



The

# Criterion

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**Missionary and patron saint**

Mass celebrates 500th anniversary of birth of St. Francis Xavier, page 11.

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## Gifts of the season

### Young and old take special Christmas outreach to heart

By John Shaughnessy

The story of the unusual Christmas event involving young people will come later.

So will the story of the 90-year-old volunteer who has found abundant examples of faith during the Christmas season.

Both stories are part of the special effort being made by Catholic schools, parishes, agencies and volunteers in the archdiocese to make Christmas more Christ-like.



Lisa Harden

Yet, right now, the focus turns to the Christmas story of the young grandmother who is sitting at the hospital cafeteria table, where she holds

a photograph of her 1-year-old grandson near a crystal cross.

As Ann Spitzig-Cady begins her Christmas tale, it soon becomes clear that the crystal cross is at the heart of her story of faith, hope and rebirth.

Fifteen months ago, Spitzig-Cady was in the midst of what she calls "a terrifying time" in her life. Her marriage of 17 years was crumbling, her daughter was unexpectedly pregnant and her health was suffering. Still, she tried to do all she could to make a good home and a good life for her two teenage sons, one who has a form of autism.

She drew strength from one of the foundations of her life—her job at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, a job she started two years ago. She works

as a clerk in the medical imaging department, where her goal is to treat each patient with care and dignity.

"When I have patients come through, I can see the fear in their eyes," she says. "I try to give back to people in the way of understanding and compassion—to get them a blanket if they need it or to hold their hand."

Her co-workers saw her compassion toward others. They also knew about the hardships in her life. So they secretly recommended her for the Hope for the Holidays program that has been a part of St. Vincent for about 20 years.

The Christmas-giving program is set up to help patients and employees who have faced overwhelming struggles within the past year. Like the family who lost a child to cancer. Like the parents whose child had a serious heart condition. Like the family of Spitzig-Cady.

"The program was developed by nurses and social workers who felt a need to do more for patients and their families," explains Lisa Harden, the coordinator of the Hope for the Holidays program. "They knew the families were going home to situations that were difficult. They wanted to make Christmas better for them."

Individuals who work at the hospital sometimes "adopt" a family for Christmas. More often, a group of employees combine their efforts to make Christmas more special for the 140 or so families who annually need help.

The caring efforts usually touch the families who receive the gifts. Sometimes, the gifts even change lives. Just ask Spitzig-Cady.

Her sons received presents. So did her daughter. Her newly-born grandson was given toys and clothes.

"I was just astounded and so grateful," she recalls. "I had been praying, not asking for anything specific. I told God I

*'I told God I don't know how I'm going to get through everything, so I was leaving it in his hands. My sons and I needed something to hold onto, to see there are people who care. It's not just the gifts under the tree. It's hope ...'*

— Ann Spitzig-Cady



Photo by John Shaughnessy

Ann Spitzig-Cady holds a photograph of her 1-year-old grandson, Serj, near a crystal cross—two Christmas gifts that have helped her through a difficult time.

don't know how I'm going to get through everything, so I was leaving it in his hands. My sons and I needed something to hold onto, to see there are people who care. It's not just the gifts under the tree. It's hope that there will be light at the end of the tunnel. I feel they saved my life in more ways than one."

That feeling especially overwhelmed her when she opened her gift and saw the crystal cross.

"I don't normally get Christmas gifts," she says. "When I opened it, it spoke to me. It let me know I'm on the right path. Before I go out the door each day, I look at the cross and say a little prayer with my sons, 'Lord, help us to have your strength. We're asking for your guidance to use our minds and our hearts in the way you want us to use them, to use our gifts in the way

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## Papal peace message stresses basic human rights

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Even when faced with a potential terrorist attack or in the midst of war, basic human rights must be respected, Pope Benedict XVI said in his message for World Peace Day 2007.



Pope Benedict XVI

"Peace is based on respect for the rights of all," the pope said in his message for the Jan. 1 commemoration.

The message, "The Human Person, the Heart of Peace," was sent to heads of state around the

world and was released on Dec. 12 at a Vatican press conference.

The pope's message included prayers for peace in war-torn countries, such as Lebanon; special concern for child victims of violence; a condemnation of continued nuclear proliferation; and concern over the potential for violent conflicts over energy resources.

The basis of any hope for peace, the pope said, is a recognition that each human person is created in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, endowed with a dignity and with rights that cannot be usurped by anyone.

Most countries around the world have adopted the tenets of international humanitarian law, recognizing that it applies in situations of conflict as well as in peacetime, he said.

"Unfortunately, to say nothing of past cases, this has not been consistently imple-

mented in certain recent situations of war," he said.

Specifically citing the July war in Lebanon between Hezbollah militias and Israel, Pope Benedict said the duty to protect, assist and avoid involving the civilian population "was largely ignored."

"The heart-rending situation in Lebanon and the new shape of conflicts, especially since the terrorist threat unleashed completely new forms of violence, demand that the international community reaffirm international humanitarian law and apply it to all present-day situations of armed conflict," the pope said.

While recognizing the difficulties posed by the threat of terrorism, Pope Benedict said countries must conduct "a profound reflection on the ethical limits restricting

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# PEACE

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the use of modern methods of guaranteeing internal security.”

Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, told reporters at the Vatican on Dec. 12 that the global fight against terrorism can be seen as “the Fourth World War. The Cold War was the third.”

He continued, “But this war does not have the parameters of the wars we experienced in history. This must push countries to ask, ‘What should we do?’ and to develop regulations” that will provide security while guaranteeing respect for human rights.

In his message, Pope Benedict also called for “a vision of the person untainted by ideological and cultural prejudices or by political and economic interests which can instill hatred and violence.”

And he urged members of religious communities and their leaders to renew their commitment to dialogue and to denouncing “conceptions of God that would encourage intolerance and recourse to violence against others.”

“War in God’s name is never acceptable,” the pope said.

Throughout the document, Pope Benedict called for a universal recognition

that basic human rights are God-given or natural; when an individual or a society decides it can determine who will enjoy which rights, both human dignity and peace are threatened, he said.

“As far as the right to life is concerned, we must denounce its widespread violation in our society,” the pope said.

“Alongside the victims of armed conflicts, terrorism and the different forms of violence, there are the silent deaths caused by hunger, abortion, experimentation on human embryos and euthanasia,” he said.

“How can we fail to see in all this an attack on peace?” Pope Benedict asked.

The pope also condemned as a violation of human dignity, and a threat to peace, situations in which individuals are not free to practice their religious faith, either because a national regime imposes one religion on its residents or because a “systematic cultural denigration of religious beliefs” encourages people to hide their faith or limits their ability to express religious beliefs in public.

In addition, he said, violations of “the natural equality of all persons” also threaten peace.

Obviously, he said, the fact that so many of the world’s people have no access to the essentials needed for life, including food, water, shelter and health, “lies at the root of violent reactions and thus inflicts a terrible wound on peace.”



Lebanese civilians evacuate after an Israeli aircraft destroyed a house in Tyre, Lebanon, on July 16. In his message for World Peace Day 2007, Pope Benedict XVI cited the war in Lebanon between Hezbollah militants and Israel as a situation where the duty to protect, assist and avoid involving the civilian population “was largely ignored.”

But also, the pope said, “inadequate consideration for the condition of women helps to create instability in the fabric of society,” especially when women are exploited or “where women are still firmly subordinated to the arbitrary decisions of men with grave consequences for their

personal dignity and for the exercise of their fundamental freedoms.

“There can be no illusion of a secure peace until these forms of discrimination are also overcome, since they injure the personal dignity impressed by the Creator upon every human being,” Pope Benedict said. †

# OUTREACH

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you see fit.’ ”

This year, as another Christmas looms, the hope continues in her life. Her grandson celebrated his first birthday on Dec. 11. Her relationships with her sons and her daughter are closer. She even arranged to have money deducted from her paychecks to give to the St. Vincent programs that help others. And this year, she will contribute to the Hope for the Holidays program to make Christmas special for another family.

“This year is still not easy for us,” she says. “My divorce will be final soon. But I don’t have the feelings of despair and fear that I had. I know the Lord will be with us. It makes me walk much stronger in my faith.”

Here are three other Christmas efforts that share that same goal.

## Singing from the heart

In her 24 years of involvement in youth ministry, Norma Seib had never heard of a carol-a-thon.

Yet when the Junior High Youth Council at St. Thomas Aquinas School in

Indianapolis approached her with the idea, Seib smiled and gave her blessing, especially when she learned that the seventh- and eighth-grade students wanted to donate whatever money they received from caroling to the parish’s sister parish in Haiti.

On the evening of Dec. 15, the students will stroll through the parish, stopping at the homes of people who requested a visit. The group plans to sing Christmas carols for free at each of their stops, but they will accept donations for specific songs. In a lighthearted vein, they also said they will accept donations from people who want them to *stop* singing.

“It’s the very first time I’ve heard of this,” Seib says. “It’s a new breath of life. I’ve been doing this long enough that I think fresh ideas are a good thing. I never thought of caroling. I don’t know how successful it will be, but with the kids having the idea and taking it forward it’s already a success.”

She was touched when the youths chose the parish’s Haiti outreach program as the beneficiary of the carol-a-thon.

“It makes it go beyond our boundaries, beyond the church here and the neighborhood,” she says. “The Haiti outreach program has been ongoing at St. Thomas. This shows how the kids have taken it inside

themselves, as a part of them. All the kids on the Youth Council are giving. They’re putting their faith into action.”

## The heart of a child

Joan Hess and Lucious Newsom haven’t forgotten what it’s like to be a child at Christmas. So both individuals are directing their efforts this season to adding a touch of Christmas joy to the lives of children who need it.

In her first year as the director of Catholic Charities in Tell City, Hess is hosting a Dec. 17 Christmas party for 37 foster children in Perry County.

“It’s the first time we’ve done this,” she says. “I was talking to a social worker and she said, ‘I wish someone would do a Christmas party for our foster kids.’ So we’re doing it. We’re going to have a visit from Santa Claus, and the gifts are being provided by the local firefighters and Toys for Tots.”

“Christmas has to be a hard time for these kids, being away from their parents. We just want to make it happier for them and let them know that people care for them.”

Lucious Newsom has the same wish in Indianapolis. The 90-year-old, self-proclaimed “Lord’s beggar for the poor” will host his first Christmas party for

500 children on Dec. 23. The party will be at “Anna’s House,” a clinic and learning center that Newsom built and established this year to offer food, dental care, medical help and educational services to people in an area often scarred by poverty, crime and drugs.

“This will be the first time we’re doing this,” says Newsom, a member of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis. “We got the toys from Toys for Tots and a lot of the Churches. This will be a place where the kids will get to pick the toys they want. The parents won’t be in there. I’ll have a room set aside where the parents can get gloves, socks, hats and pajamas.”

Newsom feels confident the party will be a success for one special reason: He’s putting the party in the hands of the Catholic high school students who volunteer regularly at Anna’s House.

“Kids from all the Catholic high schools come here to help,” he says. “I’m turning this over to them. I’ll pray with them and talk with them, and then I’ll let them loose. They’re the leaders. I don’t have to guide them. We’ve got the best kids in the country right here in our Catholic schools. It shows our Church for the future is in great hands. That’s what they show me—the Church moving on.”

It’s one more gift of the season. †

## Christmas liturgical schedules announced

The Christmas liturgical schedule for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis is as follows:

A 5 p.m. Mass on Dec. 24 will be preceded by carols starting at 4:15 p.m.

A vigil service of lessons and carols will begin at 11:15 p.m. on Dec. 24 with

Mass starting at midnight.

A 10:30 a.m. Mass will be celebrated in the cathedral on Dec. 25.

The liturgical schedule for Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church in St. Meinrad is as follows:

Vigils will be celebrated at 7 p.m. on

Dec. 24 with Mass starting at midnight.

An 11 a.m. Mass will be celebrated in the church on Dec. 25.

For the Christmas liturgical schedules of other religious communities or parishes, contact them directly. †



## Correction

In the Dec. 8 issue of *The Criterion*, an article about the centennial celebration of the dedication of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral incorrectly noted that that event occurred on Dec. 22, 1906. It actually happened on Dec. 21, 1906.

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# Pope asks leaders to work for solution to Lebanese crisis

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI called on political leaders to urgently work for a peaceful and just solution to the situation in Lebanon.

He said that while there appeared to be “glimmers of a solution to the crises that plague” the Middle East, resurging “tensions and difficulties ... make us fear new violence.”

The pope expressed his “great worry” over the situation in the Middle East, particularly in Lebanon, during his Dec. 10 Angelus address to thousands of the faithful gathered at St. Peter’s Square.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters rallied in central Beirut on Dec. 10, demanding an end to Lebanon’s Western-backed government and the formation of a national unity government. The pro-Syrian opposition was pressuring Prime Minister Fouad Siniora to give a bigger role to the Shiite militant Islamic group Hezbollah in a new government.

Pope Benedict said he shared “the strong fears” expressed by the head of Lebanon’s Maronite Catholic Church, Cardinal Nasrallah P. Sfeir, and the Maronite bishops concerning the rising political unrest that has split the country.

Most Sunni Muslims back the Sunni prime minister, and Shiite Muslims support Hezbollah, while Lebanon’s Christians are divided between the two factions.

The pope called on all Lebanese and the country’s political leaders “to have exclusively at heart the best for their country and harmony among its communities.”

He said being committed to the nation’s unity “is everyone’s responsibility” and demands “patience and perseverance, along with permanent and trusting dialogue.”

“I hope the international community helps pinpoint the urgent, peaceful and fair solutions needed for Lebanon and the whole Middle East,” he said, while he invited everyone to pray during this “grave moment” in the region’s history.

Lebanon’s Maronite bishops appealed for a peaceful resolution to the growing political crisis in an appeal released on Dec. 6. They called for early presidential elections as a first step to ending the Hezbollah-led protest that hopes to topple Siniora’s Cabinet.

The bishops also called for Nabih Berri, the country’s parliamentary speaker, to call for a legislative session to negotiate a way out of the current impasse.

In a declaration of the Church’s principles, the bishops urged the country’s political and spiritual leaders to agree on a “code of honor” through which they would reject violence as a means of achieving their goals and agree to settle their differences through dialogue.

They called for the creation of a “reconciliation government that ensures wide participation at the national level,” inclusive of all national parties. They avoided use of the term “national unity government,” as has been demanded by the Hezbollah-led opposition.

They also urged the swift ratification of a U.N.-proposed international tribunal to try the suspected killers of former Prime



Lebanese protesters wave national flags during a rally against Lebanon’s Western-backed government in Beirut on Dec. 10. Hundreds of thousands of people rallied in support of a larger governmental role for the Shiite militant Islamic group Hezbollah.

Minister Rafik Hariri, who was assassinated in a February 2005 truck bombing that killed 22 people.

The bishops noted that Lebanon’s constitutional institutions have been paralyzed by the ongoing political crisis. While they acknowledged that protesting was the Lebanese people’s constitutional right, they warned that ongoing demonstrations in Beirut could lead to clashes that would only serve to inflame the situation.

Welcoming the bishops’ statement during his televised address to thousands of protesters who have spent the last week camped outside Siniora’s office in central

Beirut, Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah’s leader, said the proposal had “a lot of positive elements and is worth considering.”

The country’s parliamentary majority “March 14” group also backed the proposal in a statement, saying it reflected “the spirit of national unity.”

But Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, a Maronite Catholic, rejected the notion of early presidential elections, saying the country’s political crisis could only be solved by the formation of a national unity government. Lahoud has rejected repeated calls to resign, vowing to stay in office until his term expires next November. †

## Dudley named director of religious education in Archdiocese of Washington

By Sean Gallagher

Beginning Jan. 1, Harry Dudley, associate executive director for faith



Harry Dudley

formation in the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Education (OCE), will become the director of religious education for the Archdiocese of Washington.

Over the first six months of 2007, he will

remain in his position in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and will carry out his duties from Washington, D.C., and through regular trips here.

The change in ministry for Dudley is especially welcome to him because he and his wife are both originally from the Washington, D.C., area.

“The only thing that made me consider leaving here, because I was not unhappy here, was the opportunity to go home,” Dudley said.

Annette “Mickey” Lentz, archdiocesan executive director for Catholic education and faith formation, said she is happy for her OCE colleague.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity for

Harry,” she said. “Harry’s done a fine job for us in his leadership in faith formation in the last [seven] years in the archdiocese. We’ll miss him.”

In reflecting on the work that Dudley has done to improve faith formation in the archdiocese, Lentz said that his legacy will be that he helped build “a deeper understanding of ... theology and how we communicate and integrate that into our curriculum, both in our schools and in our faith formation programs.”

For his part, Dudley said he values the opportunity to collaborate with his fellow OCE staff members, and principals and directors of religious education across central and southern

Indiana.

“All of those [people] have been a real gift for me as well as just working with the most incredible team I’ve ever been on,” he said. “The challenge for me [in Washington] is that I’m going to get a chance to build and form a team there that has been working separately but will now be working together.”

“I think the experience here will certainly enrich that.” †

**Did you miss the last Criterion issue? Find it on the Web at [www.criteriononline.com](http://www.criteriononline.com).**

This Christmas, Miracles Are Happening.

# Charlotte's Web

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## Editorial

CNS photo/MaryAnn G. Hewitt, The Michigan Catholic



A woman lights a candle in November at the entryway to the grotto at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank, which is traditionally believed to be where Jesus was born.

## Advent is a time of longing

Each year, the Church begins again with a new year of grace that takes us back to the beginning of human history and of our individual histories.

Each new Church year, we “start afresh from Christ” (as Pope John Paul II urged us to do in the dawning years of the new millennium) by recalling the time before Christ, the time when all of humanity longed for the one who would enter into our sad old history and make it joyful and new.

Advent, which is a season of expectation and hopefulness, is also a time of longing. We remember the longing of ages past, but we also recognize and name the longing that exists now in our own hearts as we live in the here and now of our everyday lives.

What is it that we long for?

Pope Benedict XVI describes our longing this way: “We long for justice; and that is why we also long for truth. ... We long for senseless gossip, for cruelty and misery to come to an end; we long for the darkness of misunderstanding that divides us, our incapacity to love to have an end and for true love to be really possible, freeing our life from its dungeon of loneliness, opening the door to others, opening the door to infinity without destroying us. ... We long for true happiness. All of us.”

We long for the coming of Christ, for the joy of Christmas and for real peace on earth (and in our hearts).

This is the “true happiness” we long for, and Christmas is the story of our longing fulfilled. It is the story of justice, truth, love and joy. We believe it is a true story, and we long to experience it again and again, as we did when we were children.

As Christians, we are called to be stewards of this longing and its fulfillment, which is a gift to be treasured and shared year after year until Christ comes again.

How can we be good stewards of the Advent longing that leads to Christmas joy?

**Gratitude**—We can be thankful for God’s nearness and for the traditions that recall and relive Christ’s presence and his coming again.

**Responsibility**—We can stop complaining about the secularization of Christmas and actually do something about it.

**Generosity**—We can make self-giving (not gift-giving) No. 1 on our to-do list this time of year.

**Giving back**—We can return God’s gifts with increase by doing our part to bring justice and truth and freedom and love into our world. By living what we celebrate during Advent and Christmas, we become good stewards of this holy season. We do make our world a better place, and we do indeed “start afresh from Christ.”

Let’s be good stewards of Advent and Christmas. Let’s celebrate the Christmas virtues of gratitude, responsibility, generosity and giving back to God with increase. Let’s recognize our longing and the hopes that are deeply hidden in our hearts as we wait in joyful hope for Christ’s coming again.

**Maranatha!** Come, Lord Jesus. Fill our longing with your justice and your truth. Come, Prince of Peace. Free us with your love and your grace. Make us joyful, happy and free—now and always and forever. Amen!

— Dan Conway

## Be Our Guest/Anita Thompson

# Centering prayer helps reader deepen relationship with God

I would like to share my positive experience with centering prayer, hoping that persons who are considering this form of contemplation won’t be discouraged after reading several opinions in *The Criterion*.

John F. Fink, in his Nov. 3 column, stated that the “blank mind” of centering prayer wasn’t for him. A letter writer in the Nov. 17 issue warned of “counterfeit” versions, detachment from other persons and openness to “diabolical deceptions.”

My view is based on regular practice, participation in centering prayer groups in Indiana and Florida, and a generous amount of discussion and reading.

Seek, be open and trust God. I encourage every person to seek an ever-deepening relationship with God, and then to be open to how God is leading each person on his or her own unique spiritual journey.

I reached a point where prayer with words no longer satisfied my deepest desire. My words had become trite and overdone, no longer passionate.

I was drawn to a deeper union through contemplation, but I didn’t know how to proceed.

Attempting to be open to God’s

promptings, I purchased Thomas Keating’s book *Open Heart, Open Mind*, saw that it spoke to my heart, and I began practicing centering prayer. Entering into a group experience also enhanced my understanding of the process and the result.

Essentially, I commune with God in silence twice a day. I try to abandon my self-centered thoughts and approach the encounter with love and gratitude, trusting God to read what is in my heart. “Even before a word is on my tongue, Lord, you know it all” (Ps 139:4).

Although at first it took a leap of faith for me to be still and let God control the prayer, I have gained peace and often passion. I find myself approaching others with greater love and generosity.

Weekly centering prayer group sessions provide an opportunity to pray with and learn from others. I still read, reflect and journal, pray in other forms and regularly receive the Eucharist, but contemplation through centering prayer is the daily hub of my life.

(Anita Thompson is a member of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.) †

## Letters to the Editor

### It’s hard to ‘see Jesus in people’ who live contrary to God’s law

“See Jesus in people.”

It really disturbs me to hear that phrase. I find it very difficult to see Jesus in people that are obviously living contrary to God’s law.

And we need priests to help us. They need to preach on the sins of the world, tell us how to resist those sins and how to get back to God. In other words, scare the devil out of us.

Some 70 percent of married Catholics are said to prevent conception in one way or another. And yet we never hear from the pulpit that artificial contraception is a sin and a matter for confession.

Most priests choose which Catholic doctrines they will talk about and which ones they will soft-pedal.

We need to hear about the Ten Commandments and the seven capital vices.

And then, lest we forget, we need to give honor to Mary. She will help us to remain pure in heart.

And then maybe we’ll be able to see Jesus in people.

Al Scheller, Elizabethtown

### Where life issues are concerned, abortion is the biggest injustice

I agree with the Nov. 24 letter writer who said that Supreme Court Justices John Roberts, Antonin Scalia and Samuel Alito should be concerned with all life issues, including capital punishment and end-of-life choices.

But perhaps the focus on abortion is because a baby is aborted every 20 seconds or abortions take place 4,400 times every day.

I don’t know the daily ratio of other life issues, but all of them combined, I’m sure, don’t even come close to abortion.

Dorothy Riley, Indianapolis

### At Christmas, remember the wonder of the Incarnation

I have come to regard the celebration of Christmas with some trepidation

and conflict.

I abhor the frenetic agenda of gift-buying, card-writing and party frolicking that preoccupies us and smothers the import of the season.

Santa Claus becomes the caricature of our obsessive diversions. At best, is he not a denigrated parody of St. Nicholas? Why do we engage our children with such an artificial scenario of the Christmas experience?

The birth of Jesus is the most astounding and momentous event in human history that clamors against substitution and diminution.

This season, I am consoled with the showing of the movie *The Nativity Story*. No, the movie is not a rendition that can be considered Catholic or scriptural, but it does draw our attention to the wonder and splendor of the Incarnation.

Do yourself and particularly your children a favor: See the movie. Then I can endure being regarded as a Christmas Scrooge.

Ben Cerimele, Greenwood

## Letters Policy

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

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

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

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

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” *The Criterion*, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org).

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.



# SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

## BUSCANDO LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

### Imitating the gracious generosity of God during Advent and Christmas

In Psalm 96, we read: “Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes.”

In our Advent liturgy, these words have been joined to other words from other psalms.

“Mountains and hills will sing praises before God and all the trees of the wood will clap their hands, for the Lord is coming, the ruler, to an eternal kingdom.”

Pope Benedict XVI, in an early collection of his homilies, remarked: “Our decorated Christmas trees are really nothing but an attempt to make these words visible. The Lord is there. Our ancestors believed this and the trees of the wood had therefore to go meet him, bend down before him, and be a song of praise to their Lord. They believed this with such certainty too that the mountains and hills singing before the Lord became a living reality for them. They themselves broke into a song of praise and it can still be heard today, so that we too have an inkling of the nearness of the Lord, since such sounds can be given to man only when the Lord is very close to him” (*Seeking God's Face*, Franciscan Herald Press, 1982, p. 80).

I must admit that when my Dad and brother and I went looking for a cedar Christmas tree on Grandpa Buechlein's farm, I didn't have that understanding in my mind. Decorating the tree was special and I knew it was a warm tradition, but I didn't make the connection to the

psalmody of the Old Testament.

Vaguely I suppose, I did sense a connection with the sacred meaning of Advent and Christmas if for no other reason than we went to a lot of trouble to find that tree and to decorate it.

More directly, I sensed the nearness of the Lord at Midnight Mass in the awesome St. Joseph Church in Jasper as we sang “Silent Night” (“*Stille nacht*”) in the original German to the accompaniment of harp and stringed instruments. I had “an inkling of the nearness of the Lord.”

The Holy Father went on to comment: “Even such an apparently external custom as our Christmas fare has its roots in the Church's Advent liturgy, which echoes the wonderful words of the Old Testament: ‘On that day the mountains will drip sweetness and the rivers will bring down milk and honey.’ It was in words such as these that men in the past expressed the quintessence of their hopes in a redeemed world, and their thoughts were echoed by our ancestors when they celebrated Christmas as the time God really came. If he comes at Christmas, he as it were distributes honey and it must be true that the earth flows with it. Where he is therefore, there can be no bitterness. In his presence, heaven and earth are in harmony and God and man are one. Honey and all the sweet things of Christmas are the sign of this peace, concord and joy. ... All these elements come together in our joy that God

became a child who encourages us to trust as children trust, to give ourselves and to let ourselves receive” (p. 80-81).

My mom's fudge and seafoam candies were traditional sweets at Christmas, but again I didn't make a scriptural connection. Yet, as I read and reflect on the Holy Father's words of years past, they make intuitive sense to me.

To be sure, decorated Christmas trees, fanciful candies and gift-giving seem to have lost the spiritual connection with their original Christian intent. And ours is not necessarily a culture that promotes childlike trust.

But the point that I want to make is simple. With the eyes of faith, strengthened by the grace of the Advent season, we can re-invest the trappings of Advent and Christmas with the spiritual meaning of old.

When we look at our decorated trees, when we enjoy the “Christmas fare,” can we not make the scriptural connections in our hearts?

We can celebrate this Christmas and the wonders of the season with a deeply grateful understanding that this is the time when “God really came.”

When we exchange Christmas gifts, may the deeper meaning infuse our intentions: We give and receive with the understanding that we are imitating the gracious generosity of God—after all, he gave us himself.

Let's make the intention not to let the spiritual meaning of our giving be lost on the floor with the discarded gift wrappings. The meaning of the exchanged gifts, then, does not quickly fade on Christmas afternoon.

Advent and Christmas provide a spiritual opportunity for us to reclaim our Christian culture as it is celebrated in the beauty of the season. It is the time “when God really came.” His name is Jesus. †

Do you have an intention for Archbishop Buechlein's prayer list? You may mail it to him at:

Archbishop Buechlein's  
Prayer List  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
P.O. Box 1410  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

#### Archbishop Buechlein's intention for vocations for December

**Catholic Grade Schools:** that they may teach our children the Catholic faith and assist them in hearing and answering God's call to service in the Church, especially as priests or religious.

### Imitando la amable generosidad de Dios durante el Adviento y la Navidad

En el Salmo 96 leemos: “Entonces todos los árboles del bosque cantarán con gozo delante del SEÑOR, porque Él viene.”

En nuestra liturgia de Adviento, estas palabras se han unido a las de otros salmos.

“Montañas y colinas cantarán de gozo ante Dios y todos los árboles del bosque aplaudirán porque el Señor, el jerarca, viene a un reino eterno.”

El Papa Benedicto XVI en una recopilación inicial de sus homilias indicó: “Nuestros árboles de Navidad decorados no son más que un intento por hacer que estas palabras se hagan visibles. El Señor está allí. Nuestros ancestros creían esto y por lo tanto, los árboles del bosque tenían que conocerlo, postrarse ante él y ser un cántico de alabanza para su Señor. También creían esto con tanta vehemencia que las montañas y colinas que cantaban delante del Señor se tornaron en una realidad viviente para ellos. Ellos mismos comenzaron a cantar de gozo y ese canto se puede escuchar todavía hoy en día, a fin de que nosotros también podamos tener un indicio de la cercanía del Señor, ya que el hombre sólo puede recibir dichos sonidos cuando el Señor se encuentra muy cerca de él” (*Buscando el rostro de Dios*, Franciscan Herald Press, 1982, p. 80).

Debo admitir que cuando mi padre, mi hermano y yo salíamos a buscar un cedro para usar como árbol de Navidad en la granja del abuelo Buechlein no había entendido nada de eso. La decoración del árbol era especial y sabía que era una cálida tradición, pero no hacía la conexión con los salmos del Viejo Testamento.

Supongo que vagamente sí sentía la

conexión entre el significado sagrado del Adviento y la Navidad ya que por ninguna otra razón nos habríamos dado a la tarea de hallar ese árbol y decorarlo.

Sentí la presencia del Señor más directamente en la Misa de Gallo en la increíble iglesia San José en Jasper, mientras cantábamos “Noche de paz” (*Stille nacht*), en su versión original en alemán, acompañados de arpa y otros instrumentos de cuerda. Tuve “un indicio de la cercanía del Señor.”

El Santo Padre prosiguió: “Aun una costumbre aparentemente tan terrenal como nuestras actividades navideñas tiene sus raíces en la liturgia del Adviento de la Iglesia, la cual se hace eco de las maravillosas palabras del Viejo Testamento: ‘En aquel día los montes destilarán vino dulce, las colinas manarán leche.’ Fue por medio de palabras como éstas que los hombres antiguos expresaron la quintaesencia de sus esperanzas en un mundo redimido y sus pensamientos encontraron eco en nuestros ancestros cuando celebraron Navidad como la época en la que Dios se hizo verdaderamente presente. Si viene en Navidad, él reparte la miel y entonces deberá ser cierto que la tierra fluye con ella. Por lo tanto, donde él está no puede haber amargura. En su presencia el cielo y la tierra se encuentran en armonía y Dios y los hombres se hacen uno. La miel y todas las cosas dulces de la Navidad son un símbolo de su paz, armonía y gozo. ... Todos estos elementos se unen en nuestro júbilo de que Dios vino como un niño quien nos invita a creer como lo hacen los niños, para entregarnos a nosotros mismos y permitirnos recibir” (p. 80-81).

