



The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



Joyful Witness

Christmas, like life, is a time to simply love and be loved, page 12.

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After its Nativity scene is stolen, a parish keeps the 'reason for the season' even more visible

By John Shaughnessy

Call it a celebration of the Christmas spirit—a heartwarming effort to overcome a senseless act with the light of faith.

Before it was stolen last December, an outdoor Nativity scene was a beautiful point of joy and reverence for the members of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh—and even more so for the Hispanic parishioners who pooled their money for it and built it.

Lit up on a hill leading to the parish church, the wooden Nativity crèche served as a beacon of the true meaning of Christmas in Edinburgh, a community about 35 miles south of Indianapolis.

Yet in a move that would make even the pre-reformed Grinch cringe, the entire Nativity scene was stolen within two days of it being assembled.

See **NATIVITY SCENE**, page 9

This Nativity scene, created by members of the Hispanic community of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh, was stolen from the parish grounds last year, just before the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12. Members of the parish's Hispanic community plan to build another Nativity scene before Christmas. (Submitted photo)



Answer Advent call for vigilance with charity, confession, pope suggests

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Advent call for “vigilance” does not mean staying awake and watchful out of fear, but rather out of a longing for the coming of the Lord, Pope Francis wrote.



Pope Francis

Sometimes people think of vigilance “as an attitude motivated by fear of impending doom, as if a meteorite were about to plunge from the sky,” he said in the text of his commentary on

the Gospel reading for Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent.

Pope Francis led the recitation of the *Angelus* prayer from his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, but explained that his bronchitis, while improving, was still making it difficult to speak, so the text of his commentary and of his appeals for peace were read by Msgr. Paolo Braida, an official of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

In the Gospel reading (Mk 13:33-37), Jesus tells the parable of the servants awaiting their master’s return.

“The servants’ vigilance is not one of fear, but of longing, of waiting to go forth to meet their Lord who is coming,” the pope’s text said. “They remain in readiness for his return because they care for him, because they have in mind that when he returns, they will make sure he finds a welcoming and orderly home.”

That kind of vigilance and expectation should mark the watchfulness of Christians as they prepare to welcome Jesus at Christmas, to welcome him at the end of time and, he said, to welcome him “as he comes to meet us in the Eucharist, in his word [and] in our brothers and sisters, especially those most in need.”

Pope Francis encouraged people to carefully prepare their hearts with prayer and with charity.

See **ADVENT**, page 2

Catholic high school seniors share a Mass and a call to follow their moral compass

By John Shaughnessy

It’s a rare moment for Catholic high school seniors in the archdiocese, and the specialness of what happened on the morning of Nov. 29 wasn’t lost on Philip Kahn III.

A senior at Father Michael Shawe Memorial High School in Madison, Philip spent about two hours on the road that morning, traveling with his Shawe classmates to St. Malachy Church in

Brownsburg for a Mass with the other Catholic high school seniors from across the archdiocese.

Settling into the church, Philip and the Shawe contingent were

See **SENIOR MASS**, page 8

A choir from Roncalli High School in Indianapolis lead the singing during the archdiocesan High School Senior Mass at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg on Nov. 29. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)





Parish vandalized

A statue of St. Joseph lies broken in front of St. Mary Church in downtown Indianapolis on Nov. 30. The marble statue, which weighed several hundred pounds, had been toppled the previous night in an apparent act of vandalism reported to the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department. Father Jeffrey Dufresne, the parish's pastor, wrote in a message to parishioners: "I invite you to take a moment today to pray the Litany of St. Joseph for the conversion of those who committed this act of vandalism and for peace in our city." (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 8-14, 2023

December 8 – 10 a.m.
Mass at Marian University in Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel, Indianapolis

December 8 – 11:30 a.m.
College Student Engagement on the Synod at Marian University, Indianapolis

December 9 – 11 a.m.
Presentation for Catholic Medical Guild Association at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, Indianapolis

December 9 – 3 p.m.
Mass for feast of St. Juan Diego at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, followed by reception at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 10 – Noon
Mass for pastor installation and blessing of Marian grotto and Stations of the Cross at St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis

December 11 – 2 p.m.
Mass and visitation at New Castle Correctional Institution, New Castle

December 12 – 10:30 a.m.
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 14 – 8:15 a.m.
Virtual Judicatories meeting

December 14 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 14 – 11:30 a.m.
Employee Advent gathering at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

Message of Peace Light seen as more urgent amid Israel-Hamas war

QUEENS, N.Y. (OSV News)—As Catholics across the New York metropolitan area were given the opportunity to light their first candle of the Advent season on the weekend of Dec. 2-3, a flame drawn from a source that dates back 1,000 years arrived at John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport in Queens.

The Peace Light, a continuous flame originating in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where for more than 1,000 years oil lamps have continuously burned, landed at JFK from Vienna on an Austria Airlines flight on Dec. 3. From there, Scouts and volunteers formed a network of drivers who will transfer the flame across North America.

Welcomed and facilitated by the Boy Scouts of America, the "Messengers of Peace" from Vienna brought the flame in a small box to Our Lady of the Skies Chapel outside JFK's Terminal 4.

A gathering of faithful surrounded the flame and prayed for peace across the world—particularly in the war-torn Holy Land—before lighting their own lanterns with fire from the Peace Light flame, which is symbolic of universal peace, harmony and unity.

"There is a little bit of a paradox or irony that the Peace Light is coming to us from a place where there is war," said Father Chris Piasta, the chaplain at Our Lady of Skies Chapel who has been part of the ceremony for 13 years. "I'm glad that it's happening because, despite the fact that there is war over there and in Ukraine, we have to be reminded that there is goodness in people."

The clergy on hand reiterated the point that the annual travels of the Peace Light carry additional weight this year, given that they begin in a place that is ravaged by the ongoing Israeli-Hamas conflict.

"This is very important from the point of view that the Light of Bethlehem brings peace to people. It is very important to pray for Ukraine and the Middle East, especially given the context of all the events in the world," said Father Cezariusz Jastrzebski, an assistant chaplain at Our Lady of the Skies Chapel.

The tradition began in 2001, when the light was brought to ground zero following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. It became a more formal event the following year, and subsequent ceremonies have been held at Our Lady of the Skies Chapel.

"This [Peace Light] has such a magic about it. ... Wherever this goes, it just brings a smile to peoples' faces," said Brian Long, director of Scouting for the Diocese of Brooklyn, who has attended all 21 arrivals of the symbolic flame at JFK Airport.

Some in attendance this year said they had been coming to the airport year after year for the Peace Light arrival celebration, including many who first began coming as Cub Scouts with their families or scout leaders.

Jotham Andrés, an 11-year-old

Boy Scout, has been coming to witness the Peace Light since he joined the Scouts. Now in his seventh year in the program, Jotham looks forward to making the annual trip with his two older siblings, parents and his troop from Annandale, N.J. His family teams up to produce a livestream video of the ceremony.

"It's a family tradition. It's fun, and it's nice to give to people," Jotham told *The Tablet*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Brooklyn. "[My favorite part] is probably just talking to people. You only get to speak to many of these people once a year." †

ADVENT

continued from page 1

"A good program for Advent," he suggested, would be "to encounter Jesus coming in every brother and sister who needs us and to share with them what we can: listening, time, concrete assistance."

Advent, he said, also is a good time to "approach his forgiveness" through the sacrament of reconciliation and make more time for prayer and Bible reading.

Remaining vigilant may take practice, he said, and starts by not letting oneself be distracted by "pointless things" and by trying not to complain so much. †

Who or what helped you navigate the first years of married life?

The first years of marriage bear unique challenges for newlyweds as they adjust to each other and to their new state in life.

"The first years of married life need to be 'accompanied,' and newlyweds should not be left in solitude." So says paragraph #74 of "Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life," a 2020 document of the Vatican's Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life. It also states that, "From the very beginning of married life, the couple needs to receive concrete assistance to live their interpersonal relationship in all sincerity" (#78).

For *The Criterion's* upcoming Spring Marriage Supplement in February, we would like to hear from "experienced" couples as a way to

help Catholic newlyweds and those preparing for marriage.

What helped you overcome challenges in the early years of marriage? Was there anyone who accompanied you in your first years of married life? If so, how did they help you grow as a couple as you adjusted to marriage? If you were to accompany a newlywed Catholic couple, what would you do to help them in those first few years?

Please send your responses to Natalie Hoefler by e-mail at nhoefler@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †



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E-mail us: criterion@archindy.org

Staff:
Editor: Mike Krokos
Assistant Editor: John Shaughnessy
Reporter: Sean Gallagher
Reporter: Natalie Hoefler
Graphic Designer / Online Editor: Brandon A. Evans
Executive Assistant: Ann Lewis



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Pope calls world leaders to end divisions to fight climate change

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The future of humanity depends on what people choose now, Pope Francis said in his message to global leaders at the World Climate Action Summit of the U.N.



Pope Francis

Climate Change Conference.

“Are we working for a culture of life or a culture of death?” he asked in his message. “To all of you I make this heartfelt appeal: Let us choose life! Let us choose the future!”

“The purpose of power is to serve. It is useless to cling to an authority that will one day be remembered for its inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so. History will be grateful to you,” the pope wrote.

Excerpts from Pope Francis’ full written message were read by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, on Dec. 2 during the high-level segment with heads of state and government at the climate conference, COP28, being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on Nov. 30-Dec. 12.

Pope Francis was to have been the first pope to attend the U.N. climate conference on Dec. 1-3, but canceled his trip on Nov. 28 after coming down with a serious bronchial infection.

The Vatican published the pope’s full speech on Dec. 2, although Cardinal Parolin read only excerpts at the summit to respect the three-minute limit on national statements. The text was submitted in full to the conference.

“Sadly, I am unable to be present with you, as I had greatly desired,” the pope’s text said.

The destruction of the environment is “a sin” that not only “greatly endangers all human beings, especially the most vulnerable,” he wrote, but it also “threatens to unleash a conflict between generations.

“The drive to produce and possess has become an obsession, resulting in an inordinate greed that has made the environment the object of unbridled exploitation,” the pope wrote. People must recognize their limits, with humility and courage, and seek authentic fulfillment.

“What stands in the way of this? The divisions that presently exist among us,” he wrote.

The world “should not be un-connected by those who govern it, with international negotiations that ‘cannot make significant progress due to positions taken by countries which place their national interests above the global common good,’” he wrote, quoting from his 2015 encyclical “*Laudato Si’*,” *On Care for Our Common Home*.”

The poor and high birth rates are not to blame for today’s climate crisis, he wrote. “Almost half of our world that is more needy is responsible for scarcely 10% of toxic emissions, while the gap between the opulent few and the masses of the poor has never been so abysmal. The poor are the real victims of what is happening.”

As for population growth, births are a resource, he wrote, “whereas certain ideological and utilitarian models now being imposed with a velvet glove on families and peoples constitute real forms of colonization.

“The development of many countries, already burdened by grave economic debt, should not be penalized,” the pope continued. “It would only be fair to find suitable means of remitting the financial debts that burden different peoples, not least in light of the ecological debt that they are owed” by the few nations responsible for the bulk of the emissions.

“We have a grave responsibility,” he wrote, which is to ensure the Earth, the poor and the young not be denied a future.

The solution requires coming together as brothers and sisters living in a common home, rebuilding trust and pursuing multilateralism, he added.

The care for creation and world peace



A view of Al Wasl Dome and an array of flags can be seen during the U.N. Climate Change Conference COP28 at Expo City on Nov. 30 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (CNS photo/courtesy of UN Climate Change COP28, Neville Hopwood)

are closely linked, the pope wrote.

“How much energy is humanity wasting on the numerous wars” being waged, he wrote, and “how many resources are being squandered on weaponry that destroys lives and devastates our common home!”

The pope again urged governments to divert money away from arms and other military expenditures toward a global fund to end hunger, to promote sustainable development of poorer countries and to combat climate change.

“Climate change signals the need for political change” away from narrow self-interest and nationalism, he wrote.

There must be “a breakthrough that is not a partial change of course, but rather a new way of making progress together,” he wrote. There must be “a decisive acceleration of ecological transition”

regarding energy efficiency, renewable sources, the elimination of fossil fuels and “education in lifestyles that are less dependent on the latter.”

He promised the “commitment and support of the Catholic Church, which is deeply engaged in the work of education and of encouraging participation by all, as well as in promoting sound lifestyles.

“Let us leave behind our divisions and unite our forces,” Pope Francis wrote. “And with God’s help, let us emerge from the dark night of wars and environmental devastation in order to turn our common future into the dawn of a new and radiant day.”

(The full text of the pope’s written address can be found in English at: bit.ly/PopeDubai23. In Spanish: bit.ly/PopeDubai23-Spanish. Both links are case-sensitive.) †

End of cease fire in Holy Land prompt papal prayers during *Angelus*

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The end of the temporary cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas “means death, destruction, misery,” Pope Francis said.

