



TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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CNS/Bridgeman Images

The adoration of the shepherds is depicted in this 17th-century painting by Bartolome Esteban Murillo. The feast of the Nativity of Christ is celebrated Dec. 25.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At Christmas, we gaze anew upon the infant Jesus in the manger. With the shepherds we worship and adore Him who reveals to us God's great humility and love. God became man in the child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.

In the Nativity of Our Lord, we encounter the maternal love of Mary, the fidelity of Joseph, and the joy of the shepherds. With them, let us adore Jesus, the Son of God and our Redeemer, and bear witness in our lives to His humility and love!

I am remembering all the faithful of the diocese in my Masses and prayers during the holy season of Christmas. May God bless all of you with the amazement and joy of the shepherds at Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Kevin C. Rhoades

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

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Filipino community celebrates Simbang Gabi at St. Therese

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

"Mabuhay!" Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades urged a packed St. Therese, Little Flower Church, South Bend, on Gaudete Sunday. The word is Tagalog for "Rejoice," one of several phrases Bishop Rhoades used at the beginning of the 5:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday, Dec. 16. Linguistic coaching was provided by Father Enno Dengo, CP, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Notre Dame who has been eager to share his traditions and introduce the bishop to his countrymen.

"There's nothing exotic about the Mass itself," Father Dengo explained of the evening's liturgy. "What's special is the fervor with which we celebrate."

In the Philippines, Simbang Gabi is a novena; nine Masses taking place from Dec. 16 through Christmas Eve. They are traditionally celebrated at 4 a.m. to accommodate farmers who need to be in the fields by the break of dawn; in fact, "Simbang Gabi" means "Night Mass." An alternative name, in Spanish, is "Misa de Gallo" or "Mass of the Rooster."

In the 17th century the Church in the Philippines received a "rescript" or permission from the Vatican, to anticipate the celebration of Christmas in this way, using white vestments and singing "Christ is born" before the end of Advent — just for these pre-dawn novena Masses. Expatriates in the northern latitude usually compress the celebration into a single evening Mass, followed by a feast in the parish hall.

People of Philippine origin are active in several area parishes of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, but came together at Little Flower for this occasion — the fourth year they have done so. Many men wore embroidered shirts, and the women had colorful dresses with butterfly sleeves. Women in the enthusiastic choir directed by Mariflor Royeca wore gold-trimmed black dresses with large red corsages. Songs, readings and prayers alternated between English and Tagalog.

While he was studying in Rome 30 years ago, Bishop Rhoades was present at the canonization of Lorenzo Ruiz, the Philippines' first recognized saint. He said he also admires St. Pedro Calungsod, a missionary



Photos by Derby Photography

St. Therese, Little Flower Church, South Bend, was packed Dec. 16 for a traditional Simbang Gabi Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

catechist who was martyred as a teenager.

Underlining the Gaudete theme, Bishop Rhoades encouraged the faithful to journey with Mary and Joseph, and he pointed out that the angel's first word to Mary is better translated "Rejoice" than "Hail." He also quoted Pope Benedict XVI: "Joy is the true gift of Christmas" — and Pope Francis: "Don't be a sourpuss." Bishop Rhoades was pretty sure, he said, that that particular word hadn't appeared in an official Church document before the current pontiff.

The Simbang Gabi tradition expresses the joy of the Catholic faith and the joy of the Gospel, as we rejoice that the Lord is near, Bishop Rhoades told the worshippers during his homily. "We rejoice in the greatest gift we could ever receive, the gift of Jesus Christ as our Savior. Today, Gaudete Sunday, the Church invites us to rejoice. As Pope Benedict XVI once said: "Joy is the true gift of Christmas."

In the second reading of the day, St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, also saying, "Rejoice always." "Rejoice always! That is

the Christian invitation. Yet we know that with life's problems and challenges, it is not always easy to live in joy," the bishop said. "St. Paul gives us some tips on how to live in joy. He writes: 'Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks ...'. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. When we pray, when we are thankful, the Holy Spirit gives us joy.

"On this Gaudete Sunday, let us think about our lives and heed God's invitation to joy," he continued. "We're called, Pope Francis says, to be messengers of the joy of the Gospel. In the world, there is often a lack of joy. To be messengers of joy, we must first experience the joy of the Gospel in our own hearts. This means listening with faith and perseverance to the Word of God. It means allowing ourselves to experience the love of God and His consolation in our life. Only then can we bring that joy to others.