El turrón de mi mamá y los caramelos eran dulces tradicionales de Navidad, pero nuevamente, yo no hacía la conexión bíblica. Sin embargo, cuando leo y reflexiono sobre las palabras del Santo Padre en años anteriores, éstas cobran un sentido intuitivo para mí.

Ciertamente los árboles de Navidad decorados, los hermosos caramelos y el intercambio de regalos parecen haber perdido su conexión espiritual con la intención cristiana original. Y la nuestra no es necesariamente una cultura que promueve la confianza ingenua.

Pero el punto que quiero demostrar es sencillo. Con los ojos de la fe reforzados por la gracia de la época de Adviento podemos revestir los enseres del Adviento y la Navidad con su antiguo significado espiritual.

Cuando vemos nuestros árboles decorados, cuando disfrutamos de nuestras actividades navideñas ¿acaso no podemos realizar la conexión bíblica en nuestros corazones?

Podemos celebrar esta navidad y las maravillas de la temporada con un entendimiento profundo y agradecido de que esta es la época cuando “Dios se hizo verdaderamente presente.”

Que un significado más profundo impregne nuestras intenciones cuando intercambiamos regalos de Navidad:

Damos y recibimos bajo el entendido de que estamos imitando la amable generosidad de Dios—después de todo lo que Él mismo nos dio.

Hagámonos el firme propósito de no permitir que el significado espiritual de nuestros obsequios se pierda en el suelo con los papeles de regalo tirados. De este modo, el significado de los regalos intercambiados no se desvanecerá rápidamente en la tarde de Navidad.

El Adviento y la Navidad nos brindan una oportunidad espiritual para recuperar nuestra cultura cristiana tal y como debe celebrarse en el esplendor de la temporada. Es cuando “Dios se hizo verdaderamente presente.” Su nombre es Jesús. †

¿Tiene una intención que desee incluir en la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein? Puede enviar su correspondencia a:

Lista de oración del Arzobispo  
Buechlein  
Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
P.O. Box 1410  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Traducido por: Language Training Center, Indianapolis

#### La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en diciembre

**Escuelas primarias católicas:** que ellos puedan enseñar la fe católica a nuestros niños y puedan ayudarles a oír y contestar la llamada de Dios para ser vir en la Iglesia, sobre todo como sacerdotes o religiosos.

## Events Calendar

### December 15

St. Paul Catholic Center, 1413 E. 17th St., Bloomington. **Simbang Gabi Mass**, 7 p.m. Information: 812-339-5561.

### December 15-January 7

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Library, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **"Christmas Crèches" exhibit**, Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m., Sat. 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m., closed Dec. 22-26, Dec. 29 and Jan. 1. Information: 800-682-0988 or [www.saintmeinrad.edu](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu).

### December 16

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Helpers of God's Precious Infants Pro-Life Mass**, 8:30 a.m., followed by rosary outside abortion clinic and Benediction at church. Information: Archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, 317-236-1569

or 800-382-9836, ext. 1569.

St. Mary Parish, 720 N. A. St., Richmond. **Tatiana concert, "Emmanuel-The Story of Christmas,"** 7 p.m., free admission. Information: 765-962-3902.

St. Margaret Mary Church, 2405 S. Seventh St., Terre Haute. **Simbang Gabi Mass**, 6:30 p.m. Information: 812-232-3512.

Michaela Farm, Oldenburg. **"Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count,"** 6:30 a.m., carpool to Big Oaks NWR, \$5 per person, bring lunch and drinks. Information: 812-933-0661 or e-mail [michaelafarm@seidata.com](mailto:michaelafarm@seidata.com).

Cathedral of the Assumption, 443 S. 5th St., Louisville, Ky. Louisville Chorus, **"A Season**

**Shining Bright,"** 4 p.m., \$18 adults, \$12 senior citizens, \$8 students. Information: 502-968-6300.

### December 17

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Faith Formation Team, **"Apologetics from A-Z,"** sessions for adults, **"Spirituality for Children,"** 4 years and older, 11:15 a.m.-11:55 a.m. Information: 317-636-4478.

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **"St. Michael Choir's Christmas Concert,"** 4 p.m., free-will donation. Information: 317-923-7359 or e-mail [kevintrager@comcast.net](mailto:kevintrager@comcast.net).

Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove.

**"Christmas Concert XLV,"** 3 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., combined choirs of voices accompanied by orchestra of strings, brass and percussion plus organ and guitar, \$5 per person. Information: 317-787-1682.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey and School of Theology, Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. Organ recital, **"Advent and Christmas Music,"** Dr. David Lamb, organist, 3 p.m. Information: 800-682-0988 or [www.saintmeinrad.edu](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu).

MKVS and DM Center, Rexville (located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South, 12 miles south of Versailles). **Covenant Sunday, Mass**, 10:15 a.m. with Father Elmer Burwinkel, holy hour, 11 a.m., pitch-in following holy hour, drinks and dessert provided. Information: 812-689-3551.

### December 18

St. Susanna Church, 1210 E. Main St., Plainfield. **Simbang Gabi Mass**, 7 p.m. Information: 317-839-3333.

### December 20

St. Nicholas Church, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Drive, Sunman. **Healing service and rosary for vocations**, 6 p.m., eucharistic adoration, praise and worship,

6:30 p.m., confession available. Information: 812-623-8007.

Calvary Cemetery, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439.

### December 21

Our Lady of Peace Mausoleum Chapel, 9001 N. Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898.

### December 22

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Simbang Gabi Mass**, 7 p.m. Information: 317-888-2861.

### December 26-29

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** 7 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

### December 29

Oldenburg Franciscans, Motherhouse, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Decorated trees and Nativities from around the world**, 6-8 p.m. Information: 812-934-2475.

### December 30

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"**

Mass, 6 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

Church of the Holy Angels, 740 W. 28th St., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** 4-6 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

### December 31

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Catholic Charismatic Renewal, **New Year's Eve Mass**, 11 p.m., fellowship and refreshments following Mass. Information: 317-592-1992 or e-mail [ccrci@inholyspirit.org](mailto:ccrci@inholyspirit.org).

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** Mass, 10 a.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

Indianapolis South Deanery parishes in Indianapolis, Beech Grove and Greenwood, **visit churches to view Christmas decorations and manger scenes**, 1-5 p.m.

### January 1

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** 8 a.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

### January 5

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei meeting**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., breakfast and program at Priori Hall, \$10 members, \$15 guests. Information: 317-919-5316 or e-mail [Lumen\\_Dei@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lumen_Dei@sbcglobal.net).

### January 7

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **"A Twelfth Night Gathering," Epiphany celebration**, vespers, 5 p.m., Newman dining room, meal, \$7 per person, reservations due Jan. 3, burning of the greens ceremony, 6:30 p.m. Information: 800-682-0988 or [www.saintmeinrad.edu](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu).

## Benedictine Sister Marie Oliger celebrates 60 years of vowed life

Benedictine Sister Marie Oliger, a founding member of the Sisters of



St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, is celebrating 60 years of vowed life this year. Sister Marie renewed her monastic promises during a ceremony earlier this year at the chapel at Our

Lady of Grace Monastery.

A native of North Vernon, she entered Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in 1944. She made her first vows in 1946 and her perpetual monastic profession in 1949.

Answering the request of transferring to a new community by her superior, Sister Marie became a founding member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery.

Sister Marie earned a bachelor's degree

in education at St. Benedict College in Ferdinand, Ind., in 1948. In 1969, she earned a master's degree in education at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis.

She began her 41-year teaching career at St. Benedict School in Evansville, Ind.

In the archdiocese, Sister Marie taught at Catholic grade schools in Columbus, Indianapolis, Floyds Knobs, Siberia, Tell City and Perry County.

She served as a sixth-grade teacher at St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis from 1965-66 then as principal from 1968-74.

Sister Marie also taught at Catholic schools in Evansville, Ind., and Vincennes, Ind.

She retired to Our Lady of Grace Monastery in 1989.

Currently, Sister Marie serves her monastic community in a variety of ways, and continues to minister in a parish setting by volunteering each month at St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg. †

## Ursuline Sister Rose Ann Muller is celebrating her golden jubilee

Ursuline Sister Rose Ann Muller, a former principal at Pope John XXIII School in Madison, is celebrating her 50th jubilee of profession this year.

She is among 14 Ursuline sisters at the motherhouse in Louisville, Ky., who are celebrating jubilees this year.

The jubilarians were honored earlier this year during a ceremony at the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception in Louisville.

She entered the Ursuline community in 1956, and taught at Catholic schools in Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska and Mississippi.

Sister Rose Ann served as principal at Pope John XXIII School in Madison for seven years.

Currently, she is involved in volunteer ministry.

The Ursuline sisters' mission is teaching Christian living by assisting others in living more fully and developing a personal relationship with God. They serve as teachers, healthcare workers, administrators, chaplains and social service workers in the U.S. and South America. †



### 'Read to Feed'

Students, staff and families at St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy in Indianapolis are making a difference in the lives of poverty-stricken children in another country through the "Read to Feed" program sponsored by the Heifer Project International, which enables the students' reading for pledges to raise funds to purchase an animal for a family in another country. This family will be taught to care for the animal and use it to lessen their poverty. To celebrate the conclusion of the "Read to Feed" program, faculty, students and parents celebrated with a Family Reading Night on Dec. 7 at the Indianapolis North Deanery school.

## VIPs

**Jim and Florence (Bova) Whitaker**, members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their



50th wedding anniversary on Nov. 24 with family members and friends. The couple was married on Nov. 24, 1956, at St. Roch Church in Indianapolis. They have four children: Tammy Mercer, Cheri, Jim Jr. and Michael Whitaker. They also have 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. †

## Alba House publishes John Fink's book titled *Jesus in the Gospels*

Alba House has published the latest book by John F. Fink, editor emeritus of *The Criterion*.



Titled *Jesus in the Gospels: Getting to Know Jesus as Presented by the Evangelists*, the book is a compilation of Fink's columns that were published in *The Criterion* from

Jan. 14, 2004, through April 21, 2006.

To explain the purpose of the book and the original columns, Fink wrote, "Many books have appeared recently studying 'the historical Jesus' as a way, apparently, to figure out what Jesus was really like. Many of these are attempts to debunk what Christians believe about Jesus or to deny his divinity. This book returns to the Jesus in the Gospels. That's the Jesus we believe in."

It is Fink's 10th book and the sixth published by Alba House.

His other books are *Married Saints*, a two-volume work on *The Doctors of the Church*, *American Saints and Letters to St. Francis de Sales: Mostly on Prayer*.

The Criterion Press published *Moments in Catholic History*, which is now out of print, and *Traveling With Jesus in the Holy Land*. Our Sunday Visitor Press published *Patriotic Leaders of the Church*.

Fink also edited, and contributed to, a book titled *The Mission and Future of the Catholic Press*, published by the Catholic Press Association.

(To purchase a copy of *Jesus in the Gospels: Getting to Know Jesus as Presented by the Evangelists*, contact Alba House at 800-343-2522 (ALBA) or log on to the Web site at [www.stpauls.us](http://www.stpauls.us). The price is \$9.95 plus the cost of postage and handling.) †

## Criterion editors to be featured on 'Faith in Action' next week

Mike Krokos and John Shaughnessy, editor and assistant editor of *The Criterion*, will be featured on the Catholic radio program "Faith in Action" during the week of Dec. 18-23.

They will discuss what it's like to work for the largest weekly newspaper in Indiana, which is published by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The program will be broadcast several times during the week. It will air on

Monday, Dec. 18, and Friday, Dec. 22, at 7 a.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 19, and Thursday, Dec. 21, at 4 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 23, at 9 a.m.

"Faith in Action" is a 30-minute local program that is produced by Catholic Radio 89.1 FM. It features people talking about their ministry or apostolate.

The program can also be heard live by visiting the radio station's Web site at [www.catholicradioindy.org](http://www.catholicradioindy.org). †

# Thousands honor Virgin of Guadalupe in procession, Mass

LOS ANGELES (CNS)—To honor the Virgin of Guadalupe on the 475th anniversary of her appearance to St. Juan Diego in Tepeyac, Mexico, close to 30,000 people in Los Angeles on Dec. 3 processed a mile from Our Lady of Solitude (*La Soledad*) Church to a college stadium where a special Mass was celebrated.

With the theme “The Mother of All Immigrants,” the event attracted people of all ages and nationalities carrying flags from their home countries. Some dressed in the ethnic clothing of their former homeland to celebrate the feast day of the patron saint of the Americas.

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa was among those who processed through the streets.

The 75th annual procession in the Los Angeles Archdiocese was scheduled to coincide with the month when Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego and left her image on his cloak in 1531.

For this year’s procession, Msgr. Diego Monroy Ponce, rector of the Basilica de Santa Maria de Guadalupe in Mexico City, brought an image of St. Juan Diego as well as a digital reproduction of Our Lady of Guadalupe that was touched to the original image and was blessed. The framed images were carried through the streets, surrounded by people, musicians and dance ensembles dressed in costume.

Picking up worshippers along the route, the group filed into the stadium at East Los Angeles College, filling the 20,000 seats as dancers and musicians dressed in bright, colorful costumes processed into the stadium and occupied the center field. The images of St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe were also brought in to applause and chants of “*Viva la Virgen!*”

About 50 doves were then released. They flew together around the stadium before disappearing.

Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony, as well as Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishops Edward W. Clark, Alexander Salazar, Gerald E. Wilkerson and Oscar A. Solis, and more than 30 priests participated in the procession leading up to the celebration of Mass.

The liturgy began with the cardinal’s



Three women join hands as nearly 30,000 people from throughout the greater Los Angeles area gather at East Los Angeles Stadium on Dec. 3 for the nation’s oldest religious procession in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

blessing in Spanish and English: “Welcome, Mother of God, to Los Angeles. Thank you for giving your mother’s love through Juan Diego. Thank you because you are with all of us and know the suffering of your children.

“Oh, holy Mother, to you we entrust our suffering, come to our aid, listen to our cries, pray to Jesus for us,” he continued. “You look upon us with kindness. Take us in your hands; heal the wounds inflicted on our journey. You are our mother and in you we trust.”

Msgr. Ponce gave the homily. Though most of the Mass was in Spanish, the prayers of the faithful were prayed in Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Mayan, English, a Native American dialect, Indonesian, Japanese and Tongan.

The Dec. 3 procession was preceded by a novena of Masses celebrated in parishes from Santa Monica to East Los Angeles. The images of St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe were being taken into parishes for a nine-day period, concluding with a vigil at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels on Dec. 11. †



Msgr. Diego Monroy Ponce, rector of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, left, and Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles celebrate a special Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe at East Los Angeles Stadium on Dec. 3. This year’s celebration was especially significant for the community as it is celebrating both the 475th anniversary of the Virgin of Guadalupe appearing to St. Juan Diego and the 75th anniversary of the Los Angeles Archdiocese’s annual procession in her honor.

## Approval rating for bishops highest since abuse scandal broke

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (CNS)—The percentage of Catholics who think the U.S. bishops are doing a “good job” is the highest it has been since the clergy sex abuse scandal broke in early 2002, according to results of the Contemporary Catholic Trends poll conducted by LeMoyné College in Syracuse and Zogby International.

In the fall 2006 Contemporary Catholic Trends survey, 71 percent of Catholics said they strongly agreed (29 percent) or somewhat agreed (42 percent) that “the U.S. bishops are doing a good job leading the Catholic Church.”

