



The

Criterion

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It's All Good

Parenthood calls us to love our children—no matter what, writes columnist Patti Lamb, page 12.

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Pope, bishops pray for victims of Egyptian mosque attack

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis led pilgrims in prayer for the victims of a bombing at a mosque in Egypt's northern Sinai region.

Addressing thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis said he received news of the attack with "great sorrow." "May God deliver us from these tragedies and sustain the efforts of all those who work for peace, harmony and coexistence," the pope said after reciting the *Angelus* on the feast of Christ the King on Nov. 26.



Pope Francis

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), was among other Catholic leaders who condemned the attack, calling it a "monstrous terrorist attack on innocent people at prayer."

The Nov. 24 attack took place at the Al-Rawdah Mosque in Bir al-Abd.

More than 300 people, including two dozen children, were killed when at least 40 attackers detonated a bomb, then gunned down worshippers as they fled. More than 120 others were wounded in what is being described as the deadliest modern-day attack in Egypt's history.

The Egyptian prosecutor's office said it believed the attack was coordinated by Islamic State militants and was targeting Muslims who practice Sufism, an Islamic mysticism.

Remembering the victims and the wounded, Pope Francis called on Christians to pray for those who were "so severely affected" by the attack that occurred during prayers at the mosque.

"Those people, in that moment, prayed. We, too, in silence, pray for them," he said.

Following news of the bombing, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said the pope was "profoundly grieved" by the loss of life and condemned the attack as a "wanton act of brutality directed at innocent civilians gathered in prayer."

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A gift of the heart and hands



Seventh-grader John Meer can be seen at St. Louis School in Batesville with his tool kit, including a hammer or two, as he selflessly serves the school community taking care of repairs. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Handy seventh-grader leaves his mark on the lives of students and teachers

By John Shaughnessy

BATESVILLE—The more you learn about 13-year-old John Meer, the more you keep smiling.

Consider this story about John, a seventh-grader whose ability to fix things with his hands may only be surpassed by the way he uses his heart to carve a special place in the lives of the students and teachers at St. Louis School in Batesville.

A couple of years ago, a classmate had a wobbly desk, so John brought in an Allen wrench to tighten it and a 5-foot-long level to check it. And ever

since, he's been using his time before school and even during recess to secure bookcases, fix broken chairs, repair picture frames and tighten wobbly desks around the school.

"I was just thinking one day, while I was eating my lunch, of all the things the teachers had done for me through the years, and I just wanted to pay them back for it," he explains. "I help my mom a lot in the kitchen, too, because she helps me with my homework. I even made breakfast in bed for her on her birthday, but she didn't eat it there because it would be too messy."

And consider this story about John. He had just finished making height-appropriate tables in the second-grade classroom of teacher Jan Narwold when she rewarded him with some candy. Yet on the way out of the classroom, John gave the treat to a second-grader who he had noticed was working hard.

"I think someone who is working hard and paying attention to the teacher deserves it more," John says about the gesture.

Gifts of the hands and the heart

The two stories show the two main

See MEER, page 2

Respect rights of all groups, pope tells Myanmar's leaders

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar (CNS)—The plight of the ethnic Muslim minority in Myanmar's Rakhine state was front and center in speeches by Pope Francis and Aung San Suu Kyi, but neither publicly used the word Rohingya.

After private meetings on Nov. 28 with Myanmar President Htin Kyaw and Suu Kyi, the state counselor and de facto head of government, the pope and Suu Kyi gave formal speeches to government officials and diplomats gathered at a convention center in Naypyitaw, the nation's capital.

Suu Kyi, leader of the process to bring democracy to Myanmar and winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, publicly acknowledged, "Of the many challenges that our government has been facing, the situation in Rakhine has most strongly captured the attention of the world. As we address long-standing issues—social, economic and political—that have

See MYANMAR, page 8



Pope Francis greets children as he arrives at Yangon International Airport in Yangon, Myanmar, on Nov. 27. The pope is making a six-day visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

MEER

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points that guide John's life—fixing things and helping others.

As the sixth of nine children of Nancy and Clifford "Kip" Meer, John has been pitching in on the family farm near Batesville for as long as he can remember, and trying to follow in his father's footsteps for just as long.

"He's just inspired me over the years," John says about his dad. "I've been in the woodshop here and there. I've built things. I made a lamp. I made a step stool that you can flip back and it's a chair. I like doing electrical work, too. And I can swing a hammer as well as I can swing an axe."

Still, the gifts of his heart outshine the talents of his hands, say the people who have watched him grow up at St. Louis School through the years.

"John inspires me and everyone around him to serve others selflessly with the gifts that God has given us," says Jenny Lents, a seventh-grade teacher who has had her desk chair repaired by John. "He continually asks how he may be of help, and if he is given any treats for his service, he gives them away to another student."

"He has a heart of gold, and he knows his stuff," says first-grade teacher Jessica Laker, who had a wooden bookcase in her classroom repaired by John. "He always asks if there's anything he can do. He even read a chapter of a book to my first-graders the other day."

Jan Narwold notes that her second-grade students "look up to John, and try to be like him. John is living out the Catholic faith. He's helping others."

John's contributions of hands and heart recently led to another memorable moment at St. Louis School.

'He's giving back the best way he can'

A few weeks ago, a representative of a catalog company came to the school with some sample products to show the principal, Chad Moeller. One of the items immediately caught Moeller's attention—a ratchet tool kit.

Knowing that John often borrows tools from him or maintenance director Wade Ryle, Moeller thought the tool kit would be a nice gift for John for all he has done at the school. The principal also arranged a presentation during which some of the teachers gave the tool kit to John.

It's the one reward that John has kept for himself.

"I thought the teachers at St. Louis must like me a lot to give me this," John



Seventh-grader John Meer works on repairing a desk at St. Louis School in Batesville. (Submitted photo)

says, smiling. "It made me feel happy that I'm a student at St. Louis, and they allow me to do what I like to do."

What John does best, Moeller says, is serve as a role model—for children and adults.

"John has found a way to use his passion and skill to give back to the teachers and school that he loves," the principal says. "He's giving back the best way he can."

On this morning during recess, John carries the tool kit with him as he walks into the first-grade classroom where he is scheduled to give a presentation on the careful use of tools the next day. When they see him, the first-graders smile at him and approach him easily.

"As you can see, I have a lot of student friends," John says.

Moments later, he's stopping in the second-grade classroom of Narwold. After a few moments there, he starts to head toward the door and back to his seventh-grade classroom. Pausing for a moment, he turns to Narwold and smiles as he says, "Anything you need fixed today, my door is always open." †



Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 1-15, 2017

December 2 — 5:30 p.m.

Mass with Installation of Pastor, St. Simon the Apostle Church, Indianapolis

December 3 — 3 p.m.

Mass for the African Community, St. Rita Church, Indianapolis

December 4 — 8:45 a.m.

Leadership Team Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 5-6

Indiana Bishops' Province Meeting and Indiana Catholic Conference Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 6 — 1 p.m.

Ascension Health Annual Sponsor Report Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 7 — 10 a.m.

Catholic Center Staff Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 7 — 6 p.m.

Catholic Community Foundation Tree Lighting and Prayer Service, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 8 — 3:30 p.m.

Mass for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Marian University Chapel, Indianapolis

December 8 — 5 p.m.

Ribbon-cutting and blessing of Paul J. Norman Center, Marian University, Indianapolis

December 10 — 11 a.m.

Mass with Installation of Pastor, Our Lady of the Springs Church, French Lick

December 11 — 8:45 a.m.

Leadership Team Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 12 — 10:30 a.m.

Priests Personnel Board Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 12 — 6 p.m.

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass, St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, Indianapolis

December 13 — 9 a.m.

Mass with students and faculty at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School, Indianapolis

December 13 — 11 a.m.

Deans Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 14 — 10 a.m.

Leadership Team Meeting, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 14 — 11:30 a.m.

Catholic Center Employee Luncheon, Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 14 — 5:30 p.m. (Central)

Solemn Evening Prayer—Installation of the Most Rev. Joseph M. Siegel, Bishop of Evansville, St. Benedict Cathedral, Evansville

December 15 — 2 p.m. (Central)

Mass of Installation—Installation of the Most Rev. Joseph M. Siegel, Bishop of Evansville, St. Benedict Cathedral, Evansville

December 15 — 5 p.m.

Little Sisters of the Poor Fundraiser Dinner, The Willows, Indianapolis

(Schedule subject to change.)

EGYPT

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Pope Francis, Cardinal Parolin wrote, "joins all people of good will in imploring that hearts hardened by hatred will learn to renounce the way of violence that leads to such great suffering, and embrace the way of peace."

In Washington on the day of the attack, Cardinal DiNardo said: "Terrorist acts can never be justified in the name of God or any political ideology, and the fact this attack took place at a mosque, a place of worship, is especially offensive to God."

"The Catholic Church in the United States mourns with the people of Egypt at this time of tragedy, and assures them of our prayerful solidarity," Cardinal DiNardo said in a statement. †

Readers are invited to share favorite Christmas memories

The Criterion invites readers to submit a brief story about a special holiday memory for possible inclusion in our annual Christmas issue, which will be published on Dec. 22.

Your favorite Christmas story may be written about a humorous or serious topic related to your faith, family or friends.

Submissions should include the writer's name, address, parish and telephone number.

Send your story to The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46206 or by e-mail to editor Mike Krokos at mkrokos@archindy.org by the Dec. 12 deadline. †

Pope Francis' prayer intentions for December



- **The Elderly**—That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.

(To see Pope Francis' monthly intentions, go www.apostleshipofprayer.org/2017-intentions.)



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Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

Collection assisting retired religious offers a way to say thanks

By John Shaughnessy

Father Gerald Kirkhoff has always been impressed by the many ways that priests, brothers and sisters of religious orders have helped shape the faith and lives of so many people through the years.



Fr. Gerald Kirkhoff

He's also appreciated the way that Catholics throughout the Church in central and southern Indiana have always been

generous to the priests, brothers and sisters of religious orders who are now retired after years of serving people for little pay.

Those two forces of generosity will connect again during the weekend Masses of Dec. 9-10 as Catholics in the archdiocese will have the opportunity to "give to those who have given a lifetime"

as part of a special collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious.

"The contributions the retired religious have made to the archdiocese are enormous," says Father Kirkhoff, the archdiocesan vicar for advocacy for priests. "We can't count all they've done. When I talk to folks about this collection, this isn't an act of charity, it's an act of justice. They weren't paid much. It's so evident the debt we owe them."

Father Kirkhoff mentions the orders of religious sisters—Benedictines, Franciscans and Sisters of Providence—who founded communities in the archdiocese and taught in parochial schools.

He also thinks of the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Missionaries of Charity and the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration who reach out and care for the sick, the elderly and the vulnerable in the archdiocese.

Then there are the priests and brothers from religious orders that

include the Benedictines, Conventual Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits and Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans). Some minister as parish pastors while others serve in schools, hospitals and colleges.

"Many of us or our siblings or our parents grew up with religious firsthand," Father Kirkhoff says. "All of us owe something to our elders and the people who went before us."

"It's good for us Christians to realize what other people do for us, and for us to acknowledge it. It puts our lives in proportion to the Lord. We receive from him, and we pass it on. People in the archdiocese have been extremely generous in this second collection."

Last year, Catholics from the archdiocese contributed \$257,604.46 to the collection, according to the National Religious Retirement Office. Nationally, the 2016 collection raised almost \$30.7 million. The organization also states that about 94 cents of

every dollar raised benefits the retired religious.

In June, the National Religious Retirement Office distributed \$25 million to 390 religious communities across the country, according to a press release from the organization. Communities use the funds to increase retirement savings and subsidize expenses, including prescription medications and nursing care.

"We are humbled and profoundly grateful for the love and support of Catholics across the nation," said Presentation Sister Stephanie Still, the executive director of the National Religious Retirement Office.

"I visit many religious communities and see the good works that members young and old provide. Generosity to the annual collection ensures our office can furnish support to help these communities care for older members while continuing their ministries and witness."

(For more on the Retirement Fund for Religious, go to retiredreligious.org.) †

Pope Francis urges bishops to exercise authority as judges in annulments

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A diocesan bishop is the sole judge in the streamlined process for handling marriage annulments, Pope Francis said.

The simplified process "is not an option that the diocesan bishop can choose, but rather an obligation that derives from his consecration and from the mission received," making the bishop the sole and exclusive authority in charge throughout the three phases of the briefer process, the pope said.