After reciting the *Angelus* prayer on Dec. 3 from his Vatican residence, Pope Francis had an aide read his remarks expressing sadness over the resumption of fighting in the Holy Land on Dec. 1 after a weeklong truce.

“Many hostages have been freed, but many are still in Gaza” in the hands of Hamas, the pope’s text said. “Let’s think about them, their families who had seen a light, a hope to embrace

their loved ones again.”

Israel and Hamas had agreed on the temporary cease-fire to allow Hamas to release hostages captured in Israel on Oct. 7 in exchange for the release of Palestinians jailed in Israel. The agreement also allowed aid agencies to deliver needed food, water, medicine and fuel to Gaza.

“In Gaza, there is much suffering; there is a lack of basic necessities,” the papal text said. “I hope that all those who are involved may reach a new cease-fire agreement as soon as possible and find solutions other than weapons, trying to take courageous paths to peace.” †

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Editorial



A woman prays during Mass on the first Sunday of Advent at St. Sylvester Church in Medford, N.Y., on Nov. 27, 2022. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Make this Advent a time of joyful anticipation

“Advent is a journey toward Jerusalem. May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man.” —Pope Francis

Pope Francis shared the above words in December of 2013 during his first year as our universal shepherd.

A decade later, they still ring true as we continue our Advent journey in preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ during the next two-plus weeks.

As many of us heard in homilies, read in parish bulletins and learned through other communications in recent weeks, this year’s season of Advent is the shortest it can possibly be—beginning on Sunday, Dec. 3, and ending on the fourth Sunday of Advent, which this year falls on Dec. 24. A few hours later on that day, parishes around the world will celebrate vigil Masses marking the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Despite the abbreviated calendar, we should not make this Advent season—which begins another liturgical year—any less important than we have of Advents in years past.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, “When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor’s birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: ‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’” (#524, Jn 3:30).

Preparing our hearts for Advent gets harder each year. So many in our secular society—including many retailers—have Christmas themes and gifts front and center in their stores and on their websites as soon as Halloween ends. And some of those same retailers advertise “Christmas in July” several months before December. It’s no wonder it gets more and more challenging to make Advent a time of anticipation and preparation.

Our faith calls us to avoid the holiday chaos and keep the birth of our Savior in our hearts and minds during Advent. We must not let a secularistic mentality shift our focus from Christ.

As we read in the first Sunday of Advent’s Gospel reading (Mk 13:33-37), Jesus tells his disciples to be vigilant. And as we are reminded throughout Advent, it is a great liturgical season of vigilance, of waiting and watching.

If you haven’t decided on a firm plan for the next few weeks, spiritual reading could be a wonderful practice to add to your daily Advent activities. Reflecting on the day’s readings is a great option because the Advent readings call us to be alert and ready, not weighed down and distracted by the cares of the world.

Why not try to include attending Mass beyond Sunday—possibly even daily—during this liturgical season?

Adding eucharistic adoration to your Advent calendar might be another practice worth considering. Keeping vigil before the Blessed Sacrament is another way to strengthen your relationship with our Lord, whose first coming we celebrate at Christmas and whose glorious second coming Advent helps us prepare for.

Our Advent practices could also include making time to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. As you’ll read on page 7 of this week’s issue of *The Criterion*, the opportunities to go to confession are plentiful throughout parishes in central and southern Indiana. Clip the schedule out, or visit our Advent website at www.archindy.org/advent if you’d like the most up-to-date schedule.

The Holy Family and their plight should come to your heart during this liturgical season. Why not give God a clean heart during Advent? Examine the state of your soul and cleanse yourselves of any wounds through confession. No matter how long it has been since your last confession, you’ll feel much better afterward. Be healed as you prepare for the birth of Christ.

The graces of Advent will give us a readiness to welcome the Christ Child.

As St. Mark shared, be vigilant. Let these next few weeks be a time of joyful expectation. Be on the watch as we approach the Nativity of Our Lord.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Joel Stepanek

Our Lady of Guadalupe encourages me to be an authentic model of faith

(Dec. 12 is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.)

I have a unique relationship with Mary. Like any mother and son, we’ve gone through ups and downs together. As a child, praying the rosary was often



punishment for breaking the rules, usually disobedience against my parents. Not surprisingly, I resented it—though I’ve come to see some humor in that particular punishment for the offense.

As a young adult, the rosary became a comfort as I held it close with shaking hands through some of my life’s darkest and most broken moments. I cherished it.

I also have an image of Mary that was gifted to my wife and me on our wedding day that I meditate on often, yet there are other images of Mary that I find no connection with at all.

Perhaps that is the beauty of Marian imagery—it can speak to many people in many different ways.

One particular image to which I find myself particularly drawn is the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

It might be the story of the image that resonates—a humble farmer encounters Mary and, through his diligence, she offers an image that provides consolation and hope to the Mexican people (and to the world). The preservation of the *tilma* of St. Juan Diego, upon which that image is imprinted, is miraculous. But what resonates the most is Mary’s appearance.

She appears in a manner that speaks specifically to the people she is appearing to—not as an outsider, but a mother. The symbols in the image and her complexion are so indigenous to the region that St. Juan Diego initially thought he beheld a native princess. In the initial apparition, Mary even spoke to him in his native language.

This should not surprise. Mary is our mother; by appearing in ways we best

comprehend her, she leads us to Jesus.

In this movement of the National Eucharistic Revival, that can be a profound reflection for us as we gaze upon Our Lady of Guadalupe: Who are we uniquely suited to bring Christ to?

A revival is a grassroots effort; it happens within each one of us. There is no strict formula for revival outside of boldly living our faith and joyfully sharing it with others. And each of us can uniquely point to Christ and speak to specific groups of people. Each of us is a living “inculturation” of Jesus.

Sometimes, I worry that many of us resist publicly leaning into our faith out of fear it will strip away the unique attributes we possess and leave a stale version of what it is to be “Catholic.” But, there is no mold to fit into and no particular icon we need to replicate. There is a deposit of faith upon which we build our lives. Beyond that, we leverage the unique gifts, talents, cultural backgrounds, and experiences that we possess to share that faith with others.

Mary, human and not divine, shows us what the living inculturation of the Gospel looks like by revealing herself as one of the people to whom she appears. Juan Diego doesn’t see an outsider; he sees a mother and trusts her. In the same way, we encounter countless people who might not recognize many expressions of Catholicism—who would find them foreign and “other”—unless they come from something authentic within us.

We can be a native representation of Christ to others when we live our faith well.

Revival happens in these moments of living inculturation as we fulfill the mission uniquely entrusted to us—and if we all lean into that reality, revival doesn’t become a possibility but an inevitable outcome.

(Joel Stepanek is chief operating officer for the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc., and is responsible for guiding the teams that empower and energize the grassroots efforts of the National Eucharistic Revival.) †



An image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is seen at San Xavier del Bac Mission in Pima County, Ariz., outside Tucson, on May 28. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Mary will lead us to her Son if we follow her 'yes'

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin. (Pope Pius IX, "Ineffabilis Deus")

Today is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Under this title, Mary is the patroness of the United States, so today is a very special day for our country as well as for our Church.

The Church's teaching on the Immaculate Conception is an example of how our understanding of Catholic doctrine develops over time as a result of prayerful reflection, scholarship and sometimes lively disagreement.

Especially during the medieval period, theologians—including St. Thomas Aquinas—debated the question of how Mary was freed from the stain of sin. There was no disagreement about the fact that Mary was without sin, but there were differences of opinion about how and when this privilege was granted to her. Pope Pius IX settled the question

in 1854 with his papal bull titled "*Ineffabilis Deus*."

This infallible declaration affirmed what had been gradually understood during the course of Christian history—namely that the mother of Jesus was freed from original sin from the moment of her conception.

Pope Pius IX taught definitively that this "singular grace and privilege of almighty God" was made possible by the merits of her divine Son. It does not mean that Mary had no need for Christ's redeeming grace. On the contrary, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception asserts that the suffering and death of Christ, and his subsequent resurrection, were absolutely necessary to exempt his mother from "all stain of original sin."

As Catholics, we believe that Mary is what every baptized follower of Jesus Christ is called to become. She is "full of grace," holy, and totally open to God's will. Mary listens with her heart. She responds decisively with courage and generosity. And she accompanies each of us, her children, as we undertake our life's journey through good times and hard times.

Being conceived without sin did not exempt Mary from hardship, suffering

or grief. Sacred Scripture makes it clear that Mary suffered with her son—just as she is compassionate and loving toward all of us. The grace of her Immaculate Conception does not make Mary less human. It gives her the courage and the singular ability to endure the pain and suffering of her children in ways that inspire us and give us hope.

Pope St. John Paul II observed that:

In contemplating this mystery in a Marian perspective, we can say that "Mary, at the side of her Son, is the most perfect image of freedom and of the liberation of humanity and of the universe. It is to her as Mother and Model that the Church must look in order to understand in its completeness the meaning of her own mission" ("Redemptoris Mater," #37).

The fact that Mary was sinless from the beginning of her existence does not separate her from the rest of us, who are sinners. It gives us hope. If we turn to her and ask for her assistance; if we follow her example in saying "yes" to God's will for us; and if we walk with Mary, following in the footsteps of Jesus, we will know the freedom and the joy that God has promised to us.

Pope Francis says that "the uncontaminated beauty of our mother is incomparable, but at the same time it attracts us." Mary's purity, her fidelity to God's will, and her relentless determination to accompany Jesus on the Way of the Cross are magnetic. They draw us to her, and in coming close to Mary, we encounter her son, Jesus. By his redeeming grace, we too are freed from selfishness and sin.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a holy day of obligation. The Church does not impose this obligation lightly. It is meant to call our attention to the multiple ways that participation in the mystery of our redemption enriches us spiritually and sets us free. Rather than "business as usual" today, we are invited—and challenged—to set aside an hour of our day to thank God for the gift of our Blessed Mother.

During this time of eucharistic revival, let's acknowledge the incarnate Word whose real presence we adore in the holy Eucharist. Let's ask Mary to inspire us in our eucharistic devotion. As Pope Francis urges, "Let us entrust ourselves to her and say 'no' to sin and 'yes' to grace once and for all." †



Cristo, la piedra angular

María nos guiará a su Hijo si, al igual que ella, decimos 'sí'

La santísima Virgen María fue preservada inmune de toda mancha de culpa original, en el primer instante de su concepción, por singular gracia y privilegio de Dios omnipotente, en atención a los méritos de Jesucristo, salvador del género humano. (Papa Pío IX, "Ineffabilis Deus")

Hoy es la Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima Virgen María, advocación bajo la cual María es la patrona de Estados Unidos, por lo que hoy es un día muy especial tanto para nuestro país como para nuestra Iglesia.

Las enseñanzas de la Iglesia sobre la Inmaculada Concepción constituyen un ejemplo de cómo se desarrolla con el tiempo nuestra comprensión de la doctrina católica, como resultado de la reflexión orante, la erudición y, a veces, verdaderos desacuerdos.

Especialmente durante la época medieval, los teólogos—entre ellos santo Tomás de Aquino—debatieron la cuestión de cómo María fue liberada de la mácula del pecado. Sobre el hecho de que estuviera libre de pecado no hubo discrepancia, pero sí con respecto a cómo y cuándo se le concedió este privilegio. El Papa Pío IX zanjó la cuestión en 1854 con su bula papal titulada "*Ineffabilis Deus*."

Esta declaración infalible afirmaba

lo que se había ido comprendiendo gradualmente a lo largo de la historia cristiana, a saber, que la madre de Jesús estaba libre de los efectos del pecado original desde el momento de su concepción.

El Papa Pío IX nos enseñó categóricamente que esta "singular gracia y privilegio de Dios omnipotente" fue posible gracias a los méritos de su divino Hijo, lo cual no significa que María no necesitara la gracia redentora de Cristo. Por el contrario, la doctrina de la Inmaculada Concepción afirma que el sufrimiento y la muerte de Cristo, y su posterior resurrección, fueron absolutamente necesarios para eximir a su madre de "toda mancha de pecado original."

Como católicos, creemos que María es aquello en lo que todo seguidor bautizado de Jesucristo está llamado a convertirse. Está "llena de gracia," es santa y está totalmente abierta a la voluntad de Dios. María escucha con el corazón, y responde con decisión, valentía y generosidad, al tiempo que nos acompaña a cada uno de nosotros, sus hijos, mientras emprendemos el viaje de la vida en los momentos buenos y en los difíciles.

El hecho de haber sido concebida sin pecado no eximió a María de penurias,

sufrimiento o dolor. Las Sagradas Escrituras dejan claro que María sufrió con su hijo en la misma medida en la que es compasiva y amorosa con todos nosotros. La gracia de su Inmaculada Concepción no hace a María menos humana, sino que le da el valor y la capacidad singular de soportar el dolor y el sufrimiento de sus hijos de una forma que nos inspira y nos da esperanza.