That percentage had been 83 percent in the fall of 2001; the U.S. clergy sexual abuse crisis erupted in Boston in January 2002. Later that year, the percentage dropped to 68 percent and was as low as 58 percent in 2004. In late 2005, 64 percent of Catholics said the bishops were doing a good job.

The latest survey results, made public on Nov. 30, had a margin of error of plus or minus 2.6 percentage points. Zogby conducted telephone interviews of 1,505 self-identified Catholics chosen nationwide.

The poll also showed a high level of

support for the work of Pope Benedict XVI and for local pastors.

More than 83 percent agreed—45 percent strongly and 39 percent somewhat—that the pope was doing a good job leading the Catholic Church, while 88 percent agreed—69 percent strongly and 19 percent somewhat—that the pastors of their parishes were doing a good job. The recent Contemporary Catholic Trends survey also compared attitudes on various social issues of Catholics who attend Mass and those who do not as well as all Catholics’ views on friendship, trust, their financial situation, and charitable giving and volunteering.

In all, 20 percent of the 1,505 respondents said they had left the Church at some time during their lives, and 10 percent said they do not attend Mass in a typical month.

Although 64 percent of Mass-attending Catholics said they thought priests should be able to marry, 81 percent of the nonattending Catholics thought so.

On artificial birth control, only 15 percent of Catholics who do not attend Mass were opposed to it while 36 percent of those who do attend Mass at least occasionally were opposed. The highest percentage of those opposed to it—43 percent—were Catholics who attend church weekly or more often.

Overall, 50 percent of Catholics

believe all abortions should be illegal; 49 percent disagreed and 1 percent said they were undecided. Of Catholics who attend Mass at least weekly, 60 percent said all abortions should be illegal. Only 30 percent of those who never attend Mass agreed with the statement.

Less than half (48 percent) of Catholics said the death penalty should be illegal, although the percentage rose to 53 percent among those who attend Mass weekly or more often.

In other results, the Contemporary Catholic Trends survey found that:

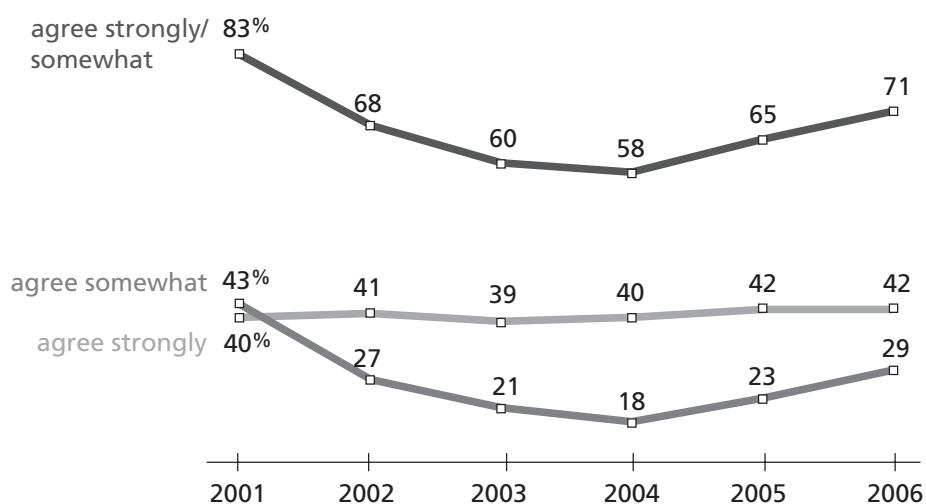
- Sixty-five percent of Catholics are satisfied or very satisfied with their financial situation.
- More than half (51 percent) agreed that

“most people can be trusted,” while 44 percent said that “you can’t be too careful” in dealing with people. Among the general population in 2004, only 36 percent of Americans said most people can be trusted.

• Catholics also have more “close friends” than those in the general population. Although 25 percent of Americans said in 2004 that they had no one to confide in, only 4 percent of Catholics said they had no one they considered a close friend and one percent reported only one such friend. Over a quarter of Catholics (27 percent) said they had 10 or more close friends. †

### Bishops Report Card

Are the U.S. Catholic bishops doing a good job?



Source: From a nationwide survey of 1,505 self-identified Roman Catholics. The margin of error is plus or minus 2.6 percentage points. 2006 survey conducted in October. Source: Source: Le Moyné College/Zogby International

# Spirit of Christmas motivates year-end giving

WASHINGTON (CNS)—It's the most wonderful time of the year.

That's what many of those who run the nation's charitable organizations might say about the period that includes Thanksgiving and Christmas as well as the end of the tax year.

But Mark Melia, director of fundraising for Catholic Relief Services in Baltimore, thinks it is the spirit of Christmas rather than the thought of tax deductions that drives increased giving during the holidays.

"This is the season that calls giving to mind," as Christians reflect on God's great gift of his Son to the world, he told Catholic News Service. To help others is "an expression of our faith," he added.

CRS, the U.S. Catholic overseas relief and development agency, receives 42 percent of its total private donations during the months of November, December and January, Melia said.

At Catholic Charities USA in Alexandria, Va., and its member agencies around the country, the Christmas season is both a time of increased giving and a time of increased need.

"Many families in our diocese are walking a tightrope, hoping to have enough just to make it through the day and keep from falling into poverty," said Rachel Hrbolich, associate director of social services for Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio, who said emergency assistance cases locally are becoming more complex.

"People are no longer simply delinquent with a bill or in need of food," she added. "They are delinquent with several bills, need food, clothing and medication, and are in danger of foreclosure/eviction or are homeless."

With more than \$646 million in private donations last year, Catholic

Charities USA and its agencies placed 14th on *The Chronicle of Philanthropy's* list of the top 400 charitable organizations. CRS is 32nd with nearly \$343 million in private funding in 2005. The two are the only Catholic organizations in the journal's top 50.

The Contemporary Catholic Trends poll conducted recently by LeMoyn College in Syracuse, N.Y., and Zogby International shows that Catholics are a generous bunch.

Asked whether they had given money in the past year to a charitable organization in addition to their parish, 79 percent of Catholics said yes. Half said they had given more than \$300, and half said they had given less than that.

In addition, 62 percent of Catholics said they had done volunteer work in the previous 12 months. Nearly one-third said most or all of that volunteer work had been done in conjunction with a religious organization.

According to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, educational enterprises—including colleges and universities—received the most from private donors in 2005 at \$15.6 billion, followed closely by social services agencies and youth groups at \$15.5 billion.

International charities like CRS got nearly \$9.9 billion, while hospitals, medical centers and other health-related charities received \$6.8 billion in private funds.

Bob Sullivan, vice president of development at The Catholic University of America in Washington, said the school sees an increase in "the volume and often the size of donations" at Christmastime, as do most U.S. colleges and universities.

But he attributes the increase as much to "the motivation people feel at the end of the tax year" as to the Christmas spirit.

When the university shuts down for



David Taylor from St. Maria Goretti Parish in Dyer, Ind., wheels in some of the groceries that will be given to 69 area families in need through Catholic Charities. Taylor is seen in a Nov. 21, 2005, file photo. For Catholic Charities USA, the Christmas season is both a time of increased giving and need nationwide.

Christmas break, Sullivan's office remains open to respond to donors who want to be sure their contributions are properly credited before the end of the year.

That motivation, aided by the Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act of 2005, prompted a spike in giving to the university last year.

After Hurricane Katrina, Congress wanted to encourage Americans to donate to assistance efforts in the Gulf region but did not want to hurt contributions to other nonprofits, Sullivan told CNS. As a result, tax breaks were approved for both Katrina recovery and other charitable endeavors, boosting giving to many charities and nonprofits.

To motivate donors and prospective donors throughout the year, charitable organizations rely on a variety of methods—all aimed at keeping people informed about how their money has been or would be spent and thanking them for the good that has been accomplished.

Keeping the cause in front of potential donors can be a challenge, "especially for those of us who work exclusively outside the country," said Melia of CRS, which has projects in 99 countries. News reports can help keep viewers informed about disaster situations, but it is harder to make people aware of ongoing and long-term needs such as hunger and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, he said.

First-time donors to CRS receive phone calls thanking them, as do those who have increased their giving. Informational tools for donors include regular e-mails to the approximately one-sixth of donors who provide their e-mail addresses, a catalog listing each CRS project and its cost, and a magazine called *The Wooden Bell*, named for a Haitian proverb: "Nobody hears the cries of the poor, or the sound of a wooden bell."

But, the magazine notes on its cover, CRS donors "not only hear the cries of the poor, but answer with compassion." †

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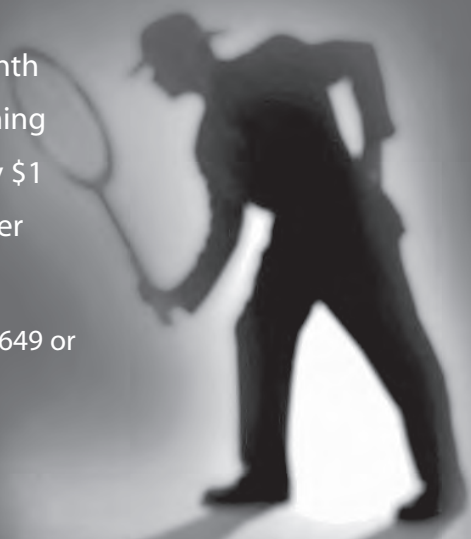
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# Children's books suitable for Christmas gift-giving

Reviewed by Barb Fraze

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The following children's books are suitable for Christmas gift-giving:

• *The Goodnight Train*, by June Sobel, illustrated by Laura Huliska-Beith, Harcourt Inc. (Orlando, Fla., 2006), 32 pp., \$16, ages 3-7.

This bedtime picture book is a rare combination of words and pictures that blend perfectly. The colorful, creative paintings dominate, but the rhyming text fits perfectly, starting with lots of activity, mimicking train rhythms and winding down for sleepy readers. Huliska-Beith's trains wind their way across facing pages, giving young listeners plenty to explore.

• *Prairie Christmas*, by Elizabeth Van Steenwyk, illustrated by Ronald Himler, Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2006), 32 pp., \$17, ages 5-10.

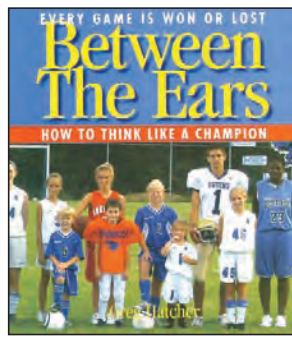
It's Christmas Eve 1880 on the Nebraska prairie, and when 11-year-old Emma travels with her mother, a doctor, to deliver a baby, she is a little resentful. But when she gets to the house, she discovers some frightened young children who might miss out on Christmas because of the birth of their newest sibling. In this heartwarming story, Emma uses very simple items from around the house to make the children's Christmas more festive. Full-page pencil and watercolor illustrations bring the sparse existence of the prairie to life.

• *Eva Underground*, by Dandi Daley Mackall, Harcourt Inc. (Orlando, Fla., 2006), 239 pp., \$17, ages 12-up.

When Eva, a U.S. high school senior, is forced to go to Poland with her father in the late 1970s, she is determined to return to Chicago. But her father, a university professor, is involved in the underground movement, and before she knows it Eva has become friends with one of the moody young men in the group. This coming-of-age novel has romance, conflict, danger and history, a great combination for young teens.

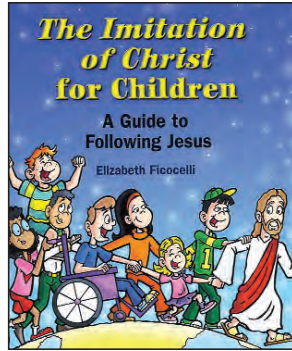
*Last minute gift ideas continued.*

• *Every Game Is Won or Lost Between the Ears: How to Think Like a Champion*, by Greg Hatcher, Tiger Books Inc. (Little Rock, Ark., 2006), 351 pp., \$29.95, ages 11-up.



Hatcher, a successful businessman and coach, has taken some of the same principles that work in business and applied them to sports. His results—proven in Arkansas youth sports—translate into developing an attitude that combines a positive mindset, hard work and competitiveness—with perspective. Very short chapters that provide practical advice, including how to set goals, should inspire young athletes.

• *The Imitation of Christ for Children: A Guide to Following Jesus*, by Elizabeth Ficocelli, illustrated by Chris Sabatino, Paulist Press (Mahwah, N.J., 2006), 49 pp., \$8.95, ages 8-12.



This illustrated adaptation of Thomas a Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* is child-friendly, with short little lessons of one page or less.

Ficocelli gets her message across without seeming preachy, and Sabatino's humorous illustrations keep the important message in a light vein.

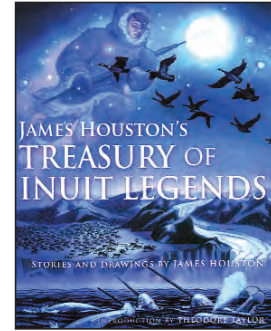
Although this book is advertised for children, adults who read it with them might find they learn something, too.

• *The Astonishing Adventures of Fanboy and Goth Girl*, by Barry Lyga, Houghton Mifflin Co. (Boston, 2006), 311 pp., \$16.95, ages 12-16.

This first-person novel told from the perspective of a self-acknowledged geek and comic book fan is truly written in a teen voice. From the first page, it will draw in teen readers with its humor and discussion of "wants" that matter to many teens. The book deals with bullying, friendship, family and high school, and touches on a few darker issues, such as cutting and revenge. Fanboy's relationships—with Goth Girl,

his "step-fascist" and the beautiful Dina Jurgens, among others—are the basis for this story, and even disenfranchised young teens should enjoy it.

• *James Houston's Treasury of Inuit Legends*, written and illustrated by James Houston, Harcourt Inc. (Orlando, Fla., 2006), 304 pp., \$18, ages 9-up.



"Treasury" is an understatement for this award-winning book of short stories. Houston has been called the greatest Arctic voice who ever lived, and this book illustrates why. He tells a good tale but, additionally, some of the passages—such as his description of an old Inuit woman—are amazingly detailed and actually beautiful. I have read many outstanding children's books over the last 20 years, and this is only the second time I have come across writing of this caliber. Houston's black-and-white illustrations, sketched during years of living in northern Canada, add to the appeal of this book.

• *Deadly Invaders: Virus Outbreaks Around the World, From Marburg Fever to Avian Flu*, by Denise Grady; *Speed Show: How Nascar Won the Heart of America*, by Dave Caldwell, Kingfisher (Boston, 2006), each 128 pp., \$16.95, ages 10-up.

These two books by reporters for *The New York Times* are part of a slick new series based on current events. The writers have been covering their subject matter for years and present their topics in a captivating yet informative manner. The visually appealing design incorporates news photos as well as historical photographs that will keep readers turning pages.

• *My Little Yellow Taxi*, by Stephen T. Johnson, Red Wagon Books (Orlando, Fla., 2006), 12 pp., \$19.95, ages 3-6.

A combination pop-up book and puzzle, this bright, sturdy board book has something different on each page. Little ones can gas up the taxi, check the oil and tire pressure, steer and check windshield wipers—with a running narrative from the imaginative taxi driver. Small pieces make this book inappropriate for toddlers.

