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Criterion

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Season of sharing

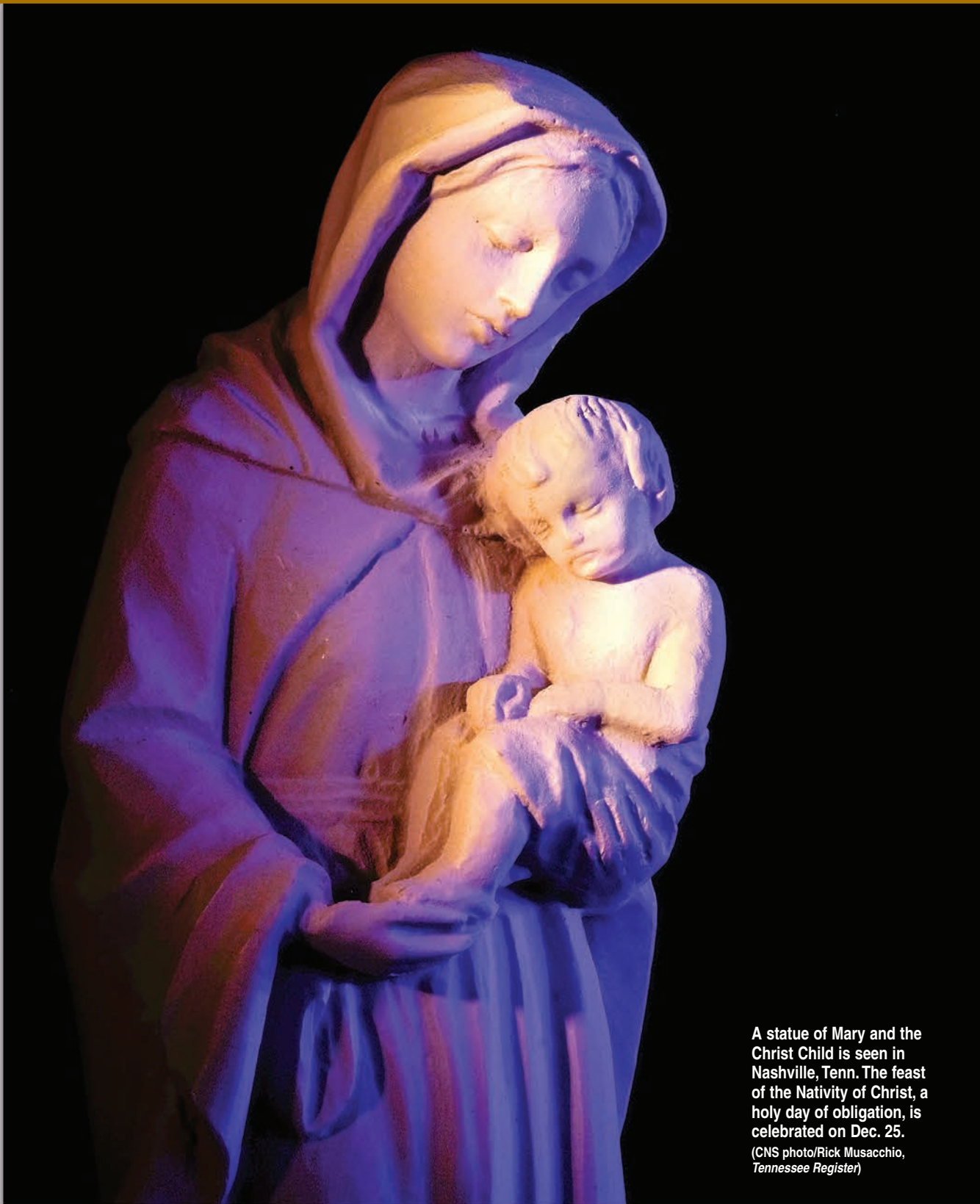
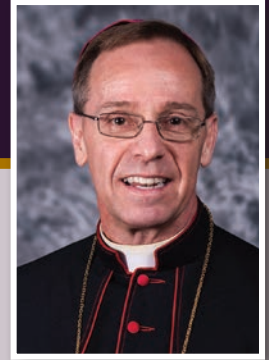
Readers share their favorite Christmas memories, pages 8-9.

CriterionOnline.com

December 22, 2017

Vol. LVIII, No. 12 75¢

A Christmas message from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson



A statue of Mary and the Christ Child is seen in Nashville, Tenn. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated on Dec. 25. (CNS photo/Rick Musacchio, Tennessee Register)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I wish everyone throughout central and southern Indiana a blessed Christmas and grace-filled New Year. Amid the exchange of gifts that is so customary at this time of year, let us not overlook our most precious gifts that remain with us throughout the year—namely, the gifts of faith, family and friends—more valuable than any sum of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Please allow me to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude for all those who have welcomed, supported and held me in prayer during the course of these first months of my ministry as your shepherd. While the schedule and expectations can seem rather daunting at times, I take great consolation in the great witness of faith so readily apparent throughout our local Church, in central and southern Indiana.

Whether you are spending the Christmas season with loved ones or alone, whether near or far, I pray that each of you encounter the sacred presence of God within the depths of your very being.

I ask that you join me in prayer during this special time of grace, especially as we embark on ushering in the New Year, for those who lack a sense of faith and hope.

In particular, let us remember those who feel alienated from God, Church, family and/or humanity in general. May we continue to reflect the Incarnation of God becoming one like us in all things but sin, as Pope Francis exhorts us, by seeking to cultivate a culture of accompaniment, dialogue and mercy.

Let us seek not only to encounter the person of Jesus Christ in and throughout 2018, but dare to be a means of that encounter for others.

Your Brother in Christ,

+ Charles C. Thompson

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Mensaje de Navidad del Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

Deseo que todos en el centro y el sur de Indiana tengan una Navidad bendecida y un Año Nuevo lleno de gracia. En medio del intercambio de regalos que caracteriza a esta época del año, no olvidemos los obsequios más preciados que permanecen con nosotros durante todo el año, a saber: el don de la fe, la familia y los amigos, todos ellos más valiosos que el oro, el incienso y la mirra.

Permítanme aprovechar esta oportunidad para expresar mi más profundo agradecimiento a todos aquellos que me han dado la bienvenida, me han apoyado y me han tenido en sus oraciones a lo largo de estos primeros meses de mi ministerio

como su pastor. Aunque la agenda y las expectativas a veces parezcan un tanto abrumadoras, me consuela enormemente el gran testimonio de fe que resulta tan evidente en toda nuestra Iglesia local.

Ya sea que usted pase la época navideña con sus seres queridos o solo, ya sea que esté lejos o cerca, rezo para que cada uno de ustedes encuentre la presencia sagrada de Dios en las profundidades de su propio ser.

Conforme nos disponemos a recibir el nuevo año le pido que durante este tiempo especial de gracia me acompañe en oración por todos aquellos que carecen de un sentido de fe y esperanza.

Recordemos en especial a aquellos que se sienten alejados de Dios, de la Iglesia,

de la familia y de la humanidad en general. Que sigamos reflejando la encarnación de Dios quien se convirtió en uno de nosotros en todo excepto en el pecado—tal como nos exhorta el papa Francisco—y que procuremos cultivar la cultura de la compañía, del diálogo y de la misericordia.

Que busquemos no solamente encontrar a la persona de Cristo durante todo el año 2018, sino que nos atrevamos a convertirnos en un medio que propicie ese encuentro para los demás.

Su hermano en Cristo,

+ Charles C. Thompson

Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson



Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, center, receives an ovation after being escorted to the *cathedra*, or bishop's chair, by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis, left, and Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, right, during his Dec. 15 installation Mass at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville, Ind. Bishop Siegel became the sixth bishop of the diocese.

(CNS photo/Peeewe Vasquez, *The Message*)

Bishop Siegel installed to lead Evansville, seeks to listen, learn

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (CNS)—Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, the sixth bishop of Evansville, Ind., said during his installation Mass that he arrived in the diocese without any preconceived notions or ideas, and wanted to learn as much as he could about the people to whom he will be ministering.

“In this first year, I look forward to listening, and learning, and seeking the wisdom of the clergy, diocesan staff and various advisory councils in the diocese,” he told more than 800 people on Dec. 15 during the liturgy at St. Benedict Cathedral.

“I hope to begin visiting our parishes, schools, and institutions very soon, and to learn more about the life, history, and culture of this part of Indiana, as well as the needs and concerns of the people who live, work and worship here,” Bishop Siegel said.

He called his service “a daunting vocation, and yes, without God’s everyday grace and help, it would be impossible. Therefore, as I begin my ministry as your bishop, I ask for your daily prayers that I will be a holy, wise and courageous bishop, one who models his life and ministry on Jesus the good shepherd.”

As the Mass began, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, led Bishop Siegel to the *cathedra*, or bishop’s chair, immediately after he publicly accepted the appointment to lead the Church in southwestern Indiana from Pope Francis, which was announced on Oct. 18.

“You are called by the Holy Spirit to serve almighty God and the people of the Diocese of Evansville, in faith and in love, as their shepherd,” Archbishop Pierre said. “Are you willing to serve the people of this diocese in the tradition of the apostolic faith of the Church?”

Bishop Siegel responded, “With faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and with the love of God in my heart, I do accept the pastoral care of the people of God in the Diocese of Evansville. I resolve to serve faithfully the spiritual needs of this local Church.”

Bishop Siegel, 54, who attended the former Saint Meinrad College in nearby St. Meinrad in the 1980s, comes to a diocese with 45 parishes in 12 counties with a population of 512,870, of which 76,218, or 15 percent, are Catholic.

Bishop Siegel was born in Joliet, Ill., and was raised on a farm in Lockport Township, Ill. He is the youngest of nine children. Ordained a priest for the Joliet Diocese on March 4, 1988, Bishop Siegel was appointed auxiliary bishop of Joliet in 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI. He served as vicar general under Bishop R. Daniel Conlon of Joliet until his appointment to lead the Evansville Diocese.

More than 20 bishops concelebrated the installation Mass, including the fourth and fifth bishops of Evansville: retired Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger and now-Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis. Bishop Siegel succeeds Archbishop Thompson, who had been bishop of Evansville since 2011 following Bishop Gettelfinger’s retirement. Pope Francis appointed Archbishop Thompson to lead Indianapolis in June.

A large group of Bishop Siegel’s family, including siblings and nieces and nephews, and diocesan staff traveled from Joliet for the installation.

During evening prayer on Dec. 14 at the cathedral, Bishop Siegel related a story about St. John Vianney becoming lost traveling to his first parish assignment in the village of Ars, France.

“He met a young boy from the village, along the way, who gave him directions. In response, he said to the lad, ‘You have shown me the way to Ars. I will show you the way to heaven.’” Bishop Siegel said during his homily. “While with the wonders of a GPS, I didn’t get lost coming down here to Evansville, my responsibility as bishop, and that of all our pastors, will still be the same as that of the sainted pastor, to help lead the people of this diocese to heaven.” †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 21, 2017 – January 4, 2018

December 21 — 11 a.m.
Funeral Mass—Father Mark Gottemoeller, St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, Indianapolis

December 22 — 11 a.m.
Funeral Mass—Father Robert Mazzola, St. Gabriel Church, Connersville

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

January 4, 2018 — 1 p.m.
Terre Haute Priests’ Deanery Meeting, Terre Haute Deanery Center
(Schedule subject to change.)

Oral arguments heard in suits on religious exemption to mandate

PHILADELPHIA (CNS)—The U.S. District Court in Philadelphia heard oral arguments on Dec. 14 in a suit that aims to take away the exemption granted in October to the Little Sisters of the Poor and other religious employers allowing them to refuse to cover contraceptives, abortifacients and sterilization for their employees on moral grounds.

A similar hearing took place on Dec. 12 in U.S. District Court in Oakland, Calif.

The Trump administration on Oct. 6 issued interim rules expanding the exemption to the mandate for religious employers.

Days after the rule was issued, Pennsylvania and California filed complaints against the federal government over the 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 exemption rule from going into effect.

On Dec. 15, a federal judge in Pennsylvania, Judge Wendy Beetlestone, temporarily blocked the new exemption rule from going into effect.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., said her decision “harms faith-based nonprofits and others who have fought for over half a decade to correct the serious injustice caused by the HHS [Department of Health and Human Services]’ mandate.

“We expect and pray that the courts reviewing this decision will uphold the government’s new regulations that protect religious liberty,” he said in a statement as chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee for Religious Liberty.

The Little Sisters of the Poor have been in the spotlight for the past several years because of their moral objection to the HHS requirement that most religious employers cover contraceptives, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in their employee health plan.

Becket, a religious liberty law firm, is representing the Little Sisters in the two cases filed after the Trump administration handed down its new rules. The cases are *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Trump* and *the State of California v. Hargan*. “Hargan” is Eric D. Hargan, acting HHS secretary.

“As Little Sisters of the Poor, all we want is to follow our calling to love and to serve and finally put this legal ordeal behind us,” Mother Loraine Marie Maguire, mother provincial of the Little Sisters of the Poor, said in a statement.

The cases are being heard, respectively, by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

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.

“After the Little Sisters’ four-year fight, a Supreme Court victory, and a new rule that protects women like them, [Pennsylvania] Attorney General [Josh] Shapiro still went to court to take away their rights,” said Lori Windham, senior counsel at Becket, said in a Dec. 14 statement.

“He then argued that the Little Sisters shouldn’t even be allowed to come to this court today to make their case,” she added.

Becket has argued all along that the government has many ways to provide services to women who want them as well as protect the Little Sisters. “Neither the federal government nor the state governments need nuns to help them give out contraceptives,” it said in a news release. †

The Criterion and Catholic Center are closed from Dec. 22 to Jan. 1 for Christmas holiday

This week’s issue of *The Criterion*, which is our annual Christmas publication, is the last issue of 2017.