El Papa san Juan Pablo II observó que, al contemplar este misterio en una perspectiva mariana, podemos decir que: "*María, al lado de su Hijo, es la imagen más perfecta de la libertad y de la liberación de la humanidad y del cosmos. La Iglesia debe mirar hacia ella, Madre y Modelo para comprender en su integridad el sentido de su misión*" ("*Redemptoris Mater*," #37).

El hecho de que María estuviera libre de pecado desde el principio de su existencia no la separa del resto de nosotros, que somos pecadores. Eso nos da esperanza. Si nos dirigimos a ella y pedimos su ayuda, si seguimos su ejemplo diciendo "sí" a la voluntad de Dios para nosotros, y si caminamos con María, siguiendo las huellas de Jesús, conoceremos la libertad y la alegría que Dios nos ha prometido.

El Papa Francisco dice que "la belleza incólume de nuestra madre es

incomparable y tiene un magnetismo irresistible." La pureza de María, su fidelidad a la voluntad de Dios y su implacable determinación de acompañar a Jesús en el Vía Crucis actúan como poderosos imanes que nos atraen hacia ella y, al acercarnos a María, nos encontramos con su hijo, Jesús. Por su gracia redentora, también resultamos liberados del egoísmo y del pecado.

La Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Santísima Virgen María, es un día santo de precepto. La Iglesia no impone esta obligación a la ligera. Pretende llamar nuestra atención sobre las múltiples formas en las que participar en el misterio de nuestra redención nos enriquece espiritualmente y nos libera. En lugar de que hoy sea un día como cualquier otro, se nos invita—se nos desafía—a reservar una hora de nuestro día para dar gracias a Dios por el don de nuestra Santísima Madre.

En este tiempo de renacimiento eucarístico, reconozcamos al Verbo Encarnado cuya presencia real adoramos en la Sagrada Eucaristía. Pidamos a María que nos inspire en nuestra devoción eucarística. Como exhorta el Papa Francisco: "Encomendémonos a ella y digamos 'no' al pecado y 'sí' a la gracia de una vez por todas." †

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 8-January 6

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish, 23345 Gavin Lane, Bright. **Bright Lights Drive-thru Christmas Light Display**, 6-10 p.m., free. Information: 812-512-1941, brightlightsdcc@gmail.com.

December 8-22

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Shop INN-Spiced Christmas Sale**, Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Dec. 2, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Dec. 9, 16 and 23, 9 a.m.-noon; many items 25-75% off. Information: 317-788-7581, benedictinn.org.

December 11

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On**, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., priests available for sacrament of reconciliation, no appointment needed. Information: 317-545-7681 or lcoons@archindy.org.

December 12

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. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.812-535-2952.

St. Malachy Church, 9833 E. County Road 750 N., Brownsburg. **A Most Wonderful Christmas**, 7 p.m., Indianapolis Symphonic Band and St. Malachy choir Christmas concert, featuring St. Malachy organist Hector Sacedo, free. Information: 317-852-3195.

December 14

Southport Presbyterian Church, 7525 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Christmas Remembrance**, 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 time, singing of traditional Christmas carols, candle-lighting ceremony, fellowship and refreshments, attendees may bring photos of their loved ones for display at the front of the sanctuary, free. Information, registration: 317-528-2636.

December 15

Northside Events and Social

Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Indiana Supreme Court Justice Hon. Derek R. Molter presenting "Faith in Government," rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Dec. 12. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg

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, Bainton, Duruflé, Lauridsen and more, followed by caroling through the streets of Indianapolis, hot drinks and light refreshments provided, free. Information: 317-635-2021, office@stjohnsindy.org.

St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7575 Holliday Dr., E., Indianapolis. **"How Far is it to Bethlehem?"** 7 p.m., concert featuring the archdiocesan *schola* Vox Sacra, performing the works of Anton Bruckner, Domenico Bartolucci, Gerald

Near, *4 Motets pour le temps de Noël* (4 Motets of Christmas) by Francis Poulenc and more, free. Information: amotyka@archindy.org.

St. Bartholomew Parish, Parish Hall, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Jazz for the Season**, 6 p.m. Italian meal, concert 7:30 p.m., freewill donations for music ministry program and adult literacy program accepted. Information: 812-379-9353, ext. 1237, bminute@stbparish.net.

December 17

St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. **Holy Season Concert**, 7 p.m., Advent and Christmas concert featuring more than 80 singers and musicians including adult, children, bell, ensemble and brass choirs, free. Information: 317-787-8246, aeagan@stmarkindy.org.

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, O'Shaughnessy Dining Hall, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Sunday Brunch with Santa**,

10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$33 adults, \$25 children ages 6-12, \$20 children ages 3-5, children ages 2 and younger free. Information: 812-535-2952, Events.SistersofProvidence.org, provctr@spmsw.org.

December 20

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

December 21

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

December 28

All Saints Parish, St. Joseph Campus, 7536 Church Ln., West Harrison. **Feast of the Holy Innocents Mass of Healing**, 6:30 p.m., for parents and families who have lost infants or children to miscarriage, stillbirth or other loss, free. To receive ornament with child's name, fill out form by Dec. 20 at tinyurl.com/himass23 or call 859-801-1293.

2024

January 6

Christ the King Parish, 5884 N. Crittenden Ave., Indianapolis. **Encounter Mary Dinner**, 6-9 p.m., dinner for women 21 and older, Sandra Hartlieb presenting, \$35, register by Dec. 17. Information, registration: 317-255-3666, encountermarty.org.

January 7

Monthly Prayer with Sisters of Providence: "Prayer on Martin Luther King Jr.," for single Catholic women ages 18-42, via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., seventh day of each month. Information, registration: Events.SistersofProvidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spmsw.org.

January 18

St. Pius X Church, 7200 Sarto Dr., Indianapolis. **Sensory-friendly Mass**, 7 p.m., for those with sensitivities to light, sound and smell, picture Mass aids available, all are welcome. Information: 317-446-5507, shannyrae67@gmail.com. †

Retreats and Programs

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

December 24-26

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christmas Celebration at Saint Meinrad Archabbey**, opportunity to join monastic community in their Christmas Eve and Christmas Day prayer and liturgies in the archabbey church, fellowship and socials with monks and other guests, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

December 29-31

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Greccio 800**, Fri. 4 p.m.-Sun. 1 p.m., retreat celebrating 800 years of the nativity scene. St. Francis shared with the

people of Greccio, Italy, Franciscan Father Jack Clark Robinson and Third Order Franciscan Dennis Feece presenting, \$150 commuters, \$250 includes two nights' accommodations and four meals. Information, registration: 812-923-8817, tinyurl.com/msfgreccio800.

2024

January 4, 11, 18, 25 Creative Ways to Encounter the Divine (virtual via Zoom): "Hearing God's Voice" offered by Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 7-8:30 p.m. Thursdays, first of four stand-alone sessions (Jan. 11, 18, 25), Jan. 4 focus: poetry, Jan. 11 focus: nature, Jan. 18 focus:

art, Jan. 25 focus: people and events and dreams, Benedictine Sister Antoinette Purcel presenting, \$75 for four sessions or \$25 per session. Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

January 9, Feb. 14

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

January 12-14

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **TOBIT Marriage Preparation Weekend**, 7 p.m. Fri.-11:45 a.m. Sun., \$298 per couple, separate rooms, includes meals and materials. Registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

January 22-26

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

February 3

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Embracing the Lenten Journey: From Ashes to Resurrection Joy**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Benedictine Sister Susan Marie Lindstrom

presenting, \$75, includes lunch. Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

February 27-29

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Women of the World**, Benedictine Brother Zachary Wilberding presenting, bring Bible, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 6

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Created in the Image of God: A Woman's Day of Reflection**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Dr. Kimberly Baker presenting, \$55. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 8-10

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Unpacking the Vocation of Marriage through Scripture and Married Saints**, Angie and Josh Greulich presenting, for married couples,

\$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 15-17

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Sleeper Awake!**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 27-31

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Living the Liturgy of the Triduum**, Benedictine Father Jeremy King presenting, \$465 single, \$735 double, commuter \$200. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 29

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

Chick-fil-A in Columbus to host Missy's Hope Maternity Home fundraiser on Dec. 12

A fundraiser for Missy's Hope Maternity Home will take place at Chick-fil-A at 1250 National Road, in Columbus, from 5-7 p.m. on Dec. 12. Missy's Hope Maternity Home is a non-profit, faith-based maternity home for young women ages 15 and older experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. More money needs to be raised in order

for the south central Indiana home to be built. Say "spirit night" when ordering meals at this Chick-fil-A location, and 10% of the cost will go to Missy's Hope Maternity Home. For more information, contact Peggy Dyer Bland at 812-767-2897 or peggydyerbland@yahoo.com. †

Surviving Divorce Support Group set for January through April in Indianapolis

Surviving Divorce Support Group, a ministry of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, will be offered three times a month for a total of 12 weeks at St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Road, in Indianapolis, from 7-8:30 p.m. beginning on Jan. 17. The support group explores the stress, anger, blame and guilt of divorce

with the goal of leading participants toward ultimate forgiveness, happiness and growth. The cost of the 12-week session is \$30, which includes materials. Scholarships are available. To register or for more information, contact Patti Collins at 317-786-4371 or pcollins@stjudeindy.org. †

Wedding Anniversaries

LORAN AND ROSEMARY (OSWALD) HOFFMEIER, members of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on Nov. 8. The couple was married in St. Paul Church (now a campus of All Saints Parish) in New Alsace on Nov. 8, 1958. They have three children: Debbie Howard, Michelle McMannus and Cindy White. The couple also has eight grandchildren and six great-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.

Archdiocesan vocal ensemble gives new life to Church's treasury of music

By Ann Margaret Lewis

In the Church's long history, sacred music, specifically vocal music, was an important element in the Mass from the earliest years of the liturgy's development.

In fact, Western music notation and theory grew out of the need to proclaim the words of holy Scripture and prayer at Mass in a way that elevated those words above those used in the secular world.

To further that tradition of proclaiming Scripture in song, the archdiocesan *schola cantorum* ("school of singers") Vox Sacra, whose name means "Sacred Voice," was formed to present sacred music from all eras of Church history—from the earliest pieces of Gregorian chant to complicated, contemporary, sacred pieces that glorify God in new and original ways.

Currently, the group is preparing for a concert for the Advent/Christmas season called "How Far is it to Bethlehem?" The concert will take place at 7 p.m. on Dec. 16 at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The free concert will include the music of Anton Bruckner, Domenico Bartolucci and Gerald Near.

The concert—as well as a new CD called "Hail, True Body"—are the latest offerings in Vox Sacra's eight-year history.

'Catholic music is a treasure'

In 2015, Vox Sacra director Andrew Motyka, who is also the director of archdiocesan and cathedral liturgical music, thought it would be useful to have an archdiocesan choral group that performed often unheard pieces from the Church's treasury of sacred music for Masses and events outside of regular Sunday liturgies.

He noted that, in paragraph 114 of "Sacrosanctum Concilium" ("Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy"), "Vatican II

says that Catholic music is a treasure of inestimable value to be carefully preserved. [The Church has] done that with varying degrees of success and failure since [the council]. That treasury needs to be cultivated."

Motyka added that Pope Francis said tradition and the liturgy should not be museum pieces.

"Some people take that to mean we should not be doing too many old things because that makes [the Church] a museum," Motyka said. "But I turn that around and say, 'No, it's actually that our traditional things should be used in the liturgy because otherwise they become museum pieces and relics that you only hear in concert outside of the Mass.'

"Our [music] is a living tradition and one that we should continue to use at Mass," Motyka continued. "It is something that belongs to all of us. I mean, these older composers from every nation in the world don't simply belong to that nationality. They belong to the Church as a whole."

'A little more versatile of a group'

To that end of sharing and performing great music from the Church's history, Motyka thought initially he'd form a larger, volunteer archdiocesan choir like those assembled regularly to sing at priestly ordinations.

But then he realized a bigger ensemble might be difficult logistically. What was needed was a smaller, more flexible choir that could adapt easily to unique occasions. He put out a notice that he'd be auditioning for a 12-person group of experienced singers that could tackle these often-difficult works.

Motyka was pleasantly surprised at the response he received and impressed by the talent of those who auditioned.

"It was really good, and I had some hard decisions to make as far as who was going to be in the group," he said. "The group now has 16 members, all of whom are highly skilled singers. Many are also music directors at parishes around the archdiocese."

Being active in one's own parish music ministry was important in Motyka's selection of Vox Sacra's members. "I never wanted Vox Sacra to be a group that pulls away from any of our parish music groups," he said.

While it was created to perform at archdiocesan special liturgies and events, one of Vox Sacra's additional efforts is making recordings.

In early 2016, the group recorded an album of Christmas music called "With Heart and Soul and Voice." In 2018, the ensemble released a second album titled "Ave" that highlighted music celebrating the Blessed Mother.