(Barb Fraze, CNS international editor, is the mother of three.) †





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# Advent Wreath Prayer helps families prepare for birth of Christ

Catholic Spirit Syndication Service

(Third of four parts)

The following Advent Wreath prayer is intended to help busy households make Advent a prayerful time during the rush of Christmas preparations. The language is fairly simple to be used by groups of adults or adults with children, and options are noted to allow for participation by a variety of members of the household.

**Leader:** With the start of this third week of the season of Advent, we are

## Advent resources available on Web site

During the season of Advent, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will have a special Web page at [www.archindy.org/advent](http://www.archindy.org/advent).

The page contains various Advent resources, including links to the daily readings, reflections from Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, penance service schedules, images of past *Criterion* Christmas supplement covers and links of interest to other Advent Web sites. †

halfway to Christmas so as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ and for the second coming of the Lord we light three candles, including a special one of a different color.

**Light the first two candles on the Advent Wreath again, and the third one that is a lighter color, usually pink or white.**

Read aloud Zephaniah 3:14-18a, Philippians 4:4-7 and Luke 3:10-18 (optional)

**Leader:** We light the lighter-colored candle this week as a sign of joy! We can hardly wait to rejoice and sing at Christmas. As St. Paul tells the Philippians, "The Lord is near!" Paul reminds us to be kind and not to worry, to ask God in prayer for what we need.

This Third Week of Advent, John the Baptist offers advice for how to prepare the way for Christ's coming, but he doesn't pull any punches. He's crystal clear about how we ought to live—or else!

### Closing prayer

(Leader may read all or others in the household may each read a segment.)

(1.) Father in heaven, help us hear



again the voice of John the Baptist crying out in the desert. Help us make straight the pathways of our own lives so that those paths lead to eternal life with you.

(2.) God above, do good and avoid evil is so easy to say yet so hard to put into practice. Be with us in each and every moment of each and every day so that we remain blameless and worthy of

your coming.

(3.) Help us, Lord, not to dampen the joy of others. Remind us this week to rejoice always and to pray without ceasing.

(4.) Holy Spirit, guide us so that our lives may be testimony of the wonders and the love of God so that others might believe through us. †

## Advent 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. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg  
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville  
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright  
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Morris  
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Dover

Dec. 21, 7 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan

### Bloomington Deanery

Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville  
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Mitchell

### Connersville Deanery

Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Richmond

### Indianapolis East Deanery

Dec. 20, 7 p.m. for Holy Cross, St. Mary and SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

### Indianapolis North Deanery

Dec. 17, 3 p.m. at Christ the King  
Dec. 19, 7 p.m., at Christ the King  
Dec. 20, 7 p.m., at Christ the King

### Indianapolis South Deanery

Dec. 16, 9:30 a.m. at St. Barnabas  
Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood  
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Jude

### Indianapolis West Deanery

Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph  
Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield

### New Albany Deanery

Dec. 16, 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs  
Dec. 17, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany  
Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville  
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Corydon  
Dec. 20, 7:15 p.m. at St. Joseph, Clark County

### Tell City Deanery

Dec. 20, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad

### Terre Haute Deanery

Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Rockville †

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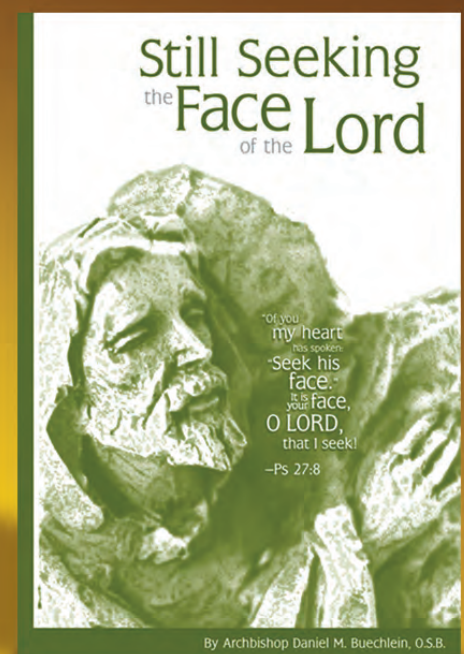
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Photos by Mary Ann Wyand



Philomena Dias sings a traditional Indian song of praise while Vijay Fernandes accompanies her on the guitar. They are members of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.



Capuchin Franciscan Father Bernard Varghese elevates the Eucharist during the Mass. He resides at St. Louis Parish in Batesville.



Nidhi Mathen, from left, Marisha Wickrensine and Anju Paul, dressed in traditional Indian costumes, carry gifts of flowers, candles and incense to the altar during the eucharistic liturgy.

# Missionary and patron saint

## Mass celebrates 500th anniversary of birth of St. Francis Xavier

By Mary Ann Wyand

Asian Indian Catholics living in central and southern Indiana have two reasons to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Francis Xavier this year.

The Jesuit missionary, who was born on April 7, 1506, at Javier Castle near Navarre, Spain, is the patron saint of India and also a patron saint of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. His feast day is Dec. 3, which also was the first Sunday of Advent.

"Our Catholic Church is a missionary Church," Capuchin Franciscan Father Bernard Varghese, a native of Kerala, India, emphasized in his homily during a Dec. 2 liturgy at the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

"We need hundreds of Xaviers to continue our missionary charism," he said. "We need people who can preach and teach by words and lives."

Carmelite Father Matthew Joseph Choorapanthiyil, also a native of Kerala, India, who now ministers at the Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute, and Father William Munshower, a retired diocesan priest from Indianapolis, concelebrated the eucharistic liturgy that commemorated the life and ministry of St. Francis Xavier.

Asian Indian Catholics dressed in traditional costumes sang hymns in their native languages during the Mass and venerated the Eucharist with flowers, incense and candles.

"By the birth of Francis Xavier, God, in his divine providence, gave to Christianity a child who would sow the seed of Christianity in Asia and, in particular, India," Father Bernard explained. "... Let us also give St. Francis Xavier a birthday gift—a gift of a prayerful life, a life acceptable and pleasing to God, a heart full of missionary zeal and, above all, thank the Lord for this holy person and imitate his example and life."

Also in 1506, Father Bernard told the gathering, "Vasco da Gama left the searoads of Lisbon, Portugal, in search of the East ... [and] upon reaching India began a new tide which changed the whole history of India and the East at large."

Father Bernard said the Portuguese explorer's discovery of the land that is now India paved the way for St. Francis Xavier—a Spanish nobleman who became a priest with a strong faith and missionary zeal—to travel to the East with friends and arrive in Goa, India, in May 1542 after more than a year's hard journey.

"With Goa as base, Francis Xavier, a man of remarkable energy and organizational ability, ... traveled a lot, especially in the southern part of the country [converting people to Christianity]," Father Bernard explained. "His missionary zeal was so energetic that he moved to Sri Lanka, Japan and so on. ... On one such missionary journey to China, without getting any medical aid, he died of severe fever at the age of 46."

He said the Jesuit missionary's body was buried on the island of Sancian off the coast of China and later taken to Malacca.

"When his grave was opened, the body was still fresh

and lifelike," Father Bernard said. "Therefore, on Dec. 11, 1553, St. Francis Xavier's body was shipped to Goa and placed in the Basilica of Bom Jesus in a glass container encased in a silver casket," which is displayed for veneration by pilgrims.

Father Bernard, who is currently in residence at St. Louis Parish in Batesville, explained that, "By the grace of God, I was privileged twice to celebrate Mass under this silver casket."

Only about 2 percent of India's people are Christian, Father Bernard said. Most Indians practice Hinduism or Islam.

"Christianity has contributed a lot in the development of the present India," he said, "especially in the areas of education, health and mission."

It is believed that there have been Christians in India from the very beginning of Christianity, Father Bernard said, citing scriptural references about St. Thomas the Apostle, who was said to have arrived in India in 52 A.D. and evangelized people in the southern part of the country before he was killed there.

"From that time onwards, Christianity began in India," he said, "but it has come to its zenith only after the arrival of St. Francis Xavier," who brought about the second wave of evangelization there.

Reflecting on the life of the patron saint of India, Father Bernard told the gathering that St. Francis Xavier was a man of faith, prayer and conviction as well as a true and committed shepherd and a man with missionary zeal and love for the soul.

"The secret of his life was his prayer and spirit of dependence on God," Father Bernard said. "He spent hours and hours in prayer, especially at night after his constant work. As St. James says, 'A good man's prayer is powerful and effective' [Jas 5:16]. It was true in the life and activities of Xavier. He did everything in consultation with Jesus."

Sadly, Father Bernard said, "the modern world wants to do everything without God or wants to do away with God."

But St. Francis Xavier stands out as "a true model of prayer and faith," he said, and a reminder "to consult God before everything, whether simple or great. His faith and conviction was so strong that, even without any knowledge of the [different] Indian languages, he spoke with the language of love, which is the language of God."

St. Francis Xavier was "a true shepherd in the sense of a great leader," Father Bernard said, who lived his life for God and the people of God with tireless missionary zeal.

"He walked hundreds of miles in search of [the] poor and needy," Father Bernard explained. "He was able to adjust with [the] mixture of peoples, cultures and behaviors. He rejected all the comforts for the sake of Christ and love for the soul. He lived a humble, holy life and was satisfied with the minimum."

Sneha Mascarenhas, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis who welcomed the assembly, said during a reception after the liturgy that it was an honor to help with

the celebration of St. Francis Xavier's life and ministry.

"It is a pretty significant thing for our family because I am a new Catholic," she said. "My husband was born and raised Catholic, and is deeply religious. He is, in a sense, an evangelist. So I can experience, perhaps to some extent, what some of the initial efforts were as far as evangelization and the initial reception to the word of God and the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Savior."

Mascarenhas said acknowledging the gifts of God at Mass and before meals serves as a way for families to express their appreciation for the important things in life.

As Father Matthew Joseph sampled a variety of traditional foods at the reception, he explained that most of the recipes came from his home region in southern India.

"[Catholics] are from diverse cultures," he said, "and we share that diversity within the same faith."

Sister Ushatta Mary, a native of Kerala, India, and a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who serve in Indianapolis, said Asian Indian Catholics are very thankful that St. Francis Xavier helped bring the Catholic faith to Asia.

"We celebrate the feast of St. Francis Xavier because ... he came to our state in Kerala and also in Goa," Sister Ushatta Mary said, "and so we love St. Francis as our father of our faith in our country." †



St. Monica parishioner Valent D'Silva of Indianapolis reads the petitions during the liturgy honoring the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Francis Xavier, a Jesuit missionary who is known as the father of the Catholic faith in India.



St. Barnabas parishioner Joseph Puvathingal of Indianapolis carries the cross in the procession on Dec. 2 at the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

# Tatiana sings about love of God, Mary and the Catholic faith

*(Editor's Note: This is the fifth article in a series of occasional feature stories about Catholic musicians with connections to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.)*

By Mary Ann Wyand

Croatian pop star Tatiana left her home country and thousands of teenage fans in Eastern Europe to pursue a



career as a Catholic musician in America in 1992.

She also met her husband, Matthew Cameron, who is her producer and the manager of Cameron Productions.

Now Tatiana sings about her love of God, Mary and the Catholic faith in her strong, clear voice that some fans have described as angelic.

She will present her original composition of "Emmanuel—The Story of Christmas" at 7 p.m. on Dec. 16 at St. Mary Parish, 720 N. A St., in Richmond. The concert is free.

After the concert, Tatiana and her husband will sell copies of her CDs, which include her Christmas album as well as "I Thirst—The Crucifixion Story," "Let It Be—Mary's Story," "A Chance to Dream—The Lullaby Album," "Tatiana—Now and Forever" and "Tatiana—Struggles and Graces."

Currently based in Cincinnati, Ohio, Tatiana and her husband and their three young sons—Dante, Evan and Blais—travel throughout the country in a customized tour bus to present Christian concerts at parishes and other locations.

They also enjoy returning to her homeland in Croatia, where Tatiana said Blais took his first steps.

"I wanted to show my boys how beautiful all the little places in Croatia are," Tatiana explained in a publicity brochure promoting her concert schedule.

"I enjoyed performing for the 30,000 mostly young people from all over the world at the Youth Festival in Medjugorje, Bosnia and Herzegovina," she said. "This place is so much more than people think it is. The focus on the

sacraments, the orphanages and the drug-rehab communities led me to feel that it is truly a center of faith."

Tatiana's music ministry is titled "Tajci—I Do Believe" after her name, Tatjana Matejas, in the Croatian language, and her Web site is located at [www.Idobelieve.com](http://www.Idobelieve.com).

"This Advent, we are joining efforts with the Knights of Columbus and their 'Keep Christ in Christmas' campaign," Cameron explained in the press release.

In recent years, Tatiana has brought her music ministry to Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, St. Mary Parish in Greensburg and parishes in Richmond.

She also helped Servants of the Gospel of Life Sister Diane Carollo, director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, and Catholics United for the Faith raise funds for pro-life ministries in the archdiocese during two Catholic Life Network dinners in March 2005.

"She is the woman who is inspiring many people to believe again," Sister Diane said. "She is a Christian singer ... who walked away from fame and fortune as a European pop star."

Tatiana's ministry encourages people to say "I do believe," Cameron said, and seek a closer relationship with God.

Her ministry is especially important, Tatiana said, because she was not allowed to practice her Catholic faith as a child.

"I was born in Zagreb, Croatia, which at the time was communist," Tatiana explained during an interview in December 2004 at Christ the King Parish.

"Even though I was baptized, it was always secret and we couldn't really openly talk about it," she said. "My parents were very afraid and intimidated from all the persecutions. I grew up not really knowing who God is."

Teachers at the government schools taught the students that there is no God, Tatiana said. "When I was attending school, I wanted to be the best student and I respected the professors so I had no choice. They taught us that there was no God, there was no reason why we should believe in God, that science had proven that all we have is this life."

Her father taught her to sing and music was always a big part of her life.

***Whatever you do, God deserves the best of you—nothing less. But then you have to step aside and let him fill you up. Then it becomes a prayer.***

—Tatiana



Former Croatian pop star Tatiana is now a Catholic musician, wife and mother of three sons who lives with her family in Cincinnati, Ohio. She said her faith is in every part of her being 24 hours a day. Trained as a classical musician, Tatiana began singing at age 4 and now sings in nine languages.

"That was a connection with something that was divine or spiritual," Tatiana said. "I attended music conservatory in Croatia, and it was always to me very interesting how music from centuries ago transcended all faiths, all boundaries, all languages. That, to me, couldn't have been just skill. ... It had to have something that was beyond it, a divine Creator."

Trained as a classical musician, Tatiana loved listening to compositions by Bach and Mozart, which she described as "transcendent beauty" and came to believe were divinely inspired.

"That was where my questions started," she said. "Could it be that this music was inspired by some divinity, some deity?"

From an early age, she said, "I understood that with music I could make people happy and evoke emotions that could make them cry. It's very magical."

As a teenager, Tatiana said, "I became the biggest pop star ever in my country. To this day, they say that nobody has ever repeated my success. I was only 19, and it was tremendous how much influence I had as a pop star, as a role model. ... Yet it was soon after the first wave of amazement, after my ego was satisfied, that I realized that I was still empty, I was lonely, and the fame and money wasn't enough. I wasn't fulfilled inside."

The ethnic war in Bosnia-Herzegovina affected her deeply and changed her life.

"Right before the war, I would sing at concerts and I realized that I couldn't offer any answers to questions, I couldn't

tell anybody how to deal with fear," she said. "For people that don't know that there is Christ, who promises eternal life, that your soul will live forever, it's a horrible thought that there's nothing when you close your eyes and you die."