This process, known as the "abbreviated" or "briefer" process, applies only to cases that meet certain specific conditions.

The pope made his remarks during an audience on Nov. 25 with canon lawyers, priests and pastoral workers attending a course sponsored by the Roman Rota, a Vatican tribunal that mainly deals with marriage annulment cases.

The pope encouraged them to be close to those who are suffering and who expect help "to restore peace to their consciences and God's will on readmission to the Eucharist."

The new process "is an expression of the Church that is able to welcome and care for

those who are wounded in various ways by life and, at the same time, it is an appeal for the defense of the sacredness of the marriage bond," he said.

Pope Francis used the occasion to clarify and strongly emphasize how a bishop should not delegate completely the duty of deciding marriage cases to the offices of his curia, especially in the streamlined process for handling cases of clear nullity that were established with new norms that took effect at the end of 2015. The norms were outlined in two papal documents, "*Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus*" ("The Lord Jesus, the Gentle Judge") for the Latin Church and "*Mitis et misericors Iesus*," ("The Meek and Merciful Jesus") for the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Pointing out the clear role of the diocesan bishop as sole judge in the briefer process was meant to help apply the new laws and increasingly recover an appropriate practice of synodality, he said.

The diocesan bishop has always been charged with exercising judicial power personally or through others, but, the pope

said, that principle has been interpreted in such a way that the bishop no longer personally exercises that power and delegates "almost everything to the tribunals."

Given the unique nature of the abbreviated process in determining the nullity of marriages, the pope set out a number of points that he deemed to be "decisive and exclusive in the personal exercise of the role of judge by the diocesan bishop."

The abbreviated process was to simplify and speed up the processes necessary to determine and declare the truth about the nullity of a marriage, in other words, declaring that it never existed as a valid sacrament.

The changes, the pope wrote in 2015, were motivated by "concern for the salvation of souls," and particularly "charity and mercy" toward those who feel alienated from the Church because of their marriage situations and the perceived complexity of the Church's annulment process.

(For more information about the annulment process, including the abbreviated process, visit archindy.org/tribunal, send an e-mail to Ann Tully, coordinator of the archdiocesan metropolitan tribunal at atully@archindy.org, or call 800-382-9836, ext. 1460 or 317-236-1460.) †

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Editorial



People take photos on tablets and phones as Pope Francis arrives to open the annual convention of the Diocese of Rome in Paul VI hall at the Vatican June 16, 2014. The pope, at his Nov. 8 general audience, said it's "an awful thing" for people to take cellphone photos at Mass. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Mass is not a show, but a beautiful, transformative encounter with Jesus

Pope Francis has taken notice of how some of us Catholic Christians behave during Mass.

And if his recent comments are any indication, we would do well to slow down, center ourselves in those times and always remember that taking part in a liturgy and receiving the Eucharist are, as the bishops at the Second Vatican Council taught, "the source and summit of the Christian life."

In his recent Wednesday general audience talks at the Vatican on the liturgy, Pope Francis has reflected on what the Mass really is and why it is so important.

But in the process, he has also let our family of faith know in no uncertain terms that some of us fail to focus our hearts on God during this time.

"This is Mass: to enter into Jesus' passion, death, resurrection and ascension," the pope said on Nov. 22 during his weekly general audience. "When we go to Mass, it is as if we were going to Calvary; it's the same."

If we realize that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist and is letting himself be broken, and his love and mercy poured out for everyone, "would we allow ourselves to chitchat, take pictures, to be on show? No," the pope said.

"For sure, we would be silent, in mourning and also in joy for being saved," he added.

The Mass is not a show, but a beautiful, transformative encounter with the true loving presence of Jesus Christ, Pope Francis said during an audience on Nov. 8.

Massgoers with smartphones should keep them stowed away so as not to interfere with the sacredness of the liturgy, the Holy Father said.

When the priest celebrating Mass says, "Let us lift up our hearts," he is not saying, "Lift up our cellphones and take a picture. No. It's an awful thing" to do, the pope added.

Unfortunately, in our world of instant access to state-of-the-art technology, photographs are becoming a norm with nearly every life experience for some people—the liturgy included.

"It makes me so sad when I celebrate [Mass] in the square or in the basilica

and I see so many cellphones in the air," the pope said. "And not just by the lay faithful, some priests and bishops, too."

But our Holy Father also reminds us, the Mass, as a "memorial," is more than just remembering an event from the past. It makes that event present and alive in a way that transforms those who participate in it. If we're being honest with ourselves, not even a photograph can duplicate that.

Our faith teaches us that the Eucharist is the focal point of God's saving act, Jesus making himself present in the bread, "broken for us, pouring out all of his mercy and love on us like he did on the cross, in that way, renewing our hearts, our lives and the way we relate to him and our brothers and sisters," the pope said.

"Every celebration of the Eucharist is a beam of that sun that never sets, which is the risen Jesus Christ," he added. "To take part in Mass, especially on Sundays, means entering into the victory of the resurrection, being illuminated by his light, warmed by his heat. 'Mass,' he continued, is "the triumph of Jesus."

And in that triumph, as Jesus goes from death to eternal life during the liturgical celebration, he also seeks to "carry us with him" toward eternal life, Pope Francis said.

As Catholic Christians, we understand that eternal life is what we yearn for as we live out our call as missionary disciples.

But if we are truly to grow closer to God, as the pope noted, then we must understand the true value and significance of the liturgy, and not get distracted by earthly things.

The Holy Father reminded us of this when he said in his Nov. 15 audience that taking part in any Eucharist, but especially on Sundays, is "prayer *par excellence*, the highest, the most sublime and, at the same time, most 'concrete.'"

"In fact, it's the encounter of love with God through his Word and the Body and Blood of Jesus. It's an encounter with the Lord."

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Greg Erlandson

Mass murder and our culture of death

On Nov. 14, Kevin Janson Neal paced about a remote elementary school in the small northern California community of Rancho Tehama Reserve, apparently looking for children to shoot during a killing spree that left five dead and at least 10 wounded in seven different locations.



Thanks to the quick actions of a school secretary, the shooter was unable to enter the classrooms and was left firing a semi-automatic

rifle through windows and walls, seriously injuring one child.

When the news broke during the bishops' fall assembly in Baltimore that same day, Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, Calif., took the microphone to ask his brother bishops to pray the Hail Mary for those victims of the shooting in his diocese.

That the shooting did not engender further discussion at the bishops' assembly, nor a great deal of coverage in the media, may be a sign of how desensitized we are all becoming to the terror of mass gun violence. Five years after the Newtown, Conn., massacre of 20 children, even the targeting of a school no longer surprises.

The bishops did release a statement on Nov. 7 in the wake of recent mass shootings in Las Vegas, where 59 died and at least 440 were injured, and at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas, where 27 died and 20 were wounded.

In that statement, Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Fla., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, urged "a real debate about needed measures to save lives and make our communities safer."

Bishop Dewane said the U.S. bishops continued to urge a "total ban on assault weapons," as well as universal background checks, limitations on high-capacity magazines and "improved access to mental health care for those who may be prone to violence."

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the president of the

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, also issued a forceful appeal: "We must come to the firm determination that there is a fundamental problem in our society. A culture of life cannot tolerate, and must prevent, senseless gun violence in all its forms."

A report by *The New York Times* that compared the United States with other countries in terms of mass shootings came to the conclusion that "the only variable that can explain the high rate of mass shootings in the America is its astronomical number of guns."

Americans make up 4.4 percent of the world's population, but the *Times* said we own 42 percent of the world's guns. Only Yemen has a higher rate of shootings, and it has the second-highest rate of gun ownership.

America also leads in gun suicides: 21,175 suicides by gun in 2013, almost twice as many deaths as by homicide. As an addiction counselor recently told me, the availability of a gun makes the suicide impulse more likely to be successful, especially for men.

The recent statements by U.S. Church leaders, like the handwringing expressions of sympathy by politicians whenever a new massacre happens, does not necessarily lead to legislative change, however.

After the Las Vegas slaughter, in which the killer used a device called a bump stock to turn his rifle into a weapon capable of firing up to 100 rounds in seven seconds, even pro-gun politicians said they should be restricted. Six weeks later, no action has been taken and one manufacturer of the device has resumed sales.

Regardless of the political paralysis, however, the Church reminds us that choosing a culture of life not only means addressing abortion and physician-assisted suicide, but also the proliferation of weapons that contribute so terribly to the suicide, homicide and mass shooting rates.

(Greg Erlandson is director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service. He can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.) †

Letter to the Editor

Recent column about change, including God's role, catches reader's attention

I was following along with Cynthia Dewes' Nov. 10 "Cornucopia" column in *The Criterion* concerning "change."

She shared how although people do not like change, fear change, and avoid change, it is, nonetheless, inevitable.

She continued on, saying that people often make decisions—some good, some

bad—in response to change.

At the end of her column, she abruptly changed direction and said, "Luckily, God loves us and God never changes."

That really got my attention!

Sonny Shanks
Corydon

Letters Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ

This weekend, we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent. It's hard to believe, isn't it? Another Church year is ending, and so we begin again our observance of the year of grace, the liturgical seasons that define our worship and our practice of the Christian faith.

Advent is a particularly colorful liturgical season. It is full of rich symbolism and references to vivid characters of the Old Testament, including the prophet Isaiah and the herald John the Baptist, who bridges both the Old and the New Testaments. Of course, in the Northern Hemisphere, Advent coincides with autumn—nature's final burst of color before the barrenness of winter—and it prepares our hearts for the warmth and beauty of Christmas.

The Scripture readings for the First Sunday of Advent this year call attention to the importance of active or attentive waiting. Isaiah speaks of the Jewish people's longing for the Lord's return. "Why do you let us wander, O Lord, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage" (Is 63:16b-17, 19b).

Our longing for God's return is a dominant theme in Advent, but it begs the question a bit. Is it God who is absent? Or have we wandered away from God, choosing to follow our own paths? "We have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind" (Is 64:5), the prophet Isaiah reminds us.

Even the responsorial psalm calls on God to manifest himself: "O shepherd of Israel, hearken from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth, rouse your power, and come to save us" so that we "will no more withdraw from you; give us new life, and we will call upon your name" (Ps 80:2-3,19).

The truth is that we have turned away from God, and our guilt has carried us away like the wind. Now we need the help of God's grace to see what is right in front of us—the loving mercy of God who has never left us and who welcomes us home to his loving arms.

Advent is a season of grace, a time of year when we "wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:7). This "revelation" is not something esoteric or complicated. It

is a person, Jesus Christ himself, who comes to us in many diverse ways and invites us to be united with him.

The Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent urges us to "Be watchful! Be alert!" because we do not know when the Lord will come to us (Mk 13:33).

We can say with the absolute certainty of faith that the Lord *will* come to us. And we can even say that he is coming *now* in our daily prayer, our gathering in his name, our reception of the Eucharist, and our service to our brothers and sisters in need. But it's also true that we have no idea when our Lord will appear among us in particular unexpected ways or at the end of time. All we can do is "Watch!" and wait for his coming.

We begin the Church year with a season of waiting, a time of expectation and longing. Advent prepares us to celebrate Christmas without falling into the trap of superficial or unrealistic expectations. It teaches us that the greatest gift of Christmas is the Lord himself. Advent shows us that a personal encounter with Jesus Christ is what we truly

hope for at this time of year (and always). It reminds us that all the joys of Christmas, and of the Lord's second coming, can truly be ours—if we learn to wait for them prayerfully.

Each time we celebrate Mass, we acknowledge that we are waiting for the Blessed Hope, Jesus, to come again. This waiting is easier said than done. It requires patience, trust and a firm belief that God will hear and answer our prayers. We hope that the Lord will give us everything we desire and need, and that his coming again—this Eucharist, at Christmas and at the end of time—will be a source of everlasting joy.

Advent is the Church's way of helping us keep our eyes open. It's also a season filled with reminders that the Lord is coming "whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning" (Mk 13:33-37).

May he not come suddenly and find us asleep at the wheel. May we use this holy season to help us remember the mystery that *God-is-with-us* at the very same time that *God is yet-to-come!*

Best wishes for a blessed Advent season! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Esperamos la revelación de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo

Este fin de semana celebramos el primer Domingo de Adviento. Parece mentira, ¿verdad? Culmina otro año eclesial y comenzamos nuevamente a observar el año de gracia, la temporada litúrgica que define nuestro culto y nuestro ejercicio de la fe cristiana.