Now the group has produced a third



Andrew Motyka conducts Vox Sacra in rehearsal at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis in preparation for its upcoming concert on Dec. 16 at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. (Photo by Ann Margaret Lewis)

album as a nod to the National Eucharistic Revival called "Hail, True Body" that features music thematically centered on the Eucharist.

"Of course, we do a lot more than just recording," Motyka said. "We've sung for ordinations and other small and larger events, like when [the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops] came to town in 2017. [We] were a big part of that because [we're] a little more versatile of a group than the larger archdiocesan choir is."

'A third choir that's somewhere in between'

The group also presents regular concerts. Its Advent and Christmas concert has continued every year, except for the years of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, they sing yearly for the *tenebrae* services during Holy Week at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Motyka found preparing the group to perform complicated pieces as much of a challenge for himself as it was for the singers.

"I have to work a little bit harder to stay ahead of some of these really talented people who come to rehearsal," he said. "They come in and they're ready to go. They know their music, and it makes me dig more into that artistry to develop pieces and take them to the next level."

"I think [the group members] push themselves, and even unconsciously push each other. ... If I know that everybody is going to know their part when they come to rehearsal, I had better be ready too, because I don't want to be the weak link."

While the ensemble challenges the

skills of its members, Motyka sees the group's role as inspirational as well, for other church musicians in general.

"I think my main goal with the group was to create something that musicians can look at and say, 'OK, we may never be able to sing that, but [then again] maybe we will.' ... [I say] here is an example of what you can do with Catholic music. And there are plenty of things we sing that our regular church choirs could certainly handle."

Vox Sacra is especially unique in that there are few ensembles like it in the United States, according to Motyka.

"Many dioceses have either a semi-professional or entirely amateur cathedral choir, where they will have a larger choir just like we do for archdiocesan events," he said. "But how many have a third choir that's somewhere in between? I know Detroit has a very large archdiocesan choir which gets a lot of buy-in from their music directors, and that was something that was inspirational to me in forming this group."

Motyka said parishes are welcome to invite Vox Sacra to sing for special events they might have. They primarily perform Masses or concerts at parishes around the archdiocese rather than in secular venues.

Of special note in their upcoming Dec. 16 concert is the presentation of Francis Poulenc's *Quatre Motets pour le Temps Noël* (4 Motets of Christmas). The group's CDs will also be available for purchase at the concert.

(For information on this and more of Vox Sacra's upcoming events or to hear clips or download their recordings, visit their website at voxsacra.com.) †



Vox Sacra's new CD, "Hail, True Body", features music thematically centered on the Eucharist. The album is available for streaming or download on all digital music platforms and can be purchased in person at its concerts or by contacting Vox Sacra director Andrew Motyka at amotyka@archindy.org. (Submitted image)

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

Batesville Deanery

Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, St. John the Evangelist Campus

Dec. 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville

Dec. 13, 6-8 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen

Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg

Dec. 15, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora

Dec. 15, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville

Dec. 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville

Dec. 20, 6-8 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery are as follows:

Weekends of Dec. 9-10, 16-17 and 23-24 before and after weekend Masses at St. Maurice, Napoleon

Bloomington Deanery

Dec. 12, 6 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville

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

Connersville Deanery

Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville

Dec. 14, 6 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville

Indianapolis East Deanery

Dec. 11, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., no appointment needed

Indianapolis North Deanery

Dec. 17, 2 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas

Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Matthew the Apostle

Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence

Indianapolis South Deanery

Dec. 13, 9 a.m.-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 at Holy Name of Jesus

Dec. 16, 8:30-10 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood

New Albany Deanery

Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, Sellersburg

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, 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 Deanery

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 Deanery

Dec. 10, 2 p.m. CT at St. Paul, Tell City

Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. CT at St. Boniface, Fulda

Terre Haute Deanery

Recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deanery are as follows:

Thursdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturdays 3:30-5 p.m. at St. Joseph University †

SENIOR MASS

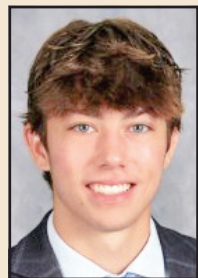
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soon part of a large, connected congregation.

They packed the church with fellow high school seniors from Seton Catholic in Richmond, Our Lady of Providence in Clarksville, Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg, and the Indianapolis high schools of Bishop Chatard, Brebeuf Jesuit, Cardinal Ritter, Cathedral, Father Thomas Seccina Memorial, Lumen Christi, Providence Cristo Rey and Roncalli.

When the Mass ended, its impact on the Shawe senior was clear.

“It was a good bonding experience for our class, to be with all the other schools and taking it all in as one,” Philip said about that rare moment. “It was really great.”



Philip Kahn III

Philip had the same impression of the homily from Msgr. William F. Stumpf, vicar general for the archdiocese and pastor of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. Msgr. Stumpf was the principal celebrant of the Mass, filling in for Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, who was spending time with his mother and other family members following the death of his father on Nov. 24.

“He talked a lot about transitioning,” Philip said about Msgr. Stumpf’s homily. “It was really good to hear because we’re all going on our different paths after we graduate.”

Msgr. Stumpf focused on how the high school seniors are in an “in-between” time of their lives.

“You are in a time of transition, transitioning from high school to adulthood,” he told the seniors. “The finish line—graduation—is within sight. But there is so much to be experienced and celebrated in the remainder of your senior year.

“Throughout your life, you will encounter other times when you will be living in transition—for it will happen every time you experience a significant change in your life. In fact, much of life is really a series of transitions and changes.”



‘And hopefully, the two great commandments—love of God and love of neighbor—have somehow been written on your hearts. These moral absolutes are really part of a powerful moral compass that will assist you in navigating not only the future but the time that remains as seniors.’

—Msgr. William F. Stumpf, archdiocesan vicar general

In facing those changes, Msgr. Stumpf told the seniors that the Apostles had to deal with similar transitions in their lives, notably between the time of Christ’s resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

“They made their way through that transition strengthened, strengthened by all that Jesus had taught them. And hopefully, you will do the same,” Msgr. Stumpf said.

It was the first of several hopes he had for the high school seniors.

“Hopefully, you will make your way through this important time of transition strengthened by all you have been taught about your faith and the values that have formed and shaped you. That formation has hopefully shaped you to see the dignity of every human life, to know that you are called to respect the life that you have been given, and also to care deeply for others.

“And hopefully, the two great commandments—love of God and love of neighbor—have somehow been written on your hearts. These moral absolutes are really part of a powerful moral compass that will assist you in navigating not only the future but the time that remains as seniors.”

In closing, Msgr. Stumpf encouraged the seniors to carry that moral compass with them through their senior year and into the future.

“Allow it to inform and guide all of your decisions. I tell you now, it will never, ever fail you. For it always points due north—due north to the truth,” he noted.

“May God continue to bless you abundantly as you make your way through the days and months of your senior year.”

Similar advice was shared with the seniors at the beginning of the Mass and near its end.

In greeting the seniors, the archdiocese’s chancellor, Christopher Walsh, encouraged the seniors to embrace a spirit of gratitude in their lives.

“As you go through your senior year, keep in mind your sense of gratitude for your classmates, for your friends, for your family, for your school, and ultimately for the opportunity to have a Catholic education,” Walsh advised.

Most of all, he stressed to the seniors “to be grateful for the sacrifice Jesus Christ made and what that means for each one of us.”

Near the end of the Mass, the archdiocese’s superintendent of Catholic schools, Brian Disney, shared a message of unity for the more than 1,000 seniors in the church.

“Coming together to share in such a beautiful Mass gives great hope for our Church, gives great hope for our society,” Disney said.

Looking across the church, he added, “I see all of this talent, all these abilities, all these amazing human beings who can help us transform the world. As we go forward in the remainder of the school



The seniors of Seton Catholic High School in Richmond pose for a class photo after the archdiocesan High School Senior Mass at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg on Nov. 29. (Photos by John Shaughnessy)



Seniors from Cathedral High School in Indianapolis—Eva Taylor, left, Ava Palmer, Eva Petruzzi and Jordan Peter—share smiles following the archdiocesan High School Senior Mass at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg on Nov. 29.

year and all the amazing celebrations, remember this Mass. This is one of the stepping stones of your senior year.

“Remember how we came together. Spread that unity throughout your school, throughout your community and throughout the world. Be that change for the good. And do that in unity for others, filled with God’s love—and always following the manner of our savior, Jesus Christ.”

The messages resonated with Mya Lang-Martinez, a senior at Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis.

“I loved how they said we’re almost there but not yet,” she said. “It was really inspiring to know we’re so close, and we still have so much to enjoy in the months coming up to graduation. Just knowing that there’s so much that we can look forward to—and that every moment matters.”

Mya especially appreciated sharing the Mass with her fellow seniors.

“It was a very lovely Mass. I loved the singing. And it was very nice seeing other people from the Class of 2024 and how we’re all doing this journey together.” †

Explosion at university in Philippines kills four people during morning Mass

(OSV News)—A deadly bomb that exploded during a Mass on Dec. 3 killed at least four people and injured dozens at a university in a predominantly Muslim city in southern Philippines.

Media reports that the explosion caused panic among dozens of students and teachers in a gymnasium where Mass was taking place at Mindanao State University in Marawi, capital of Lanao del Sur province. At least four people were killed, and nearly 50 others were brought to two hospitals for treatment, authorities said. The explosion took place at around 7 a.m. local time.

Later that day, Islamic State militants claimed responsibility for the deadly blast, according to Reuters and *The New York Times*.

After praying the *Angelus* on Dec. 3, Pope Francis assured the attack’s victims of his prayers. He added that “I am close to the families, to the people of Mindanao who have already suffered so much.”

In a telegram addressed to Bishop Edwin de la Peña of Marawi, the pope also said he was “deeply saddened to be informed of the injuries and loss of life caused by the bombing,” according to Vatican News.

Nearly 80% of the population in the Philippines—which according to U.S. government estimates has 114.6 million people—is Catholic. According to a census conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority, about 6% of the population identifies as Muslim.

In 2017, Marawi saw a five-month battle between government forces and Islamic militants aligned with the Islamic State, which left more than 1,000 dead, including some civilians, and displaced about 100,000 people. International forces helped the army to regain control of the besieged city.

Prior to Islamic State militants claiming responsibility, authorities had called the explosion a “terror attack,” and regional military commander Maj. Gen. Gabriel Viray III said they were trying to identify those responsible, according to Reuters. The motive was yet to be determined, but police were investigating the possibility of Muslim militants’ involvement.

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., condemned the attack on the social media platform X—formerly known as Twitter—on Dec. 3, offering condolences to the victims’ loved ones,

urging calm and promising that the perpetrators will be brought to justice.

“I condemn in the strongest possible terms the senseless and most heinous acts perpetrated by foreign terrorists,” he said. “Extremists who wield violence against the innocent will always be regarded as enemies to our society.”

He added that the armed forces and police have been instructed “to ensure the protection and safety of civilians and the security of affected and vulnerable communities.”

Lanao del Sur Gov. Mamintal Alonto Adiong, Jr., was swift to condemn the attack. “Here in my province, we uphold basic human rights, and that includes the right to religion,” said Adiong, who has visited with victims at a nearby hospital, according to ABS-CBN media network.

“Terroristic attacks on educational institutions must also be condemned because these are places that promote the culture of peace and mold our youths to be the future shapers of this country,” Adiong said.

Officials at Mindanao State University (MSU) said they were “deeply saddened” and “appalled” by the act

of violence, saying that “violence has no place in a civilized society, and it is particularly abhorrent in an institution of higher learning like MSU.

“We unequivocally condemn in the strongest possible terms this senseless and horrific act and extend our heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families,” it said in a statement posted on Facebook. “Our immediate priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of all constituents, particularly our Christian community.”

According to ABS-CBN, Cardinal Orlando B. Quevedo, a member of the Council of Leaders in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, also strongly decried the attack and sent his condolences to the victims’ families.

“The massacre at the Mindanao State University gym in Marawi City during Sunday Mass this morning is a crime that literally cries out to heaven,” he said. “Perpetrated on the First Sunday of Advent, a season of hope, and at the beginning of the Mindanao Week of Peace, the massacre is the most terrible and most damnable terroristic crime against innocent worshippers on a Christian holy day.” †

A decision leads to a state championship and a perfect season for the Bishop Chatard football team

By John Shaughnessy

Head coaches use different ways to keep their teams focused during a long season, and Rob Doyle turned to one of his favorites in leading the football team of Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis to another state championship this year, including a perfect 15-0 record.

Every week during a season, Doyle shares one word with his players—a word to help them not only prepare for the upcoming game, but also to help them in the way they live their lives.

So, in the week leading up to an intense game against the strong, talented team of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, Doyle chose the word “decision.”