"As a role model that so many people wanted to be like, I realized that my responsibilities were bigger, not just for my own life but for all those lives that were following me," she said. "It was then that I decided I was going to look for answers. I literally had to leave everything behind. I had to remove myself from fame, from money, ... I had to put myself in a place where I would struggle."

A Croatian song, which translates as "Lord, You Have Come to the Seashore," changed her life at age 21 and led her to serve God as a music minister. She sang it at a church in Croatia in 1991 and knew that she had found a new purpose in life.

"The lyrics are 'Lord, is it me that you're calling?'" she said. "'Your lips have whispered my name. I will leave everything that I have behind, and I will follow wherever you lead me.' As I was singing it, I was ready to do exactly that."

She said her songs become prayers because she surrenders herself to God during concerts.

"The Eucharist would bring me to my knees," Tatiana said. "Whatever you do, God deserves the best of you—nothing less. But then you have to step aside and let him fill you up. Then it becomes a prayer." †

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## The Virgin Mary is 'a sign of hope' to Christ's people

By Fr. Thomas A. Thompson, S.M.

*Time* magazine's cover on March 21, 2005, was an image of the Virgin Mary accompanied by the words "Hail Mary: Catholics Have Long Revered Her, But Now Protestants Are Finding Their Own Reasons to Celebrate the Mother of Jesus."

Actually, the Virgin Mary never was absent from the Anglican tradition.

Marian references were present in its feasts, prayers and hymns.

See related story, page 16.

But in May 2005, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission released a document titled "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ," the result of five years of preparatory meetings that reviewed the place of Mary in the Scriptures, Christian tradition and the life of the Church.

The document begins with areas of agreement between Anglicans and Catholics:

- Christ was "conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary."
- Mary received the unique vocation to be the mother of God incarnate.
- Mary is related to the doctrines on Christ and the Church.
- Mary is a model of holiness, obedience and faith.

The ecumenical document says that Mary's spiritual motherhood was manifest on Calvary: "Mary is seen as the personification of Israel, now giving birth to the Christian community just as she had given birth earlier to the Messiah."

## Mary is a model, inspiration and companion for Christians

By David Gibson

Mary said "yes" to God, and this "yes" is central to discussions of her role today.

Her "yes" to God's will makes her a model of faith for the rest of us.

It isn't surprising that this dimension of Mary's life is so heavily accented.

These, after all, are times when the active response of faith that each baptized person makes to God is regarded as one of the basics.

Every Christian is called to say "yes" to Christ, to actively enter into all that this entails: a changed way of life, participation in the community of his followers

The document also notes the areas of disagreement.

Anglicans have difficulty with the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception, defined in 1854, and the Assumption, defined in 1950, because "they do not consider that the precise definitions given by these dogmas are sufficiently supported by the Scripture."

The dogmatic definitions of 1854 and 1950 gave scriptural references, but the principal witnesses were the Church's tradition, the liturgy and the sense of the faithful.

Rather than reply with specific scriptural proof texts, the Catholic response given in the document was that the Marian doctrines formulate a faith "consonant" with Scripture.

In relating Mary to Christ and the Church, Vatican Council II placed the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption within a scriptural and ecclesial context.

The Marian doctrines are "gift" and "blessing" illustrating the mystery of Christ and the Church. God willed the assent of "this predestined mother," and through "the gift of sublime grace" Mary was formed by the Holy Spirit as the "new creation." She is the image of the Church, which aspires to be, in St. Paul's words, "without sin and stain" (Eph 5:27).

The Anglican-Roman Catholic document continues this approach, relying on the epistles of St. Paul to show that the Marian doctrines are consonant with and illustrate the great scriptural themes: God's election and predesti-

and endeavors to carry out his work.

It often is said that Mary's "yes" wasn't an expression of passivity. To say yes as Mary did doesn't mean one simply undergoes or suffers through God's will.

A person who says yes as Mary did won't just drift along in the life of faith; faced with life's hard challenges, the person will attempt to bring mature, hopeful faith and renewed understanding to bear on the events at hand.

Mary is a model, inspiration and companion for Christians setting out with commitment on the pilgrimage of faith.

(David Gibson edits Faith Alive!) †



At the Annunciation, Luke presents Mary as a humble person astonished at the role for which she has been chosen. In relating Mary to Christ and the Church, Vatican Council II placed the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption within a scriptural and ecclesial context.

nation; Christ as the new Adam and the beginning of the new creation; the final Resurrection. Mary is both the personification of the people of Israel and the first to enter into the new creation.

St. Paul, the ecumenical document points out, speaks of the future retrospectively when he says that, "Those whom God predestined he also called; those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified" (Rom 8:30).

St. Paul also said that God's saving promise given in Christ includes the gentiles: "All Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26). This pattern of grace and hope, foreshadowed in Mary, will be fulfilled in the new creation in Christ when "all of us ... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor 3:18).

God was at work in Mary from her earliest beginnings, preparing her for the unique vocation of giving birth to the new Adam "in whom all things in heaven and earth hold together" (Col 1:17).

The ecumenical document says it can be said of Mary, both personally and as a representative figure, that she is "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God has prepared in advance" (Eph 2:10).

The document concludes that "in Christ, Mary is already a new creation." This perspective, it says, "illuminates our

understanding of Mary's person and calling. In view of her vocation to be the mother of the Holy One (Lk 1:35), we can affirm together that Christ's redeeming work reached 'back' in Mary to the depths of her being and to her earliest beginnings. This is not contrary to the teaching of Scripture and can only be understood in the light of Scripture" (#59).

In the Assumption, the document explains, we see in Mary "the final destiny of God's people to share in Christ's victory over the powers of evil and death" (#30).

"Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ" outlines a trajectory of Christ's saving grace operative within a daughter of Adam from her earliest moments to her final glorification, a daughter who freely consented to God's word.

Vatican II called Mary a "sign of hope" to Christ's people, who see in her what the Church and its members one day hope to be.

The Anglican-Catholic document is proposed for our study, discussion and prayer. Although not an authoritative agreement between the two Churches, the text appears on the Vatican Web site at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) on the link for the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

(Marianist Father Thomas A. Thompson is director of the Marian Library at the University of Dayton, Ohio.) †

### Discussion Point

## Mary is our intercessor to God

### This Week's Question

How would you explain to a child the meaning and role of the Virgin Mary?

"She's the tenderness, the intercessor and the mother that we can go through to come to Jesus." (Judy Dewell, Fowler, Kan.)

"She is the mother of God and of all of us. That's all I would tell small children because that's all they would grasp." (Carmel Brabazon, Philadelphia, Pa.)

"I tell children that God knew what he was doing when he chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. In the *Magnificat*, she said, 'Let it be done unto me. ...' Jesus' mother was chosen because of her willingness

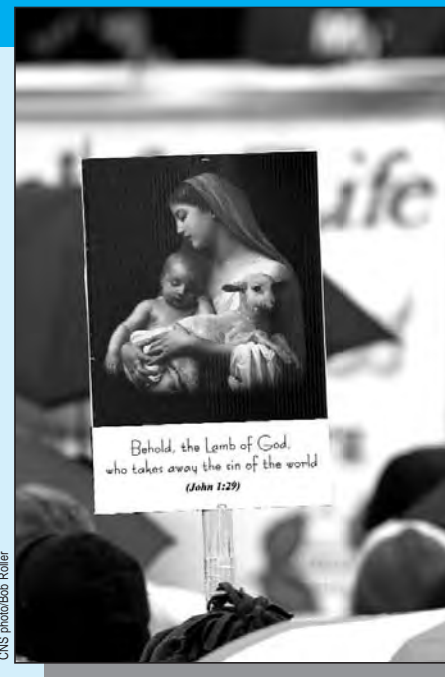
to do God's will." (Alexa Moscardelli, Lebanon, Tenn.)

"She was influential with Jesus growing up. She loved him as your mother loves you. At the cross, Jesus gave her to us, so we can go to Mary to intercede for us with him." (Elaine Falck, Jamestown, N.D.)

### Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What can individuals—or groups—do for the environment?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to [cgreene@catholicnews.com](mailto:cgreene@catholicnews.com) or write to *Faith Alive!* at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

## Prayers of adoration and praise

(Tenth in a series)

Since I've written about prayers of petition in my previous two columns, let me now turn to prayers of adoration and praise. I'll cover thanksgiving and intercession next week.



Of all prayer forms, adoration ranks as the highest. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us, "Adoration is the

first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator. It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil" (#2628).

To some extent, every prayer is an act of adoration since we are acknowledging God's greatness and our utter dependence upon him. Whether prayers of blessing, petition, intercession, contrition or praise, we concede that God is Lord and Master of everything that exists and that all our

blessings come from him.

Jesus told us that the greatest commandment is, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mk 12:30). Expressing our love for God by worshipping him is adoration.

The most perfect form of adoration is the Eucharistic Sacrifice because it is the sacrifice that Jesus himself made on the cross as a total offering to God the Father for our salvation. Other forms of worship or adoration, though, are also of great value, especially adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Prayers of praise are closest to prayers of adoration because they laud God for his own sake, simply because he is who he is. Many of the psalms are songs of praise. In fact, the title of the collection of the psalms, the Psalter, means "the Praises." I plan to write more about the psalms in a later column.

The Old Testament Jews didn't praise God only in the psalms, though. Many biblical prayers, and prayers the Jews still say today, begin with, "Blessed are you,

our God, King of the universe." God is always called "blessed" because of his great deeds.

St. Paul admonished his readers to praise God by "singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your heart to God." Paul himself gave praise to God frequently in his letters, as he did when he ended his First Letter to the Romans with "to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen."

In our liturgy, the doxology—the praise of God—is the highest moment of expression. The Gloria of the Mass ("Glory to God in the highest") is what is called the Greater Doxology while the prayer "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit" is the Lesser Doxology.

The Lesser Doxology concludes every psalm and canticle in the Liturgy of the Hours. When Benedictine monks (and perhaps others) chant or recite it, they pay particular reverence by standing and bowing.

The doxology is also appended to the *Our Father*: "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever." †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

## Remembering Christmas in the good old days

It's the Ides of December already, and some of us may find this date as ominous



as the Ides of March. That is, we might feel this way if metaphorical murder by overeating, overdrinking, overspending and under-sleeping are imminent.

Only 10 days until Christmas, and we haven't sent that first Christmas card or wrapped that first gift—which, by the way, we haven't bought yet. Our diet has gone to oblivion as has any hope of getting into that slinky dress we planned to wear on New Year's Eve.

Interesting, isn't it, how our Christmas customs sometimes get in the way of really celebrating Christmas? We tend to think that the "good old days" were better, when life was simpler and our Christmas preparations were wholesome and non-stressful.

Well, let's see. In those good old days, my Grandma, for example, always made a traditional Scandinavian "white dinner" on Christmas Eve before the midnight church service. This included lutefisk, boiled potatoes and turnips, all "whitish" in color

in honor of the purity of baby Jesus.

Lutefisk is codfish preserved in a lye solution. It must be soaked in water for several hours before being drained and cooked in boiling water. Of course, the water Grandma used had to be brought into the kitchen in buckets earlier in the day and deposited in a tank under the sink and its hand pump.

Some days before, Grandma had baked many traditional goodies as well: *fattigman*, *krumkake*, *jule kage* and, this being Wisconsin, Jello, both as a salad and a dessert. She cooked everything on a wood-fired stove, for which firewood must be constantly cut and hauled inside the house.

Previously, the house had been cleaned thoroughly and the dinner linens washed, starched and ironed, all without the use of electricity, running water, machines or almost any equipment other than a broom and some rags.

By Christmas Eve, it must've been a physical relief to sit through a church service. I'm sure that other ethnic groups in those "good old days," the Irish and the Poles and the Germans, were equally involved in labor-intensive, time-consuming hard work in preparation for Jesus' birth.

Still, despite all the effort involved in Christmas preparations in those days, they probably were less stressful than the days

leading up to Christmas today. Maybe that's because the stress we feel comes from the quality of our expectations rather than from the actual needs of the occasion.

Maybe we're feeling stressed because we're emphasizing the wrong things.

Grandma and her peers worked to emphasize the special joy and glory of Christ's birth. Everything was focused on the religious meaning of the big day. Maybe we've lost sight of that goal in some of the ways we prepare today.

Perhaps we don't need to send Christmas cards to every last person we ever knew or worked with. People tend to know if we're interested in them without seasonal reminders.

Maybe we don't need to exchange elaborate gifts with people we love. The cost or importance of a gift is not a true indication of the value we place on a person.

True gifts involve no expectation of a return. After all, God sends us a priceless gift in the birth of his Son just because he loves us.

We can do the same, and we won't even need to wrap it.

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

## An Advent story about a summertime healing

As though frozen in a touch-the-floor exercise, the young man bent forward with his legs apart and his head and arms down.



Muscles taut, his body glistened. Perspiration dropped from his ears and forehead, yet his skin was icy to the touch. He was bare from the waist up. Sweat-soaked fleece pants

looked the color of dark blood.

Through shallow breaths, he whispered, "Ma'am, I think I'm going to pass out."

My sister, Beverley, and I encountered this emergency situation when we stopped at her son and daughter-in-law's apartment as they packed for a move. It was a fiercely hot day.

"This man needs a doctor," Bev said.

Her son ran across the hall to use a neighbor's telephone because his phone was already disconnected.

Wanting to help the young man relieve his locked muscles, Bev and I gently

massaged the man's back and arms to no avail. We wiped his brow and wet his lips. He could take no liquid in that position, and he was nauseous.

Curious as to why my nephew was gone so long, I went to the neighbor's apartment and learned that 911 did not answer so Jim called an ambulance service. I thanked the neighbor for the use of her phone then explained what was wrong.

"I'm going over," she said, heading for her door.

"Are you a nurse?" I asked with hope.

"No, but I'm a believer," she remarked quietly. Seeing skepticism in my face, she smiled and said, "Don't worry. I'm not going to do anything weird."

She left and I waited for Jim. When we returned to his apartment, the neighbor's arms were wrapped around the stricken man's torso.

She moved one hand to his forehead and prayed, "Lord, help this man breathe. Loosen his muscles. Be with him now ... in Jesus' name. ..."

Her prayers tumbled forth repeatedly with calm authority.

The man, still bent over, breathed easier

then slowly relaxed his fingers. There was a sense of relief about him—and us.

Bev and I and the neighbor cautiously coaxed his knotted body onto a chair, placing his rigid legs on another. He was still in serious trouble when the paramedics arrived.

All we knew about him was his name, Harold, and that he was working for the two main movers who seemed more concerned about "getting this load on the road" than about their co-worker. However, one man did press a roll of bills into my hand—Harold's pay as a "day worker."

Following the ambulance to the hospital, we wondered, "Was that faith healing?"

Impressed, we knew it was more than stress-easing technique. We felt the power of love and witnessed the truth of James 5:16—"The prayer of a righteous person has great power. ..."

The rest of Harold's story will be published in this column in the Christmas issue next week.

(Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Go and Make Disciples/

John Valenti

## Advent: A time for evangelization

Advent is a liturgical season that highlights the evangelization mission of our Catholic Church.



The Gospel message calls for a need to prepare and be ready. It is a time to convert our hearts and get things right for the Lord.

The term evangelization literally means "to preach the Gospel and encourage conversion to the heart and mind of Jesus." Preaching the Gospel is the art of delivering a public discourse, sermon or witness on behalf of Jesus Christ.