El Adviento es una temporada litúrgica especialmente vívida. Es rica en simbolismo y referencias a personajes muy reales del Antiguo Testamento, entre ellos, el profeta Isaías y el heraldo, Juan el Bautista, el enlace entre el Antiguo y el Nuevo Testamento. Por supuesto, en el hemisferio norte el Adviento coincide con la estación otoñal, el último despliegue de colores de la naturaleza antes de sumirnos en la aridez del invierno, época que prepara nuestros corazones para la calidez y la belleza de la Navidad.

Las lecturas de la Palabra para el Primer Domingo de Adviento de este año destacan la importancia de la espera activa o vigilante. Isaías habla acerca del anhelo del pueblo judío de que el Señor regrese. "¿Por qué, Señor, nos desvías de tus caminos y endureces nuestros corazones para que dejen de temerte? ¡Vuelve, por amor a tus servidores y a las tribus de tu herencia!" (Is 63:17).

Nuestro anhelo de que Dios regrese es el tema principal de la época de

Adviento, pero plantea la interrogante: ¿Es Dios el que está ausente? ¿O acaso somos nosotros los que nos hemos alejado de Dios, siguiendo nuestros propios caminos? "Nos hemos marchitado como el follaje y nuestras culpas nos arrastran como el viento" (Is 64:5), nos recuerda el profeta Isaías.

Incluso el salmo responsorial es un ruego para que Dios se manifieste: "Escucha, Pastor de Israel, tú que guías a José como a un rebaño; tú que tienes el trono sobre los querubines, resplandece entre Efraím, Benjamín y Manasés; reafirma tu poder y ven a salvarnos" para que "nunca nos apartaremos de ti: devuélvenos la vida e invocaremos tu Nombre" (Sal 80:2-3,19).

La verdad es que nos hemos alejado de Dios y la culpabilidad nos ha arrastrado como el viento. Ahora necesitamos la gracia de Dios para poder ver lo que está delante de nuestros ojos: la devota misericordia de Dios que jamás nos ha abandonado y que nos abre los brazos para darnos la bienvenida al hogar.

Adviento es una temporada de gracia, la época del año en la que aquellos que "esperan la Revelación de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, no les falta ningún don de la gracia" (1 Cor 1:7). Esta "revelación" no es algo esotérico o

complicado; se trata de una persona, el propio Jesucristo, que llega a nosotros de muchas formas distintas y nos invita a unirnos a Él.

El evangelio del Primer Domingo de Adviento nos presenta la siguiente exhortación: "Tengan cuidado y estén prevenidos porque no saben cuándo llegará el momento" (Mc 13:33).

Podemos decir con la certeza absoluta de la fe que el Señor vendrá a nosotros. Incluso podemos decir que viene a nosotros ahora, en la oración diaria, cuando nos reunimos en Su nombre, cuando recibimos la Eucaristía y cuando servimos a nuestros hermanos necesitados. Pero también es cierto que no tenemos idea de cuándo aparecerá el Señor entre nosotros en formas especialmente imprevistas o al final de los tiempos. Lo único que podemos hacer es estar atentos a su venida.

Comenzamos el año eclesial con una temporada de espera, un momento de expectativas y de añoranza. El Adviento nos prepara para celebrar la Navidad sin caer en la trampa de las expectativas superficiales o poco realistas. Nos enseña que el obsequio más grande de la Navidad es el Señor mismo. El Adviento nos enseña que lo que verdaderamente ansiamos en esta época del año (y siempre) es un

encuentro personal con Jesucristo. Nos recuerda que realmente podremos disfrutar de todas las alegrías de la Navidad y de la segunda venida del Señor si aprendemos a esperarlas con recogimiento.

Cada vez que celebramos la misa reconocemos que esperamos que vuelva "la bendita esperanza," Jesús. Esta espera no es tan fácil como parece. Requiere paciencia, confianza y la creencia firme de que Dios escuchará y responderá nuestras súplicas. Esperamos que el Señor nos conceda todo aquello que deseamos y necesitamos, y que su venida—tanto en la Eucaristía, en la Navidad como en el día final—sea nuestra máxima fuente de alegría.

El Adviento es la forma mediante la cual la Iglesia nos ayuda a mantener los ojos abiertos. Asimismo, es una época cargada de recordatorios de que el Señor viene, no sabemos "si al atardecer, a medianoche, al canto del gallo o por la mañana" (Mc 13:35).

Que no venga repentinamente y nos pille dormidos. Aprovechemos esta temporada santa para recordar el misterio de que Dios está con nosotros al mismo tiempo que está por venir.

¡Mis mejores deseos para ustedes y que tengan una bienaventurada época de Adviento! †

Events Calendar

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

December 5

McCauley Centre, 702 North Shore Dr., Jeffersonville. **Professional Advisors Professional Development Seminar**, for attorneys, accountants, financial advisors and life insurance representatives, addressing Catholic Community Foundation, Ethics in Charitable Estate Planning, Gift Planning with Retirement Plans, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., free, includes continental breakfast and box lunch, registration required at www.archindy.org/ccf/ProfDevelopment. Information: 317-236-1482, ccf@archindy.org.

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. **Senior Discount Day**, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off clothing, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing

Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

December 6

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Professional Advisors Professional Development Seminar**, for attorneys, accountants, financial advisors and life insurance representatives, addressing Catholic Community Foundation, Ethics in Charitable Estate Planning, Gift Planning with Retirement Plans, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., free, includes

continental breakfast and box lunch, registration required at www.archindy.org/ccf/ProfDevelopment. Information: 317-236-1482, ccf@archindy.org.

December 7

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Assembly Hall, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **An Evening of Lights: Archdiocesan Christmas Tree Lighting and Prayer Service**, led by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, Scripture, reflection, music by Vox Sacra, no charge, 6 p.m., refreshments to follow. Information: 317-236-1482, ccf@archindy.org.

December 9

Sisters of Providence Motherhouse Grounds, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Christmas Fun at the Woods, sleigh rides, crafts, cookie decorating, face painting, wagon rides, visit Santa, sing-a-long and more, 1-4 p.m., \$5 per person, children age 3 and under free, no registration required. Information: 812-535-2931, wvc@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Black Catholic Women's Advent Day of Retreat**, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, Dr. Kathleen Dorsey Bellow and Divine Word Missionaries Father Charles A. Smith presenting, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. with Mass following, \$25 includes lunch. Registration encouraged by contacting Pearllette Springer, 317-236-1474, 800-382-9836, ext. 1474 or

pspringer@archindy.org. Online registration available on the Black Catholic Ministry of Indianapolis Facebook page.

December 10

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or acfadi2014@gmail.com.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Class of '63 monthly gathering**, 6 p.m. Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396.

December 11-14

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **The Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell**, parish mission presented by Father Paul Landerwerlen, talks twice

daily, 8:15 a.m. and 6:45 p.m., 7:30 a.m. Mass in Ordinary Form and 5:45 p.m. in Extraordinary Form, confessions at 7 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. (optional). Information: 317-636-4478 or info@holyroary.org.

December 12

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild**, Christmas Party and Pitch-In, noon. Information: 317-223-3687, vlgmimi@aol.com.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. **Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, theme "Praying for Peace in the World and in Our Hearts," 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org. †

Retreats and Programs

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

December 15-17

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Sing Ye Noël**, Benedictine Father Noël Mueller, \$255 single, \$425 double. Information: 812-357-6585 or mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

January 16

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-

Woods. **Series: Women, Wine and Song!**, three Tuesdays, Providence Sisters Jan Craven and Paula Damiano, prayer, story-telling, music and wine, 7-8:30 p.m., \$10 per session, \$25 for three. Registration deadline: Jan 12. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events.

January 20

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center,

1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Poetry as Spiritual Practice: Reading, Praying and Writing**, Providence Sister Mary Montgomery presenting, read, write and share poetry as prayer and life experience, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., \$45 includes lunch. Registration deadline: Jan. 15. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/providence-center/events. †

VIPs



Joseph B. and Mary Ann (Kelly) Klein, members of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 1.

The couple was married at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 1, 1967.

They have three children: Carrie Fazio, Kristopher and Matthew Klein.

The couple also has three grandchildren.

The couple will celebrate with a family dinner. †



Mark and Mary Jane (Hahn) Felts, members of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 2.

The couple was married at the former Holy Cross Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 2, 1967.

They have four children: Chris, Mike, Nick and Tony Felts.

The couple also has 12 grandchildren. †



Paul J. and Jean L. (Meister) McMullen, members of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Stillwater, Okla., and former members of the archdiocese, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 2.

The couple was married at the former St. Bernadette Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 2, 1967.

They have five children: Jennifer Kurena, Linda Monroe, Patty Sherrill, Annette Zaidle and Brian McMullen.

The couple also has 12 grandchildren.

A celebration was held with family and friends in Indiana on Oct. 1. †

Vox Sacra (Sacred Voice) to hold Advent and Christmas concert on Dec. 16

Vox Sacra (Sacred Voice), the Schola Cantorum of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, is presenting its second annual concert of Advent and Christmas music at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1530 Union Street, in Indianapolis, at 7 p.m. on Dec. 16.

It will feature works by Byrd, Sweelinck, Vaughn Williams and more.

For more information, contact the archdiocesan Office of Worship and Evangelization at 317-236-1483, 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1483, ctuley@archindy.org or visit www.voxsacra.com. †



Saints for a day

Eighth-grade students from St. Nicholas School in Ripley County pose in the costumes they wore for an All Saints' Day skit about St. Jose Sanchez del Rio they wrote and performed for the school on Nov. 2. Pictured in the front row are Nathan Schuman, left, Rebecca Kilby, Annalise Hudepohl, Levi Ludwig and Gregory Kline. In the back row are Andrew Rennekamp, left, Dyllon Stewart and Andrew Strzok. (Submitted photo)

Bake Sale benefitting sisters to be held at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on Dec. 9

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and the Providence Associates will host a bake sale at O'Shaughnessy Dining Hall, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, from 12:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. on Dec. 9.

Items for sale include cookies, brownies, pies, fudge and cakes, and sweet breads baked by Providence

Sister Rosemary Schmalz and other Sisters of Providence.

Most items will be available for a freewill offering, and all proceeds from the bake sale will go to the sisters and their ministries of education, outreach, service and advocacy.

For more information, contact Providence Associate assistant director Debbie Dillow at 317-250-3294 or ddillow@spsmw.org. †

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

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. 1, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. for All Saints, Dearborn County, at St. Martin Campus
 Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhouses
 Dec. 11, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
 Dec. 12, 7 p.m. for St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, at St. John the Evangelist Church, Enochsburg
 Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon
 Dec. 15, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. for All Saints, Dearborn County, at St. Martin Campus
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
 Dec. 19, 6 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
 Dec. 20, 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
 Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

Bloomington Deanery

Dec. 6, 7 p.m.-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center
 Dec. 12, 7 p.m. for St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville
 Dec. 14, 6 p.m. at Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, Paoli
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
 Dec. 20, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
 Dec. 21, 6 p.m. at Our Lady of the Springs, French Lick

Dec. 21, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington

Connersville Deanery

Dec. 12, 7 p.m. at St. Anne, New Castle
 Dec. 13, 6 p.m. Mass, 6:30 p.m. confession, at St. Gabriel, Connersville
 Dec. 14, 6 p.m. Mass, 6:30 p.m. confession, at St. Mary, Rushville
 Dec. 19, 6 p.m. for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, at St. Mary Campus

Indianapolis East Deanery

Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. at Holy Spirit
 Dec. 11, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) at Our Lady of Lourdes
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. Philip Neri
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. for St. Rita and Holy Angels (West Deanery) at St. Rita
 Dec. 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Greenfield

Indianapolis North Deanery

Dec. 10, 2 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X
 Dec. 11, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X
 Dec. 12, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X

Indianapolis South Deanery

Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Jude
 Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. for St. Barnabas, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Roch, at St. Mark the Evangelist
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove
 Dec. 16, 9 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
 Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Ann

Indianapolis West Deanery

Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
 Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel
 Dec. 7, 9-11 a.m. at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School
 Dec. 9, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at St. Monica
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. for St. Anthony and St. Christopher at St. Christopher
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. for Holy Angels and St. Rita (Indianapolis East Deanery) at St. Rita
 Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
 Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville
 Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield

New Albany Deanery

Dec. 5, 6-7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
 Dec. 5, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
 Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
 Dec. 8, 4-6 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
 Dec. 9, 8-10 a.m. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
 Dec. 12, 6-7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
 Dec. 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
 Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. for St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, at St. Paul Campus
 Dec. 15, 4-6 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
 Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
 Dec. 16, 8-10 a.m. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
 Dec. 18, 1 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight
 Dec. 19, 6-7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville



(CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review)

Dec. 19, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
 Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
 Dec. 22, 4-6 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
 Dec. 23, 8-10 a.m. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville

Seymour Deanery

Dec. 5, 7 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace
 Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour
 Dec. 13, 6 p.m. at St. Patrick, Salem
 Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
 Dec. 14, 6 p.m. at American Martyrs
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. for St. Bartholomew, Columbus, and Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, at St. Bartholomew
 Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Mary

Tell City Deanery

Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad
 Dec. 10, 2 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City

Terre Haute Deanery

Dec. 7, 1:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods
 Dec. 12, 1:30 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute
 Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute
 Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton †

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MYANMAR

continued from page 1

eroded trust and understanding, harmony and cooperation between different communities in Rakhine, the support of our people and of good friends who only wish to see us succeed in our endeavors has been invaluable.”