The Criterion will be published again on Jan. 12, 2018, and resume its weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 22 through Jan. 1 in observance of the holidays.

Archdiocesan agencies will reopen at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2018. †



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Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1570
Circulation: 317-236-1454
Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1454

Price: \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

Postmaster:
Send address changes to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Web site: www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.
Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2017 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

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The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
317-236-1570
800-382-9836 ext. 1570
criterion@archindy.org

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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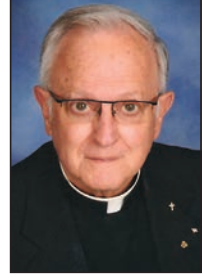
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Father Robert Mazzola ministered in parishes, served in tribunal

Criterion staff report

Father Robert E. Mazzola, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on Dec. 14 at his home in Connersville. He was 80.



Father Robert Mazzola

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Dec. 22 at St. Gabriel Church, 232 W. Ninth St., in Connersville. The principal celebrant of the Mass will be Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

Msgr. Frederick Easton, a cousin of Father Mazzola and a retired archdiocesan priest, will be the homilist. Burial will follow at Dale Cemetery in Connersville.

"My father and his mother were brother and sister," said Msgr. Easton, adding that Father Mazzola's father was a stone worker who migrated to the United States from northern Italy, which is known for its marble. "His paternal grandfather, Arnoldo, was actually the first cousin of St. Pope John XXIII. The pope's mother's maiden name was Mazzola."

The two priests attended the

beatification of Pope John XXIII in 2000, Msgr. Easton noted, and Father Mazzola also attended the pope's canonization Mass at the Vatican in 2014.

Msgr. Easton remembers as a boy visiting his grandparents' home in Bloomington, and seeing his cousin's growing interest in becoming a priest.

"More than once and perhaps several times over the years, he would try to set up an altar and go through the motions of celebrating Mass. He was three years older than I," Msgr. Easton said. "It was already clear at that time when he was still in elementary school that he was strongly interested in going to the seminary and becoming a priest. I'm sure his strong interest probably had some impact on me at that time, although perhaps I did not know it so clearly."

Father Mazzola was always very strong on a meaningful celebration of eucharistic liturgy, Msgr. Easton said, adding that his cousin "would want to be remembered as a dedicated priest."

"Being the priest was his whole life," he said, "so I think he would want to be remembered as someone totally dedicated to that purpose."

Robert Easton Mazzola was born on May 26, 1937, in Bloomington to Arthur

and Elizabeth Mazzola. He grew up first as a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington and later as a member of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville.

He received priestly formation as an archdiocesan seminarian in St. Meinrad at the former Saint Meinrad High School, the former Saint Meinrad College (earning a bachelor's degree in French literature) and at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. He earned a bachelor's degree in sacred theology from the Catholic University of America in Washington.

Father Mazzola was ordained a priest on May 5, 1963, at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln by Archbishop Paul C. Schulte.

His first pastoral assignment was as associate pastor of the former St. Francis de Sales Parish and as part-time instructor at Father Thomas Sccecina Memorial High School, both in Indianapolis, from 1963-64.

In 1964, he temporarily served as associate pastor of St. Mary Parish and St. Michael Parish, both in Madison.

Father Mazzola then ministered as associate pastor of St. Michael Parish in Charlestown and St. Francis Xavier Parish in Henryville from 1964-69; as associate pastor of St. Gabriel Parish

in Connersville from 1969-73; and as associate pastor of the former St. Andrew Parish in Richmond from 1973-74.

Father Mazzola served as pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin from 1974-83; as pastor of St. Andrew Parish in Richmond from 1983-93; as pastor of Holy Family Parish, St. Andrew Parish and St. Mary Parish, all in Richmond, from 1993-94; and as pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield from 1995-97.

Beginning in 1998, Father Mazzola served as an auditor and assistant in the archdiocesan Metropolitan Tribunal in Indianapolis until his retirement in 2011.

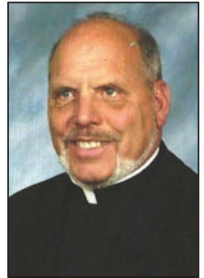
He is survived by sisters Linda Struewing of Connersville and Margaret Vanderheide of Gallatin, Tenn.

Memorial gifts may be sent to St. Gabriel Parish Endowment, c/o Catholic Community Foundation, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202 (archindy.org/CCF), Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology (saintmeinrad.edu), 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577, Archdiocesan Continuing Education for Priests, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, or the Heart Foundation (theheartfoundation.org), 31822 Village Center Road, Suite 208, Westlake Village, CA 91361. †

Father Mark Gottemoeller served in parish ministry for 40 years

Criterion staff report

Father Mark Gottemoeller, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on Dec. 15 at IU Methodist Hospital



Father Mark Gottemoeller

in Indianapolis from complications after surgery. He was 68.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 21 at St. Gabriel the Archangel Church in Indianapolis. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Father Michael O'Mara, pastor of St. Gabriel, was the homilist.

Burial followed at the priests' circle at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Father Gerald Kirkhoff, archdiocesan vicar for advocacy for priests, knew Father Gottemoeller for more than 40 years. He described him as a priest

who sought to help people on the peripheries of society and of the Church.

"Mark was always for the underdog," Father Kirkhoff said. "Mark was a person who went to the prisons. He dealt with people who were struggling with thoughts of suicide, people who had problems with the faith.

"He was down to earth. He had what Pope Francis says we [priests] should have: the smell of the flock. Get out of the rectory, get out of the office, and go out there. That was his hallmark.

"He was looking for the person who was suffering, and he tried to do his best [to minister to him]," he added.

Father Kirkhoff also recalled his friend's love of the outdoors.

"He was a man of the earth—hunting, fishing," Father Kirkhoff said. "He loved fishing. I believe that came from his dad."

Mark Gottemoeller was born on June 10, 1949, in Indianapolis to Walter and Josephine Gottemoeller. He grew up as a member of St. Mark the Evangelist

Parish and later of St. Jude Parish, both in Indianapolis.

Father Gottemoeller received priestly formation as an archdiocesan seminarian at the former Latin School of Indianapolis, the former Saint Meinrad College in St. Meinrad, and at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, earning a bachelor's degree and a master's of divinity degree.

He was ordained a priest on May 22, 1976, by Archbishop George J. Biskup at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. His first pastoral assignment was as associate pastor of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, serving there from 1976-80.

Father Gottemoeller then served as associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville from 1980-81; as associate pastor of the former Holy Family Parish in Richmond in 1981; and as associate pastor of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg from 1981-85.

Beginning in 1985, Father Gottemoeller

began eight years of ministry in the Tell City Deanery. He served from 1985-93 as pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Leopold and administrator of St. Mark Parish in Perry County.

Beginning in 1989, he additionally served as administrator of Holy Cross Parish in St. Croix while continuing his leadership of St. Augustine and St. Mark.

Father Gottemoeller served as pastor of St. Martin of Tours Parish in Martinsville from 1993-2005, and as pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville from 2005 until he was granted early retirement in 2016.

He is survived by a sister, Christine Dittman of Dayton, Ohio.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Catholic Relief Services (crs.org), 228 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD 21201-3443, or to Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology (saintmeinrad.edu), 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577. †

Archdiocese to lead pilgrimage to Ireland for 2018 World Meeting of Families

By Natalie Hoefler

The archdiocese will lead a pilgrimage to the World Meeting of Families in Dublin, Ireland, from Aug. 18-27, 2018. The pilgrimage is sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, and Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan director of vocations, will serve as its spiritual director.

The World Meeting of Families was started in 1994 by St. John Paul II and is held every three years. The 2018 theme is "The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World."

"The World Meeting of Families will be a time for us to focus on the good news of the family," says Scott Seibert, archdiocesan director of Marriage and Family Life, who will also accompany the pilgrimage. "The fact that God created us in his image, that he is present with us and came to us through family—the family is the *Imago Dei* [image of God]—what good news!"

Reflecting on St. John Paul II's quote, "As the family goes, so goes the nation, and so goes the whole world in which we live," Seibert notes that "we are seeing that today.

"The rise of single-parent homes, the rise in cohabiting and never-married

parents, the rise of depression in our youths and [the rise in] substance abuse—families are broken.

"Yet, despite it all, they are the school of love and mercy. We as humans learn to be a part of something bigger, learn to care for others, learn to give, and learn

to love in families. This builds society—it builds a civilization of love. ... The World Meeting of Families brings together families from all over the world to truly see the connection between life, family, nation and world."

In a world where working parents feel more accomplished on the job than at home, says Seibert, "Fathers and mothers need to be reminded how they are truly changing the world simply by loving and raising their family. ... Families are a saint-making

business when done right and with openness to God, but it's hard to see the extraordinary within the ordinary. ... For these reasons, we need the World Meeting of Families."

Father Augenstein notes that "vocations come from families—and not just vocations to the priesthood or consecrated life, but disciples of all kinds come from families.

"The World Meeting of Families is an opportunity to step back and be both

rejuvenated and challenged in growing as disciples in the family through shared prayer, faith-filled speakers, and encounters with families from all around the world."

Father Augenstein points out that this event is truly a pilgrimage, not a "trip."

"We were very intentional in planning the itinerary of this pilgrimage so that it is grounded in faith and prayer," he says. "Mass will be celebrated every day, and there will be other significant opportunities for prayer and spiritual growth."

The pilgrimage will include visits to many Catholic shrines, including Our Lady of Knock, where the Blessed Mother and other saints appeared in 1879; the tomb of St. Patrick in Downpatrick; and the shrine of St. Oliver Plunkett.

The World Meeting of Families takes place on Aug. 22-24. It will include keynote speakers, workshops, talks, testimonies and discussions, as well as daily celebration of the Eucharist, prayerful activities, exhibitions, cultural events and musical performances.

A Festival of Families will be celebrated on Aug. 25, a reflective, concert-style event within a prayerful and joyful atmosphere, in which personal stories of faith will be shared by families from all continents. The event will end on Aug. 26 with a Mass celebrated by Pope Francis.

Pilgrims will also have the opportunity to visit several towns and destinations

in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, including Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, Dublin, Westport and more, plus have time for their own exploration, visiting pubs and seeing the Green Isle. Optional tours will also be available for purchase while in Dublin.

Seibert notes that, while the World Meeting of Families offers a program for children ages 4-12, "it is for each family to discern for their children whether God might be calling them to this experience. The itinerary is pretty full, and travel across an ocean is no small feat for children. However, this would truly give them an experience unlike any other. ...

"As St. Teresa of Calcutta says, 'If you want to change the world, go home and love your family.' Well, let's send them to Ireland and then send them back to their Church families to change the world and bring back the Gospel of the family."

(The complete pilgrimage package includes round trip commercial airfare non-stop from Chicago, private coach to/from Chicago, deluxe hotel accommodations, single and double occupancy, all itinerary admission and inclusions, Dublin rail pass for three days, and 12 meals. The price is \$3,499 per person/ double occupancy or \$4,188 per person/ single occupancy. To register or for more information on the itinerary, trip insurance and payment schedule, call Grueninger Travel Group at 317-581-1122.) †





The Criterion

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Editorial



The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated on Dec. 25.
(CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

The greatest of all miracles

Here is a meditation on what we Christians celebrate on Christmas, as written by St. Gregory Nazianzen:

“The very Son of God, older than the ages, the invisible, the incomprehensible, the incorporeal, the beginning of beginning, the light of light, the fountain of life and immortality, the image of the archetype, the immovable seal, the perfect likeness, the definition and word of the Father: he it is who comes to his own image and takes our nature for the good of our nature, and united himself to an intelligent soul for the good of my soul, to purify like by like.

“He takes to himself all that is human, except for sin. He was conceived by the Virgin Mary, who had been first prepared in soul and body by the Spirit; his coming to birth had to be treated with honor, virginity had to receive new honor. He comes forth as God, in the human nature he has taken, one being, made of two contrary elements, flesh and spirit. Spirit gave divinity, flesh received it.”

We admit that that’s a lot to take in. You might have to read it over a time or two. It’s what St. Gregory wrote back in the fourth century, and it’s what Catholics, if not all Christians, still believe today.

But even St. Gregory lived several centuries after the earliest Christians. When St. Paul wrote his Letter to the Philippians in the 50s, he quoted an early Christian hymn: “Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of humans. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself” (Phil 2:6-8).

The amazing thing is that Jesus was willing to humble himself to become a human being. Paul says that he “took the form of a slave” because he was subjecting himself to his Father’s will. Yet he did not abandon his divinity when he became human. Rather, he took on human nature while continuing to be God.

Of course, the well-known second chapter of the Gospel of Luke narrates

the birth of the baby Jesus in the little town of Bethlehem. The text above gives us more to meditate about. It describes the mystery of the Incarnation.

Today, though, in this secular post-Christian age we’re living in, miracles like the Incarnation are looked on with skepticism. If you are a Christian, though, you must believe in miracles, and on Christmas we celebrate one of the most amazing miracles of all time.

Los Angeles Bishop Robert E. Barron is arguably the best American evangelist since Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. This year, he and Catholic journalist John Allen Jr. wrote a book called *To Light a Fire on the Earth*. Here is what Allen wrote about Bishop Barron’s belief in the Incarnation:

“Barron stands with the great Christian writer C. S. Lewis, who noted that Christianity is premised on the most audacious miracle claim of all time—that God himself chose to take on human flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, in order to save the world.”

Lewis wrote in his book *God in the Dock*, “The Christian story is precisely the story of one grand miracle, the Christian assertion being that what is beyond all space and time, what is uncreated, eternal, came into nature, into human nature, descended into his own universe, and rose again, bringing nature up with him.”