“We use that to ask the kids to make a decision about what kind of teammate you’re going to be, what kind of man you’re going to be, what kind of football player you’re going to be,” Doyle says. “Write it down. Put it in your phone. Put it on paper.

“It’s easy to give up when you haven’t decided in advance that you’re going to do something, that you *will* do it. If you make a decision to do it—a contract with yourself—it’s a lot easier to finish it, and it’s a lot harder to fail at it because you’ve decided that this is what you want to do. No one wants to fail.”

After trailing 21-10 at halftime, Bishop Chatard rode a dominant second half to a 24-21 win over its rivals.

That victory was one of the turning points in a season that ended on Nov. 24 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis where the Trojans defeated the team from Heritage Hills High School 35-7 for Indiana’s Class 3A state championship.

It’s the 17th state championship in football for Bishop Chatard, a state record. And while it’s the fourth state championship in the past five years under Doyle’s leadership, the member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis turns the spotlight away from himself and onto his players, especially this year’s seniors.

Describing the seniors as smart and hardworking, their head coach also praised them for their willingness to challenge their teammates when they

were’t living up to the “standards” for the team.

And striving “to live up to standards” is a constant theme that Doyle shares with his players—a theme that starts with what happens on a football field and soon focuses on what can be achieved in life.

“We work really hard every day in trying to build the best men we can. That’s our culture. That’s our standard,” he says. “We talk about those standards for on and off the field all the time. It’s real important for our guys to live up to those standards. They don’t always do it. They’re kids. We don’t always do it, but that’s why we’re doing this. We need strong, good men in our country today. And part of being a strong man is being generous and helpful to people.

“Our seniors were willing to help the younger guys and bring them along. I think it’s really important when your best players are generous to those who are younger than them. When you can bring someone else along with you and help them out, it makes for a pretty full life. If you have someone to love and someone who loves you, that’s a successful life.”

Another standard in the Bishop Chatard program is what Doyle calls “brotherhood.”

“I know it’s real because the kids talk about it all the time,” he says. “They will fight for their brothers. They have faith in their teammates. I don’t know how you can have faith in God if you can’t learn to have faith in other people and those around you. You have to learn to trust



The football team of Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis runs onto the field of Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 24, the day when the Trojans defeated the team from Heritage Hills High School to win Indiana’s Class 3A championship. (Submitted photo)

each other and lean on each other—be there for each other. That’s what our brotherhood is.”

While “decision,” “standards” and “brotherhood” were mentioned often, Doyle avoided one word with his team for most of the season as they kept winning and winning—“perfect,” as in having a perfect, undefeated record.

“We have a rule that we don’t talk about anything but the next game,” he says. “We never talk about winning state or beating some team down the road. Our thing with the kids is, ‘Take care of business now and the future will take care of itself.’

“Obviously, you want to prepare for your future, but planning and preparing for your future is done by being really good at what you’re doing now. If you’re really good at what you do now, you’re probably going to have a lot of good things happen.”

Before the state championship game, Doyle finally talked to his team about the potential for a perfect season. He looked

back on the previous 14 games and how the team overcame injuries to starting players, how younger players stepped in to make a difference, how striving for a standard had led to a special opportunity.

“At the end, right before the very last game, I did emphasize the chance to have a perfect season and how historic that would be,” Doyle says.

When it happened, the joy overflowed. “Amidst the madness and having fun, I told them we’re very proud of them and we love them. All our coaches love our kids, and I love all our coaches. It’s a really special group of men. It was a great ride to be with them, to share this journey with them. They achieved something historic by going 15 and 0 against a really good schedule.

“The perfection thing is really neat to see for the kids. I want them to think about what they accomplished and how they accomplished it. Years down the road, they’ll look back and say, ‘That was a really special part of our lives.’” †

NATIVITY SCENE

continued from page 1

“The idea of someone stealing a representation of our faith is beyond any reality you can imagine,” says Deacon Jorge Arturo Sanchez Leanos, who ministers at Holy Trinity. “People were surprised and sad.”

And when the Nativity scene was stolen just before the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12, the



Members of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh gather around a Nativity scene by their church, part of the parish’s efforts to celebrate the birth of Christ after the theft of their large, wooden Nativity crèche during Advent last year. Members of the parish’s Hispanic community also plan to build a new wooden Nativity crèche in time for the celebration of Christmas. (Submitted photo)

theft also struck to the heart of what many Mexican Catholics hold dear in their faith—a boundless love for the Blessed Mother and her Son that has especially existed for nearly 500 years, ever since she appeared to a Mexican peasant, St. Juan Diego, in 1531.

“From a Mexican tradition, the festivities of Our Lady of Guadalupe go back to our very roots,” Deacon Jorge says. “She has been the icon of evangelization for Mexicans and many Latino-American cultures. In Mexico, we know about Christ because of the love of Christ demonstrated by the Virgin Mary.”

With that love to guide them, a core group of people from Holy Trinity have chosen to overcome the actions of a thief or thieves by bringing even more attention this year to the celebration of Christ’s birth.

First, parish members from the Hispanic community plan to build another wooden Nativity crèche in time for the celebration of Christmas.

And when parish leaders learned of an effort to increase the number of outdoor Nativity scenes across central and southern Indiana, they viewed it as a way to help light up Edinburgh for Christmas even more. Holy Trinity members bought 44 Nativity scenes from Project Outdoor Nativity Scene to display outside their homes this year.

“That is telling us that the representation of Christ himself is really the reason for the season,” says Deacon Jorge, who has one of the Nativity sets at his home and is involved in the creation of the large, wooden Nativity crèche that will also be featured by the church. “The representation of the Holy Family coming together is the real meaning of the Christmas celebration. It’s a beautiful way to share our faith.”

That resolve and respect from Holy Trinity members tie in naturally with the commitment of other Christian churches in the community—and with Edinburgh’s annual Holiday of Lights celebration, which will be on Dec. 9 this year.

“The whole city participates,” Deacon Jorge says. “Holy Trinity has participated in it for years. It’s a great celebration.”

The purchase of the 44 Nativity scenes was coordinated by Terry Robinholt, a member of Holy Trinity.

“It was the right thing to do, and it felt good doing it,” says Robinholt, who also has one of the Nativity sets. “For the first year of doing it, I was happy with 44.”

That feeling contrasts with the one he had last year when he learned about the theft of the parish’s outdoor Nativity scene, which was never recovered.

“When something like that is stolen, I just don’t understand people,” he says. “We always had some sort of Nativity scene at our home. I love the one we got this year. It’s simple, but it’s very nice.”

Robinholt says he was also pleasantly surprised by the number of Nativity scenes that were sold this year through Project Outdoor Nativity Scene—1,475.

The project is operated by Jim Liston, a member of St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. In its third year, the effort has led to nearly 3,400 Nativity scenes being displayed in yards across central and southern Indiana.

“That’s what Christmas was meant to be, rather than the commercial stuff and running to buy presents,” Robinholt says.

He is already touched and thrilled at seeing some of the Nativity sets being displayed in Edinburgh, a community he describes as “a small, friendly town where people look after each other.”

“It makes me feel good to see the Nativity scenes because our church is a part of this,” he says. “To be able to bring this back just feels nice.”

A Nativity scene can be stolen, but its essence can never be taken away, Robinholt believes.

“The Nativity is the meaning of Christmas.” †

In 50 years, Father Joseph Rautenberg has served as ethicist, parish priest

By Sean Gallagher

There's no doubt that modesty is a prime feature of the personality of Father Joseph Rautenberg, a retired archdiocesan priest.

When answering questions about the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a priest, he asked with a smile that any article about him be "as subdued and as boring as I really am."

Whether his five decades of priestly life and ministry are boring or flashy is a question that individuals will have to answer on their own. Since his 1973 ordination, Father Rautenberg has brought together—with much pastoral skill and a pastor's heart—the Church's centuries-long tradition of seeking to integrate academic research with pastoral ministry.

A son of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish on Indianapolis' south side, Father Rautenberg began discerning a possible priestly vocation at a young age. A graduate of the Latin School of Indianapolis, the archdiocese's former high school seminary, he went on to receive priestly formation at the former Saint Meinrad College and Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

While in the southern Indiana seminary, Father Rautenberg developed an interest in the interplay of science and faith.

This led him to do graduate work in ethics in the philosophy department at Georgetown University in Washington in the 1980s.

"It was something that I wanted and something that [archdiocesan leaders] thought would make sense with the health care systems here and issues coming up," Father Rautenberg said.

Before doing full-time graduate work at Georgetown, Father Rautenberg did parish ministry for seven years at two Indianapolis parishes. And while in Washington, he assisted at a parish there.

"It was a very rich experience," he said of his time in the nation's capital. "One of the things I learned to appreciate was not only that moral theology is based in a vision of humanity, but also simply the importance of critical thinking. You need both."

After Father Rautenberg earned a doctorate in ethics

and returned to minister in the archdiocese, he always assisted in parishes, even when his full-time ministry was as an ethicist at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis.

The archdiocesan parishes in which he ministered range geographically from as far south as French Lick and Paoli to as far east as Cambridge City. He also served in parishes in the Batesville Deanery.

"I didn't want to just be an ivory tower academician,"

Father Rautenberg said. "Contact with people, their lives and problems kept things real for me.

"How do you make morality and moral principles intellectually respectable and able to stand their ground with scientific rigor, but, at the same time, not lose sight of human values and people?"

Beginning in 2005, Father Rautenberg focused on parish ministry full time. He served as administrator and then pastor of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Cambridge City in the Connersville Deanery from 2005-16.

Although his experiences as a priest have ranged widely from academic work at a top-flight university to ethics consulting at a Catholic hospital to serving in parishes in cities, small towns and rural areas, Father Rautenberg sees them all tied together.

"I don't see a divorce between ministry in medical ethics and pastoral ministry," he said. "If you're with a family trying to make decisions about a patient or if you're in a parish trying to preach to people, you want to talk with both of them about life, about what makes sense in life and how you have hope."

Likewise, Father Rautenberg valued his experiences in the relationships he built up with both scholars of philosophy and with farmers in rural Indiana. Regarding the latter, Father Rautenberg said that "anybody who thinks that farmers are stupid don't know any farmers."

This feeling at home wherever he has been called to minister he sees expressed well in a quote from the ancient Roman playwright Terence that Father Rautenberg learned while a seminarian at Saint Meinrad: "I am a man. Nothing human is foreign to me."

In recent years, physical ailments have limited Father Rautenberg's ministry. Although he continues to serve as a consultant on ethics and bioethics, he retired from



Father Joseph Rautenberg, right, concelebrates a Sept. 30 Mass at St. Mark the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the faith community. A son of the parish, Father Rautenberg was ordained a priest in 1973. Concelebrating with him is Father James Brockmeier. (Submitted photo)

parish ministry in 2018. Still, he finds great fulfillment in being an archdiocesan priest now for 50 years.

"I feel that I've been able to help people find peace and hope, but also to do that in a context that could stand with the best of the thinking, science and philosophy," Father Rautenberg said. "I didn't need to cut any pieces of life apart to make it meaningful."

(For more information on a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.) †

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SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Advent, Lent have overlapping practices but distinct purposes

By Katie Yoder

(OSV News)—For Kendra Tierney, a Catholic author and mother of 10, the Advent season leading up to Christmas is like preparing to give birth.

“There’s such a unique character to that time where you can’t rush it and that you’re trying to prepare everything,” said the founder and CEO of Catholic All Year. “I think that Advent gives us all that opportunity to really dive into that sort of feeling, where we want to use that time to prepare our homes and to prepare our families to welcome Christ into our lives.”

Advent marks the beginning of the Church’s liturgical year, starting four Sundays before Christmas. The name “Advent” hints at its meaning: It comes from the Latin word “*advenire*,” which translates to “to come to” or “to arrive.” The season began on Dec. 3 this year.

While Advent is sometimes called “a little Lent,” Catholic experts observe that there are important similarities and differences between the two, both of which lead up to major feast days and liturgical seasons: Christmas and Easter, respectively. Advent, they agree, is primarily a season of preparation.

“Lent has that penitential character where ... we are trying to focus on exercising those muscles of being penitent. I think that the character of Advent is intended to be a little different than that—that it is really, actually, a waiting for a birth,” said Tierney, who writes about living the liturgical year in the home.

In a 2019 blog post, she describes the difference from Lent: “Advent is *predominantly* preparation, and Lent is *predominantly* penance.”

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

In contrast, the catechism calls Lent one of the “intense moments of the Church’s penitential practice” (#1438).

Franciscan Friar of the Renewal Father Agustino Torres, author of the new book *Prepare Your Hearts: A Guided Advent Journal for Prayer and Meditation* (Ave Maria Press, 2023), tied the penitential and preparation aspects together.

“Although it’s not widely thought of as such, Advent is a time when we can offer up penance to prepare the way for the coming Christ Child,” he said. “It is not penitential in the same way Lent is, but there has been a long-held tradition in the Church to offer up prayer vigils, fasts and offerings during Advent.”