“The road to peace is not always smooth,” she told the pope, “but it is the only way that will lead our people to their dream of a just and prosperous land that will be their refuge, their pride, their joy.”

In his speech, Pope Francis was even less specific, although he repeatedly insisted that the rights of each member of society and each ethnic group must be respected. He praised the role of the United Nations and the international community in supporting peace efforts, presumably also in their condemnations of the discrimination and persecution of the Rohingya, a Muslim minority.

“The future of Myanmar must be peace, a peace based on respect for the dignity and rights of each member of society, respect for each ethnic group and its identity, respect for the rule of law, and respect for a democratic order that enables each individual and every group—none excluded—to offer its legitimate contribution to the common good,” Pope Francis said.

The pope said he wanted to visit the country to strengthen the small Catholic community, and “to offer a word of encouragement to all those who are working to build a just, reconciled and inclusive social order.”

Myanmar’s “greatest treasure,” he insisted, “is its people, who have suffered greatly, and continue to suffer, from civil conflict and hostilities that have lasted all too long and created deep divisions.”



Pope Francis walks with Aung San Suu Kyi, state counselor and foreign minister of Myanmar, as he arrives for a meeting with government authorities, members of civil society and the diplomatic corps at the Myanmar International Convention Center in Naypyitaw, Myanmar, on Nov. 28. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Pope Francis praised Suu Kyi for convoking the “21st Century Panglong Union Peace Conference,” a series of meetings that began in 2016 between the government and militant groups from more than a dozen ethnic groups in Myanmar.

The Rohingya are not included in the peace process since the government does

not consider them to be a Myanmar ethnic group, but rather foreigners.

Religious communities must play a role in the process of reconciliation and integration, the Pope said. “Religious differences need not be a source of division and distrust, but rather a force for unity, forgiveness, tolerance and wise nation building.”

In addition to helping heal “the emotional, spiritual and psychological wounds of those who have suffered in the years of conflict,” he said all religions “can help to uproot the causes of conflict, build bridges of dialogue, seek justice and be a prophetic voice for all who suffer.” †

Archdiocesan parishes to host Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations

Special to *The Criterion*

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

Holy Spirit Church, 7243 E. 10th St., Indianapolis.

- Dec. 9—7 p.m. St. Juan Diego feast day Mass and rosary
- Dec. 10—7 p.m. Mass, re-enactment of the apparitions, dance to follow

- Dec. 11—7 p.m. Mass, re-enactment of the apparitions, dance to follow
- Dec. 12—7 p.m. Mass, re-enactment of the apparitions, dance and dinner to follow

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood.

- Dec. 12—5:30 a.m. *mañanitas*, 6:30 a.m. coffee and Mexican bread, 6:30 p.m. Mass, 7:30 p.m. dinner.

St. Ambrose Church, 325 S. Chestnut St., Seymour.

- Dec. 3—Dec. 11 Novena Prayer recitation (The rosary will be prayed in the church.)
- Dec. 3—6 p.m.
- Dec. 4—6 p.m.
- Dec. 5—6 p.m.
- Dec. 6—6 p.m.
- Dec. 7—6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 8—6 p.m.
- Dec. 9—6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 10—6 p.m.
- Dec. 11—6 p.m.
- Dec. 11—11 p.m. rosary and intercessions
- Dec. 12—midnight-1:30 a.m. serenade by *Nueva Creacion* Choir, 1:30-2 a.m. hymns by Jose Aron, 2-3 a.m. Shalom Choir from St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, 3-4 a.m. rosary, 4-5 a.m. *Alma Misionera* Choir, 5-6 a.m. *mañanitas*, 2-2:30 p.m. representation of apparitions by St. Ambrose School students, 5-6 p.m. procession, 6 p.m. Mass followed by fellowship and dinner in the parish center.

St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St., Columbus.

- Dec. 11—10:30 p.m. procession, 10:45 p.m. rosary, 11:30 p.m. dance and narratives, midnight *mañanitas* followed by hot chocolate and sweet bread.
- Dec. 12—6 p.m. Mass in Spanish, dinner following.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, St. Andrew Campus, 235 S. 5th St., Richmond.

- Dec. 12—7 p.m. Mass

St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis.

- Dec. 11—7 p.m. re-enactment of the apparitions, 8 p.m. rosary, 9 p.m. music by the *Grupo de Oracion*, 9:30 p.m. Aztec dance, 10 p.m. *Grupo Alianza*, 10:30 p.m. *Danza Matachines*, 11 p.m. *Grupo Confidente*, 11:30 p.m. *Grupo Coro Latino de San Gabriel*.
- Dec. 12—midnight Mass, 8:45 a.m. Mass in English, 6 p.m. bilingual Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, 8 p.m. Mass in Spanish followed by a procession.

St. Joseph Church, 125 E. Broadway St., Shelbyville.

- Dec. 12—7 p.m. rosary, 7:30 p.m. Aztec dance, 8 p.m. Mass, 9 p.m. procession and blessing of Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine, 9:30 p.m. fellowship, food and serenade.

St. Margaret Mary Church, 2405 S. 7th, Terre Haute.

- Dec. 11—11:30 p.m., rosary of the Virgin Mary and *mañanitas*.
- Dec. 12—7 p.m. Mass.

St. Mary Church, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis.

- Dec. 3-11—Novenas in homes, businesses and church
- Dec. 11—8 p.m. meet at Monument Circle, 9 p.m. pilgrimage to St. Mary Church, 9:30 p.m. traditional dance, 9:45 p.m. rosary in English, 10:15 p.m. traditional dance, 10:45 p.m. representation of the apparitions, 11 p.m. music.
- Dec. 12—midnight Mass in Spanish, 6 p.m. procession from parking lot to church, 6:30 p.m. rosary in English, 7 p.m. Mass followed by fellowship in the Marian Center.

St. Mary Church, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany.

- Dec. 11—7 p.m. Mass, *mañanitas*.
- Dec. 12—7 p.m. Mass, *mañanitas*, meal to follow.

St. Monica Church, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis.

- Dec. 11—8-11:59 p.m. rosary, performance, Mariachi, Chilenos.
- Dec. 12—midnight Mass with Aztec dance, 7 p.m. Mass with Aztec dance, reception to follow in gymnasium.

St. Philip Neri, 550 N. Rural St., Indianapolis.

- Dec. 11—6:30 p.m. Our Lady of Guadalupe activities, 11 p.m. Mass followed by refreshments and a *piñata* in the gymnasium; activities conclude at 1 a.m.
- Dec. 12—4 p.m. Mass, dancers, musicians, re-enactment of the apparitions, 7 p.m. solemn Mass with dancing and music to follow until 9 p.m. †



Eleven-year-old Miguel Morin of Houston serenades an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe during a Dec. 11, 2016, celebration in honor of the patroness of the Americas in Houston. Her feast day is on Dec. 12.

(CNS photo/James Ramos, *Texas Catholic Herald*)

Basketball legend praises volunteers who serve seniors

By Sean Gallagher

Bobby Plump is a legend across the Hoosier State.

As a senior at Milan High School in Milan in 1954, Plump hit a last-second shot to win the championship in that year's Indiana High School Athletic Association boys basketball tournament.

Plump and his teammates from their small school in southeastern Indiana beat their much larger opponent from Muncie Central High School in Muncie



Mayor Joseph Hogsett

in a hard-fought championship game at Hinkle Fieldhouse on the campus of Butler University in Indianapolis.

That championship run and Plump's game-winning shot were immortalized and shared with the world far beyond Indiana in the 1986

Oscar-nominated movie *Hoosiers*.

On Oct. 19, Plump came to the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis to serve as the keynote speaker at Catholic Charities Indianapolis' (CCI) Hoosiers for Seniors dinner event to share memories of playing for Milan's championship team, and to praise the teamwork of Catholic Charities staff members and volunteers who serve adults in its eldercare programs.

"All of you people who are giving your time are marvelous," Plump said. "Look at the person next to you and smile. Doesn't that feel good? That's what you people do for these people that you're volunteering for."

"If you can smile every day forever, you're going to make somebody's life happier."

Another guest at the event regaled the attendees with his own basketball stories, even if they didn't result in glory.

Indianapolis Mayor Joseph Hogsett recounted the time when he was on the boys basketball team for Rushville High School in Rushville, and he scored a basket in its opposing team's goal.

Hogsett's true purpose at the Hoosiers for Seniors event was to encourage the people who participate in and support Catholic Charities Indianapolis' programs for seniors.

"You're making a difference in the lives of so many people," Hogsett said. "Those of us who find ourselves a little bit older than we care to admit—we need help from time to time. And your generosity tonight means the world to Catholic Charities' efforts in this regard."

In reflecting on his team's championship run, Plump recalled how his coach refused to share scoring statistics for individual players on the team with the public. He wanted the focus to be on the team as a whole.

"We did not have, up and down the line, the best talent of most of the teams that we played in the tournament," Plump said. "But I contend that we had the best team that played in the tournament in 1954. I contend that a good team will often beat exceptional talent if they don't have the teamwork."

David Bethuram, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities, spoke with *The Criterion* after the event about how important teamwork is for the programs he oversees that serve seniors.

"For years, the amount of people who have volunteered in programs helping vulnerable seniors has been incredible," Bethuram said. "It's just amazing. Bobby Plump's conversation about tradition and how things are done as a team really rings true here. None of this can work unless we work as a team."

One of the "team members" present at the Hoosiers for Seniors event was volunteer Alice Whitney. She is 86, and has been a volunteer for 16 years in Catholic Charities Indianapolis' Senior Companion Program, which is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service.



David Bethuram

It recruits, trains, gives support and matches volunteers age 55 and older with frail seniors, helping them to remain living independently and offering friendship and alleviating the loneliness that can often burden them.

Whitney currently volunteers in the program for about 20 hours per week with three different seniors.

"It's been a great blessing to me because it makes me feel like I'm doing something for somebody else," she said.



Indiana high school basketball legend Bobby Plump praises volunteers in four Catholic Charities Indianapolis programs that serve seniors during the agency's Hoosiers for Seniors dinner event on Oct. 19 at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

"It's kept me going. It's a great program. I hope it continues forever. It's helped so many people."

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is also a part of the Corporation for National and Community Service and is one of the largest volunteer networks for people 55 and older. Catholic Charities Indianapolis staff members link volunteers with opportunities that either match their gifts and talents, or help them develop new ones.

"Seniors love to be independent," Bethuram said. "Sometimes through their independence, though, they become lonely and isolated."

"For us to say that you can be part of something in our community that gives back and, at the same time, gives you something in return means a lot."

Catholic Charities Indianapolis also has a Caregiver Support Program that helps those who care for seniors to care for themselves and to better support the seniors in their care. Services include support groups and home modifications.

Another senior program in Catholic Charities Indianapolis highlighted during the event was A Caring Place Adult Day Services. It is a respite care program to provide support for families and caregivers of seniors, and therapeutic and meaningful activities for seniors.

Bethuram also noted that the kind of care that Catholic Charities Indianapolis has given to seniors for years has been praised by Pope Francis.



Alice Whitney, a volunteer in Catholic Charities Indianapolis' Senior Companion Program, listens to speakers during the Oct. 19 Hoosiers for Seniors event.

"He talks a lot about the fact that nobody is dispensable," Bethuram said. "Seniors sometimes feel as if they aren't as important. But they have wisdom to give back to the community. As Pope Francis said, 'I know that many of them are retired, but still active; they keep working to build up this land.' It's important for us to tap into that."