Lewis continued, “If you take that away, there is nothing specifically Christian left. There may be many admirable things which Christianity shares with all other systems in the world, but there would be nothing specifically Christian.”

Bishop Barron agrees: “Miracles stand at the heart of Christianity the way they don’t with other religions. The Virgin Birth, the Immaculate Conception, the Resurrection, the Incarnation: we’re a faith based on miracles.”

This Christmas, let us celebrate the greatest of all miracles, the Incarnation.

—John F. Fink

Reflection/Daniel Conway

The Church in southwestern Indiana welcomes its new bishop

Newly-installed Bishop Joseph Mark Siegel of Evansville, Ind., likes to call attention to his rural roots. Along with his eight siblings, Bishop Siegel knows what it’s like to work the land. He has a deep love and appreciation for the beauty of



Daniel Conway

God’s creation, and for the precious gifts we have been given as stewards of the Earth and its abundant resources.

Much of the 5,010 square miles that make up the Diocese of Evansville is rural, and Bishop Siegel is quick to say that, although his assignments in the Diocese of Joliet, Ill., were in urban and suburban communities, he feels equally at home in the cities and rural communities of his new diocese.

The bishop is not a stranger to southwestern Indiana. His college seminary years were spent at the former Saint Meinrad College in St. Meinrad, Ind., and although he traveled to Rome and, later, Chicago, for his graduate studies in theology, Bishop Siegel says he treasures the formative years spent “on the holy hill” under the guidance of the Benedictine monks.

That made the bishop’s installation at Evansville’s St. Benedict Cathedral a true homecoming. Established 105 years ago, “St. Ben’s” has been staffed by monks from Saint Meinrad from the beginning. Sisters from the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., provided for the education of children of the parish and have served in a variety of parish ministries throughout the years.

A vibrant parish community, St. Benedict’s was designated as the cathedral for the Diocese of Evansville by then-Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger on April 11, 1999.

Bishop Siegel considers the presence of women and men religious, who serve alongside diocesan priests, deacons and lay ministers, as a gift to the diocese. He also notes that his many diverse pastoral experiences have provided him with an excellent perspective on the mission of his new diocese. Serving people in 12 counties of southwest Indiana, the Diocese of Evansville seeks to “continue the mission of Jesus Christ in the world today by joyfully living the Gospel, ministering to all in justice and charity, and inviting people into a personal encounter with the living God through word, sacrament and service.”

Bishop Emeritus Gettelfinger, who was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and served as pastor,

school superintendent and vicar general in this archdiocese until his appointment by Pope John Paul II as the fourth bishop of Evansville in 1989, attended the installation. He was joined by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, who served as the fifth bishop of Evansville from 2011 to 2017, until he was appointed as the metropolitan Archbishop of Indianapolis. Also in attendance were Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States; Louisville Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain, Joliet Bishop R. Daniel Conlon, and many other bishops, abbots, priests, deacons, religious and lay faithful from the Evansville and Joliet dioceses and other neighboring dioceses.

Courage is a consistent theme in Bishop Siegel’s homilies and prepared remarks. “Love, wisdom and courage are required,” the bishop says, “if we are to take up the Cross of Christ and follow him as missionary disciples.” The ministry of a bishop is not always popular, he added. “The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. He protects them against all dangers, and he anticipates threats against their well-being.”

In his installation homily, quoting Pope Francis, Bishop Siegel described the three-fold leadership responsibility he has been called to accept: *To lead God’s people* with wisdom and discernment, *to accompany God’s people* walking alongside them and sharing in their sorrows and joys, and *to follow God’s people* making sure that no one is left behind.

During his homily for Solemn Evening Prayer the night before his installation, Bishop Siegel told a story attributed to St. John Vianney, the patron of parish priests. On his way to his new assignment as the Cure of Ars, the new pastor lost his way and had to ask directions from a little boy. The boy told him the way, and after thanking him, the new pastor said, “You have shown me the way to Ars. It’s now my responsibility to show you the way to heaven.”

Acknowledging that this is also his responsibility as the new bishop of Evansville, Bishop Siegel asked that everyone in the 12 counties of the diocese pray for him—that he might be faithful and courageous in his new ministry.

The episcopal motto of Bishop Siegel is “In you, Lord, I place my hope.” His installation as the sixth bishop of Evansville during Advent, the season of hope, is a powerful moment for the Church in southwestern Indiana as it continues its journey on the way to heaven.

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion’s editorial committee.) †



Bishop Joseph M. Siegel blesses a child during his installation Mass on Dec. 15 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville, Ind. Bishop Siegel became the sixth bishop of the diocese.

(CNS photo/Peewee Vasquez, The Message)

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Rejoice! God is with us. Come, let us adore him!

“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you,” the angel said. But Mary was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be” (cf. Lk 1:28-29).

Last weekend, we celebrated *Gaudete* Sunday. The Latin word *gaudete* means rejoice. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has written that the first word of the angel’s greeting, which we translate as “hail,” might just as easily be translated as “rejoice.” That means that “rejoice” is one of the first words spoken in the New Testament.

In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul tells us to rejoice always because the Lord is near. Christians should always be filled with joy, but we rejoice in a special way during the Advent and Christmas seasons because the Lord is near.

What do we mean when we say that the Lord is near?

Christ lived among us as a man 2,000 years ago. After his passion, death and resurrection, he ascended to his Father. But we Christians believe that he will come again in glory on the last day. We also believe that he is with

us here and now—in the holy Eucharist and all the sacraments, in our prayer and in the works we perform in his name, and wherever two or more are gathered as his Church.

What do we mean when we say that the Lord, who is with us always, is also coming again this Christmas season and at the end of time?

Jesus Christ is the Lord of history. That means that, while he is the goal or end of human history, he is not bound by the limits of time or space as we are. As a result, he can be present with us now and, at the same time, he can be coming again in the future.

Advent celebrates this mystery. Although we know that Christ is with us always, we still wait in joyful hope for his coming again in glory. While we believe in his Real Presence in the Eucharist, we long for the more perfect communion that we will enjoy when we are with him in our heavenly home.

This “perfect communion” that is still yet to come is hinted at in the sights, sounds and smells of Christmas. The season of Christmas is the time of year when we rejoice at the coming of

the Lord. We sing of his presence and we celebrate the wondrous fact that God is with us (Emmanuel), the Lord of history freely choosing to enter into our time and space in order to be one with us.

As Pope Benedict XVI has written, “As a child, Jesus came not only from God, but from other human beings. He grew in the womb of a woman, from whom he received his flesh and his blood, his heartbeat, his gestures, his language. He received life from the life of another human being.” Christmas celebrates this great mystery. God is with us—really and truly—in the person of an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The Almighty God has emptied himself, as St. Paul says, and taken the form of the most vulnerable and dependent human being, a little child.

So, we rejoice. We are filled with joy because the long-awaited Savior has come at last. We rejoice because we are not alone in a vast, uncaring universe. God is with us. He knows us—each one by name—and he loves us as his sisters and brothers in the one family of God.

But even as we rejoice at the

mystery of God’s presence here and now, we also celebrate the profound hope that he will come again. The suffering and evil that we experience in this world will pass away one day. God’s kingdom will come—on Earth as it is heaven—and on that day every tear will be wiped away, and we will see God face to face.

This is the source of all our rejoicing. This is why we wait in hope for the one we believe is our Blessed Hope. It’s why we celebrate Christ’s birth, and why we proclaim with the absolute certainty of our Christian faith: Jesus Christ has died. He is risen. And he will come again!

My prayer for you and for all the clergy, religious and faithful people of the Church in central and southern Indiana is that you will be filled with Christian hope, and that you will experience all the joys of the Christmas season. Now, with the whole Church, we proclaim: *Maranatha!* Come, Lord Jesus! And, at the very same time, we can sing with joyful hearts: *Adeste, fidelis!* God is with us. Come, let us adore him!

Merry Christmas! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

¡Alégrense! Dios está con nosotros. Vengan, ¡vamos a adorarlo!

“El Ángel entró en su casa y la saludó, diciendo: ‘¡Ave!, llena de gracia, el Señor está contigo.’ Al oír estas palabras, ella quedó desconcertada y se preguntaba qué podía significar ese saludo” (Lc 1:28-29).

La semana pasada celebramos el Domingo de Gaudete, palabra latina que significa alegría. El papa emérito, Benedicto XVI, ha indicado que la primera palabra del saludo del Ángel, “ave,” se podría traducir fácilmente por “alégtrate.” Esto quiere decir que la palabra “alegría” es una de las primeras que aparece en el Nuevo Testamento.

En su carta a los filipenses, san Pablo nos dice que debemos estar alegres porque el Señor está cerca. Los cristianos siempre debemos estar alegres, pero nos regocijamos especialmente durante la época del Adviento y la Navidad por la cercanía del Señor.

¿Qué queremos decir al afirmar que el Señor está cerca?

Hace 2,000 años Cristo vivió entre nosotros como hombre; tras su pasión, muerte y resurrección, ascendió al encuentro con su Padre. Pero los cristianos creemos que volverá con gloria en el Día Final. También creemos que se encuentra

con nosotros aquí y ahora: en la sagrada Eucaristía y en todos los sacramentos, en nuestras oraciones y en las obras que realizamos en su nombre, y siempre que haya dos o más reunidos como Su Iglesia.

¿Qué queremos decir al afirmar que el Señor—quien siempre está con nosotros—también volverá en la época de Navidad y al final de los tiempos?

Jesucristo es el Señor de la historia y esto significa que, si bien Él es el objetivo o el fin de la historia de la humanidad, no se encuentra confinado a los límites del tiempo y del espacio como nosotros. Por lo tanto, puede estar presente entre nosotros ahora y, al mismo tiempo, volver en el futuro.

El Adviento celebra este misterio. Aunque sabemos que Cristo siempre está con nosotros, igualmente aguardamos con alegre esperanza su regreso glorioso. Si bien creemos que su presencia en la Eucaristía es real, anhelamos la comunión más perfecta que disfrutaremos cuando estemos junto a Él en nuestro hogar celestial.

La “comunión perfecta” que está por venir se anticipa en las imágenes, los sonidos y los aromas de la Navidad. La época de la Navidad es

el momento del año en el que nos alegramos de la venida del Señor. Alabamos su presencia y celebramos el hecho maravilloso de que Dios está con nosotros (Emmanuel), el Señor de la historia que eligió participar en nuestro tiempo y nuestro espacio para hacerse uno con nosotros.

Tal como lo expresó el papa Benedicto XVI: “Como niño, Jesús provino no solamente de Dios sino de otros seres humanos. Creció en el vientre de una mujer que le dio su carne y su sangre, su pulso, sus gestos y su idioma. Recibió vida de otro ser humano.” La Navidad celebra este gran misterio. Dios verdaderamente está con nosotros, encarnado en un recién nacido envuelto en pañales y acurrucado en un pesebre. San Pablo nos dice que el Dios Todopoderoso se ha entregado y ha adoptado la forma del ser humano más indefenso y vulnerable: un bebé.

Y esto es motivo de júbilo. Nos inunda la alegría porque finalmente ha llegado el Salvador a quien ansiábamos. Nos regocijamos porque no estamos solos en un universo vasto e indiferente. Dios está con nosotros. Nos conoce por nombre a cada uno y nos ama como sus hermanos en una sola familia de Dios.

Pero incluso mientras celebramos el misterio de la presencia de Dios aquí y ahora, también celebramos la profunda esperanza de que volverá otra vez. Un día pasará el sufrimiento y el mal que aquejan a este mundo, y vendrá el Reino de Dios—en la Tierra como en el cielo—; ese día toda lágrima será enjugada y veremos frente a frente el rostro de Dios.

Esa es la fuente de nuestra alegría y la razón por la que aguardamos anhelantes por el que creemos que es nuestra bendita esperanza. Es el motivo por el que celebramos el nacimiento de Cristo, y por el que proclamamos con la certeza absoluta de nuestra fe cristiana que Jesucristo ha muerto, ha resucitado ¡y vendrá nuevamente!

Mi oración por usted y por todo el clero, los religiosos y los fieles de la Iglesia del centro y del sur de Indiana es que se colmen de la esperanza cristiana y que vivan todas las alegrías de la época navideña. Y ahora, junto con toda la Iglesia, proclamamos: *Maranatha!* ¡Ven, Señor Jesús! Y, al mismo tiempo, cantamos con corazones rebosantes de alegría: *Adeste, fidelis!* Dios está con nosotros. Vengan, ¡vamos a adorarlo!

¡Feliz Navidad! †

Events Calendar

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

December 24

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Christmas Eve Liturgies**, 5 p.m. Vigil Mass, 10 p.m. Mass During the Night with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, parking available for both Masses from 4 p.m.-midnight behind the cathedral and at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols**, Scripture readings, prayer, singing of carols and candle lighting, 7-8 p.m., open to all faith traditions.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christmas Eve Liturgies**, 7 and 10 p.m. CT.

December 25

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St.,

Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 10:30 a.m.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Mass**, 11 a.m.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christmas Mass**, 9:30 a.m. CT.

December 28

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Monthly Ecumenical Taizé Prayer Service**, sung prayers, meditation and readings. 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-926-7359 or rectory@saintmichaelindy.org.

December 31

St. Monica Church, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **New Year's Eve Adoration and Midnight Mass**, 11 p.m. adoration, midnight Mass followed by breakfast and fellowship, bring a breakfast dish to share.

Information: 317-253-2193 or dbartet@comcast.net.

January 2

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.

January 3

Archbishop 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.

January 5

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday** celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following

Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or info@olgreenwood.org.