There are many scriptural examples of effective preaching and evangelization. The elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, and finished building the temple at the command of God (Ezr 6:14). The people of Nineveh were saved from condemnation for those who repented at the preaching of Jonah (Mt 12:40-42).

John the Baptist came preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mk 1:4 and Mt 3:1). Jesus himself went throughout Galilee teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the Good News of the kingdom was the central theme of his ministry.

In 1 Cor 1:17, we read the words of the Apostle Paul: "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power."

Our Web site, which is located at [www.archindy.org](http://www.archindy.org), serves as a portal to any one of the numerous ministries offered by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The goal is to be an "online home for Catholics in central and southern Indiana and beyond—to be a tool of evangelization, to draw all people more deeply into the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to help them stay connected to the broad world of our faith."

The *National Directory for Catechesis* places evangelization at the core of ministry to fire a new energy and commitment to proclaim the Gospel. Everyone in ministry must appreciate the fact that evangelization and a comprehensive catechesis are in some way part of their own responsibilities.

According to Diana Raiche, director of Religious Education for the National Catholic Educational Association, the expansion of the term catechetical leader is worth noting in the *National Directory for Catechesis*: "A Catholic school superintendent, for example, by virtue of the catechetical responsibilities, is a catechetical leader."

Since the Catholic school is a center for evangelization, the Catholic school principal is also a catechetical leader who "plays a crucial role in achieving the catechetical objectives of the parish."

According to Bishop Richard J. Malone of the Diocese of Portland, Maine, who also serves as an episcopal adviser for the National Conference of Catechetical Leaders, "We do not evangelize and catechize in a vacuum. Even as we affirm and build on culture's positive elements, we must recognize and confront those elements that are roadblocks to evangelization and catechesis."

During Advent, we celebrate and anticipate the Good News of the kingdom which will be proclaimed throughout the world. We look forward to being evangelized.

Jesus said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God for I was sent for this purpose" (Lk 4:43). The time is fulfilled. Repent and believe in the Good News.

(John Valenti is associate director of evangelization and faith formation for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. E-mail him at [jvalenti@archindy.org](mailto:jvalenti@archindy.org).) †

Third Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 17, 2006

- Zephaniah 3:14-18a
- Philippians 4:4-7
- Luke 3:10-18

This weekend, the Church observes the Third Sunday of Advent.



The Book of Zephaniah furnishes the first reading.

It is a short book, only three brief chapters. Little is known about this prophet, beyond what can be assumed from the writing itself. This much, however, is

known. Zephaniah was the son of Chusi and traced his ancestry to Hezekiah, presumably King Hezekiah of Judah.

It appears that the book was written between 640 B.C. and 609 B.C., or during the reign of King Josiah of Judah. Josiah was a reformer, and his reforms were religious in intent and in impact, which is not surprising. The kings saw themselves, if they viewed themselves properly, as representatives and agents of God. Aside from all else, their duty was to draw the people more closely to God.

Zephaniah, obviously, supported this effort.

This weekend's first reading is an exuberant and bold exclamation of joy. When the people are faithful to God, they bring peace and prosperity upon themselves. If they draw more closely to God, if they are more attentive to the Covenant, their good fortune will be assured, their enemies will be turned away and they will be secure.

For the second reading this weekend, the Church presents a passage from the Epistle to the Philippians.

Philippi was a city located in what today is Greece, and was founded centuries before Christ and named in honor of King Philip, the father of Alexander the Great.

By the time of the first century A.D., it was an important center in the Roman Empire as a military base.

Such centers often became the sites of Christian communities because their population was considerable by contemporary standards and there was much movement of people through them. People

came from all parts of the empire, bringing their ideas and values, such as Christianity.

Like the reading from Zephaniah, this reading is filled with excitement and joy. The coming of the Lord is predicted, and it will be soon. Such was the assumption of many of the early Christians.

When Jesus would come again, all wrongs would be righted. Evil would be defeated. To prepare, Christians should conform themselves as much as possible and in every respect to the Lord.

The epistle proclaims that this holy transformation has occurred. It declares that the Christians of Philippi are unselfish.

St. Luke's Gospel is the source of the last reading.

In this reading, John the Baptist appears, urging that the man with two coats give one to the poor.

John also tells a tax collector to assess only the fixed amount. The Roman system of taxation was in effect legalized extortion. The Roman authorities were not able or even inclined to send citizens of Rome into the far reaches of the empire to collect taxes so local tax collectors had to be induced to do the work.

Some incentive was necessary. Local tax collectors were turncoats, despised as such, but profit made it worthwhile. They achieved their profit by adding their own demand to the assessed tax. The law required the taxpayers to meet these demands.

Then John declares that the true Messiah will come soon. The prophetic, holy, fearless John foretells the coming of Jesus.

## Reflection

This weekend sometimes is called Gaudete Sunday, the word coming from the opening of the Entrance Song, "Gaudete," which means "be joyful."

Zephaniah, Philippians and the Gospel all predict the coming of God's power and justice. Such is the Lord's promise.

However, even while the Scriptures look forward to a sudden, dramatic coming of Jesus in glory, these readings this weekend also remind us that we can bring Jesus into our lives and our communities by living the Gospel.

Fortifying our efforts to live the Gospels is the purpose of Advent. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, Dec. 18

Jeremiah 23:5-8  
Psalm 72:1, 12-13, 18-19  
Matthew 1:18-24

### Tuesday, Dec. 19

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

### Wednesday, Dec. 20

Isaiah 7:10-14  
Psalm 24:1-6  
Luke 1:26-38

### Thursday, Dec. 21

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

### Friday, Dec. 22

1 Samuel 1:24-28  
(Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-7, 8abcd  
Luke 1:46-56

### Saturday, Dec. 23

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

### Sunday, Dec. 24

Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Micah 5:1-4a  
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19  
Hebrews 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45

## Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

# Catholic with hearing problem may use a written confession

**Q**I am almost completely deaf and haven't been to confession in years.



If someone is unable to understand the priest, even with a hearing aid, can that person make confession between oneself and God? (New York)

**A**As you know, I'm sure, many people with serious hearing difficulties share your problem. I presume that, depending on your age when it became difficult for you to hear, you may have some speech handicaps as well. And it's not likely the priest will know sign language.

It is important, however, that you not let this keep you from the sacrament of penance, at least without considering what I will suggest. I have heard hundreds of confessions of people with these handicaps, and it can be done rather simply.

Nearly all Catholic churches today have confessional rooms that allow penitents to sit across from the priest. You may write a note to the priest informing him that you are deaf. If you feel you cannot speak clearly enough for him to understand you, mention that to him.

On the paper, write the sins you wish to confess, and ask the priest to write your penance on the same note. When you leave, the priest should return the paper to you. You can destroy it later.

This manner of confessing is entirely appropriate and accords with the Church's ritual for this sacrament (Introduction, #18), and the *Code of Canon Law*, which, for example, allows even human interpreters to assist the penitent in confession if the penitent is not familiar with the language.

It may be most convenient to take advantage of a time announced for the sacrament of reconciliation in your parish or at another church. It may also help to ask a relative or friend to talk to your parish priest about your situation so he can arrange to help you. One way or another, however, try not to deprive yourself of the benefits of this sacrament.

**Q**My 21-year-old granddaughter, one of the many unwed mothers, is raising her 2-year-old daughter alone.

Is it possible for her to have her baby baptized? What would you advise her to

do? Also, can she give the baby the father's name even though they are not married? (Florida)

**A**Children of unmarried mothers may be baptized. It is done often. As in any other baptism, however, some requirements must be met before a priest could baptize the child as a Catholic.

To summarize these requirements briefly, the Church insists that, apart from imminent danger of death, a priest cannot lawfully baptize a child unless he has solidly founded hope that the baby will be properly raised as a member of the Catholic faith (Canon #868).

Do the parents or the Catholic parent practice their faith now by faithful prayer, attendance at Mass, reception of the sacraments and so on?

If this evidence is lacking, the priest should delay the baptism until he can counsel the parent and explain why this is being done.

Unless a marriage between the couple is pending and imminent, I would strongly advise your granddaughter to think twice before naming the baby after the father. They're still young and much can happen in the coming years or before they decide finally whether or not to marry.

Please ask the mother to talk with her parish priest and ask him to help her.

(Catholic Q & A: Answers to the Most Common Questions About Catholicism is a 530-page collection of columns by Father John Dietzen published by Crossroad Publishing Company in New York. It is available through bookstores and sells for \$17.95. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612 or by e-mail to [jjdietzen@aol.com](mailto:jjdietzen@aol.com).) †

## My Journey to God

# Advent Blessings and Poems

### O Radiant Dawn

May you be blessed with a gentle spirit,  
a stillness of soul,  
so that, ever ready for radiance,  
you may thrill to the dawning within.

### An Advent Blessing

May you be blessed with moments of stillness,  
joy quickened within you,  
and a deep sense of awe  
in this season of holy waiting.  
May you know a fresh dawning of life  
within your spirit  
and a new capacity for discovering  
light  
emerging from the darkness.

### Longing for Light

In the deep stillness

of winter nights,  
we long for you,  
O silent, stirring presence.

In the long stretches of darkness,  
we desire your light.

Remind us,  
surprise us,  
amaze us  
with the burning.

### Entice Us, O God

O Radiant Light,  
dispelling early morning fog,  
piercing wisps of lingering gray clouds,  
draw us into an expectant stillness.  
Entice us into attentive waiting,  
until you find that place in us  
that longs to receive  
and to reflect  
your light.

By Sister Barbara Leonhard, O.S.F.

(Franciscan Sister Barbara Leonhard of Oldenburg wrote these poems following quiet prayer time. She has shared them with friends on Advent cards she created in past years.)

## Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to "My Journey to God," The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org). †

# Mary, the mother of Jesus, isn't just for Catholics anymore

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As publications from *Time* magazine to *Christianity Today* have discovered recently, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is not just for Catholics anymore.

Features on Mary are perennial favorites for editors looking for a religion-themed story before Christmas, and in the last few years many of these articles have focused on the increasing popularity of Mary among Protestants.

Marianist Father Thomas Thompson, editor of the Marian Library Newsletter at the University of Dayton in Ohio, points out that the expanding Protestant acceptance of Mary is based upon a strictly scriptural view of her, rather than on any change in Protestant theology.

Some Catholic doctrines about Mary, such as the Immaculate Conception—the belief that she was conceived

without sin—remain controversial among Protestants, Father Thompson said. But as anti-Catholicism has waned among

Protestants, the barriers to Episcopalians, Baptists and evangelicals turning to Mary have faded as well.

"We're very happy to see others taking an interest in Mary," he said in a telephone interview with Catholic News Service.

Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University, a Baptist college in Birmingham, Ala., wrote recently that "it is time for evangelicals to recover a fully biblical appreciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her role in the history of salvation, and to do so precisely as evangelicals."

George's comments appeared in the December 2003 issue of *Christianity Today* and in a 2004 collection of essays by various theologians titled "Mary: Mother of God."

"We may not be able to recite the rosary or kneel down before statues of Mary, but we need not throw her overboard," George wrote.

In the magazine, he quoted an early 20th-century Southern Baptist New Testament scholar, A.T. Robertson,

who said Mary "has not had fair treatment either from Protestants or Catholics." Robertson argued that while Catholics have "deified" Mary, evangelicals have coldly neglected her.

"We have been afraid to praise and esteem Mary for her full worth," said George, citing Robertson, "lest we be accused of leanings and sympathy with Catholics."

George's article went on to explain historical, scriptural and theological reasons why Protestants should embrace Mary.

"We need not go through Mary in order to get to Jesus," George concluded, "but we can join with Mary in pointing others to him."

Another recent book, *Blessed One*, is a collection of 11 essays about Mary by Protestant scholars.

In their introduction, editors Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Cynthia L. Rigby, professors at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Texas, respectively, said their goal for the book was to help Protestants think in new ways about Mary, "blessing her and being blessed by her."

"She is a person of faith who does not always understand but who seeks to put her trust in God," they wrote.

For Muslims, on the other hand, Mary has always been a part of the picture.

John Alden Williams, professor emeritus in the humanities of religion at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, is a Catholic historian who has studied Islamic civilization and religion. He and fellow William and Mary professor James A. Bill published *Roman Catholics and Shi'i Muslims* in 2002.

It notes that two sections of the Quran, the sacred book of Islam, are devoted to Mary, known there as Maryam. She is recognized as the purified woman chosen to be the mother of the promised Messiah. Islam considers Jesus an important prophet, but not the incarnation of God.

Williams explained in a phone interview that, like Catholics, Shiite Muslims, who are a minority compared to



This is a detail from the Duccio painting "Madonna and Child." The work is among those featured in the new documentary "Picturing Mary." The production, made possible in part by the U.S. bishops' Catholic Communication Campaign, airs on several Indiana public television stations, including on Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. on WTIU-HD in Bloomington and on Dec. 24 at 10 p.m. on WFYI in Indianapolis. Check your local PBS listings for more viewing times.

the vastly more numerous Sunni Muslims, believe in intercessory prayer through saints and other holy people. That includes Mary, who is highly revered as a mediatrix between humans and God, or Allah. Sufis, another Islamic sect, also believe in intercession.

In Sunni Islam, "the whole idea of intercession is disputed," Williams said, "just as it is among Calvinist Protestants."

Among the differences the leaders of the Protestant Reformation had with the Catholic Church was the growth during the Middle Ages of devotion to Mary. Reformers argued that Jesus was the only mediator between God and mankind, and that "exuberant Marian devotion seemed to them to threaten the clarity of the Gospel message of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, through Christ alone," wrote Daniel L. Migliore, a theology professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, in his chapter in *Blessed One*.

Muslims who seek Mary's intercession, on the other hand, see her in much the same way Catholics do, said Williams.

While living in the Middle East, he said he witnessed several striking examples of the reverence that many Muslims have for Mary.

At the Convent of Our Lady, an Orthodox Church in Sednaya, Syria, he watched devout Muslims roll out prayer rugs to join Christians in reverencing an icon of Mary that is reputed to have been painted by St. Luke the Evangelist and believed to have the power to cure illnesses.

And in the late 1960s, many Muslims were among the millions who gathered in a Coptic Orthodox church in Egypt, hoping to catch a glimpse of reported Marian apparitions, he said.

For more than a year starting in 1968, apparitions of Mary were reported over the domes of the Church of the Virgin Mary in the Zeitoun area of Cairo.

Williams went to the church once during that time and was surprised to see Muslims among the crowd, he said.

"I asked some people, 'Isn't it a little funny for you to be coming here to a Christian church?'" Williams said. They said they considered it only proper that Mary would appear at a church dedicated to her, but explained that they believed she was speaking to all Egyptians, not just Christians.

"They all saw it as a great sign of consolation after the war with Israel [in 1967] that God had not forgotten the people of Egypt," he said. †

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**What is the Old Testament?**

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis and Saint Meinrad School of Theology are offering a ten week course emphasizing the historical, prophetic and literary significance of the Old Testament in the context of Christian Faith. This course is one of the required classes for the Ecclesial Lay Ministry program (ELM).

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Contact:  
Suzanne Yakimchick, Director of Lay Ministry Formation  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
1-317-236-7325 or 1-800-382-9836 ext. 7325



# Serra Club announces Vocations Essay Contest theme

By Sean Gallagher

The Serra Club of Indianapolis has announced the theme for its 2007 Vocations Essay Contest.

It is inspired by the recent canonization of St. Theodora Guérin, the 19th-century foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and Indiana's first saint.