(For more information about Catholic Charities Indianapolis' eldercare programs, visit www.archindy.org/cc/indianapolis and click on "For Seniors," or call 317-261-3378.) †

Teens, adults forsake comfort to experience way of life for homeless

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (CNS)—Though rain and high winds forced most of the 40 students and adults inside during the fifth annual "Homeless for a Night" campout at Good Shepherd Parish in Alexandria on Nov. 18, it brought greater awareness to the problem of homelessness.

Cardboard boxes, tarps, sleeping bags and extra layers of clothing—only what could fit in a small overnight bag—filled the lawn outside Good Shepherd.

Campers spent time in the afternoon working together to assemble the makeshift cardboard shelters, sometimes laying plastic underneath the boxes for protection from the soggy ground and covering boxes with tarps or plastic bags before going inside for Mass. The

campers returned to their shelters at 9 p.m. after an evening full of activities.

Miguel de Angel, director of youth ministry, said the program was inspired by a desire to give the students an experience of tangible service. "We needed something experiential to hopefully draw people out," he said. "Families and kids have responded."

The church's ZIP code—22309—has the highest income disparity in the United States, according to Susan Grunder, parish director of social ministry.

Campers learned this and other facts during activities and presentations. They learned about the Point-in-Time Count in Fairfax County, which counts the homeless one night a year. This year, 964 homeless were counted on Jan. 25.

Campers learned that a significant portion of the homeless in Fairfax County are under age 18.

"Many of the homeless actually have jobs," said Grunder told the *Arlington Catholic Herald*, newspaper of the Diocese of Arlington. "The activities [got] the campers thinking about how hard it can be to have a place to live."

Madeleine Oertel, grants manager at Covenant House Washington, which helps homeless and exploited youths, gave a presentation to the campers and parishioners.

As part of the campout, parishioners collected boots and socks for the Rising Hope United Methodist Church hypothermia shelter in Alexandria.

Prior to the campout, Arlington Bishop Michael F. Burbidge celebrated the vigil Mass and spoke about the World Day of the Poor initiated by Pope Francis, which was taking place for the first time the next day.

"Every day is a day for the poor and for us to respond in compassion and love," he said. "This designation that Pope Francis has given to us helps us to recognize the poverty that is in our midst. We look at our own poverty—to be poor in spirit is actually a gift. The poverty of spirit helps us realize that without God we have nothing."

Bishop Burbidge blessed the campers at the end of Mass.

"How proud you must be of some of the young people who will tonight participate in the homeless campout to actually experience what it is like to be cold, to be homeless, to have chills, knowing that our brothers and sisters, members of God's holy family, live that way every day," said Bishop Burbidge.

Isabella Winarski, a fifth-grader at Woodley Hills Elementary School in Alexandria, said the experience taught her

that other people go through homelessness for days. "We are doing this for one day," she said. "When I see them on the streets, I think of this and how I experienced it and know how it feels, and it was not a good experience."

Nicholas Zaso, a freshman at Virginia Tech, said the experience is powerful even if it is only for one night.

"Even if we are not experiencing the whole part of being homeless, it still makes you think about it more and puts you in the mindset to want to do something to help," Zaso said.

The following morning, campers shared their take on the experience.

"One thing that came out in the debriefing in the morning was the parallel between the slow removal of comfort—first being outside, then the rain, then the wind, then the temperature drop—and the slow stripping of dignity that people go through as they lose work, or the ability to bathe and wash their clothes to the point that we walk past them without a glance or a word," said de Angel.

Derek Rogers, youth minister at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Vienna, Va., brought 14 teens to the campout.

"Their parents have blessed them with incredible housing," he said. "When the teens are in the cardboard box, they say, 'Oh, my gosh, I have so many blessings.' When they can have that kind of perspective put in place, that is worth it to me." †



Joseph Yap and Alejandro Velez prepare their box shelter on the lawn of Good Shepherd Church in Alexandria, Va., for the fifth annual "Homeless for a Night" campout on Nov. 18. (CNS photo/Elizabeth A. Elliott, *Arlington Catholic Herald*)

New book says people should be Catholics because the Church is true, good and beautiful

Reviewed by John F. Fink

Probably the single most important problem the Catholic Church in the United States faces today is the fact that it is losing its young people. The Pew Research Center has found that almost exactly half of millennials who were raised Catholic no longer call themselves Catholic today, and that 80 percent of people who have left the Catholic Church have left before age 23. And, unlike those of earlier generations, they are not returning after they marry and start raising a family.

That's why the book *Why I Am Catholic (And You Should Be Too)* is one of the most important books published this year.

Brandon Vogt now works for Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron's Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, but in this book he explains why he converted and was received into the full communion of the Church as a 20-year-old mechanical engineering student at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Fla.

In doing so, he acknowledges, he went in the opposite direction of most people his age. Choosing to be Catholic in today's culture is provocative and countercultural. All the more reason, then, for young people to read this book.

At 178 pages, the book is a fast read. Vogt tells how he carefully studied the Church's claims and how he prayed, read, thought and discussed the Church. He

finally became a Catholic, he writes, for the same reason as G. K. Chesterton did: that Catholicism is true. But, he says, it's also good and beautiful, so the book is divided into three parts: Catholicism Is True, Catholicism Is Good, and

Catholicism Is Beautiful.

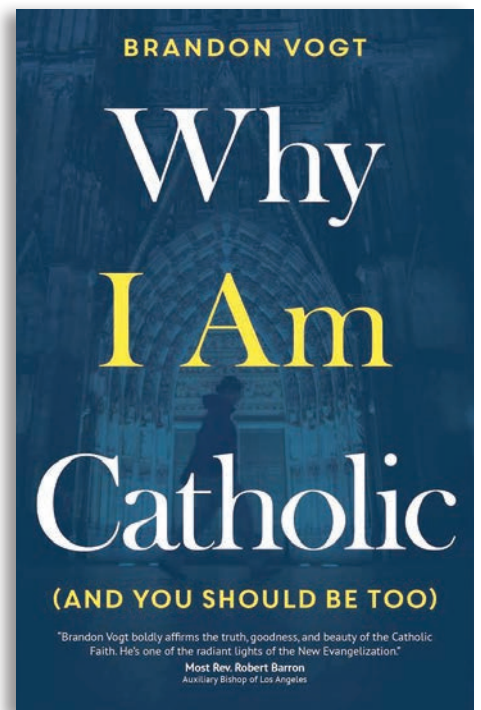
Each part has multiple chapters and each chapter has sub-parts. But the chapter heads give a good idea of how he treats each part. Catholicism is true, he says, because God exists, because we need religion, because Jesus is God, and because Jesus started the Church.

Catholicism is good, he says, because it built western civilization, because of its heroic charity, because it doesn't go with the times, and because it offers true forgiveness.

Catholicism is beautiful, he says, because it cherishes beauty, because it lifts us up, and because it's for everybody.

Vogt insists that his book isn't just a conversion memoir—there are lots of those—but an appeal to readers that they should consider Catholicism. Even exploring the Catholic Church is an act of rebellion in this culture, he says. "It's not rebellious to get drunk, criticize institutions, pursue sex and money, or come out as an atheist," he says. "Everyone's doing that. Those are all mainstream. What's truly radical is to consider a Church that billions of people have embraced throughout history, but millions of people today dismiss as bigoted and outdated."

Maybe the Catholic Church is wrong, evil and ugly, as it's portrayed, he says. Or, "Maybe in a strange and confused world, the Catholic Church looks so backward because everyone else is facing



the wrong direction."

It's an excellent book for Catholics, especially young Catholics, and for anyone who is asking the important questions of life.

(John F. Fink is editor emeritus of The Criterion. *Why I Am Catholic (And You Should Be Too)* by Brandon Vogt is available on Amazon. The cost is \$14.26 in hardcover, and \$8.49 on Kindle.) †

'Everyone's doing that. Those are all mainstream. What's truly radical is to consider a Church that billions of people have embraced throughout history, but millions of people today dismiss as bigoted and outdated.'



— Author Brandon Vogt in *Why I Am Catholic (And You Should Be Too)*

Contraceptive mandate battle still on: States fight religious exemptions

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Little Sisters of the Poor, who have been known for their care for the poor elderly, have been in the spotlight for the past six years with their objection to the federal government's requirement that they provide insurance coverage of contraceptives, abortifacients and sterilization for their employees.

They hoped the issue was behind them after a new rule was issued in October by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) granting an exemption to the mandate for religious nonprofits who oppose it on religious grounds.

But days after the rule was issued, Pennsylvania and California filed legal challenges to the new

federal exemption. Delaware, Maryland, New York and Virginia joined California's lawsuit to become the first plaintiff group to file a motion for a preliminary injunction seeking to prevent the new rule from going into effect.

This means the Little Sisters of the Poor are going back to court.

Mark Rienzi, senior counsel at Becket, the law firm representing the sisters, said in a Nov. 21 press call that the HHS rule "should have been the end of the story," and the end of a "long and divisive culture war."

But with these lawsuits in place, he said Becket is preparing to file a brief on behalf of the Little Sisters of the Poor, and he also said the sisters want the judge to hear their arguments, noting that the case is more than state's attorneys general arguing against the federal government.

Rienzi said the sisters will echo what they've said all along: that the government doesn't "need nuns to give out contraceptives," and that they should not be punished for acting in accordance with their faith. He said the cases will be heard in December.

A statement issued by Sister Loraine Marie Maguire, mother provincial of the Little Sisters, based in Denver, said: "We just want to be able to continue our religious mission of caring for the elderly poor as we have for over 175 years. We pray that these state governments will leave us alone and let us do our work in peace."

Rienzi called the states' fights "political grandstanding" that is trying to take away rights from religious groups. He also said none of the states has come forward with someone who had contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization insurance coverage through an employer before and is now going to lose it.

He also said the lawsuits were "deeply ironic" since some states—such as Pennsylvania and Virginia—don't even have a mandate and others have broad religious exemptions in place.

The lawsuits claim that the exemptions to the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate pushes the cost burden to states.

In the California suit, Attorney General Xavier Becerra said the HHS ruling providing the religious exemption violates constitutional amendments because it allows employers to use religious beliefs to discriminate against employees and denies women their rights to equal protection under the law.

When the HHS ruling was announced this fall, Catholic Church officials said it "corrects an anomalous failure by federal regulators that should never have occurred and should never be repeated."

The statement by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, then-chairman of the USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty, said the decision to provide the religious and moral exemption to the HHS mandate recognizes that faith-based and mission-driven organizations and those who run them "have deeply held religious and moral beliefs that the law must respect." †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

- Courses on the Catechism of the Catholic Church from CDU
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God can come into our lives in unexpected ways in Advent

By David Gibson

“Let us see your face.” The whole Church repeats this five-word, heartfelt plea to God four times during Masses on Advent’s first Sunday. Heard in the responsorial psalm after the first biblical reading, it echoes this repeated plea to God in Psalm 80:4.

“Light up your face and we shall be saved” (Ps 80:4).

Does it make sense for the Christian family to beg God at the Advent season’s beginning to reveal his face? Doesn’t the memory of the one born 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem reveal this—the one frequently described as God’s face in this world?

“Christ is the face of God, which is never darkened,” Pope Francis told bishops from around the world in September 2016. When he called in April 2015 for a Holy Year of Mercy throughout the Church, he stated emphatically:

“Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth.”

This, then, is no distant Lord. As the Gospel of St. John plainly states, the Word of God “made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1:14).

So God’s face is known among Christians. But as Advent gets under way, Christians begin again their quest to see God’s face. Does that sound like a contradiction in terms?

During Advent, Christians patiently await the revelation of the face of God at Christmas. Notably, this pursuit prepares them to discover how God is present in their lives and world now.

For the memory of Jesus’ birth is a living memory, not the memory of an event confined to the past.

Like the determined Wise Men from the East (Mt 2:1-12), contemporary people of faith set out to find Jesus and discover what his birth portends for them.

Where can the Lord be seen and heard in the 21st century? Pope Francis

approaches this as a basic Advent question. He spoke of it at the start of Advent in 2016.

The Lord visits humanity, he said. “We all know” that this “occurred with the incarnation, Jesus’ birth in the cave of Bethlehem.” But, the pope continued, “the Lord visits us constantly.”

Consolingly, he walks “alongside us.”

Furthermore, he “will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.” But this faith statement is not meant “to scare us,” Pope Francis remarked.

Instead, the purpose is “to open our horizons to another, greater dimension, one which ... puts into perspective everyday things, while at the same time making them precious, crucial.”