St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Charismatic Renewal Praise and Mass**, praise and worship 7 p.m., Mass 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-546-7328, mkeyes@indy.rr.com.

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Father Kyle Rodden presiding, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, www.womenscarecenter.org.

January 6

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, prayers, rosary, confession, meditation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

January 9

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of

Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. 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.

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.

January 14

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.

January 17

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

January 18

St. Joseph Parish, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m. Information: 317-244-9002.

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

January 20

Helpers of God's Precious Infants, Indianapolis. Mass and Divine Mercy Chaplet at 8:30 a.m. at St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., followed by prayer at a local abortion center, and continued prayer at the church for those who wish to remain. †

Retreats and Programs

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

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

January 9

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **World Religions**, based on the PBS series *Religions of the World*, Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe and Patty Moore presenting, six Tuesdays, Jan. 16, 23, 30, and Feb. 13 and 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$25 per session or \$140 for six. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, www.benedictinn.org.

January 14

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Meaningful Matinees**, viewing of the movie *War Room*, followed by informal discussion, 2-5 p.m., freewill offering. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, www.benedictinn.org.

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, Jan. 23 and 30. 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 17

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., \$35 includes room for the day and lunch, spiritual direction available for additional \$30. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, www.benedictinn.org.

January 18

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Nature Nights**, Benedictine

Sister Sheila Fitzpatrick presenting, 7-8:30 p.m., free will offering. Information and registration: 317-788-7581, www.benedictinn.org.

January 19-20

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Divine Mercy Retreat**, Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy Sister M. Caterina Esselen and M. Confida Gilera presenting. Information and registration: www.motheroftheredeemer.com or 812-825-4642, ext. 1.

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, 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/. †

St. Luke the Evangelist Church to present radio and television host Dr. Ray Guarendi

Dr. Ray Guarendi, clinical psychologist, author and Eternal Word Television Network radio and television host, will present "Standing Strong as a Parent" at St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7575 Holliday Dr., E., in Indianapolis, from 7-9 p.m. on Jan. 19.

This event is sponsored by the St. Luke the Evangelist Marriage and Family

Ministries in partnership with the north deanery parishes of the archdiocese. The event is free, but registration is required at www.stluke.org/church-news/parents-standing-strong.

For more information or to reserve childcare, contact Gospel of Life Sister Diane Carollo at dcarollo@stluke.org or 317-259-4373, ext. 256. †

Training workshop offered for lay ministers leading funeral vigil services

A training workshop for ecclesial lay ministers to lead funeral vigil services in the absence of a priest or deacon will be held at the SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Rectory, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, from 9 a.m. to noon on Jan. 20.

The training will be presented by

Father Patrick J. Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization.

Reservations are not required. For more information, contact Deb VanVelse at 317-236-1586 or dvanvelse@archindy.org. †

Christmas crèches on display at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library through Jan. 7

An exhibit of Christmas crèches from around the world are on display in the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, through Jan. 7.

The crèches represent diverse regions and cultures in a variety of styles and media, such as porcelain, wood, glazed tile, glass, cloth, stone, metals and

ceramic. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

For library hours, call 812-357-6401, 800-987-7311 or visit www.saintmeinrad.edu/library/hours. All times are CT.

The library is closed on Dec. 23-26 and on Dec. 30-Jan. 1. †

Catholics Returning Home to be offered at St. Malachy Church starting in January

An ongoing series called "Catholics Returning Home" will be offered at St. Malachy Church, 9833 E. County Road 750 N., in Brownsburg, on six consecutive Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. beginning on Jan. 2.

These sessions are for non-practicing Catholics who are seeking answers to questions about returning to the Church. There will be informal sharing and an update of the Catholic faith.

For more information, call 317-650-5751. †

St. John Paul II Parish to host Mass, mini-retreat and dinner on Jan. 13

A Mass, dinner and mini-retreat will be held at St. John Paul II Parish's St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., in Sellersburg, at 4 p.m. on Jan. 13.

Benedictine Father Adrian Burke will present on "Christ Alive in You—

The Discipline of 'Living Christ' in the World." A dinner will follow the presentation.

All are invited to this free event. Reservations are requested by calling 812-246-3969. †



Pizza party

Pope Francis blows out a candle on a 13-foot-long pizza during a special meeting to celebrate his 81st birthday on Dec. 17 at the Vatican's Paul VI Hall. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)

Appointment of Archbishop Thompson tops local news stories

By Brandon A. Evans

The appointment of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson as the seventh archbishop of Indianapolis was voted the top local news story of 2017, followed by the archdiocese's hosting of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) and the efforts of the local Church to aid immigrants and refugees.

Other stories of note included the spring meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) held in Indianapolis in June, the ordination of 21 men as permanent deacons and the first graduating class of Marian University's new medical school.

Following the tradition of other news agencies, *The Criterion* editorial staff votes each year for the top 10 local stories that were published in our newspaper.

Many of the top stories selected this year were covered in multiple articles. Read this article online to browse the links to all the original coverage.

Among the hundreds of locally produced news stories during 2017, here is our "Top 10" list:

1. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson appointed the seventh archbishop of Indianapolis.

Last year's news surrounding former Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin—namely, his being made a cardinal, then weeks later being appointed to lead the Church in Newark, N.J.—left the archdiocese to start 2017 without an archbishop.

For five months, Msgr. William F. Stumpf, formerly the vicar general, led Catholics of central and southern Indiana as the archdiocesan administrator.

Then on June 13, news broke that Pope Francis had appointed Bishop Charles C. Thompson of Evansville as the seventh archbishop of Indianapolis.

"I pledge to dedicate myself to you without hesitation or reservation," said Archbishop-designate Thompson during an introductory press conference. "Together, we will build on the incredible foundation that already exists, striving to discern the signs of the times and make every effort to participate in framing the essential questions of faith and life, in order to promote a shared vision rooted in word, sacrament and service that enables us to respond rather than react to opportunities and challenges."

On July 28, the Kentucky native—and former student of Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad—was installed as the new archbishop.

"Far too often, we are being confronted with an either/or mentality," Archbishop Thompson said in his homily. "We must dare to counter the growing polarization, division and radical individualism that breed fear, distrust, hatred, indifference, prejudice, selfishness, despair, violence and radical ideology."

"Our role as people of faith—I especially hold myself accountable as bishop—is to be willing to stand in the breach of the divide, drawing people back from the ledges of extremism in self-indulgence and self-righteousness by serving as bridges of unity, ambassadors of hope and instruments of peace."

2. Archdiocese hosts 20,000 young people for the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

Indianapolis has hosted the biennial NCYC every time it has occurred since 2011.

The massive event on Nov. 16-18 drew more than 20,000 young Catholics from around the U.S.

The young people spend three days at the event getting to know each other, listening to dynamic speakers, attending Mass, making confessions, worshipping



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson smiles and waves to members of the congregation as he processes on July 28 into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis at the start of the Mass in which he was installed as the seventh archbishop of Indianapolis. Behind him is Father Patrick Beidelman, rector of the cathedral, who served as master of ceremonies for the liturgy. (File photo by Rob Banayote)

at eucharistic adoration and visiting with bishops, priests and religious.

But the scope of the event goes beyond just those who attend. A critical component is the volunteer force of generous people from around the archdiocese.

"We deploy over 1,000 volunteers, and people love it," said Scott Williams, the director of youth ministry for the archdiocese who also led the local steering committee for NCYC. "Our vocations office, our liturgy office and our youth ministry office have all worked on this seamlessly for the past several years. ... It's not something we just do; it's something that we're really passionate about."

3. The local Church works to aid immigrants and refugees.

The local Church continued its work

in welcoming and aiding immigrants and refugees this year, becoming more noteworthy because of the external difficulties it faced.

Both the U.S. bishops and the bishops of Indiana asked Catholics earlier this year to pray for a just and compassionate resolution to immigration issues.

A February event on justice for immigrants filled the gym of St. Philip Neri Parish. Father Christopher Wadelton, the parish's pastor, estimated the turnout to be between 1,500 and 2,000 people, including immigrants, leaders of many congregations, Catholics, Muslims, Christians and Jews.

"It was overwhelming to see the response," he said. "It spoke to a new level of anxiety in our immigrant community. ... What it highlighted for me is our

See YEAR-END, page 10

Experiencing the True Spirit of Christmas

CHRISTMAS isn't just a time of **GIVING** and **SHARING** with those we **LOVE** and **CARE** for. It's also about **HELPING** those less fortunate who we have never met and will never see.

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Readers share their favorite Christmas memories

Unexpected challenge leads daughter to follow mother's example of unconditional love

Patricia Cooley

The year was 1960, and I was 6 years old. The Christmas catalog had arrived at our home, and our parents told each of us to pick one item. That item would be our special Christmas present. After much searching, I found the perfect doll. It talked and walked. It was absolutely beautiful to me.

On Christmas Day, I found that Santa Claus had indeed brought me that beautiful, blue-eyed, blond-haired doll. I played with her all day long.

At bedtime, my mother came to tuck us in. She took my doll away, explaining that if she fell out of bed she could break. After mom left the room, I snuck out of bed and went to get my beloved doll to sleep with. I was absolutely sure that if I held her tight enough I would keep her safe.

When I woke up the next morning, I found my beautiful doll lying on the floor. I picked her up and found that she could no longer talk or walk. I burst into tears and cried my eyes out for what seemed like forever.

My mom came in, picked me and my doll up, wiped the tears away, gave me a kiss and hug and told me

that if something happened to me and I could no longer walk or talk, she would still love me.

Years passed quickly and I grew up, fell in love, and married my high school sweetheart. We had two beautiful girls and on June 24, 1979, we had our first son. He was a handsome, blond-haired, blue-eyed boy. The nurses couldn't get over how good-natured and quiet he was.

Months later, we realized that he wasn't developing like our girls did. We were sent to Children's Hospital, where the chief of staff told us to put our son in an institution. My husband stood up, looked that doctor straight in the eyes and told him "No! We are going to keep him and love him."

The doctor told us, "Fine, but your son will never walk or talk or be able to take care of himself." We didn't care. He was our son, and we would indeed love him no matter what. And we still do to this day.

If I close my eyes and think back to that day so very long ago when I was 6, I can still hear my mom's words, "I would love you even if you couldn't walk or talk."

(Patricia Cooley is a member of St. Michael Parish in Brookville.) †

Daughter's birth in December was young mother's best Christmas gift

Angela Crecelius

December 1987 was a wonderful and exciting time for my family. I was expecting my second child the week before Christmas. My son was 2 and very excited about the new baby who was in my "pocket." He was also excited about all the Christmas decorations, especially the tree.

As we attended Advent Mass one Sunday morning, our church sang the song "Gentle Woman" for the first time. I was so moved by the beauty of the song's lyrics, especially the lines, "Blessed are you among women, bless in turn

all women too, blessed they with peaceful spirits, blessed they with gentle hearts."

It moved me to tears to connect with Our Lady as an expectant mother at Christmas. I truly felt blessed to share this special bond with Mary.

My blessings were even greater when my daughter was born on Dec. 17. My blessings continue as she turns 30 this year, and is the mother of two little boys.

She truly was my best Christmas present.

(Angela Crecelius is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Crawford County.) †

Rabbits, possums and Sears helped family celebrate Christmas during the Depression

Peter J. Schickel

In 1933, when I was 10 years old, I had my first chance to earn my own Christmas by trapping rabbits and possums.

My father would help skin them and send the furs to the Sears and Roebuck catalog. Sears and Roebuck would buy them, and the money we received in return would go toward the clothes we'd get for Christmas.

Rabbits ran around 40 to 50 cents apiece, and possums ran around \$1.50 to \$2, depending upon their size. There was a demand in those days since fur clothing was popular in the trims of coats and hats.

My mother, dad, two brothers and three sisters would all help. In total, we'd usually earn between \$22 to \$25.

That was a lot of money in those days since it was in middle of the Depression. It would buy quite a bit of clothing for me and my family. I truly remember this as a blessing—being able to help work as a team with my family and earn my own Christmas.

My wife, Joan, and I have carried out this philosophy with our five children during our 71 years of marriage.

(Peter J. Schickel is a member of St. Mary Parish in Lanesville.) †



Christmas tree ornaments hang from a tree in St. Anthony Friary in Butler, N.J. (CNS photo/Octavio Duran)

God's message of love is at the heart of annual celebration of Christmas

Ron Lewis

I grew up a Christmas Eve person. The most joyful parts of my family's celebration happened on that night.

My brother and I took turns studying each beautifully wrapped package under the tree, trying to guess its contents. The house was filled with the delicious aroma of Mother's special Christmas dinner—turkey, stuffing, cranberries, mashed potatoes and green beans. We set out cookies for Santa Claus, and carrots for the reindeer. Then, because my brother was the youngest, he was given the special job of placing the Baby Jesus in the manger scene by the Christmas tree.

Later, as we opened our presents, we shared the pure joy of being together as a family—laughing and oohing over the best gifts. I always seemed to get exactly what I

hoped for—at least that's how I remember it. We would stay up later than usual, but not too late, because we had to be in church in the morning. With warm memories of the night swirling in my head, I would fall asleep knowing that Christmas Eve was the happiest night of the year.

The message of Christmas Eve with my family was simple: You are loved. The message of Christmas for all of us is the same: God expressing how very much he loves us in one simple, but miraculous act. Giving us Jesus. That is Good News of great joy.

Once again, this Christmas I hope to receive exactly what I want—My Savior to come to Earth.

(Ron Lewis is a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Clarksville and an Oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.) †

Search for tree a reminder that beautiful signs of nature are blessings from God

Jeanne Huntzinger

Being born and raised on a farm, my memories of Christmas are indelible.