Timothy O’Malley, the director of education at the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana and the academic



Lauren and Billy Edzards help their children Emma, 11, and Max, 5, assemble an Advent wreath on Dec. 1, 2019, the first Sunday of Advent at Our Lady of Grace Church in West Babylon, N.Y. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

director of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy, emphasized that much of the Church’s year has historically been penitential.

“Advent takes on a penitential spirit inspired by the three-fold advent of Jesus Christ,” he said. “The Christ who comes at the end of time, who will judge the world. The Christ who comes into the heart of every believer longing for his presence. The Christ who comes as the newborn babe.”

He added: “It is penitential insofar as we have to ask ourselves if we’re ready for these various presences.”

Like Lent, Advent in the Church historically included fasting, O’Malley said.

“Advent develops as a fasting period preceding the celebration of Christmas, likely connected to initiation of Christians,” he noted. “But the Roman rite was later to adopt this period of around four weeks—it’s Gregory the Great that tells us of the four weeks. We know in Milan, it was six weeks, and still is.”

Advent is also marked by the use of the Advent

wreath, which O’Malley said was adopted as a practice of popular piety from Germany. It is also known for the “O Antiphons,” which are descriptions of the Messiah drawn from the Old Testament. They are used in the alleluia verse at Mass and in Vespers in the Liturgy of the Hours on Dec. 17-23.

Father Agustino also pointed out that, in many countries, the period between Dec. 17 and Christmas Eve “is filled with prayers, processions and devotions followed by a celebration and songs.”

He noted, however, that, “In the East, the monks would take it to Lenten levels.”

Some Eastern Catholic Churches still traditionally observe the “Nativity fast,” or “St. Philip’s fast,” which begins on Nov. 15, the day their liturgical calendar observes the feast of St. Philip the Apostle. Like Lent’s 40-day fast before Easter, the Nativity fast begins 40 days before Christmas, but its requirements are not as rigorous as those in Lent.

Father Agustino noted that Lent emerged as part of the Church’s liturgical calendar before Advent.

“Initially, only Easter had a preparatory season, but later Christmas developed its own similar period called Advent,” he said. “Both Advent and Lent share common features, such as violet liturgical color, omitting the Gloria at Sunday Mass and having a Sunday of ‘joy’ during both seasons—*Gaudete* Sunday in Advent and *Laetare* Sunday in Lent.”

The seasons also have notable contrasts, Father Agustino added. “While Lent lacks flowers, Advent features them moderately. Lent has images of going into the desert. Advent has a voice coming from the desert. Lent has readings of conversion of life; Advent has readings of fulfillment of prophecy in our lives. Advent has a joyous anticipation feel, because it is meant to embody the expectation for the Messiah with delightful devotion, whereas Lent has penitential practices like the Way of the Cross,” he said.

He noted that the current expectations of Advent are that it is a time of joyful anticipation.

“If your family is getting ready to receive a lovely guest, there is a time of cleaning, cooking and prepping,” he said. “We are readying our hearts for Jesus in Advent in similar ways.”

In her home, Tierney says she pushes back against the pressure to rush into Christmas decorating. Her family spends time cutting paper snowflakes and stringing popcorn, among other things.

“Just to lean into the season by slowing it down and taking the decorating step-by-step has been really meaningful for us,” she said.

(Katie Yoder writes for OSV News from the Washington, D.C., area.) †

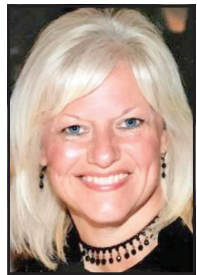


Father Michael Keucher gives absolution to a teenager in the sacrament of penance on Nov. 17 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during the National Catholic Youth Conference. The sacrament in Advent can be experienced as a way to prepare for Christ’s coming. Father Keucher, who serves as archdiocesan vocations director, is also pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Joyful Witness/Kimberly Pohovey

Christmas, like life, is a time to simply love and be loved

I think the growing popularity of Hallmark Christmas movies can be attributed to folks idealizing what they want Christmas to look like.



A snow-covered serene scene in the country with an exquisitely decorated Victorian home. Blissful families laughing together while they bake beautifully iced Christmas cookies

or gingerbread houses. An entire village of smiling people gathering in the town square to light a picturesque Christmas tree, and of course, sip on someone's secret homemade hot chocolate recipe.

Does this sound or look like your Christmas? If it does, you are very blessed, but I would venture to guess that no one's Christmas is ever Hallmark perfect. And our efforts at trying to make it so often ends in chaos, burnout, short tempers and frustration, which is ironic because the whole point of Christmas is the joy of God's love.

When I picture that first Christmas when Christ was born, I envision nothing but peace, calm and glorious rejoicing in that simple manger in a cave in Bethlehem. Despite the meager accommodations, smelly animals and cold weather, *that* was the perfect Christmas.

I'm as guilty as anyone wanting Christmas to be perfect. Like many of you, I feverishly buy all the gifts, often wrapping them at the last minute. I furiously decorate our home, inside

and out. I bake lots of cookies, make homemade gifts like paintings or jewelry, and frantically address and mail nearly 100 Christmas cards. To compound my personal Christmas chaos, I work in a field where our busiest time of the year occurs during the month of December—causing longer hours and more stress.

In reality, my Christmas might have looked perfect, but it was far from being so.

When I was a young girl, I absolutely loved every single thing about Christmas. With my birthday a week before, it always felt like the most magical time of the year.

I still love Christmas, but in past years, I know I've let the natural hustle and bustle of the holiday season overwhelm me. And in my pursuit of Martha Stewart-like perfection, I always ended up frustrated that I could never quite achieve it. In truth, I've probably driven my family crazy trying to manufacture the perfect Christmas—which was the opposite of my intentions.

In more recent years, I've taken a step back to examine my motivations, weed out unreal expectations and figure out how to more peacefully coexist with the holiday trimmings.

First and foremost, I remind myself that the Christmas season is to be enjoyed and celebrated. Ultimately, it is all about God's love for us manifested in Jesus' birth—not grand gifts, over-the-top decorations or lavish parties. While nothing is wrong with any of these, they do become problematic when we lose ourselves in the chaos and lose sight of what is truly important.

I have done a few things to help

maintain a more relaxed balance between what I want Christmas to be and what is realistic. First, I have found that reading daily Advent reflections provide the tranquility I desire this time of year. The last few years, I've had a series of surgeries at year's end. While I wouldn't wish surgery on anyone, it forced me to admit that I couldn't do everything on my Christmas preparations list.

A couple of those years, the trade-off was not putting up a Christmas tree or making homemade cookies. And you know what I found out? Life and Christmas went on beautifully despite the fact that I didn't complete the whole list. In fact, I felt relief in not even trying.

This year, I have found that starting preparations much earlier than usual helps me space out the tasks. As of late November, I already had my Christmas cards finished, baked some cookies and made candy to share with others, the majority of my gifts were purchased (thank you, Amazon) and the inside of my house was decorated. And I thoroughly enjoyed having less-rushed time to spend on these projects and experienced the pure joy of Christmas.

While I still appreciate the Hallmark Christmas movie, I no longer view them as the perfect representation of Christmas. Christmas can be just as messy as life. And the point of life (and Christmas) is simply to love and be loved.

(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of major and planned gifts for the archdiocese.) †

Twenty Something/

Christina Capecchi

Keep the candle lit: pouring out the greatest gift

Oprah Winfrey looks regal in a purple pleated skirt and matching sweater, beaming on the cover of the magazine that delivers her much-



anticipated Favorite Things—"112 crowd-pleasing gifts for everyone on your list."

Now in her ninth year partnering with Amazon, Oprah vouches for each product with her trademark hype: a \$22

silk eye mask she calls "life-changing," \$350 Beats headphones that are "the best of the best," a \$600 TrueBrew Drip Coffee Maker she lauds as "a dream for persnickety coffee drinkers." Not to mention her new book, which will help you "be happier in 2024."

It's commerce with a spiritual bent. "What I know for sure," Oprah writes, "is that what you give comes back to you."

I've always been intrigued by the television queen's shopping list, but what strikes me most is how much company she now has. These days, everyone has a holiday gift guide—from high-profile peddlers to micro-influencers and suburban moms.

You can follow them in real time, linking every item. The wreaths they're hanging. The bows they're hanging on the wreaths they're hanging. The joggers they're wearing while they're hanging the bows on the wreaths they're hanging.

'Tis the season to spend money. It's never been easier to do, requiring the kind of deliberation that vanishes in the blink of an eye, the tap of a button. It can almost feel like play money—no paper trail, no accountability, just an invisible Venmo transaction.

What we lack in time, we try to make up for in money, throwing it at people and problems who actually need minutes and hours. The kindergartener doesn't need a fancy new baseball glove but an adult to play catch with. Back and forth, again and again, chasing all the errant throws until, finally, there are fewer.

Our immigrant ancestors had no money and all the time in the world. They made use of long bus rides, early mornings, tiny apartments, daily walks to Mass. Stitching and scheming, painting and plotting.

Today we have flipped the script. We have all the money in the world, so it seems, but no time. We're busy. And when we're not busy, we're distracted by screens siphoning our precious time. But the things we buy cannot replace quality time spent with loved ones.

I once read an article about a troubled teen who was turning to the wrong remedies. Her parents recognized a better one and chose to lavish her with their time and attention.

"We took her kayaking, played more board games with her and watched more TV with her and took other short family trips," her mom said. They asked their teen to stay off the Internet and instead keep a journal. She obliged, even though she was frustrated.

Eventually, something shifted. Her depression lifted and, in its place, a sense of self emerged.

This will be our first Christmas without my paternal grandma, who showered us with loving attention. She and my grandpa bought a modest cabin on a little lake up north where we all squeezed in countless hours and memories.

The porch was the gathering place where Grandma was always perched,

See CAPECCHI, page 14

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

Understanding the stages of grief and working through the pain

(National Grief Awareness week took place on Dec. 2-8, providing a dedicated period for individuals, organizations and communities to come together to acknowledge and address the various aspects of grief.)



Most people have experienced some type of loss or perhaps multiple losses that have led them onto the path of grief.

Grieving can feel like being on a roller coaster—experiencing a multitude of emotions—and the process is often very different from what most people anticipate.

Depending upon how traumatic the loss is, grieving never really ends. Although the intensity of pain and emotions decreases over time, and for some individuals fully resolves, it is a lifetime journey that changes us in some ways from the loss.

In 1969, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, a Swiss psychiatrist, described the five stages of grief that we experience in response to a loss: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Although these stages are not linear and not all people experience all five of them, they reflect our very natural psychological response to different types of loss (i.e., death of a loved one, divorce, trauma, disability).

As one works through these stages, he or she can experience a variety of symptoms including but not limited to sadness, anxiety, frustration, confusion, guilt, fatigue, anger, sleep and eating problems, a flat or numb feeling, brain fog, isolation, physical symptoms, hopelessness and questioning their purpose in life.

Throughout the years, many clients have sought counseling through Catholic Charities to work with a therapist to help them through this often difficult and confusing process of grief. Many grief experts have often found that people can work through these stages toward acceptance of their loss, but they are sometimes left feeling lost and asking questions like, "OK, so where do I go from here?" and "How do I find meaning in my life?" after a loss.

In David Kessler's book *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*, he encourages anyone who is grieving to consider: Where am I trying to find meaning? In the death, the loss, the event? The life of the person I loved? Or am I trying to find meaning in my own life after the loss?

The reality is that we can find meaning in any or all of the above. Research indicates that individuals who are grieving and can find some meaning in their loss are less likely to get stuck in one or more stages of grief for longer periods of time.

Finding meaning from the loss leads you to deeper questions and deeper answers. But there are ways to find

See BETHURAM, page 14

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

How do we win the abortion battle in America? Maybe like this

For abortion's opponents, it has been a frustrating year.

When it came to the courts, the pro-life movement scored its most significant victory when the U.S. Supreme Court in 2022 reversed its 1973 decision calling abortion a constitutional right.



When it has come to the ballot box, however, the pro-life movement has suffered

a string of defeats, even in conservative-leaning states such as Kansas and Ohio.

The loss of popular support, despite Americans' conflicted feelings about abortion itself, has resulted in some pro-life advocates arguing for renewed legal efforts, blaming the losses on lack of funding for

political campaigns to win elections.

If messaging is questioned at all, the common response is that pro-lifers need to do a better job of explaining their position. Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a news conference on Nov. 15 that the bishops' role "continues to be one of catechesis and education." He added, "I don't think the role has changed very much, other than perhaps we need to make our position clearer."

The painful truth, however, is that pretty much everyone does know what the Church's position is. Unfortunately, it is understood in the narrowest of terms: no. What the pro-life movement in general, and unfortunately even the Church, has not done is to campaign convincingly for what replaces the "safety net" of abortion

in the voters' minds.