Pope Francis accented the often “unexpected” form of the Lord’s presence. “The relationship with the God-who-comes-to-visit-us” casts a “different light” on everything, he said.

Advent, he added, encompasses a call “to expand” our hearts’ horizons. “To do this, we must learn not to depend ... on our own established strategies.” Awaiting the Lord means preparing “to let ourselves be visited by him, ... even if it disturbs our plans.”

Patently preparing to welcome the Lord might mean asking probing questions, whether individually, as families or as faith communities, questions like:

- Have I been asking the wrong question about someone I consider difficult? What is the right question?
- Do we possess hidden gifts that might well benefit us and others? Why do these gifts remain hidden?

St. Joseph is an Advent figure. God unexpectedly disrupted Joseph’s life plan.

As the time of Jesus’ birth approached, a great question challenged Joseph fiercely. His answer would transform his entire life.



A detail of a stained-glass window from St. Edward Church in Seattle shows Jesus, Mary and Joseph on their flight into Egypt. St. Joseph can be a model for Catholics in the season of Advent in the way he was open to God coming into his life in unexpected ways. (CNS/Crosiers)

Joseph is a bridge for the Church between Advent and Christmas. His story is told in 2017 both during the Dec. 18 Advent Mass and the Christmas Vigil Mass.

Near the end of Advent in 2013, Pope Francis highlighted Joseph’s predicament. The Gospel of St. Matthew (Mt 1:18-25) tells of “the events preceding the birth of Jesus,” presenting them from the perspective of Joseph, “the betrothed of the Virgin Mary,” the pope observed.

Joseph and Mary, he continued, “were not yet living together, because they were not yet married. In the meantime, Mary, after having welcomed the angel’s announcement, came to be with child by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Joseph “was bewildered.” Trying to do God’s will, Joseph made “what for him [was] an enormous sacrifice,” the pope explained. The Gospel says that since Joseph “was a righteous man, yet

unwilling to expose [Mary] to shame,” he “decided to divorce her quietly.”

This “reveals a true inner drama” if one thinks of Joseph’s love for Mary, said Pope Francis. But God opened up “a different path.”

In the Gospel’s words, “the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived’” (Mt 1:20).

Joseph had been “following a good plan for his life,” but God reserved “another plan for him, a greater mission,” Pope Francis said, adding:

“By accepting himself according to God’s design,” Joseph fully found himself.

(David Gibson served on Catholic News Service’s editorial staff for 37 years.) †

God gives the world gifts of light and hope during the season of Advent

By Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield

“So ... what are you giving up for Advent?”

Lent gets all the attention. There is Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, the daily “giving up” of chocolate and meatless Fridays. Lent has a lot of reminders. But Advent sneaks up on us.

For a string of Sundays, the priest is in green vestments signifying Ordinary Time in the church. Then, all of a sudden, the priest enters Mass in violet vestments. Oh, and there’s the Advent wreath—the three violet candles and one rose candle. Each week of Advent, we light another candle.

As the days get shorter and the sun sets earlier, as the darkness grows outside, the light grows within the church. Light is God’s first miracle: “Let there be light” (Gn 1:3). And to this day, light expands, traveling at more than 186,000 miles per second.

It may seem, with the natural disasters this past year, the hurricanes and earthquakes, wildfires and disease, and of course with all of the man-made disasters of racism, gun violence and drug dealing that the days are getting darker. There are the personal hurts and those of our families ... job loss, depression and long-held misunderstandings.

We need the light to grow. With so much going on in the world we ask ourselves, what can we do? We can remember. Memory sparks light. Advent is the great memory of the Church.

We remember that God’s first miracle, light, is also his most frequent. We remember that the Creator

of light made our human nature his own, and in his humanity began to form in the womb of Mary.

We remember that Jesus, in his death and resurrection, has defeated death on its own ground, and in the world’s darkest place—the sealed tomb—light, uncontainable supernatural light, began to grow. It was the last place one would expect anything new to ever emerge.

And for the Catholic, memory is never nostalgia—it is never confined to the past. Hope looks to the future. So does Advent.

And so, what can we do? It all begins with light. Hope is the light of Advent. Patience is hope rehearsing. Patience is hope’s favorite hiding place.

Not patience as a passive “sitting still,” but patience in the face of our old battlegrounds—where we want to have the last word, be in control, be first, have our own way.

This Advent, may we let the light grow and give patience to others as a gift. How?

The next time you or I are in a disagreement with a loved one, let’s refuse to have the last word.

The next time we are convinced that we are right, instead of proving our point again, let’s listen to the other, who we are convinced is wrong.

The next time we demand our own way, let’s refuse to take it. This isn’t “giving in” or “giving up” ... this is giving forth. Like Jesus.

Advent sneaks up on us. So does hope. And hope begins in small places that are unseen at first. And like the light, hope grows.



A lit candle is seen on an Advent wreath in this 2016 photo. We remember that God’s first miracle, light, is also his most frequent. (CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review)

(Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield is the author of *Living the Beatitudes: A Journey to Life in Christ*.) †

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Ralph McInerney: Philosopher, mystery author and more

Let me tell you something about Ralph McInerney, although I'm sure some of you know about him, especially if you have a Notre Dame connection or are a murder-mystery fan.



Ralph died almost eight years ago, on Jan. 10, 2010, at age 80. For 54 of those years, he taught philosophy at the University of Notre

Dame, where he was also director of the Jacques Maritain Center. Maritain was his hero because both of them were experts in the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.

He was an excellent teacher, selected by 47 students to review their doctoral dissertations, more than any other Notre Dame professor. He was awarded eight honorary doctorates and taught at Oxford. He was president of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. And he wrote or edited 38 books on philosophy or theology.

But teaching philosophy at a Catholic university wasn't lucrative

back in the 1950s. Ralph's family was growing (he and his wife Connie would eventually have seven children; one died at age 3), so he had to supplement his income.

He had always written, so he decided to try his hand at fiction. He sent stories to magazines like *Redbook* and *Ladies Home Journal*. Like all of us writers, he received his share of rejection letters. He persevered and eventually realized why his stories were rejected; he found the secret. His stories began to sell.

He switched to longer stories, to novels and then to mysteries. In all, he wrote 95 murder mysteries. Twenty-nine of them were the Father Dowling mysteries, which became a TV series with actor Tom Bosley as Father Dowling. He also wrote a series of mysteries centered at Notre Dame, 13 in all. Under the pen name Monica Quill, he wrote 10 mysteries with Sister Mary Teresa as the protagonist. And he had six mysteries starring attorney Andrew Bloom.

Ralph loved puns, the cornier the better. That was reflected in his book titles, like *On This Rockne*, *Lack of the Irish*, and *Mom and Dead*. Even one of his books about Thomas Aquinas was

Handbook for Peeping Thomists. His autobiography was titled *I Alone Have Escaped to Tell You*, a quotation you'll find four times in Chapter 1 of the Book of Job.

Ralph went to Mass daily, usually at noon. He was a conservative Catholic. Unhappy with some of the things that happened to the Church after the Second Vatican Council, he and Michael Novak founded *Crisis* magazine in 1982, with Ralph as its first editor. He also founded and edited *Catholic Dossier*.

In later years, he became president of the International Catholic University, with videos on the Internet. He recorded five separate courses which I think are still available from *The Catholic Thing*, which Ralph also helped to start.

Ralph was, obviously, always writing. A vacation for him usually consisted of a trip somewhere where he could hole up in a hotel across the street from a Catholic Church (his favorite place was Sicily) and write.

As he was dying, he asked for writing materials. Given a pad, he wrote his last words, "I commend my soul to God." †

It's All Good/Patti Lamb

Parenthood calls us to love our children—no matter what

Recently, I enjoyed an opportunity I haven't had in a very long time. When I visited my friend in Ohio, her little sister



happened to stop by with her 3-week-old infant. My friend's sister graciously let me hold her little girl. I practically melted. Rosie smelled like lavender baby wash, and she slept peacefully in my arms for 15 minutes while

we visited in the living room.

"My kids were never this little," I said, as I stared down at the 8-pound child in my arms. I truly couldn't remember Henry and Margaret being that size.

I asked how mom and baby were doing.

"Honestly—perfect," she said.

She went on to tell me how well everything had gone—from the ease of birthing the baby to the fact that the little darling—with the most amazing bright green eyes—slept through the night the past four nights.

"Even Bruno loves her and takes care to walk softly around her," she added. (Bruno is their ginormous dog.)

She told me that she absolutely loved being a parent.

I drove a few hours back home later that evening, and still smelled little Rosie on my sweater—until I walked in the door and smelled only burnt pizza.

Not only did the house wreak of burnt food, but it was in complete disarray. Both kids were working on science fair projects, and there were supplies strewn across the kitchen floor. I almost tripped over a bag of silverware on the floor that my son was using to weigh down a bridge structure he was testing.

There were gnats circling some grapes that no one had put away in the refrigerator. When I put them back in the fridge, I discovered a completely empty carton of orange juice one of the kids put back on the bottom shelf.

I've only been gone eight hours, I thought to myself.

Just then, the kids came running down the stairs shouting at each other.

"Yes you did!" Margaret screamed at her brother.

I heard my friend's little sister's words echo in my head: "I love being a parent."

No one knew I was home yet, so I tiptoed into the living room and counted to 10 before I morphed into momzilla and started yelling at the kids.

I saw the Nativity scene in a box, next to some ornaments. We had planned to

decorate for Christmas that evening upon my return home.

I looked at the Nativity scene—Mary, Joseph and Jesus surrounded by animals in a barn. There was no room for a dignified birth, so our Savior was born in a stable and laid in a manger. Even for the Holy Family, God's chosen ones, parenting wasn't a perfect road. Mary fretted when Jesus was lost in the temple, and she mourned when she watched him wrongfully and shamefully be put to death before her very eyes.

While we might not always be chanting "I love being a parent," it's a vocation to which we're called on good days and bad ones.

There will be hills and valleys. There will be times when our children make us proud, and there will be times when they make us want to hide our faces.

But we are called to love them always.

Elder Ballard captured it well. In this saying, I encourage you to replace the word "mother" with "parent": "There is no one perfect way to be a good mother. Every situation is unique. Each mother has different challenges ... and certainly different children. What matters is that a mother loves her children deeply."

(Patti Lamb, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Coming of Age/Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Procrastination can be defeated a step at a time

When was the last time you delayed working on an important assignment? Was it a lack of motivation? Or did you actually care a lot about the project and still end up doing something else?



Students' reasons to procrastinate include not knowing where to start, underestimating how long it takes to complete a task, perfectionism, trouble concentrating or poor organizational skills. Another reason is the need to better regulate emotions.

Timothy Pychyl, a professor who studies procrastination at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, told *The Washington Post* that most psychologists see procrastination as a kind of coping mechanism gone awry.

Students who feel tired, frustrated, bored or nervous will often try to make themselves feel better before tackling a challenging task. However, the idea that they need to be in "the right mood" to work is sabotaging their efforts.

Working at the last minute increases opportunities for mistakes, and, if taken to extremes, can seriously affect the student's performance. But the consequences of procrastination go beyond grades and can affect students' health, increasing stress, guilt and feelings of inadequacy.

The quest to fix current stress prevents procrastinators from figuring out how to relieve stress in the long run. Even productive procrastination (like cleaning the house or revising notes from another class) hinders their ability to work on important, long-term goals.

From teens to college students, learning effective strategies to avoid procrastination increases their chances of success. Here are ways to fight procrastination:

- Offer your schoolwork as prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you when starting a big project. Write AMDG ("ad maiorem Dei gloriam," meaning "for God's greater glory") on top of task lists, or ask Mary for her intercession to stay focused.

- Set reasonable goals and commit. Remember the proverb, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Getting started builds momentum and self-esteem, which reduces the temptation to procrastinate as a stress reliever.

- Break down a task into small, realistic tasks. This keeps you accountable and allows you to cross things off (showing your progress and making the next step less overwhelming).

- Anticipate roadblocks. "You have to have a plan for the goal itself and a plan to get around the obstacles to your plan," wrote Jennice Vilhauer, director of Emory University's adult outpatient psychotherapy program. "We tend to be creatures of habit, and many times the biggest obstacle to change is our current way of doing something."

- Be honest with yourself. Recognize and change patterns that lead to procrastination (like leaving the hardest work for last, when you have less energy). Seek productive study environments to minimize distractions and interruptions.