Every December, my mom, dad, brother and I would bundle up in our snowsuits and head for our big woods. Hatchet and saw in hand, we were on a mission.

We were shivering cold as the snow hit

our faces, but we did not leave until the perfect evergreen was found.

I remember the delight of carrying that special tree through the snow-covered fields. The beautiful signs of nature, on a snowy, Christmas day, are blessings from God.

(Jeanne Huntzinger worships at St. Rose of Lima Chapel in Knightstown.) †

'Silent, Holy Night' brings back memories of mom's association with Mary

Terry Daley

It all happened one quiet December evening. My mom, a young mother, and I were sitting on the couch waiting for Dad to come home from selling life insurance to a late dinner.

On the wall visible only by the light of a single lamp was a figurine of the Virgin Mary, blue veil, white gown, holding the Christ Child.

Mom broke the silence by singing "Silent Night." "Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child, holy infant so tender and mild" took hold.

I easily associated Mom and me with Mary and child. Since Mom has been gone for a while, I have recalled the image and Mom's singing with some sadness. But recently came a deeper understanding.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson in his Dec. 8 column in *The Criterion* noted that Mary is bonded intimately with Jesus, "a sacred portal."

As I compose this at night, the house is quiet—except for Christmas music softly playing on the radio. "Silent Night" has just begun. There is no sadness as I see again that figurine. I recall as noted in the same issue the devotion of the Mexican immigrants in Jackson, Miss., who place the Blessed Mother concretely in their lives.

Mindful of the power of the Memorare, I am reassured by the constancy of our "most gracious Virgin Mary," the Mother of God, in our journey to him.

(Terry Daley is a member of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Like birth of our Savior, grandmother's cookie recipe lives on through generations

Karen Gerhart

The taste of my grandmother's homemade oatmeal cookies always meant Christmas.

My grandmother was a hard-working, petite German-American. She could easily bake a batch of her signature holiday cookies along with an entire feast for her family of four kids and 12 grandchildren in her small kitchen.

Those oatmeal cookies were quite frugal. The cookies called for simple ingredients such as flour, cinnamon and raisins. Perhaps it was the shape of them that was most unique. There was no congruence with shape and size. Teaspoons full of dough would be plopped on the cookie sheet, placed in the oven, and sprinkled with a light coating of sugar.

The years would pass, and my mom and aunts would soon take over the cooking and baking for holidays as my grandmother aged. I distinctly remember several years of dropping my grandmother off in her dark, quiet home on Christmas night after a day full of festivities, family, food and cookies.

How quiet her house was on Christmas night. I can still see her small town's corner Christmas decoration shining light through her windows. I'd see the image of her standing in her kitchen as we'd leave on all those quiet

Christmas nights. It made me sad as a child. It still makes me sad.

My mom now bakes her own signature cookie every year—a secret recipe that she has taught me and my own two young sons. However, every year my mom continues to pay tribute to her own mother by baking my grandmother's oatmeal cookies as well. I've filed both these recipes away.

Recipes and cookies are like family heirlooms; they bond a family together through generations as we cling to the past and to the memories of those we love. It's often through these recipes that we can still feel a sense of closeness with our loved ones who have passed—if only for an instant.

With each Christmas that passes, it's clear that it is not the ingredients or recipe that made my grandmother's oatmeal cookies one-of-a-kind; it's the love and the memory associated with those cookies and all those Christmases spent with my grandmother.

And, each Christmas as I close my eyes to savor this simple oatmeal cookie, I am taken back to my childhood and to my grandmother sitting quietly in a room full of family as we celebrated the birth of our Savior.

(Karen Gerhart is a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield.) †

Fireplace, stockings become Christmas tradition throughout family's journey

Marlene J. Kries

Christmas time while growing up on the east side of Indianapolis was special for my older sister and myself with my single Mom in the 1940's and 1950's.

Our tree was tall enough to reach the 9-foot-ceiling in our rental house on Emerson Avenue. One thing missing was a fireplace to hang stockings from Santa that many of my friends talked about. The songs we sang around the old upright piano and in church made up for the omission of stockings.

When as an adult I transferred because of my work to Michigan and my two children again were experiencing no fireplace to hang stockings, I was able to buy a regular size cardboard fireplace from a toy store while I was purchasing toys for them to put in layaway.

I bought two red stockings for their 3-and 6-year-old sizes, and they were delighted with the surprise on Christmas morning and the stockings stuffed with

candy and a small gift.

When I met and remarried my husband who was home from the military in Vietnam, we added to our family and when he was reassigned to Germany. Of course, we took the cardboard fireplace with us.

What fun it was to set it up in our apartment on the base and hang three stockings for ages 1, 6 and 9 with the children looking on for the Christmas greeting card to everyone back home.

Now after 49 years, I still hang 10 stockings at a real fireplace in my home for all of my family to help me celebrate my Christmas Day birthday, and this year I will be 80 years young.

By the way, the mantel on my fireplace is set with a beautiful ceramic Nativity scene that belonged to my deceased husband's mother and made by his sister, which is the real reason for the holiday.

(Marlene J. Kries is a member of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Brookville.) †

Family's Springerles cookies became gifts to others during annual season of giving

Virginia McBride

Growing up in Jeffersonville during the 1920's, making the German anise cookies, Springerles, was a Christmastime ritual at our house.

Each year, my Mother borrowed some beautiful molds for this cookie from a German neighbor. I can still see my Mother in the breakfast nook amid the ingredients, stirring and beating, pressing the molds, and cutting these cookies. These were the days prior to electric mixers.

My sister and I would carry these cookies to fill the top of the dining table. The table was covered with a bed sheet, as the cookies needed to dry overnight.

The next morning, Mother was up around 5 o'clock and began baking the many dozens of Springerles. They would become our gift to others, and everyone loved receiving my Mother's cookies.

At one point, my Mother asked my Father if he could replicate the wooden molds in metal in the foundry where he worked. He did, but they were so heavy. The funny part was that we forgot to tell our neighbor, and she wondered why we no longer borrowed her molds.

(Virginia McBride is a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Clarksville.) †



Kindness chain

To prepare their hearts for Christmas, Andi McKee's first-grade class at St. Louis School in Batesville has taken the lead to build a kindness chain throughout the school. When they notice students or staff doing kind deeds, they add a link to the chain. Their goal is to have it go around the entire school. McKee talked to the first graders about how they've been preparing the whole time, especially as they learn about the Christmas story and the tradition of the Christmas tree. The kindness chain has made it to the second floor of the school, and is growing more every day. First-grade students pictured with the Grinch bulletin board picture are from left, Maci Smith, Declan Meyer, Kassandra Garza and Anthony Meer. (Submitted photo)

Father's act of kindness leads to annual 'Merry Christmas' for would-be thief

Julie Sullivan Schnieders

My dad was Bob Sullivan, owner of Sullivan Hardware in Indianapolis. I was the oldest of the seven kids, and was the first kid to work in the hardware store as a cashier. The year was 1969, and I was 12.

In walked a policeman with a woman in handcuffs. He drug her to the paint counter, where my dad was mixing paint for another customer. The policeman did not know not to interrupt my dad while mixing paint, so he began to use words like "allegedly" and "she was a shoplifter," referring to this young woman.

I kept staring at her handcuffs. The woman had stolen a Christmas tree from the hardware store the night before, and this policeman had arrested her and was bringing her to my dad to see how he wanted to proceed.

My dad, with his glasses on the end of his nose, (he looked like Santa minus the beard) instructed the policeman to undo the handcuffs and told him to go sit in his office, which meant the policeman was now sitting in my area.

The woman was sobbing and my dad, who now had finished mixing the paint, said to her "Dry your eyes," and handed her his handkerchief.

She said she needed a tree for her

kids. My dad took her to the aisle with all of the tree decorations, and proceeded to get her all the fixings she needed to decorate a tree. He then had one of the workers get a tree for her, and told them to take it to her house. I heard him ask her how many kids she had. He then went in the back of the store and handed her a bag of gifts. (My mom always hid our presents at the hardware store.)

He then reached into his wallet and handed her money. His parting words to her were: "You come here every year, and we will get you a tree. Merry Christmas."

The policeman at this point was kind of giving my dad the stink eye. My dad then went into the office and spoke to the policeman. I am not sure what my dad said to him, but the policeman looked a little frustrated and said, "Merry Christmas" to me as he left.

I grew up witnessing the generosity of a wonderful man, and I will never forget the kindness my dad showed to this woman. My dad never told anyone this story. He never wanted to be thanked. ... He just did what was right.

P.S. This woman came to the store every year for many years, and received a tree.

(Julie Sullivan Schnieders is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.) †

'Is this a sign, Lord?' After year of loss, Christmas bells plant seeds of faith

Sonny Shanks

It was Christmas night 2011, and I was alone. In the past year, I'd lost my mom, my dad, my job, my home, and my marriage. Even my dog "Buddy" had died. My kids were all grown and gone and lived out of state.

My soul felt as empty as my heart. Something told me I needed to get up and get out, so I went to the local town square. It was empty too, as all the shops were closed and there was no foot traffic. All the Christmas lights were still on though, and there was music coming from speakers hidden in bushes.

As I walked around the square, pondering about this past year and the one to come, I thought to myself, "No matter what has happened to me, it can't

compare to Christ's suffering on the cross."

Just then, I heard church bells ringing from somewhere nearby. I wasn't sure why there were church bells ringing because it was well after 6 p.m. I followed the sound, and it led me to the local Catholic church. It was closed too, but the bells were ringing.

"Is this a sign, Lord?" I asked out loud as I looked toward the sky. "Should I become Catholic? And while I'm at it, should I stop feeling sorry for myself, give it all to you, move on, and think about ways to help others?"

Just then, the church bells stopped and it started to snow.

(Sonny Shanks is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.) †

YEAR-END

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families are scared and want to hear some consoling word.”

4. Spring meeting of the U.S. bishops is held in Indianapolis.

Each year, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) meets twice to discuss matters of importance, vote on various statements and elect new committee leaders. Their fall meeting is always in Baltimore, home of the first diocese erected on U.S. soil, but their spring meeting moves to a different city.

While in Indianapolis in June, the bishops discussed a variety of topics, among them:

- Discussing the upcoming worldwide synod on youth and vocations.
- Reiterating the Church’s commitment to the fundamental right to health care.
- Hearing a report on worldwide religious persecution.
- Reflection on immigration issues.
- Remembering the continuing sorrow they must feel for the tragedy of abuse.
- Making religious liberty concerns into a permanent committee.

5. Marian University’s new medical school graduates its first class.

Of the 134 students enrolled in Marian University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine in Indianapolis, six of them became part of a group that earned its place in both the histories of Catholic colleges and medical education in Indiana.

As the first graduating class, the story that those two women and four men are now part of is “how Marian’s program is the nation’s first osteopathic medical school at a Catholic university, and how it became, in 2013, the first medical school in Indiana to open in 110 years,” reported a story in *The Criterion*.

The approach of osteopathic medicine is something that connects to the Catholic faith, said Katie Fiori, one of the school’s graduates and also a 2007 graduate of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

“The osteopathic philosophy is to try to get to the root cause,” Fiori said. “Looking at the person as a whole and trying to understand their emotions and feelings is part of what lends itself to the Catholic faith—of seeing people deeper.”

6. 21 men across the archdiocese are ordained permanent deacons.

On June 24, then Archbishop-designate Thompson ordained 21 men of diverse

backgrounds as permanent deacons for the archdiocese.

“It was only the third such ordination of permanent deacons in the history of the archdiocese,” said a story in *The Criterion*.

“In the Church’s worship, they will baptize, witness marriages and preside over funeral services,” the story noted. “At Mass, they will be able to proclaim the Gospel and preach, but may not serve as celebrant or consecrate the Eucharist. In the ministry of the word, deacons teach the faith and serve as pastoral counselors. Their ministry, however, is focused on charity.”

7. The archdiocese deepens its commitment to prison ministry.

Former Archbishop Tobin desired to place special emphasis on, among other things, ministry to those in prison. He set in motion a ministry that continues now under the support of Archbishop Thompson.

Lynne Weisenbach, coordinator of corrections ministry for the archdiocese, said that she views it as “a magnetic force” that changes the lives of everyone involved in it.

“Some of the misunderstanding is that if you help in prisons, it devalues or undermines what happens to the victim,” Weisenbach said. “But this isn’t about not respecting or not honoring the victims. We do. This is about God’s mercy for these people. It’s about mercy and redemption.”

8. A record \$7.1 million raised as annual event celebrates Catholic education.

Each year, the archdiocese hosts a formal event to not only celebrate the vital role of Catholic education, but to honor those who have lived out their Catholic education with Celebrating Catholic School Values Awards.

During the 2017 event, hosted in February for more than 600 people, it was announced that in the past year \$7.1 million had been raised to benefit children attending Catholic schools.

Most of that record amount came through contributions to the Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship program. A Tax Credit Scholarship of at least \$500 per child, given for one year, allows an income-eligible student to receive an Indiana school voucher the following year and for up to 12 years of education in a Catholic school—a potential of \$60,000 in state voucher assistance.

9. Listening and sharing are highlights of the local V Encuentro event.

In an effort to breathe the spirit of St. John Paul II’s “new evangelization” into Hispanic



African Mass

Above, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, center, prays the eucharistic prayer during the annual archdiocesan African Mass celebrated on Dec. 3 at St. Rita Church in Indianapolis. Joining him at the altar are Father John Kamwendo, left, Father Kenneth Taylor, and Deacon Oliver Jackson. Standing behind Archbishop Thompson, partially obscured, is Loral Tansy, master of ceremonies. (Submitted photos by Bob Kelly)



Right, Sally Stovall, African Catholic Community coordinator and a member of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis, presents Archbishop Charles C. Thompson with African garments at the end of the Dec. 3 liturgy.

ministry, the U.S. bishops have started a four-year process called *V Encuentro*, or Fifth Encounter. There have been four previous *Encuentros*, dating back to 1972.