One year ago, after a whopping 70% of Californians enshrined abortion in the state constitution, then-chair of the bishops' pro-life committee, Archbishop William E. Lori, challenged his fellow bishops "to take stock" of the election results. The demise of *Roe v. Wade* "will be a Pyrrhic victory if we fail to win the minds and hearts first and foremost," he told his brothers.

The battle at the ballot box has consumed the pro-life movement for 50 years. It has wedded the movement to one political party, and it has become odd bedfellows with a lot of positions that seem hardly pro-life.

Perhaps the way to win the abortion battle is to step away from focusing solely on the courts and constitutional amendments.

In a *Washington Post* opinion column a

See ERLANDSON, page 14

Second Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 10, 2023

- Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
- 2 Peter 3:8-14
- Mark 1:1-8

The second part of the Book of Isaiah provides the first reading for Mass for the Second Sunday of Advent.



When this book was written, God's people were very happy. Their long, dreary exile of four generations in Babylon was about to end. They were looking forward to returning to their homeland.

These verses convey well the sense that this happy circumstance occurred because of God's mercy and faithfulness to the covenant.

It was not as if the people had earned God's munificence in this regard, or that they had been unusually loyal to the covenant themselves. To the contrary, their sins had brought misery upon themselves.

Nevertheless, God's mercy endured! So, the prophet insists that upon returning to their homeland, the people must go to Jerusalem, to the holy mountain of Zion where stood the temple, and there proclaim aloud the goodness of God.

For its second reading this weekend, the Church presents a passage from the Second Epistle of St. Peter. Its theme differs from that of the first reading. The first reading was wonderfully optimistic. This reading is grim in its predictions of dark days and of unwelcome possibilities in the future.

However, and this is critical, it does not predict everlasting death. Bad things will happen. Difficult times will come. But God will always protect the faithful. In this last reassurance, the reading parallels the message of the first reading.

St. Mark's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is the beginning of the Gospel, as the first verse of the reading states. The opening verse states the purpose of this Scripture. It is the "good news" about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In these relatively few words, the entire reality of salvation is revealed. Something new is being proclaimed,

utterly different from the sad moods and dreariness of human life, unbound by the variances of earthly existence. The news, furthermore, is good! Jesus, the Son of God, both conveys this good news and brings its effectiveness into human life.

This reading quotes Isaiah's prophecy that God will send a representative to guide the people from death to life, from the deadly effects of their sins to the bright realms of God's forgiveness. God has been true to this pledge. He gives us Jesus.

The Gospel then tells of St. John the Baptist, who went throughout Judea calling people to repentance. John recognized Jesus. Anyone can recognize Jesus, the Son of God. Too many create an unrealistic image, an invention to confirm the easy way out or to excuse them from the task of genuine conversion.

Reflection

The "Christmas season" is here, big time. While somber Advent seems out of place in our culture, Advent nonetheless makes sense. It calls us to remember the birth of Jesus, what it meant and to allow the Lord entry into our hearts.

A Protestant minister in New York, James Allen Francis, noted this in the early 20th century about the Lord's time on Earth:

"Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race," Francis wrote. "I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned—put together—have not affected the life of man on this Earth as much as that one, solitary life."

Jesus transformed human life, by sweetening it and giving it purpose. He brightened millions upon millions of individual lives.

No one, before or after, matched what Jesus brought to and gave the world. Of course, the birth of Christ is entitled to our primary attention.

His mercy has not ended. Bringing Jesus into our own personal lives is worth every effort. †

Daily Readings

Monday, December 11

St. Damasus I, pope
Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 85:9ab, 10-14
Luke 5:17-26

Tuesday, December 12

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

Wednesday, December 13

St. Lucy, virgin and martyr
Isaiah 40:25-31
Psalm 103:1-4, 8, 10
Matthew 11:28-30

Thursday, December 14

St. John of the Cross, priest and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 41:13-20
Psalm 145:1, 9-13b
Matthew 11:11-15

Friday, December 15

Isaiah 48:17-19
Psalm 1:1-4, 6
Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday, December 16

Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday, December 17

Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
(Response) Luke 1:46-50, 53-54
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Canon law calls parishes to keep records of sacraments celebrated in their territory

My cousin is getting married soon and will need to obtain a copy of her baptismal certificate for inclusion in the pre-nuptial enquiry.



As a newborn baby, it wasn't clear if she would survive and so she was baptized in emergency at the hospital.

To whom should she write, in order to obtain her baptismal certificate? (Ireland)

The short answer is that she should write to the parish in whose geographical territory the hospital in question is located.

In canon law, it's clear that sacramental record-keeping in general is intended to happen in a parish context. For example, canon 535 tells us that: "Each parish is to have parochial registers" for sacraments that take place in a parish, including funerals. The canon goes on to note that the "pastor is to see to it that these registers are accurately inscribed and carefully preserved."

Of course, marriages and baptisms can and do happen outside of parish churches. But even when a wedding or baptism is celebrated at a non-parochial space—such as a shrine, university chapel or the chapel of a religious community, or even a hospital—the local parish must be informed so that it can be recorded properly in that parish's record books.

We read in canon 878 (which actually seems to envision an emergency baptism scenario, like your cousin's): "If baptism was administered neither by the pastor nor in his presence, the minister of baptism, whoever that was, must notify the parish priest of the parish in which the baptism was administered, so that he may register the baptism." Therefore, the hospital's

local parish should have your cousin's baptismal record.

Granted, sometimes it can be hard to determine exactly which parish's territory the hospital was located, especially if it was part of a large urban area with several nearby Catholic churches. If your cousin runs into this issue, the best thing to do would be to contact the relevant diocese.

The diocesan chancery office would have access to maps of parish territorial boundaries and would also be familiar with any quirks of local sacramental record-keeping.

When I was a kid, I would often hear adults say, particularly at funerals, that when a long-term and chronically ill person finally passed, they would go straight to heaven, as God counted their years of suffering as sufficient to pay for their sins and required nothing further from them. Could you comment? (Indiana)

Short of a formal canonization process, there isn't any way to know for sure how long or short a particular person's stay in purgatory will be, much less whether they have been able to skip purgatory altogether.

Purgatory isn't about "serving time" for sins committed so much as it is a time of purification and becoming ready to enter fully into God's presence.

The degree to which an individual needs this kind of purification is something which is only truly known between that soul and God.

That being said, the Church does teach that suffering in this life can be redemptive. As we hear in one of the prayers which a priest might use to conclude the sacrament of penance: "May the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, whatever good you do and suffering you endure, heal your sins, help you to grow in holiness and reward you with eternal life."

The clear implication here is that suffering, when patiently endured, can help heal the wounds caused by sins. So, I think it's reasonable to hope that a generally virtuous person who suffered through a long illness could have had their time in purgatory at least shortened—though it's important to still pray for the repose of his or her soul, regardless.

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



O Holy Night tree

At the Indiana Historical Society's Festival of Trees at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center in Indianapolis, Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA) entered this tree with a theme of "O Holy Night," based on the Christmas hymn written in 1843 by Adolphe Adam. The tree was entered in the festival to increase awareness of MTCA. The ornaments were made by its students, and the tree was decorated by MTCA faculty and staff. The tree can be viewed on the second floor of the history center building at 450 W. Ohio St., in Indianapolis, through Jan. 6. More information and hours can be found at indianahistory.org. Also keep an eye out for the tree decorated by the Catholic Business Exchange. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Rest in peace

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

ANDREWS, George W., 84, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 16. Father of Gail Bailey and Kim Fatout. Brother of Thadeus Andrews. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of one.

BAYS, Janice M., 83, St. Joseph, Corydon, Nov. 10. Mother of Jolene Downs, Jaime, Jay and John Bays, Jr. Sister of JoAnn Jeffries, June King, Jean and Jeffrey Vaughn. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 13.

BENZ, Andrew L., 76, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Nov. 14. Husband of Virginia Benz. Father of Shanna Maydwell. Brother of Mikiel Hull and William Benz. Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of one.

BONOMINI, Virginia, 89, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright, Nov. 11. Mother of Mary Lynne Folz, Virginia Staubach and Joseph Bonomini. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 19.

BRADSHAW, Jean M., 75, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Nov. 13. Wife of Jerry Bradshaw. Mother of Julie Berrong. Sister of Diane Meleshkewich. Grandmother of five.

BYRNE, Gerry S., 80, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 20. Mother of Lisa Hickerson and Paul Parker. Grandmother of five.

CANNON, Robert W., 72, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 26. Husband of Beverly

Cannon. Father of Siobhan, Phillip and Stuart Cannon, and Adam, Eric, Jason and Matthew Wolfzorn. Brother of Judy Fabrizi, Nancy MacIvor, Glenn and John Cannon. Grandfather of several, great-grandfather of one.

CLARK, Mary T., 93, St. Gabriel, Connersville, Nov. 15. Mother of Patricia Fassold, Peggy Gilland, Bill, Ernie and Tom Clark. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 12.

CLEMENTS, Theresa A. (Alvey), 73, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Oct. 26. Mother of Misti Bennett and Scott Clements. Stepmother of Crystal Mikels and J.R. Morris. Sister of Rosemary Buchanan, Paul and Tommy Alvey. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of one.

CRAIG, Bette Mae, 89, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Nov. 25. Mother of Mary Ann Blevins, Roxanna Owens, Andrew and Greg Craig. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 16. Great-great-grandmother of two.

DICKS, Margaret, 96, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 12. Mother of Jeanne Campbell, Donna Clarkson, Dianne Durrett and David Dicks. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 19. Great-great-grandmother of six.

DILTS, James P., 77, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 17. Husband of Diane Dilts. Father of Aaron and Brian Dilts. Brother of Lynn Dilts-Hill, Sarah Dilts-Howe, Barbara Dilts Inskip and Mike Dilts. Grandfather of six.

EHRINGER, Carol J., 63, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Nov. 23. Daughter of Paul Ehringer. Sister of Lisa Howerton and Paul Ehringer. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

EVERITT, Roy E., 88, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Nov. 15. Father of Al Everitt. Brother of Don Everitt. Grandfather of one.

FLANNERY, Michael P., 70, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Oct. 31. Husband of Judith Flannery. Father of Kathleen Flannery. Brother of Joan Pasquarella, Katherine and Joseph Flannery.

Honoring St. Jude



A woman prays in front of a glass-encased reliquary containing a bone from an arm of St. Jude the Apostle on Nov. 27 at St. Jude Church in Mastic Beach, N.Y. The relic, which arrived in Chicago from Italy in September, is on a nine-month tour of the U.S. One of its previous stops was at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

HAMMOCK, Stephen L., 75, St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, Oct. 30. Husband of Irene Hammock. Father of Troy Hammock. Brother of Suzanne Young, Mark Adams and Mike Hammock.

HEEKE, Bernard, 98, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Sept. 25. Husband of Myra Heeke. Father of Laura Patridge, Eric and Neil Heeke. Grandfather of four.

HOLLORAN, Claire, 91, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Nov. 15. Mother of Mary Elizabeth and Nancy Halloran.

LUKEN, Linda, 71, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 15. Wife of Richard Luken. Mother of Katy Kegley, Kristy Ortman and Jeffery Luken. Grandmother of five.

MILLER, Leo, 84, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 14. Husband of Helen Miller. Father of

Dawn Powers, Debbie White, Amy Wilmer and Chris Miller. Brother of Larry Miller. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 15.

MITCHELL, Louise, 58, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Sept. 12. Wife of Mike Mitchell. Mother of Eli, Ian, Noah and Seth Mitchell.

MORGAN, Vonda, 86, Holy Family, New Albany, Nov. 16. Mother of Leslie Knable, Marilyn Nash and Paul Morgan. Grandmother of eight.

O'BRIEN, Wanda L., 92, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora, Nov. 24. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of eight. Great-great-grandmother of one.

RICHARD-IKEDIASHI, Ebielose M., 22, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 10. Son of Angela Chibogwu

Richard-Ikediashi. Brother of Brian Osehalim and Jeremy Osedinso Richard-Ikediashi.

RICHARDSON, Elizabeth J. (Deatrick), 79, Most Precious Blood, New Middletown, Nov. 12. Mother of Lisa Jean and Marc Richardson. Sister of Patricia Grismore, Teresa King, Juanita Krogh, Janice Lind and Ron Deatrick. Grandmother of two.

SCHOLLE, John R., 80, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright, Nov. 3. Husband of Cathy Scholle. Father of Aaron, Ed, Rob and Shawn Scholle. Brother of Doreen Brayton, Debbie Macke, Denise Weisenbach, Diana Wheat and Jim Scholle. Grandfather of nine.

SMITH III, Jimmy, 67, St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute, Nov. 16. Husband of Tami Dooley. Father of

Courtney Sumner and Greg Oden. Brother of Jerry Smith. Grandfather of four.

SUTTON, Mary, 88, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 26. Mother of Pam Morgan and Mike Sutton. Sister of Betty Seifert and Bud York. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of 12.