- Schedule short breaks into your study strategy. Stand up, walk around the room, stretch and breathe deeply. Now get back to work!

- Persevere despite your fear of failure. Don't back away from a goal because you've failed in the past. Be patient and keep at it. Forgive yourself for past procrastinations, pray for focus and self-control, and try again.

Change takes time, so keep up your efforts. Just remember, fulfilling your responsibilities will yield greater accomplishment, less stress and more peace of mind. And ultimately, you'll be glorifying God through your work.

(Maria-Pia Negro Chin is bilingual associate editor at Maryknoll Magazine.) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Advent season offers us a time to put our house in order, start anew

There's no better time than Advent for putting our house in order.

The house of which we speak is our disposition that is being bombarded by a topsy-turvy world threatening the beauty of the season.



Years ago, the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World identified

the threats to society and the common good: "Feelings of hostility, contempt and distrust, as well as racial hatred and unbending ideologies, continue to divide men."

Today, violence, character assassination, dishonesty, animosity and combative ideologies are strangling our ability to live a kind and well-disposed existence.

Advent is a sacred time to celebrate

Christ becoming incarnate and living among us—a time to increase our efforts to live his love within ourselves and with those among us.

Recently, a friend threw out his back and complained that it had stopped him from going on with business as usual. Many people among us are in the same situation lacking a healthy life due to physical or mental handicaps.

Advent is a time to befriend the destitute through our caring. As Christ befriended us, we reach out to others. We seldom think of its power, but when care is heartfelt, it contains the potential for creating a calming peace in those whose life is seriously disrupted.

No doubt many of us know people who are perpetually glum. Advent is a time to flash a cheerful smile in hopes of uplifting their hearts with a sunny moment.

These days, our air is filled with negativity. In Advent, we direct our conversations away from the negativity to the optimistic side of life, in gratitude for

the many God-given gifts we enjoy.

I often listen to a news station that ends on a heartwarming note. Unfortunately, most news and many of our movies are about vicious violence. Advent stops us and allows us to focus on wholesome events of the day. It is especially a time to read the Gospels with an eye on Christ's heartwarming humanness as he walked among us.

Truth applies to our most important relationships: friendship, collaboration, love, marriage, the family. Advent is a time to counter an atmosphere of untruthfulness by "telling it as it is," and thereby increasing our loyalty to truthfulness.

The above examples are but a few of how to celebrate Advent through the cultivation of the disposition of kindness within ourselves, our homes and those among us.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for Catholic News Service.) †

First Sunday of Advent/Msg. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 3, 2017

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

This weekend, the Church begins Advent. It begins the use of biblical readings from Year B of its three-year Sunday Mass reading cycle.



It also is the start of a new liturgical year. Each liturgical year is carefully planned so that the seasons and the major feasts guide us through the Church's worship into a closer relationship

with God.

The first reading is from the third section of Isaiah, composed when the Jews were in a difficult situation. Years before, they had been allowed to return to the Holy Land from Babylon after being exiled there. But this return brought the exiles home to no paradise. Life was miserable.

The prophet called for faith in God, not only as almighty, but as unrelentingly true to his covenant, to the divine pledge that he would protect his chosen people.

The prophet appealed for relief to God in the name of the people, but without saying that the people were being treated unfairly, at least in terms of God's care for them. Indeed, Isaiah made clear that sin led the people away from God. This estrangement has produced their woes.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the next reading. Counseling the Christians of Corinth was a challenge for Paul. Not only did temptation and vice surround them on every side, but they also argued among themselves. Paul called them to faithfulness and sought to persuade them to put their differences aside.

He saw the disciples there as having enormous religious potential, despite the odds produced by their surroundings and the human inclination to sin. If they chose to cooperate with God's grace, they would be able to be close to God and also infuse the goodness of Christianity into the circles in which they moved.

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

By the time the Gospels were written—even in the case of the Gospel of Mark, thought to be the oldest of the four as they now exist—Christians were numerous enough and geographically distributed enough to catch the public eye, but not numerous enough or powerful enough to stand against their enemies. The culture was an enemy. Soon, the political system would be an enemy as well.

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

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

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

If we are with God, we need not fear.

Reflection

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

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

Mark's Gospel greatly assists us in forming solid faith. Only God is permanent and real.

Advent is an opportunity to grow in our union with God, to realize that God's love for us is real.

If we respond to the opportunity given to us by Advent, then Christmas becomes not a national holiday, or even a holy religious commemoration, but the moment when we encounter God, firmly believing that Jesus will come again, but also believing that here and now we know the Lord. †

Daily Readings

Monday, December 4

St. John Damascene, priest and doctor of the Church

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm 122:1-9

Matthew 8:5-11

Tuesday, December 5

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17

Luke 10:21-24

Wednesday, December 6

St. Nicholas, bishop

Isaiah 25:6-10a

Psalm 23:1-6

Matthew 15:29-37

Thursday, December 7

St. Ambrose, bishop and doctor of the Church

Isaiah 26:1-6

Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a

Matthew 7:21, 24-27

Friday, December 8

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Genesis 3:9-15, 20

Psalm 98:1-4

Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12

Luke 1:26-38

Saturday, December 9

St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin

Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26

Psalm 147:1-6

Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Sunday, December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Psalm 85:9-14

2 Peter 3:8-14

Mark 1:1-8

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Masses of Christian Burial are ordinarily celebrated in a parish church

QIn certain parts of our country, Masses of Christian Burial at funeral homes are allowed. I think this is a wonderful



idea, especially for small funerals. Who makes that decision or gives permission for this? (New York)

AI am not aware of any place in the United States where funeral Masses are celebrated on a regular

basis in a funeral home. The Archdiocese of Detroit notes, for example, on its website: "Funeral Masses are not allowed in funeral homes. The funeral liturgy outside of Mass, as provided in the 'Order of Christian Funerals,' is allowed in the funeral home."

That ritual held in a funeral home, then, would consist only in the sprinkling of the casket, opening prayers, scriptural readings, a homily, intercessory petitions, the Our Father and the closing prayers of commendation. In short, this service would include all of the parts of a normal funeral Mass with the significant exception of the Eucharist itself.

It is much more fitting that a funeral be celebrated with the church's central and most powerful prayer, the Eucharist—ordinarily in the parish church in which the deceased had traditionally worshipped.

At the same time, though, this guideline is not absolute, and a local bishop could grant permission for a Mass to be celebrated in a funeral home—particularly in rural areas, where the church might be a great distance away, or in a case where severe weather might imperil travel.

QI am concerned about the population growth in the world, and about religious leaders not addressing it. I know that as Catholic Christians we are called to support the poor, and I have done this. But with unlimited population growth, isn't this like bailing water from a boat with a hole in the bottom? Why aren't religious leaders encouraging families to limit size? (New Jersey)

AThe concern you express resonates to a certain extent with the words of Pope Francis. Speaking to journalists during a flight in January 2015 from the Philippines back to Rome, the pontiff addressed that same question, indicating that Catholics fail to practice responsible parenthood when they have more children than can be provided for.

While defending Church teaching against artificial contraception expressed

by Pope Paul VI in the encyclical "Humanae Vitae," Pope Francis said that "this doesn't mean a Christian should have a succession of children." "Some people believe that," he added, "in order to be good Catholics, we should be like rabbits."

Rejecting that myth, he noted that there are legitimate natural ways to limit reproduction and cited with disapproval the case of a woman who became pregnant an eighth time after giving birth to seven children by cesarean section. "Do you want to leave seven orphans?" the pope asked. "This is tempting God."

At the same time, Pope Francis in a 2015 general audience challenged married couples who refuse to be open to the gift of life, calling it a "selfish choice."

"A society stingy in generation," the pope went on to say, "that does not love to surround itself in children, that considers them overall a worry, a weight, a risk, is a depressed society."

The Church has consistently acknowledged the dangers posed by increased poverty rates in the fastest-growing regions of the world; it has urged prudent decision-making in the spacing of births, but has situated that choice in the consciences of parents, rejecting efforts by some governments to act by force through programs of artificial contraception, sterilizations and even abortions.

In April 2015, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences asserted that there is a determinable level of sustainable world population and that the common good requires maintaining that number.

Two months later, though, in his encyclical "Laudato Si", on Care for Our Common Home," Pope Francis offered a more nuanced and comprehensive view, saying, "Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate. ... To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some is one way of refusing to face the issues" (#50).

In fact, in many developed countries population decline and low birth rates are more of a problem. In such countries, social safety net programs are threatened because of a declining number of income earners.

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

My Journey to God

Ode to Trees

By Cathy Lamperski Dearing

O' trees
You appreciate
The rhythm of things.
You understand and respond
To every season's change
Though change and letting go
Isn't always as easy
As it looks.
You live life in two worlds—
Solitary and solidarity
Embracing the gifts
And challenges
Of both.
You have mourned the loss of many
Yet have remained rooted
Standing firm and tall
In faith.
You are great teachers
Of patient waiting
And how growth is slow
And takes time.
You remind us all to
"Look up!"
And trust what the Heavenly Father
Is calling us to.



(Cathy Lamperski Dearing is a member of Saint Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. Aspen trees display fall colors at the base of the San Francisco Peaks in Flagstaff, Ariz., on Oct. 3.) (CNS photo/Nancy Wiehcek)

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.

ASCHBACHER, Anna K., 95, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Nov. 10. Mother of Carol Coulter, Janice Gilley, David, Robert and William Aschbacher. Sister of John and Richard Krentenz. Grandmother of three.

BALLMAN, Victor, 94, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Nov. 18. Father of Linda Benjamin, Catherine, Patricia and Mark Ballman. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of several.

BRAUN, Frank J., III, 90, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville, Nov. 3. Father of Cynthia Bannett, Donna Gibson, Deborah Pryor, Gloria, Daniel and Timothy Braun. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of four.

CARR, Thomas L., 90, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Nov. 15. Father of Jo Ann Clark, Jack, Michael and Tom Carr. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 11.

DIDELOT, J. Donald, 58, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 18. Son of Mary Didelot. Brother of Patty King, Mary Ann Moberly, Bill, Dave, Frank and Joe Didelot. Uncle of several.

DIESELBERG, Beth, 37, All Saints, Dearborn County, Nov. 19. Mother of Journey Cobb. Daughter of Gary and Janice Dieselberg. Sister of Ann Bovard, Chad and Jared Dieselberg.

FISCHER, Joseph S., 87, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Nov. 18. Husband of Marjorie Fischer. Uncle of two.

HEIOB, Robert J., 61, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Nov. 3. Father of Lauren, Lindsey and Sara Heiob. Brother of Sally Armstrong and Peggy Whitsett.

HEWITT, Wanda, 80, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County, Nov. 14. Wife of Jack Hewitt. Mother of Amy Campbell, Jay and Perry Hewitt. Sister of Norma Browning and Jim Beyer. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of two.

HILLARD, James, 86, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Nov. 18. Husband of Karen Hillard. Father of Kathy Bongers, Lynda Skaggs and Todd Hillard. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of six.

JOYAL, Dean, 85, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Nov. 11. Husband of Martha Joyal. Father of Marrianna Brunner and Elizabeth

Hamilton. Brother of Sharon Marshall, Betty Nally, Kathy Spangenberg and Irene Thrasher. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of two.

KARNs, Michael W., 38, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Nov. 24. Son of Jim and Pam Karns. Brother of Amanda Cartheuser and Jeffrey Karns. Uncle of several.

KOSOF, Betty J., 97, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Nov. 12. Mother of Paula Stezzi and Kathy Young. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of two.

KLUMP, Maxine, 90, All Saints, Dearborn County, Nov. 18. Mother of Terry Damon, Nancy Lillie and Michelle Paquette. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of 10.

KRAMER, Ruth, 97, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 15. Mother of Beth and Elaine Kramer.

LANNAN, Mary F., 76, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 14. Wife of Kenneth Lannan. Mother of Karen Breedlove, David and Kevin Lannan. Sister of Cecilia O'Bryan. Grandmother of five.

LEE, Mary A., 92, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 13. Mother of Sherry Frazee, Paul and Rick Davis and Patty Lee. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of 19. Great-great-grandmother of four.

OESTERLING, Leona M., 100, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 19. Mother of Janet Pribble, Dr. Joseph, Mark and Dr. Robert Oesterling. Grandmother of six.

OPEL, Mallory E., 27, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 24. Mother of Camilla Jackson. Daughter of Doug and Julie Opel. Sister of Morgan and Bryce Opel. Granddaughter of Janet Bartram and Ronald and Carol Opel.