The Criterion reported that a fact sheet from the national *V Encuentro* process organizers describes the effort as “a four-year process of ecclesial reflection and action that invites all Catholics in the United States to intense missionary activity, consultation, leadership development and identification of best ministerial practices in the spirit of the New Evangelization.”

Oscar Castellanos, director of the archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry, spoke about the need for this process:

“It’s important [for the archdiocese to participate] because we are following an initiative of the bishops who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, have summoned every diocese in the country to live this *Encuentro* process. It’s important because it will give an opportunity to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to reach out to those living in the periphery through the missionary process of evangelization and consultation of the *V Encuentro*.”

10. Local events join worldwide celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Marian apparitions in Fatima.

One hundred years ago, the Mother

of Jesus appeared to three children in Fatima, Portugal, on the 13th day of each month from May through October.

Her message repentance and prayer—particularly a call to pray the rosary—as well as three now-published “secrets” and the spectacular miracle of the sun, witnessed by thousands of people, have made the apparitions a hallmark of 20th-century Catholicism.

People around the world celebrated the anniversary, and so did the Catholics of central and southern Indiana. In addition to individuals and various small, private celebrations, parishes offered organized events.

The archdiocese culminated the celebration with a “Morning with Mary” gathering in mid-October at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

The event, highlighted by the praying of the rosary, featured the testimony of Benedictine Sister Nicolette Etienne of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove and of Heather Renshaw, creator of the RealCatholicMom.com blog.

(To read the original coverage, including additional links of interest, click on the headline for this story on our website at www.CriterionOnline.com.) †

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Church carries on mission of Prince of Peace born in Bethlehem

By David Gibson

Did you ever hear a sound in the night that startled you from sleep, an unsettling sound that left you wide awake and demanded that you investigate its cause? The Gospel of St. Luke tells of a nighttime disturbance similar to this (Lk 2:8-14).

It startled shepherds “keeping the night watch over their flock” some 2,000 years ago in the Holy Land. “Behold,” a voice called out to them (Lk 2:8, 10).

Luke indicates that what happened in the night really frightened the shepherds at first. It captured their complete attention, of course.

It was an angel who spoke to them, saying, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news”—joyful news for all—that today “a savior has been born for you.” The angel revealed where the shepherds should look for this newborn child, “lying in a manger” (Lk 2:10-12).

Surely the shepherds knew then and there that they would not sleep that night! Instead, they would make their way to the place described to them. First, however, “a multitude of the heavenly host” joined their angel (Lk 2:13).

All these heavenly visitors were “praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest and on Earth peace to those on whom his favor rests’” (Lk 2:14).

Pope Francis calls this “the song of the angels.” It is, he comments, “a song that unites heaven and Earth.”

On his first Christmas as pope, he asked everyone to join in this little song. He called it “a song for every man or woman who keeps watch through the night, who hopes for a better world, who cares for others while humbly seeking to do his or her duty.”

The song of the angels gives “praise and glory to heaven,” while at the same time promising “peace to Earth and all its people,” said Pope Francis.

Indeed, it is a song of peace.

The shepherds of Luke’s Gospel must have been awestruck by all that they heard and saw in the night. “Behold,” an angel said to them, and quite soon they beheld an infant named Jesus.

His birth was destined down through the ages to call to mind the words of Isaiah the prophet about a child “born to us” who was titled “Wonder-Counselor” and “Prince of Peace,” a prince whose vast rule is “forever peaceful” (Is 9:5-6).

Jesus’ birth always is recalled among Christians as an awe-inspiring event of astounding beauty—an event to behold and to celebrate jubilantly.

Yet, attaching the title “Prince of Peace” to him assures that in celebrating his birth Christians always will ponder his peacemaking mission in our world, which becomes a commission to his followers, as well.

“God is peace: Let us ask him to help us to be peacemakers each day—in our life, in our families, in our cities and nations, in the whole world. Let us allow ourselves to be moved by God’s goodness,” Pope Francis urged on Christmas 2013.

Today, peacemaking is threaded into the very fabric of the Church’s celebration of the Christmas season.

There are wonders to behold and quietly to treasure every year at the time of Christmas. Yet, every wonder of faith is like a two-sided coin. Its reverse side calls believers into action.

So, Christmas is a call to make peace, to give birth to reconciliations of all kinds in marriages and families, in neighborhoods, within a single nation and among nations. This is why the prayer of the Church at Christmas so often is a prayer for peace.

In “The Joy of the Gospel,” his 2013 apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis



Boys dressed as herders prepare to march along the streets in Tbilisi, Georgia, during a religious procession to celebrate Christmas. The Gospel of Luke tells the story of shepherds “keeping the night watch over their flock” some 2,000 years ago in the Holy Land, only to be startled by an angel who revealed to them the joyful news that “a savior has been born for you.” (CNS photo/Gleb Garanich, Reuters)

stressed that “by preaching Jesus Christ, who is himself peace,” the Church calls upon “every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life” (#239).

In the mind of Pope Francis, a lack of human dialogue harms peace greatly. But isn’t that another way of stating that the willingness to hear others, to lend time to them by listening with interest and respect to their voices, holds a vital place among the building blocks of peace?

Indifference toward others also harms peace profoundly, Pope Francis makes clear. In a homily he gave in a 2015 Mass in previously war-torn Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, he stated that “cold indifference” can be “won over by the warmth of mercy,” a “gift of God that turns fear into love and makes us artisans of peace.”

The song of the angels promises peace on Earth. But the reality is that peace seemingly breaks down with ease in this world. Conflict takes over and people lose sight of the rightful place of justice and love in human existence.

Still, as Pope Francis has said, Christmas means that “God is with us”—with the real us—“in this real world, which is marked by so many things both good and bad.”

Christmas celebrates “the birth of a vulnerable child” called “the Prince of Peace,” Pope Francis points out. This is the incarnate Lord, who “shows us the real face of God, for whom power does not mean force or destruction but love” and mercy.

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

Birth of the Savior brings into the world a light that overcomes darkness

By Nancy de Flon

The highlight of Christmas, for me, is hearing the reading from Isaiah (Is 9:1-6) proclaimed at the Mass during the night: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone” (Is 9:1).

The absence of daylight streaming in through the windows reinforces the sense of darkness, and thereby makes this “great light” even more meaningful.

Images of light pervade the Christmas season liturgy—especially light that pierces the darkness. It is a metaphor for the new life, hope and peace overcoming the darkness of seeming hopelessness and futility.

What is this “great light” of which Isaiah speaks? He continues: “A child is born to us, a son is given us ... They name him ... Prince of Peace” (Is 9:5).

Christian tradition understands this Prince of Peace as Christ, who proclaims himself the “light of the world” (Jn 8:12). No wonder the liturgy is suffused with this image during these dark winter days!

The response to the psalm for the Christmas Mass at dawn promises: “A light will shine on us this day: The Lord is born for us.”

And consider the shepherds in Luke’s Gospel (at the Mass during the night): Suddenly an angel appears above their coal-dark fields, and “the glory of the Lord shone around them” while the angel proclaims “good news of great joy,” the birth of the Savior (Lk 2:9-10). Meanwhile, John, in his Gospel (Christmas Mass during the day,

Jn 1:1-18) tells us that “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn 1:5).

The Cantic of Zechariah, sung each morning in the Liturgy of the Hours, draws the themes of light and peace together. Zechariah prophesies that through the birth of the Savior “the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Lk 1:78-79).

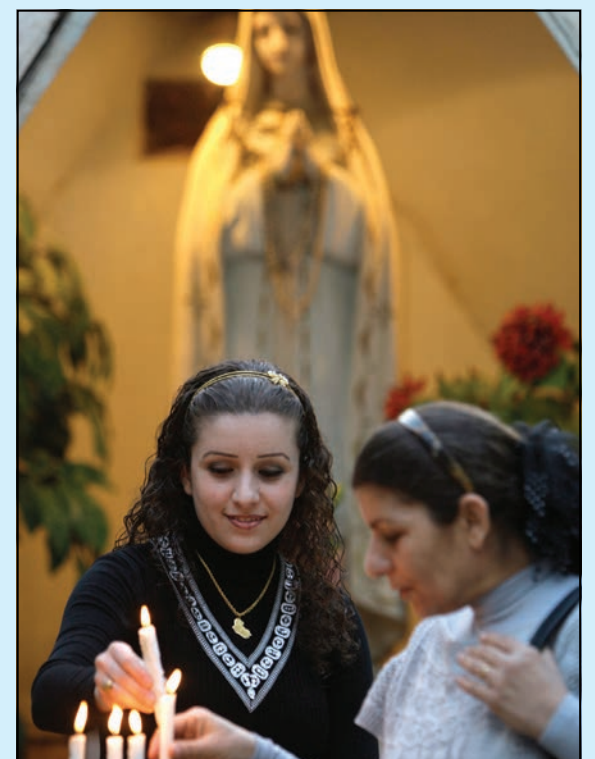
I like the way the cantic uses another metaphor from nature—“the dawn from on high”—for the light that is coming into the world.

Notable by its absence from the Christmas liturgies is this prophetic passage from Tobit: “A bright light will shine to the limits of the Earth. Many nations will come to you from afar ... Bearing in their hands gifts for the King of heaven” (Tb 13:11).

But it is tellingly fulfilled in the Gospel reading for the Epiphany, in which the story of the Magi emphasizes the universality of Christ’s mission. To be a true Prince of Peace, Christ must rule over all people, for the peace he brings will be realized when all accept his reign.

Remember, then, when you turn on your Christmas lights, whether a single candle in a window or a blaze of colors encircling your tree, that you are proclaiming Christ, the “great light” and Prince of Peace who has overcome the darkness of the world.

(Nancy De Flon is editor-at-large at Paulist Press and the author of *The Joy of Praying the Psalms*.) †



Chaldean Catholics light candles at Virgin Mary Church in Baghdad. Images of light pervade the Christmas season liturgy—especially light that pierces the darkness. It is a metaphor for the new life, hope and peace overcoming the darkness of seeming hopelessness and futility. (CNS photo/Saad Shalash, Reuters)

From the Editor Emeritus/John E. Fink

A visit to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

A highlight of any pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a visit to the Church of the Nativity, built in Bethlehem over the cave in



which Jesus was born. It's the oldest church in the Holy Land, built by St. Helena, Constantine's mother, in 325.

It survived destruction by the Persians in 614 that 300 other churches did

not because the Persians found a mosaic of the Nativity with the magi dressed in ancient Persian costumes.

The present church isn't precisely the one built by St. Helena, though. That one was looted and burned by the Samaritans from Nablus in 529. The Emperor Justinian then had a larger and more beautiful church built, and it's the one still standing today.

The church is a fortress. To prevent men on horseback from entering, its entrance is only 4 1/2-feet high, and it's narrow enough that only one person at a

time can enter. Since one has to stoop to enter, it's called the "gate of humility."

Today, it's mainly a Greek Orthodox church, with other Christian religions having control of parts of it. Mosaic floors from the fourth century are covered to preserve them, but there are openings so pilgrims can see part of them.

To get to the cave where Jesus was born, pilgrims descend a flight of stairs to the right of the sanctuary. The rectangular cave is covered with asbestos as a safeguard against fire from the numerous burning candles. A Greek Orthodox shrine, with a silver star, marks the spot where Christ was born. A Roman Catholic shrine off to the side has two altars—the altar of the crib where the newborn infant was laid, and the altar of the magi.

That silver star was an indirect cause of the Crimean War in 1853. Someone stole it, and that incident spread to the war between Russia, defending the rights of the Orthodox Church in the Holy Land, and France, defending the rights of Roman Catholics. Of course, the incident was

a mere pretext since there were bigger issues between the two countries.

The roof of the church also figured in war. During the time of the Crusades in the 12th century, the roof was badly in need of repair, and the Crusaders replaced the cedar roof with lead. Later, in 1683, the Ottoman Turks were besieging Vienna and threatening to overrun all of Christian Europe. The Turks were running out of ammunition when someone remembered the lead on the roof of the Church of the Nativity.

The church was stripped of its lead and it was rushed to Vienna. It arrived too late, after the Christian forces led by Prince Sobieski of Poland had defeated the Turks. However, from then until late in the 20th century, including the first few times I visited the church, large puddles formed on the floor of the church whenever it rained.

The Catholic Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria is attached to the Church of the Nativity. It was built in 1881 over a cave where St. Jerome lived while he translated the Bible into Latin. †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Simplicity at Christmas can help families focus more on Christ

My 4-year-old son Colin is getting old enough to start to learn what Christmas is truly about, but not yet so old that he's



been hooked by the meaning that our broader culture has given to the holiday.

Over the past month, he's been talking about "baby Jesus" a good bit. He found an old unused diaper in our minivan and insisted that we

give it to baby Jesus.

It also came to mind for him when he opened a door recently on our homemade Advent calendar.

I have made Advent calendars for many years now for our family, drawing pictures of Advent wreaths on the Sundays and portraits of saints on feast days—although no one will ever confuse my work with Michelangelo's.

When there is no saint being honored on a day in Advent, I draw a symbol of the season—a Christmas tree, lights, bells, etc.

Colin opened a door on such a day not long ago, and discovered a drawing of a wrapped present. After looking at it, he asked, "Is baby Jesus in the present?"

He asked the question during a ritual we do as a family in our supertime meal prayer in Advent. It involves lighting the appropriate number of candles on our Advent wreath, singing a verse of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" and opening the door of the day on the calendar.