TURNER, Howard L., 89, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Nov. 27. Father of Krista Mann, Diana Nall, Karen Rohe, Jane Selvidge, Anna Stuckey, Howard and Mark Turner. Brother of Jane Johnson. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of 10.

YOO, Jung Woo, 75, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 19. Husband of Mi Yung Yoo. Father of Joseph and Paul Yoo. Brother of Hwa, Kyung and Won Yoo, and Jong Woo Yoo and Kyung Woo Yoo. †

BETHURAM

continued from page 12

meaning in positive ways. For example:

—Celebrating a deceased loved one's life through creating new family traditions or rituals that bring a time of remembrance.

—The loss of a loved one bringing other family members or friends closer together.

—The loss teaching someone the importance of living

mindfully and not taking life or loved ones for granted.

—Reflecting on the different connections or relationships formed after the loss.

—Developing a passion to give back to others in society or working for an important cause, in memory of your loved one.

—A heightened sense of awareness to change priorities, practice gratitude or change the way you live your life, after the loss.

It is important to remember that avoiding the grief process only delays the healing process and the

opportunity to find meaning. If you or a loved one is experiencing grief (from any number of life events), please don't hesitate to reach out for help through professional counseling, connecting with a grief support group or talking with a priest or pastor, or perhaps with a loved one or friend who has walked on the path of grief and understands your pain.

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. You can contact him at dbethuram@archindy.org.) †

ERLANDSON

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few months ago, a pro-life columnist—Marc Thiessen—and a pro-abortion columnist—Alyssa Rosenberg—outlined a pro-family agenda that both sides should and could support. What they agreed upon is that there needs to be a bipartisan effort to better support children and families. It benefits mothers by making it more possible to have and support a child.

What both Thiessen and Rosenberg understand is that

in terms of family support and in terms of maternal and infant health, keeping a pregnancy involves huge risks and costs. They compiled a long series of proposals to change the equation. Their proposals address scandalous maternal and infant mortality rates in the U.S., the lack of available medical care, the lack of job protection for pregnant women, the marriage penalties in federal welfare programs, the lack of Medicaid coverage after birth, the skyrocketing cost of child care and the shortage of paid parental leave.

While Catholic leaders have supported many of these issues through the years, their voice is not nearly as loud, nor are these issues understood to be their pre-eminent

political concerns. Until Catholics in the pews—not to mention other Americans—see pro-lifers as fiercely supportive of these programs as they are of restrictions, the battle for hearts and minds is unlikely to be won.

Abortion is a decision made often in a moment of fear. We need to acknowledge that the fears are not imaginary. There are lots of proposals available to help America become truly family friendly. Thiessen and Rosenberg have suggested where we can start making a difference.

(Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic publisher, editor and journalist whose column appears monthly at

CAPECCHI

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catching all the comings and goings, the fishing reports, the sunscreen applications. We played 500 at the long dining room table where Grandma placed the centerpiece:

a chianti straw bottle holding a taper candle. She lit it every day, letting the wax from candle after candle drip down the straw, lumpy strands of mauve and violet, sage and cream.

It was a visual of our time together, hour after hour, a work of art that could not be rushed. Our layered family, ever expanding yet bound together.

The sum, greater than the parts.

It will not make Oprah's Favorite Things list. But it was, indeed, "life-changing," "the best of the best." Time together—the ultimate Christmas gift.

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

Notre Dame names Father Robert Dowd as its new president

(OSV News)—The University of Notre Dame has selected a new president who said he hopes to position the school as an “ever-greater engine of insight, innovation and impact.”

The Catholic university’s board of trustees announced on Dec. 4 that Holy Cross Father Robert Dowd has been named Notre Dame’s 18th president, effective on July 1, 2024.

Father Dowd—an alumnus of Notre Dame, located in northern Indiana, and an Indiana native himself—has since 2021 served as the school’s vice president and

associate provost for interdisciplinary initiatives. He also is an associate professor of political science, a university fellow and trustee, and religious superior of the Holy Cross community at Notre Dame.

Father Dowd will succeed Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, who is stepping down at the end of the 2023-2024 academic year after serving as president for 19 years.

Father Jenkins described his successor as “an accomplished scholar, a dedicated teacher and an experienced administrator,”

as well as “a faithful and generous priest.

“He will lead the university to being even more powerfully a force for good in the world,” said Father Jenkins in the announcement.

Jack Brennan, chair of Notre Dame’s board of trustees, said in the university’s Dec. 4 statement that Father Dowd was “an ideal person to lead the university into the future,” given “his character and intellect . . . broad academic and administrative experience” and “deep commitment” to Notre Dame.

Father Dowd said in the statement that he was “deeply humbled and honored by the board’s decision,” as well as “grateful for Father Jenkin’s selfless and courageous leadership for almost two decades,” which “positioned the university extremely well in every way.

“We will build on those efforts,” said Father Dowd in the statement. “Informed by our Catholic mission, we will work together so that Notre Dame is an ever-greater engine of insight, innovation and impact, addressing society’s greatest challenges and helping young people to realize their potential for good.”

Father Dowd graduated from Notre Dame in 1987 with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and economics, and entered Moreau Seminary—the major seminary for the Congregation of the Holy Cross—shortly thereafter. Following his 1994 ordination, he worked in campus ministry at Notre Dame, serving as associate rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart and as an assistant rector in one of the university’s residence halls.

Having served in East Africa for 18 months while in seminary, Father Dowd earned a master’s degree in African studies in 1998 and a doctorate in political science in 2003 from the University of California, Los Angeles.

He joined Notre Dame’s political

science faculty in 2004, with his research focusing on how Christian and Islamic religious communities impact support for democratic institutions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

In his 2015 book *Christianity, Islam, and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa*, published by Oxford University Press, Father Dowd stated his research found that “religious diversity has prompted religiously inspired support for a liberal democratic political culture,” one “characterized by social tolerance and civic engagement”—a conclusion that

countered other analysts’ claims that religious diversity was an obstacle to liberal democracy in developing nations.

Under Father Jenkins’ leadership, Notre Dame has seen significant growth and expansion, particularly in its research initiatives, global engagement, student diversity and financial resources. The school was admitted this year to the Association of American Universities, which represents the nation’s leading research universities. In addition, Notre Dame enjoys partnerships with a number of schools throughout the world.

At the same time, Father Jenkins faced criticism at points during his tenure. Following a lawsuit filed by the university, he applauded a 2017 Trump administration expansion of the religious freedom exemption from a 2012 U.S. Health and Human Services mandate requiring most employers to include contraceptives, abortifacients and sterilizations in their employee health plans. However, Father Jenkins opted to allow third-party administrators to provide such coverage, saying the “university’s interest has never been in preventing access to those who make conscientious decisions to use contraceptives,” but was rather “to avoid being compelled by the federal government to be the agent in their decision.” †



Fr. Robert Dowd, C.S.C.

Benedictine Sister Mary Carol Messmer celebrates 80 years of religious life

Criterion staff report

In 2023, the Benedictine Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove had one member celebrate a significant milestone in religious life.



Sr. Mary Carol Messmer, O.S.B.

Benedictine Sister Mary Carol Messmer marked the 80th anniversary of her profession of vows as a religious.

She entered Monastery Immaculate Conception in

Ferdinand, Ind., now in the Diocese of Evansville, Ind., on Sept. 7, 1941, when she was 18 and professed first vows in 1943.

Sister Mary Carol earned a bachelor’s degree in education at the former St. Benedict College in Ferdinand.

She is a founding member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery, which was

founded from Monastery Immaculate Conception and became an independent community in 1961.

In the archdiocese, Sister Mary Carol served as a public school teacher and parish catechist. The archdiocesan parishes at which she served are the former Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Indianapolis from 1949-50, St. Paul Parish in Tell City from 1955-56 and 1960-63, St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad from 1956-58, St. Michael Parish in Bradford from 1963-65, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish in Floyd County from 1965-67 and St. Pius V Parish in Troy from 1968-69.

Sister Mary Carol then began 36 years of ministry at St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight from 1969-2005.

She also spent time in ministry in the Evansville Diocese.

Sister Mary Carol retired from ministry in 2005. After that, she served as a seamstress at the former St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove and continues in her ministry of prayer at Our Lady of Grace. †

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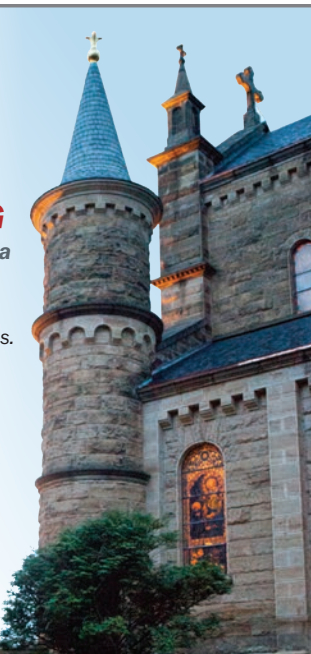
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**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
ARCHDIOCESE of INDIANAPOLIS**

Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education

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 curricular support, communications, business management, policy guidance, and data analysis. The duties of this position also include serving as a member of the Archdiocesan Schools Team 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 professed and practicing Roman Catholics with a deep commitment to Catholic education. Candidates should also have experience in development and/or marketing efforts and be both proponents and role models of lifelong learning.

Applications 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.

Five monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey celebrate anniversary of vows

Criterion staff report

Five Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad celebrated anniversaries of profession of vows of religious life this year.

60-year jubilarians

Benedictine Father Ephrem Carr was born in Toledo, Ohio. He made his first profession of vows on Aug. 15, 1963. Ordained a priest in 1967, he earned a licentiate in Eastern Church studies from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome and a doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Athenaeum Sant'Anselmo in Rome.

He served on the faculty of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology from 1970-78 and 1981-87, including six years ministering as its academic dean. Father Ephrem also served as subprior of the monastery from 1978-86.

He served on the faculty of Sant'Anselmo from 1986-2013, where he taught courses in Eastern liturgy, Eastern monasticism and the ancient Syriac language. From 2008-12, he served as president of the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy in Rome.

After serving on the faculty of the Institutum Liturgicum in London, Father Ephrem returned to the monastery. He is the author and editor of several books and scholarly articles.

Benedictine Father Noël Mueller was born in Louisville, Ky. He made his first profession of vows on Aug. 15, 1963. Ordained a priest in 1968, he earned a master's degree in English literature at the University of Louisville in Louisville.

Father Noël served in Saint Meinrad's mission in Huaraz, Peru, from 1969-80, teaching English and religion and assisting in liturgy and marriage ministry. He later taught at the former

Saint Meinrad College for 13 years.

Father Noël has also ministered as associate director of continuing education, associate dean for housing and food services and a formation dean at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

In the monastery, he has served as its guest master, secretary to the archabbot, spiritual director and retreat director.

50-year jubilarians

Benedictine Father Guy Mansini was born in Indianapolis, where he was baptized at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish and was a graduate of the Latin School of Indianapolis, the former archdiocesan high school seminary.



Fr. Guy Mansini, O.S.B.

He made his first profession of vows at Saint Meinrad on Aug. 24, 1973. Ordained a priest in 1977, he earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Saint Meinrad College, a master's degree in philosophy at Marquette University in Milwaukee, a master's degree in religious studies at Indiana University in Bloomington and a doctorate in theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

Father Guy taught for many years at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology and the former Saint Meinrad College. He currently holds the Max Seckler Chair of Theology at Ave Maria University in Ave Maria, Fla., and is the author of several scholarly books and articles.

Benedictine Brother Jacob Grisley was born in Logansport, Ind., but grew up in Indianapolis as a member of the former St. Bernadette Parish and was a graduate

of the Latin School of Indianapolis.

He made his first profession of vows at Saint Meinrad on Aug. 24, 1973.

Brother Jacob, who earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry at the former Saint Meinrad College, has worked for many years in information technology for the monastery. Other assignments have included serving as assistant novice and junior master, director of candidates, director of transportation, choirmaster and secretary to the archabbot's council and the monastic chapter.

25-year jubilarian

Benedictine Father Joseph Cox was born in Bloomington-Normal, Ill. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Peoria, Ill., in 1991. In 1997, he entered the monastery and made his first profession of vows on Aug. 6, 1998.

He earned a bachelor's degree in international business from Quincy University in Quincy, Ill., and a master of divinity degree from Saint Meinrad School of Theology. He later earned a master's degree in library science at Indiana University.



Benedictine Father Noël Mueller, left, Benedictine Father Joseph Cox, Benedictine Brother Jacob Grisley and Benedictine Father Ephrem Carr, four of the five Benedictine monks marking significant jubilees this year at St. Meinrad Archabbey, pose in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Father Joseph currently serves as the monastery's subprior, on the staff of the archabbey library and as chaplain for the monastery's community of oblates. He previously ministered as secretary to the archabbot's council and the monastic chapter and as assistant refectorian. †

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