Students throughout the archdiocese in grades 7 through 12 enrolled in religious education programs or interparochial and private schools, as well as those who are homeschooled, will be asked to reflect upon the following words of St. Theodora:

"If you lean with all your weight upon providence, you

will find yourself well supported."

They will be invited to answer the following question in their essay: "How do deacons, priests, and religious brothers and sisters, through their lives and their ministry, demonstrate their trust in God's providence?"

Contest rules and procedures will be sent to all parishes and schools early next year. The deadline for entries is Feb. 15, 2007.

Teachers and catechists for each grade may choose one or two essays from each grade to be submitted to the contest. A committee will read and judge the entries.

One winner from each grade will be chosen and receive a cash prize, be invited to read his or her

essay at a recognition luncheon and have the essay published in *The Criterion*.

The Serra Club of Indianapolis is a chapter of Serra International, a Catholic organization dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioner John Kelley of Indianapolis, who is also a Serra Club member, said the contest is an opportunity for young people to recognize the importance of vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.

"[It] forces kids to stop ... and reflect on the service that priests, deacons, brothers and sisters perform, which I think is all too easy to take for granted," he said. "We just expect a priest to be there to

say Mass and hear confessions.

"It's not automatic. We have to nurture [vocations] and encourage them and do everything we can.

Dave Worland, the principal of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis and a Serra Club member, said that participation in the contest is an integral part of his school's curriculum in all four grades, and is a way to open students to the possibility that they might be called to the priesthood, diaconate or religious life.

"That's part of what we do here," he said. "We don't shy away from that. We want to make sure that if any of the students are getting a calling ... that they can hear it."

According to Kelley,

File photo by Sean Gallagher



Three students from Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, from left, Katie Zupancic, Michael O'Neil and Elizabeth Jamison, pose with their principal, Dave Worland, during a 2005 luncheon at the Knights of Columbus Hall at 511 E. Thompson Road in Indianapolis. The students were winners in their grade division in the 2005 Indianapolis Serra Club Vocations Essay Contest.

approximately 50 percent of archdiocesan schools participated in the contest last year, which is also open to students

in parish religious education programs. He hopes that participation will increase for next year's contest. †

## Bishop Wenski urges more aggressive efforts for peace in Somalia

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Fla., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Policy, has urged the U.S. government to take a more aggressive diplomatic stance to ensure peace in war-torn Somalia.

"The Somali people deserve international support in their search for a resolution to a worsening crisis that has already taken a devastating human toll in the last 15 years," he said in a Dec. 5 letter to Stephen J. Hadley, U.S. national security adviser. "But an aggressive military strategy will not resolve the current situation."

Rather, Bishop Wenski suggested the U.S. government "expand high-level diplomatic attention" to the Somali situation. "The United States should engage more closely with key actors—especially Somalia's neighbors and other African governments—in order to help avert a full-scale conflict and work toward a viable long-term solution," he said.

The U.N. Security Council on Dec. 6 approved a resolution authorizing an East African peacekeeping force to keep Somalia's interim government intact. The government is now under threat from an alliance of Islamic militias in the country.

The militias took control of the Somali capital of Mogadishu over the summer and have been extending their control to other areas of the country. Ethiopia has sent troops to aid the government, while rival Eritrea has sided with the militias, who told The Associated Press on Dec. 6 that residents of one Somali city will be beheaded if they do not pray five times a day, as required by Islam.

Bishop Wenski said he wants the U.S. government to tell both sides—the transitional federal government and the militias, known as the Council of Somali Islamic Courts—and neighboring nations to "stop the escalation of conflicts and declare their support for the current peace process," which includes mid-December talks in Khartoum, Sudan.

The bishop said the U.S. should call on the U.N. and

the international community "to increase diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing tensions, promoting dialogue and

supporting concrete steps to reduce the potential for war," adding that "particular support is needed for measures

that would reduce militarization in the region."

Bishop Wenski told Hadley, "Military action is

not the solution to this problem. Civilians, especially women and children, would bear the brunt of any

violence, and the people of the region could suffer many deaths and massive displacement." †

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# 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.

**ANDRES, Virginia M.**, 82, St. John the Baptist, Starlight, Nov. 20. Wife of Richard J. Andres Sr. Mother of Lynn Donohue, Gregory, Michael and Richard Andres. Sister of Irma Bierman, Bonnie Huber, Norma Johns, Martha Schmidt, Edward Sr. and George Krueger Jr. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of five.

**BENEKER, Marie**, 96, St. Joseph, St. Leon, Nov. 16. Mother of Frances Bischoff, Lillian Knue, Mildred and Rita Stenger. Grandmother of 24. Great-grandmother of 61. Great-great-grandmother of nine.

**CAVARRUBIUS, Cindy L.**, 47, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Nov. 19.

**CLARK, Dennis Warren**, 59, St. Mark, Indianapolis, Nov. 26. Husband of Dorothy Clark. Father of Denise Swineford, Dana and David Clark. Son of Josephine Clark. Brother of Paula McAfee.

**EVANS, Betty J. (Knecht)**, 86, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 1.

Mother of Margie Cordray, Bettigee Gilpin, Nancy Leising, Diane Stevenson, James and William Evans. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 27. Great-great-grandmother of several.

**FAULKENBERG, Mary F.**, 77, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 26. Mother of Melinda Nugent. Sister of Louella Jarboe, Carol Perkins and Alex Newton. Grandmother of one.

**FENTRESS, Yvonne M. (Venne)**, 52, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs, Nov. 13. Mother of Nathan and Wade Fentress. Daughter of Theodore and Mary Venne. Sister of Eva Andres, Sara Edwards, Jane, Ernest, Felix, Mark and Timothy Venne. Grandmother of four.

**GARTNER, Richard Benedict**, 74, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Dec. 2. Husband of Jean (Edens) Gartner. Father of Richard B. Gartner Jr. Brother of Dorothy Allen and Robert Gartner. Grandfather of four.

**GAULT, Raymond Edward**, 60, St. Mary, North Vernon, Nov. 19. Husband of Dawn (Stroker) Gault. Father of Rebecca Eckles, Robin Hempstead, Tracy Vinson and Bryan Gault. Brother of Rosie Coleman, Barbara and Robert Gault. Grandfather of eight.

**HAUCK, Rosemary Ellen**, 83, Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis, Nov. 21. Mother of Lou Hauck. Sister of Eileen Zalewski. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

**HOOVER, William Donald**, 76, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Nov. 22. Father of Stacy Hoover.

**KAHLER, William J.**, 76, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 12. Husband of Patricia (Poehlein) Kahler. Father of Tabitha Brown, Shelley Gregory, Cindy Malone, Debbie Poehlein, Brenda Stephens, Todd Williams, Tamara and Mike Kahler. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of 14.

**KENNEY, Alice J.**, 76, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Mother of Michelle Biggerstaff, Denise Freeman, John and Tom Kenney. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of one.

**KRIER, Betty Jean**, 80, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Mother of Mary Clayton, Annie Drake, Carolyn Friedman, Suzanne Hewitt, George, James, John, Thomas and William Krier. Sister of Joanne Shelton. Grandmother of 20. Great-grandmother of one.

**KURTH, Brent Andrew**, 30, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 20. Son of Peggy Ann (Newman) Herrod and Dennis Kurth. Stepson of Doyle Herrod. Brother of Bridget, Kate and Rob Herrod. Grandson of Rosemary Magill, Ron and Margaret Forrester.

**MIJARES, Joe I.**, 89, Sacred Heart, Indianapolis, Nov. 27. Husband of Gertrude Mijares. Father of Roy Mijares. Brother of Theresa Mijares.

**MOORE, Mary M.**, 79, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 24. Mother of Donna Goffinet. Sister of Ed Marchand. Grandmother of one.

**MULLIN, James Malachi Sr.**, 78, St. Patrick, Indianapolis, Oct. 22. Husband of Thelma

(Wright) Mullin. Father of Maureen Reel, Therese, James and Michael Mullin. Grandfather of five.

**NAY, Merle Lee Jr.**, 63, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 10. Husband of Jean Nay. Father of Terri Deeg, Mary Dunn, Kimberly Moran, Sandra Shestina, Charles, Clifford, Merle and William Nay, Harold, James, Joseph and Shepherd Lefebere. Brother of Wendylen and Ralph Nay. Grandfather of 27. Great-grandfather of eight.

**NELSON, Juanita Harris**, 82, St. Rita, Indianapolis, Nov. 16. Wife of Charles Nelson Sr., Mother of Charles Jr. and Larry Nelson Sr. Sister of Wanda Smith. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of 22. Great-great-grandmother of two.

**PATTERSON, Roger A.**, 89, St. Rita, Indianapolis, Nov. 16. Husband of Norma Mae Patterson. Father of Joyce Harrison, Beverly Jackson, Rita, Mark, Paul and Roger Patterson Jr. Brother of William Patterson. Grandfather of 22. Great-grandfather of 20.

**RADY, Fred**, 83, Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville, Nov. 19. Husband of Betty (Williams) Rady. Father of Janette Milhon, Julia Miller and Pat Rady. Brother of Ethel Rainey. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of four.

**RICHARD, Duane F.**, 82, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 12. Husband of Wilma Richard. Father of Cathy Taylor, Holly, David, Rick and Roger Richard. Brother of Floyd Funderburke and Gary Richard. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of four.

**UBELHOR, Ronald W.**, 71, St. Michael, Greenfield, Nov. 11. Father of Rhonda Crosby and Martin Ubelhor. Brother of Carole Gilliland. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of three.

**WALKER, Raymond**, 84, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 16. Husband of Clara Walker. Father of Claire Barron, Nancy Patterson, Elva Woodmansee and Robert Walker. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of seven.

**WEISBACH, Eleanor M.**, 89, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 19. Wife of John A. Weisbach. Mother of Pauline and Shirley Niese. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of one.

**WERNER, Margaret (Winsted)**, 86, St. Mark, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Mother of Jill Notter, Marie White and John Werner. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of three.

**WIGHT, Rosemary**, 76, St. Bernadette, Nov. 23. Mother of Gayle Walsh and Claire Elliott. Grandmother of three. †

## Franciscan Father Benno Heidlage was a native of Oldenburg

Franciscan Father Benno Heidlage, a native of Oldenburg and member of the Franciscan community at Holy Family Friary, died on Nov. 26 after a brief illness. He was 85.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 29 at Holy Family Church in Oldenburg, with burial on Nov. 30 at Holy Family Cemetery in Oldenburg.

A spokesman for the Franciscan friars of St. John the Baptist Province in Cincinnati, Ohio, said Father Benno was highly regarded by the thousands of parishioners he served in decades of ministry and greatly respected by the hundreds of young friars who benefited from his spiritual direction during their years in formation.

The son of Theodore and Olivia (Scheidler) Heidlage, he began his education at Holy Family School in Oldenburg.

He started his life with the

friars at St. Francis High School Seminary in Cincinnati, was invested as a friar in 1939 and ordained to the priesthood in 1948.

For 51 years, Father Benno served as a teacher at the seminary, a novice director for friars in formation, and a pastor or associate pastor.

He ministered at parishes in Fort Wayne, Ind.; Lafayette, Ind.; Louisville, Ky.; Metamora, Ill.; and Washburn, Ill.

Father Benno retired in 1999 and moved to St. Louis Friary in Batesville then returned to his home parish in Oldenburg in 2003.

He is survived by a brother, Robert Heidlage of Connersville, and great-nieces and great-nephews.

Memorial gifts may be sent to St. John the Baptist Province, 1615 Vine St., Cincinnati, Ohio 46202. †

## Providence Sister Jane Maher was an educator and treasurer

Providence Sister Jane Maher died on Nov. 28 at Mother Theodore Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 87.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 1 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

The former Dorothy Jane Maher was born on March 10, 1919, in Indianapolis.

She entered the congregation of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on Feb. 11, 1938, professed first vows on Aug. 15, 1940, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1946.

During 68 years as a member of the congregation, she ministered as a teacher and principal for 37 years at Catholic schools staffed by the sisters in Indiana, Illinois and California.

In the archdiocese, Sister Jane served at St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis from 1962-65, St. Patrick School in Terre Haute from 1965-68 and Our Lady of the Greenwood School in Greenwood from 1969-71.

Sister Jane also ministered

in Indianapolis at the former St. Bridget School from 1971-72, St. Monica School from 1972-74 and St. Philip Neri School from 1974-77.

She served as business officer at the Providence Retirement Home in New Albany from 1977-84 then returned to the motherhouse to serve at the plant business office from 1984-85.

Sister Jane ministered as Sacred Heart provincial treasurer at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods from 1985-89, served on the province treasurer's staff from 1989-90 then assisted with clerical service for the province staff treasurer from 1990-91.

From 1992-96, Sister Jane served as an office assistant at the central business office at the motherhouse. She began her prayer ministry in 1997.

Surviving are two half-sisters, Irene Maher of Sarasota, Fla., and Norene Mara of Nashville; two half-brothers, James and Timothy Maher of Indianapolis; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

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

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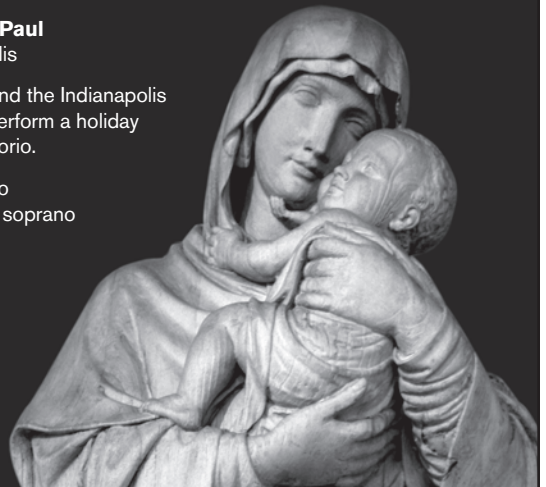
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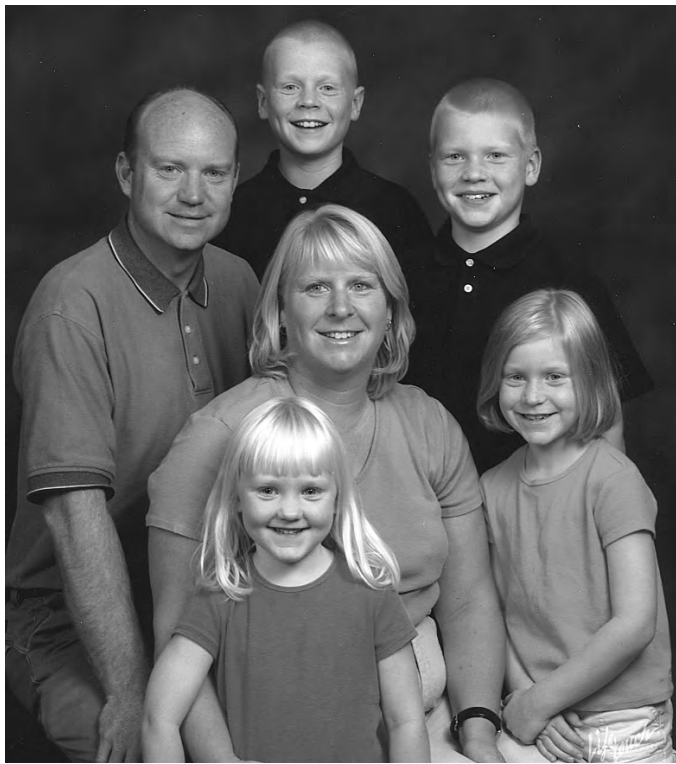
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