The boys take delight in taking turns lighting the candles, blowing them out and opening the door to such an extent that we have to set a schedule for who does what on which day, or disputes will break out.

Our homemade ritual can also lead to good conversation, like when Colin asked his question.

We talked after that about how Jesus himself is the present we all receive at Christmas, the greatest one of all.

Being modest in observing Advent and Christmas at home might help families to focus more on the gift Christ gives us in himself while still showing the world the joy of the seasons.

Christmas seems more complicated now than when I was my boys' ages. The variety of Christmas lights grows every year, with lights projected on a house being the latest craze. And then there are the ever-proliferating inflatable yard decorations.

We try to be more simple, yet joyful at the same time, in our home. Our Christmas tree is covered with lights, tinsel and ornaments that we give each year to the boys. (With five boys each getting a new ornament each year, the space on the tree for ornaments keeps shrinking.)

We also have lights on our small front porch, and a homemade painted plywood outdoor Nativity set that was given to us.

As to gifts, the boys know better than to turn in long wish lists of the latest Lego sets, digital devices or computer games. For some years now, we've followed a custom borrowed from a friend and give them three gifts: something they want, something they need and something to read.

Worship, of course, remains at the heart of Advent and Christmas for our family.

Implementing these and other suggestions to simplify Advent and Christmas to focus more on Christ is not the exclusive territory of the saints. The last time I looked, there were definitely no halos above the heads in the Gallagher household, especially mine.

No, these customs can be means to help us grow in holiness one step at a time. As we take such steps, God's grace will help us live our daily lives like his little children that we truly are.

How much happier would we truly be if our hearts were focused more on the baby Jesus like Colin's is this year? †

Coming of Age/Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Teenagers' acts of kindness in 2017 leave us 'united in hope'

"Unidos por la esperanza" or "united in hope" is the official motto for Pope Francis' upcoming visit to Peru in January. A Peruvian friend, Rosa, told me that the motto is helping her to be more



aware of people's acts of kindness, unity and hope. Inspired by Rosa, I wanted to share some of the ways teens around the world have moved others this year with their acts of kindness.

Chris Rodriguez, a Puerto Rican teen,

spent his birthday helping hurricane victims in his community by working with military vets to deliver care packages. The teen has been homeless for three years, but instead of focusing on what he doesn't have, he's helping others who are struggling after Hurricane Maria devastated the island. He told CNN that the biggest reward for him is to see his community bounce back.

Two sisters in Pittsburgh spent a cold night in November distributing blankets and coats to homeless people because, they said, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity. According to *The Pittsburgh Catholic*, the teens, along with their youth

ministry team, worked with their parish and the Knights of Columbus to raise money and collect the coats and blankets.

A rising senior at a Catholic high school in the Archdiocese of Portland, Ore., collected school supplies for low-income and immigrant families last spring. An immigrant from Ethiopia himself, the young man told *The Catholic Sentinel* that he was inspired to help other families when his own family struggled after his mother was injured and could not work for several months.

A selfless spirit was what inspired students at Archbishop Carroll High School in Washington to spend many weekends before Thanksgiving collecting and classifying food donations for struggling families. Students told *El Pregonero*, the archdiocesan Spanish-language paper, that knowing the community needs and being able to help them in Thanksgiving was a way to live their Catholic faith.

Young people also showed unity in prayer with others, like members of 136 Don Bosco youth centers in Spain. The young people participated in a peace prayer vigil in unison with other youth centers in Syria. This was part of "Suriya," a Don Bosco center project to raise awareness about "what it means to

practice solidarity and how that can bring concrete change that can promote a more just world."

And teens from the Montevideo Archdiocese in Uruguay visited public cemeteries on All Souls' Day to give a message of comfort to people who are visiting their loved ones that day. The young people offered to pray with them, gave away images of the Good Shepherd and wrote down the name of the dead to offer a Mass for their eternal rest.

Many teens also fundraised for causes dear to them. In the Archdiocese of Hartford, Conn., students at St. Paul Catholic High School raised more than \$50,000 for Haiti in the past five years. According to the archdiocesan newspaper, the money has helped to build two houses in the Makandal slum of Jeremie, Haiti, and assisted with the hot lunch program for the nearly 1,000 students.

This is of course an incomplete list. I could not fit all the ways teens are sharing hope and unity in 2017. But hopefully their example inspires us to be "united in hope" as we perform more acts of kindness in 2018.

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

Emmaus Walk/Debra Tomaselli

Ever wonder what wrapping presents has to do with God's gifts to us?

In this season of Christmas, there is a lot of wrapping of presents going on. Do you wonder how the tradition began? Why do we wrap presents?



Why not just give them unwrapped?

I do, so I researched it. The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, in an online post dated Dec. 9, 2013, says:

"The desire to hide the identity of the gift until just the right moment led people to wrap gifts long, long ago."

How about that?

We began concealing the identity of a present ages ago. Why? Because we're looking for "just the right moment" to reveal the gift.

Makes sense, right?

After all, I've received gifts and waited to open them until the "real" date. Or, I've waited to open them until the giver is present to share in the joy. Or, I've waited to open it until I have time to savor it.

I never thought about it, but, yes, we wait to open gifts at "just the right moment."

It reminds me of a particular scene from my childhood.

"Have a seat on the sofa," my mother said. "We have a surprise for you!"

What? A surprise? I couldn't imagine what it was, but surprises were always good. I raced to the couch, sat down, and turned my smiling, freckled face her way.

"Close your eyes," she said. "I'll be right back."

I squeezed them shut.

Moments later, I heard my parents shuffling something through the room, stopping at my feet.

"OK," they said. "You can open your eyes now!"

Delight filled me as I saw the present set before me. It was wrapped in colorful paper, which I immediately removed.

Underneath was a big grey case. I flipped the latches open, first one ... then the other. I gasped with delight when I spotted the full-sized accordion, marble-gray with stunning ivory keys.

What? I'd wanted this forever! At least as long as I'd been taking accordion lessons.

"I love it!" I said. "Thank you!"

My parents helped me take it out of the case and adjust the straps to fit my small frame. Moments later, I played a simple rendition of "Silent Night."

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 24, 2017

- 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
- Romans 16:25-27
- Luke 1:26-38

The first reading for Mass on the Fourth Sunday of Advent is from the Second Book of Samuel. Once, the two Books of Samuel were a single volume. Translations and editions over the centuries divided this one volume into two.

David is the principal figure in these books. The ancient Hebrews looked upon David as much more than a king. Beyond all else, he was God's chosen representative, given the kingship so that laws and circumstances would provide an atmosphere in which the people more fervently would follow God and be loyal to the covenant.

For this weekend's second reading, the Church offers us a reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which is considered Paul's theological masterpiece.

As indicated by its title, Paul sent this epistle to the faithful of the Church in Rome. In the first century, Rome was the center of the Mediterranean world in every respect—political, economic and cultural. It was also the largest city in the Roman Empire. Not surprisingly, Rome, the great imperial capital, had within its borders a great array of ideas and religions, Christianity among them.

In this weekend's reading, as often elsewhere, Paul asserts his own vocation as an Apostle. His vocation from God came so that "all the nations" might believe in and obey "the only wise God" (Rom 16:26-27).

For the final reading this weekend, the Church proclaims a beautiful passage from St. Luke's Gospel. It is the story of the annunciation, the event when the angel Gabriel came into the presence of Mary in Nazareth to inform her that she would be the mother of the long-awaited Redeemer.

The reading abounds with meaning. Luke makes clear that Mary was a virgin, and that the conception of the Redeemer would not be the result of any human relationship. Behind this fact is the reality that God, as Creator and the provider of order to the universe, can do anything. He is almighty. The Redeemer will be the Son of God. He will be David's successor.

The Redeemer's coming will fulfill God's promises, spoken by the prophets all through the ages, to bring life and salvation to the people. The birth of this Redeemer will be the ultimate satisfaction of the ancient Covenant.

Vital to the message of the story is Mary's response: "I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

Reflection

The Church makes a vital point in each of these scriptural readings. God reaches out to us. And this outreach is not vague, pointed to a few or impossible to see. It came in the people with whom we can relate: David, Paul and Jesus.

This outreach has critical implications for us in our own inadequacy and limitations. God is almighty, but his supreme power over all creation is not the most consoling point here. Rather, the most reassuring factor is that God loves us.

He continually dispatched messengers such as David, Paul and Jesus, to rescue us from ourselves and to guide to peace in our hearts and life in eternity. He saves us.

The Church approaches Christmas strongly convinced of this fact of God's love. God's love indeed saves us. He does not leave us helpless and doomed. He reaches to us to draw us to the divine presence itself.

Now, each of us must respond. Do we accept God? Do we love God? Or do we reject God? It is that simple. †



Daily Readings

Monday, December 25

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

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

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

Tuesday, December 26

St. Stephen, the first martyr
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Psalms 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc-17
Matthew 10:17-22

Wednesday, December 27

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

Thursday, December 28

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

Friday, December 29

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

See DAILY READINGS, page 16

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church allows grandparents to serve as godparents to their grandchildren

Both my daughter and I left the Church some years back, although for different reasons.



I returned to regular practice of faith about a year and a half ago, and my daughter is thinking of returning as well.

She is a single mom, with two children—ages 6 and 12—and she would

like them to be baptized. I have been trying to teach them about the Catholic faith.

Our problem is that we have no other family, and our friends are not Catholic. Is it possible that I can be their godmother, even though I am also their grandmother? (Kentucky)

I am delighted to hear of your return to the sacramental practice of the Catholic faith and to the support this offers you in living the Christian life. Note, too, the "multiplier effect"—I can only believe that your own journey back has served as an example for your daughter, and now her two children will be raised as Catholics as well!

In answer to your question, yes—you may certainly be the sponsor (godparent) for your grandchildren's baptisms. A father or mother may not serve as a godparent for their own child (Canon 874 of the Church's *Code of Canon Law*), but there is no such rule prohibiting grandparents.

The role of the sponsor is to "help the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it," and I am sure you would do this well (Canon 872).

The Catholic Church indicates that children who are 7 years of age and older receive the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation and Eucharist) through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) adapted for children of catechetical age, instead of just baptism and then confirmation and the Eucharist later. In the RCIA, a sponsor (which also may be a grandparent) accompanies the candidate, but in the Rite of Baptism of Children (under 7 years old) that sponsor is also a godparent.

The only downside I can see in a grandparent's being a godparent is this: If the parents were to pass on or to be incapacitated in some way, a godparent is meant to serve as a "stand-in," mentoring and assuring the continued Catholic life of

the child—so I suppose that the younger the godparent/grandparent is, the better!

I enjoy reading your columns in our diocesan newspaper. Recently, you responded to a person who is concerned about missing Mass due to agoraphobia. (Editor's note: Agoraphobia is defined as an extreme or irrational fear of crowded spaces or enclosed public places.)

As a psychiatrist, I wish you would have added that agoraphobia is a very treatable condition, using medication or a specific kind of therapy called cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which can help a person manage anxiety in public settings such as Mass. In addition to discussing the situation with a priest, the person who wrote may seek treatment with a doctor or a therapist with skills in CBT.

(Since the writer is seeking to participate more fully in worship and the sacraments, I have to believe that God will smile on the work he or she does with a medical professional to achieve that!) (Ohio)

I was delighted to read your column about agoraphobia. It is nice to know that you are not alone, that others are dealing with similar issues. I have panic/anxiety problems and, when I told a deacon that I was unable to attend weekend Masses because of the large number of people present, he suggested that I attend Mass instead on a weekday. (Actually, I now go on more than one weekday!)

It is a great relief to feel comfortable while praying at Mass and not have to focus on fighting feelings of panic. Thank you for addressing this, and I am sure it will help others as well. (Location of origin withheld.)

The two letters above are indicative of the responses that are received daily, commenting on this column. Often enough, these comments contain additional information that may be helpful to some readers.

Here, the first letter serves as an important reminder that God works in many ways—often through the efforts of skilled professionals. When medical help is available, one is wise and well-advised to seek it. The second letter may be of comfort simply by assuring readers that they are never alone in dealing with particular challenges.

(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

Open Our Hearts

By Sandy Bierly

Let us open our hearts
And let Christ enter in
He is the King of kings,
Our Savior and friend.

Born as a little babe
In Bethlehem town,
He came to save us,
From all of our sins.

Let us open our hearts
And let Christ enter in.
Let him be born in us,
So that peace will win.



(Sandy Bierly is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. A Nativity scene decorates the back of a cave used for celebrating Mass in Chapel of Shepherd's Field in Bethlehem, in the West Bank, on Feb. 12, 2015.)

(File photo by Natalie Hofer)

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.

BARTH, Joan, 90, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Nov. 27. Sister of Imelda Ramsey. Aunt of several.

BITTELMEYER, Christine (King), 66, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Nov. 14. Wife of Joe Bittelmeyer. Mother of Elizabeth Searcy and David Bittelmeyer. Sister of Tom King. Grandmother of four.

BUTTICE, Joseph J., 71, SS. Francis and Clare of

Assisi, Greenwood, Nov. 25. Husband of Mary Ellen Buttice. Father of Jennifer Pearsey. Brother of Judy Handshu, Patty Pinkard, Al and Michael Buttice. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.

DAMIN, Irene (Early), 87, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 8. Wife of Tom Damin. Mother of Cheryl Sweeney, Barbara, Kerry and Tony Damin. Sister of Marge Petriello. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of five.

FELDHAUS, Pauline, 102, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 3. Mother of Joyce Eubanks, Cecilia Melcher, Pam Mills, Mary and John Feldhaus. Sister of Bea Jessen. Grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother of several.

FESSEL, Harold L., 66, St. Joseph, Corydon, Dec. 5. Husband of Pamela Fessel.