OPEL, Meredith G., 20, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 24. Daughter of Doug and Julie Opel. Sister of Morgan and Bryce Opel.



Vatican Christmas tree

A Christmas tree is positioned in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Nov. 23. This year's tree is from Poland. (CNS photo/Max Rossi)

Providence Sister Anita Bechert served in Catholic schools, administration

Providence Sister Anita Bechert died on Nov. 12 at Mother Theodore Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 90.

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

Elizabeth Jane Bechert was born on April 23, 1927, in Indianapolis and grew up as a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish. She entered the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on Feb. 2, 1946, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1953.

Sister Anita earned a bachelor's degree at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master's degree at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

During her 71 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Anita ministered in education for 37 years in schools in California, Illinois, Indiana and Maryland. Beginning in 1986,

Granddaughter of Janet Bartram and Ronald and Carol Opel. Aunt of one.

PAIR, Phillip A., 70, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Nov. 11. Husband of Victoria Pair. Father of Elaine and Lynley Pair. Grandfather of two.

PEONI, Charles A., 59, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 10. Husband of Patricia Peoni. Son of Rosemary Peoni. Brother of Paul Peoni. Uncle of several.

PFLUM, Robert P., 76, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 13. Husband of Sandra Pflum. Father of Shelley Day and Eric Pflum. Brother of Bill, John and Mark Pflum. Grandfather of four.

RUEHRWEIN, William R., 97, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 12. Father of Sharon Kwiecinski, Rose VonHolle, Susan Wendel, Bill and Steve Ruehrwein. Brother of Mary Chiseck. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of seven.

SHIRK, Patricia, 87, St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby

County, Nov. 7. Wife of Charles Shirk. Mother of Melissa Freeman. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of three.

SOPER, Marion, 85, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Oct. 28. Father of Carol Paolantino, Claudia and Charles Soper. Brother of Corrine Doan. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of two.

SULLIVAN, Phyllis J., 85, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Nov. 9. Wife of John Sullivan. Sister of Bill Greve. Aunt of several.

SWANK, Diane E., 68, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Oct. 23. Wife of John Perkins. Sister of Teresa Brady, Suetta Fischer, Barbara Gallegos, Mark and Paul Swank. Aunt of several.

WILLIAMS, Glenn M., 93, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Nov. 20. Father of Catherine Wahnsieder and Kerry Williams. Grandfather of four.

WILSON, Angeline M., 87, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Nov. 9. Mother of Jane Hendrickson. Grandmother of two. †

she retired from teaching and served in administrative work for her order, overseeing its office of records from 1991-2007. She dedicated herself entirely to prayer beginning in 2014.

In addition to serving at her order's motherhouse, Sister Anita served in the archdiocese at the former St. Mary-of-the-Woods School in St. Mary-of-the-Woods from 1947-48, at the former St. Andrew the Apostle School in Indianapolis from 1961-65, at the former Holy Trinity School in New Albany from 1965-69, and at St. Luke the Evangelist School in Indianapolis from 1973-75 and 1979-85.

She is survived by a sister, Anna Marie Ewing of Canyon Lake, Calif.

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

Franciscan Sister Patricia Connor served in education, as librarian at Marian University

Franciscan Sister Patricia Connor died on Nov. 5 at the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. She was 88.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 13 at the Motherhouse Chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Patricia was born on Sept. 6, 1929, in Hays, Kan. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on Sept. 11, 1949, and professed final vows on Aug. 12, 1955.

Sister Patricia was a graduate of Marian University in Indianapolis, and Rosary College in River Forest, Ill.

During 67 years as a Sister of St. Francis, Sister Patricia ministered as an educator for 22 years in Catholic schools in Indiana and Ohio, serving in the archdiocese at the former St. Paul School in New Alsace from 1965-74.

Beginning in 1974, Sister Patricia began ministry as an assistant librarian at Marian University until her retirement in 2009.

She is survived by sisters Lorrie Blackwill of Quinter, Kan., Gladys Connor of Salina, Kan., Kay Religa of Brooksville, Kan., and Karen Vail of Salina, Kan., and brothers James Connor of Catoosa, Okla., and Larry Connor of WaKenney, Kan.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036-0100. †

Zimbabwe's bishops urge new government to embrace country's diversity

HARARE, Zimbabwe (CNS)—All Zimbabweans should have a voice in the country's governance following Robert Mugabe's 37-year presidency, and the new government should embrace diversity, Zimbabwe's bishops said.

Congratulating President Emmerson Mnangagwa, whose Nov. 24 inauguration followed a de facto coup, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference also thanked 93-year-old Mugabe for "the good work he did for Zimbabwe during the liberation struggle" against white rule and as president.

"We forgive him for any shortcomings during his long tenure of office," the bishops said in a Nov. 26 pastoral statement.

Addressing all Zimbabweans, the bishops said, "We thank God and congratulate you as a nation for displaying a high standard of maturity in the recent tensions" in the southern African country.

"We thank you all for your peaceful conduct, tolerance and cooperation during the military-assisted transition," they said.

Mugabe resigned on Nov. 21, a week after Zimbabwe's army seized control of the government. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in the capital, Harare, to celebrate.

The bishops said the goals of economic recovery and electoral reforms must be achieved before the general elections, scheduled for 2018.

Mugabe's policies are widely blamed for Zimbabwe's economic decline over the last two decades. Millions of economic refugees have left the country, with most going to South Africa.

Zimbabwe "needs to develop a culture of broad consultation, constitutionalism, safeguarding life, human dignity and fundamental human rights and freedoms," the bishops said.

The country's churches can facilitate dialogue "with the aim of harnessing collective will and support in ensuring Zimbabwe pursues a renewed path to peace, unity, progress and prosperity," they said.

"Let us as one family continue to pray for peace and a just outcome to the present situation," they said. †

Osgood parish celebrates 150 years as a family of faith

By Sean Gallagher

Over the past year, the members of St. John the Baptist Parish in Osgood have celebrated the 150th anniversary of the founding of their Batesville Deanery faith community in a variety of ways—social events, the dedication of a Marian shrine and a procession honoring the parish's patron saint.

But it was a surprise visitor to the parish's anniversary Mass on Sept. 10 that may have been the highlight of all the events.

About 20 minutes before the start of the liturgy, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson arrived as its surprise principal celebrant. Last minute changes to his schedule allowed him to attend.

It meant a lot to Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth, St. John's parish life coordinator.

"I've always believed in the God of surprises," she said. "And this was one of the most pleasant surprises I've experienced. It was unexpected, but I welcomed him with open arms."

Sister Shirley knew that Archbishop Thompson's participation in the anniversary Mass was also meaningful for everyone who attended.

"He really made the celebration very, very special," she said. "He did a wonderful job. His homily was excellent. He greeted all the people afterward, and was the last one in line for his food."

Andy Miller, a young adult member of the parish, was a lector at the Mass.

He and his family sat in the same area of the church during the liturgy in which several previous generations of Millers have worshipped, right next to a stained-glass window that Miller's great-great grandfather donated to the parish.

"It's amazing how many people have been there and raised their families there," said Miller, 26. "It continues on and on. One hundred and fifty years is really amazing."

Miller works as a farmer with other members of his family near the parish that was settled by an ancestor that emigrated from Germany.

Now he and his wife are raising two young children who are the sixth generation of Millers who are members of St. John.

"It's big shoes to fill with that many generations all thinking it's important enough to stay and go every Sunday," he said. "I just hope I'm doing the right thing for my kids to make them see how

important it's been to our family. Hopefully, it will be a way to make it important for them."

Miller hopes to set an example for his children by being involved in the parish. When he was growing up, he said he frequently went there with his father and grandfather to do any work that needed to be done. Now he helps in hospitality ministry, is a lector at Mass and serves on the parish's cemetery committee.

Jill Jansing, 45, has also been involved in St. John Parish for much of her life. She credits the strength of her faith today to the catechesis she received there growing up.

"I didn't go to a Catholic school," she said. "That was why the parish was all the more important. That's where I got all of my formation. It was really everything. It meant a lot. We had a good foundation that was given to us here."

Jansing assists with liturgies in the parish, has served on its pastoral council and assisted with its youth ministry activities held with nearby St. Maurice Parish in Napoleon.

"It's a matter of giving back, thinking back to all of the people that set an example for me as I was growing up," she said. They passed the torch to people like myself. And so it's important for me to do it for future generations."

Over the years, Jansing has appreciated the small size of her faith community and how it serves the families of the small town of Osgood and the surrounding rural area.

"We're a common, country type of folk," said Jansing. "Everybody seems to know everybody. We really feel like we're family. That's easier to do when you're a smaller church."

Ruth Wenning, 90, has been part of the family of faith at St. John since around 1950.

"When we first moved here, there were 300 families in the parish and we knew them all," said Wenning. "We went to church every Sunday. We'd have our big chicken dinner and festival during the summertime."

Ruth's daughter Rosalie Calhoun is also a member of St. John, and has seen how the families of the parish reach out to help each other in times of need.



Olivia, left, and Katie Miller, front row, Wyatt McCain, second row, and Renee Tunny, all members of St. John the Baptist Parish in Osgood, bring up offertory gifts during a Sept. 10 Mass at the Batesville Deanery faith community's church to celebrate the 150th anniversary of its founding. (Submitted photo)



Members of St. John the Baptist Parish in Osgood enjoy a banquet on Sept. 10 at the Batesville Deanery faith community after a Mass celebrating the 150th anniversary of its founding. (Submitted photo)

"It's comforting," said Calhoun, 70. "After all these years, you're still doing the same things for families that have been there since almost the start of the parish."

Sister Shirley said the faith of the people she ministers to at St. John has

strengthened her own.

"Whenever I'm in the presence of a person whose faith is strong, it certainly deepens my own faith in God," she said. "Witnessing people who have a strong faith is a great inspiration to me." †

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Indian Catholics sorry that papal invitation never came through

NEW DELHI (CNS)—As Pope Francis began his tour to Myanmar and Bangladesh, Catholics in neighboring India regret missing a chance to meet him in their homeland, nostalgically recalling past papal visits, reported ucanews.com.

Catholic groups began discussing plans to host the pontiff earlier this year, after the Vatican confirmed a papal visit to the region.

Nobody then expected a papal itinerary would not include India, a nation of 19 million Catholics.

Cardinal Baselios Cleemis Thottunkal, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, said the Church in India was expecting to receive Pope Francis, "but it did not happen."

In August, the Vatican announced that the Nov. 27-Dec. 2 journey would only include Myanmar and Bangladesh, whereas the original plan had been to visit India and Bangladesh.

The lack of an official invitation for Pope Francis to visit India is widely seen as being the result of political considerations by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. The government is operated by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Observers say the BJP feared that Modi hosting Pope Francis would have alienated majority-Hindu voters ahead of scheduled 2019 national elections.

However, Cardinal George Alencherry of Ernakulam-Angamaly said the outcome had disappointed the entire Church in India. Cardinal Alencherry was scheduled to join a papal Mass in Bangladesh, ucanews.com reported.

A wide cross section of Indians interviewed by ucanews.com said a papal visit would have uplifted Christians facing violence and threats from extremist Hindu groups, especially in northern India.

One of those unhappy about Pope Francis not visiting India was Johana Xalxo, an Oraon ethnic minority woman and a school principal in New Delhi.

Xalxo, 52, said she was privileged to meet St. Pope John Paul II in 1986 when he toured some 15 Indian cities, including her city of Ranchi. She was part of a group that danced to welcome St. John Paul.

"It was an exciting experience," she recalled.

Xalxo noted that papal visits lifted the morale of indigenous Christians, who often felt weak and neglected, providing them with a sense of belonging to a larger community. †

Flag Raising at St. Mary in North Vernon

This photo shows a flag raising event at St. Mary School in North Vernon. Though no date is given on the photo, it could depict celebrations related to the dedication of the school building by Bishop Denis O'Donoghue, former auxiliary bishop of Indianapolis, on June 21, 1908. St. Mary Parish was founded in 1861, and the school continues to operate in the building shown in this photograph.

(Would you like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesan archivist Julie Motyka at 800-382-9836, ext. 1538; (317) 236-1538; or by e-mail at jmotyka@archindy.org.)



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Photo (from left): Sister Gloria Rodriguez, MGSps, 80; Father Albert Bunsic, OCD, 81; Sister Alfonsina Sanchez, OCD, 96; Sister Mary Ann Hanson, SND, 79. ©2017 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved. Photographer: Jim Judkis.