Father of Jennifer DePriest and William Fessel. Brother of Beth Sharp, Elaine Tuchscherer, Dale, Dennis and Larry Fessel. Grandfather of four.

GILLESPIE, Michael C., 46, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 17. Husband of Sondra Gillespie. Father of Cody and Ryan Looney and Riley Gillespie. Son of Margaret Gillespie. Brother of Tomi and Chris Gillespie.

HOLTEL, Rosemary R., 100, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 9. Mother of Debbie Lamping, Mary Jo Youngman and Jack Holtel. Sister of Barbara Heidlage and Betty Waters. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of nine. Great-great-grandmother of three.

JUDGE, Elizabeth A., 74, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 1. Mother of Leslie Holbrook, Gabriel and Greg Asbury, Jay and Kit Judge. Sister of Robert Van Pelt. Grandmother of nine.

MARTINI, Ruth C. (Hoffmeier), 83, All Saints, Dearborn County, Dec. 4. Mother of Julie Crawley, Susan Roell, Mary, Dave, John, Joseph, Patrick and William Martini. Grandmother of 14.

MCNELIS, Eleanor P. (Mulg), 83, St. Anne, New Castle, Dec. 2. Mother of Amy Hollowell, Lisa McNelis-Roselli and Kevin McNelis. Sister of Anthony Mulg. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of one.

NIERSBACH, Mary E., 89, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Nov. 25. Mother of Gretchen Murray and William Niersbach, Jr. Grandmother

of five. Great-grandmother of five.

PLUCKEBAUM, Robert V., 85, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Nov. 10. Husband of Maryann Pluckebaum. Father of AnneMarie Cottrell, Dave, Mike, Paul and Steve Pluckebaum. Brother of Jack Pluckebaum. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of three.

RIEHLE, Eunice M., 95, St. Peter, Franklin County, Dec. 10. Mother of Linda Fullenkamp, Cindy Nurrenberg, Kathy Tekulve, Francis, Jr. and John Riehle. Sister of Jinny Werner. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 27. Great-great-grandmother of two.

ROSSITTIS, Emanuele, 77, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Dec. 9. Husband of Donna Rossittis. Father of Mary, Eric and Damian Rossittis. Brother of Teresa Giroiami. Grandfather of seven.

SCHIAVONE, Lena M. (Gross), 83, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Mother of Michael and Peter Schiavone. Sister of Louise Enrietti. Grandmother of five.

SCHOMACKER, Amy C., 41, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Wife of Geoff Schomacker. Mother of Hazel and Olive Schomacker. Daughter of Michael and Arlyn Meyer. Sister of Lisa Gunyon and Sarah Overpeck.

SCHWARTZ, Martin T., 95, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 8. Father of Laura Titzer, Barbara Weiserbs, Angela and Paul Schwartz. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 12.

SMITH, Nevada, 91, St. Anne, New Castle, Dec. 2. Mother of Patricia

Bailiff, Mary Vance, Edward, Jr., Michael and Stephen Smith. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 18.

TIMKE, Elvira F., 89, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 10. Mother of Joyce Gauck, Patricia Leffingwell, Jean Linkel, Carol Livers, Joan Thompson, Mary Vogelsang, David, James and Mark Timke. Sister of Shirley

Laker. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 11.

WILHELM-LOOS, Margaret M., 89, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 1. Mother of Mark and Michael Wilhelm. Stepmother of Ellen Gill, Mary Kay Liverett and Phil Loos. Grandmother of two. Step-grandmother of six. Step-great-grandmother of five. †

Providence Sister Kathryn Koressel served in Catholic schools for 39 years

Providence Sister Kathryn Koressel died on Dec. 7 at Providence Hall at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 90.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 14 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Alfreda Kathryn Koressel was born on July 27, 1927, in Evansville, Ind. She entered the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on July 20, 1944, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1952.

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

During her 73 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Kathryn ministered for 39 years as a teacher in Catholic schools in Indiana, Illinois, Oklahoma and North Carolina. She retired from education in 1986, and then served for 12 years as a

receptionist at the Providence Retirement Home in New Albany. She later ministered in the Evansville Diocese for seven years before returning to the motherhouse, where she served the community in several ways.

In the archdiocese, she served at Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis from 1951-52 and at St. Paul School (now St. John Paul II School) in Sellersburg from 1959-65.

Sister Kathryn is survived by four sisters: Marie Gentry, Agnes Sammet and Margaret Will, all of Evansville, and Helen Klinge of Indianapolis; and three brothers: Father James Koressel of Montgomery, Ind., Joseph Koressel of Louisville, Ky., and Linus Koressel of Evansville.

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. †

Providence Sister Agnes Mary Raetz served at her community's motherhouse

Providence Sister Agnes Mary Raetz died on Dec. 7 at Mother Theodore Hall at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 85.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 15 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Mary Agnes Raetz was born on April 10, 1932, in Toledo, Ohio. Her family later moved to Indianapolis, where they were members of St. Joan of Arc Parish. She entered the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on Sept. 12, 1963, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1970.

During her 54 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Agnes Mary ministered for 34 years as a secretary and clerical assistant in various offices in her community's motherhouse. She also served as a clerical assistant to the president of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College from 1987-89. She retired in 2007, dedicating herself entirely to prayer.

Sister Agnes Mary is survived by two sisters, Elizabeth Vangordon of Greenwood, and Angela Danford of Toledo.

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. †

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:

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Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition
Feb. 2, 2018, issue of *The Criterion*

If you are planning your wedding between Jan. 30 and July 1, 2018 or if you were married between July 1, 2017 and Jan. 30, 2018 and did not have your engagement announced in *The Criterion*, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement using the form below or electronically at www.archindy.org/criterion/local/forms3/wedding-form.html.

E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend to have a photo where the couple's faces are close to each other. Please send your photo as an attachment to the following e-mail: cclark@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If you are unable to e-mail a photo, you may mail us a photo to scan with the bottom form. Please, no photocopied photos. If you want the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 19, 2018. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Cindy Clark, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Deadline with photos: Friday, January 19, 2018, at 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last) Daytime Phone

Mailing Address City State Zip Code

Name of Bride's Parents (first, last)

City State

Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)

Name of Bridegroom's Parents (first, last)

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Archbishop, local Church share in love for Our Lady of Guadalupe

By Sean Gallagher

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego as Our Lady of Guadalupe nearly 500 years ago in 1531, some 2,000 miles south and west of Indianapolis just outside Mexico City.

But the love and devotion to her expressed by many Catholics from Mexico, as well as the faithful from many cultural backgrounds, was so strongly expressed on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 in parishes across central and southern Indiana that the time and space that separates Mary's appearance to Juan Diego seemed to have disappeared.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson shared in that devotion when he gathered on the evening of Dec. 12 with several hundred worshippers giving thanks to God for the gift of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Gabriel the Archangel Church in Indianapolis.

It was one of several Masses and other celebrations that took place at the Indianapolis West Deanery faith community on the vigil of the feast, and on the feast itself for the faithful to show their love for *La Virgen de Guadalupe*.

"This is the biggest day for Catholics in our culture," said St. Gabriel parishioner Paula Betancourt, who previously lived in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. "It makes us feel like we're back in Mexico. The people, the celebration, the songs, the rosaries, the dancers—it brings us a spirit to help us feel like we're in Mexico."

Betancourt shared her thoughts about the feast at her parish after meeting Archbishop Thompson after the liturgy.

Many of the worshippers stood in line to greet him and to receive his blessing.

Father Michael O'Mara, St. Gabriel's pastor, stood off to the side taking in the scene with a smile. He recalled how Mary sent Juan Diego to the local bishop to request that a church be built in her honor.

"It's an exciting night to celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe with our Latino community," Father O'Mara said. "The bishop is such a big part of the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe. And so to have the archbishop present with us, the community is so very excited that our pastor is with us tonight."

During his homily at the Mass, Father O'Mara joked about the tie between the archbishop and Our Lady of Guadalupe.

"I can understand Juan Diego being just a little bit nervous when he had to



Father Michael O'Mara, pastor of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, preaches a homily during a Dec. 12 Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrated in his parish's church. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

go and knock on the door of the bishop," Father O'Mara said. "I feel a little bit nervous today, too, preaching in front of the archbishop. I could find myself in a new parish tomorrow. You just never know what might happen."

Archbishop Thompson later praised Father O'Mara, recalling how good of a student he was when they were seminarians together more than 30 years ago at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

In his homily, Father O'Mara told those gathered that, just as Our Lady of Guadalupe gave a mission to Juan Diego, they too have a mission of faith here and now.

"We have to believe that we, too, are sent," Father O'Mara said. "Pope Francis says to us, 'Where does Jesus send us? There are no boundaries. There are no limits. He sends us to everyone and everywhere.'"

St. Gabriel's pastor went on to tell those at the Mass that they can discover that mission by staying close to Mary.

"Mary was, and still is, the first Christian evangelist," Father O'Mara said. "Through Mary, we discover our true identity as Catholics. May we respond like Mary with an enthusiastic, 'Yes,' acknowledging that we are missionary disciples of the Lord. May his will be done to us according to his word."

Although Our Lady of Guadalupe at first had a close tie to the Church in Mexico, Catholics around the world have drawn close to her over the nearly five centuries since she appeared to Juan Diego.

Archbishop Thompson reflected on this reality after the Mass when speaking with *The Criterion*.

"As the bishops have said and Pope Francis has said, Our Lady of Guadalupe is the great protector of the unborn, of the migrant, of the immigrant, of the refugee, those on the margins and the peripheries," he said. "She's the great unifier, the great protector and model of heroic virtue for us. She draws us closer to Christ through her example and our imitation of her willingness to say, 'Yes,' to God's will time and time again."

(For more photos from the Mass on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 at St. Gabriel the Archangel Church in Indianapolis, visit CriterionOnline.com.) †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson incenses an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 at St. Gabriel the Archangel Church in Indianapolis during a Mass on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

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Employment

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The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Executive Assistant to the Archbishop to serve as a member of the Chancery administrative team and assist the Archbishop with scheduling, correspondence, and projects. Responsibilities include preparing letters, reports, and other documents at the request of the Archbishop and providing administrative support such as answering phone calls, greeting visitors, and processing mail. The person in this position will also coordinate the Archbishop's calendar, including appointments, conference calls, liturgies, pastoral visits, and USCCB activities.

The position requires outstanding verbal and written communications skills, attention to detail, proficiency with Microsoft Office software, flexibility, the ability to prioritize and multi-task, and the ability to exercise discretion and maintain confidential information. A bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in communications or a related field is preferred. Experience in administration and communication, preferably involving matters pertaining to the Catholic Church, is required. Proficiency in effectively speaking and writing both English and Spanish is also preferred.

To apply, please e-mail a cover letter, resumé, and list of references, in confidence, to:

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The position requires an understanding and acceptance of Church teaching and theology concerning marriage. Excellent oral and written communications skills, strong analytical skills, interpersonal teamwork, proven organizational ability, and sensitivity to confidentiality are also essential. Computer skills including word processing are very important for this position.

Please send a resumé and salary requirements by December 31, 2017 to:
Very Rev. Joseph L. Newton, JCL
Vicar Judicial
Archdiocese of Indianapolis • 1400 N. Meridian St. • Indianapolis, IN 46202
jnewton@archindy.org



Ana Munoz stands with her son, Matteo Perez, dressed as St. Juan Diego, during a Dec. 12 Mass on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Gabriel the Archangel Church in Indianapolis.



Archbishop Thompson speaks after the Mass with Karen Avila, left, her father Jose Avila, and her son Ramon Avila.

Daily Readings

continued from page 13

Saturday, December 30
Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
1 John 2:12-17
Psalm 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

Sunday, December 31
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
or *Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3*
Psalm 128:1-5
or *Psalm 105:1-6, 8-9*
Colossians 3:12-21
or *Colossians 3:12-17*
or *Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19*
Luke 2:22-40
or *Luke 2:22, 39-40*

Monday, January 1
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord
Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Tuesday, January 2
St. Basil the Great, bishop and doctor of the Church
St. Gregory Nazianzen, bishop and doctor of the Church
1 John 2:22-28
Psalm 98:1-4
John 1:19-28

Wednesday, January 3
The Most Holy Name of Jesus
1 John 2:29-3:6
Psalm 98:1-3, 6
John 1:29-34

Thursday, January 4
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
1 John 3:7-10
Psalm 98:1, 7-9
John 1:35-42

Friday, January 5
St. John Neumann, bishop
1 John 3:11-21
Psalm 100:1-5
John 1:43-51

Saturday, January 6
St. Andre Bessette, religious
1 John 5:5-13
Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
Mark 1:7-11
or *Luke 3:23-28*
or *Luke 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38*



Tourney champs

The fourth-grade basketball team of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis won the annual south side pre-season basketball tournament in November. The event, hosted by St. Mark Parish, consisted of 16 fourth-grade boys teams representing 10 parishes from the archdiocese. All told, 28 games were played during the eight days of the tourney, which marked its 10th year. (Submitted photo)

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

Monday, January 8
The Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
or *Acts 10:34-38*
or *Isaiah 55:1-11*
or *1 John 5:1-9*
Psalm 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10
or (Response) *Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6*
Mark 1:7-11

Tuesday, January 9
1 Samuel 1:9-20
(Response) *1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8*
Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday, January 10
1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20

Psalm 40:2-5, 7-10
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday, January 11
1 Samuel 4:1-11
Psalm 44:10-11, 14-15, 25-26
Mark 1:40-45

Friday, January 12
1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22a
Psalm 89:16-19
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday, January 13
St. Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church
1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
Mark 2:13-17

Sunday, January 14
1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10
1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
John 1:35-42



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