"The joy of Christmas, the joy of the Gospel, is meant for all. This is the joy we should mean when we say to others: 'Merry Christmas!' It is much more than a happy holiday. It is not something fleeting and transitory. It is the joy of God's amazing love, the joy of God who comes as a tiny infant lying in a manger. This is the joy of the Simbang Gabi celebration," the bishop concluded.

After Mass the worshippers not only enjoyed a "salo-salo," or "shared meal" featuring traditional foods, but extended their hospitality to others. Participants at the meal were shepherded into line by Virginia Coloma, who happened to be celebrating her 74th birthday. She has only been in the United States for six years, she said; but she seemed to know everyone in the room. She put the number of meal guests at 400.

Entertainment was provided by several groups: guests from LaPorte; a Youth for Life group associated with the Couples for Christ movement; and 11 tiny angels complete with wings and halos, who stole the show with their mime and movement to the song "Happy Birthday, Jesus." Dancers in a variety of colorful costumes performed traditional dances from several different islands, using poles parasols, fans, flower wreaths, scarves and baskets worn on their heads.



Young ladies perform a traditional dance following the Mass. A dinner and several forms of entertainment took place, all of which reflected the Filipino culture.

Holy Cross priest, founder of Rosary Crusade one step closer to sainthood

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis advanced the sainthood causes of Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton, CSC, and St. John Paul II's mentor, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.

The pope approved the decrees recognizing their heroic virtues during an audience Dec. 18 with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes.

The pope also recognized the miracles needed for the beatification of: Jesuit Father Tiburcio Arnaiz Munoz of Spain; Father Jean-Baptiste Fouque of France; and Sister Maria Carmen Rendiles Martinez of Venezuela. He also recognized the martyrdom of Father Teodoro Illera del Olmo, a member of the Congregation of St. Peter in Chains, and 15 companions, who were killed during the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and 1937.

Father Peyton, known worldwide as "The Rosary Priest," was a Catholic media pioneer in the 1940s, using radio and later television to produce popular programs featuring Hollywood stars and other celebrities to promote family prayer.

His ministry produced more than 600 radio and television programs and 10,000 broadcasts. The priest also conducted rosary crusades for millions of people in dozens of countries. He had two especially famous mottos: "The family that prays together stays together" and "A world at prayer is a world at peace."

Father Peyton emigrated from Ireland to the United States in 1928 when he was 19, with his heart set on becoming a millionaire after his dream of becoming a priest was thwarted when a seminary turned down his scholarship request.

He found a job as a sexton in the cathedral of Scranton, Pennsylvania, and he and his brother joined the seminary and were ordained in the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1941.

Father Peyton's first assignment was as chaplain in Albany, New York, where he launched a project to promote praying the rosary and family life. He had a special devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary after attributing his recovery from tuberculosis to her intercession.

He founded Holy Cross Family Ministries, which includes Family Rosary, Family Theater Productions, Father Peyton Family Institute and Family Rosary International.

Father Peyton died in 1992. After the pope's decree recognizing his heroic virtues, in general, a miracle is needed for his beatification and a second one for his canonization.



CNS photo/Family Theater Product
Pope Francis advanced the sainthood cause of Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton. Father Peyton is pictured in an undated photo.

Cardinal Wyszyński was primate of Poland from 1949 until his death from cancer in 1981. He was Poland's youngest bishop when he was installed as archbishop of Warsaw and Gniezno during the imposition of communist rule.

Despite Vatican misgivings, Cardinal Wyszyński signed the first Church accord in 1950 with a communist government, which promised the Church protection in return for encouraging "respect for state authorities."

Although the accord was quickly violated, he defended the intentions behind it in posthumously published diaries, compiled while he was imprisoned without formal charges from 1953 to 1956 by Poland's ruling communists.

"I was of the opinion the modern world needed the martyrdom of work, not of blood," the cardinal wrote.

"It seemed possible, as well as indispensable, to establish several points in a 'modus vivendi' if the Church was to avoid a new — perhaps accelerated and drastic — annihilation," he wrote.

In later years, Cardinal Wyszyński vigorously defended human rights and reminded Vatican diplomats they should secure local religious freedoms

before signing top-level international agreements.

Acknowledged by Poland's ex-communists and anti-communists as one of their country's greatest modern leaders, Cardinal Wyszyński was credited by former President Lech Walesa with laying the groundwork for the rise of the Polish trade union, Solidarity, and the eventual fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

Among his proteges was the future St. John Paul II. When then-Father Karol Wojtyła was appointed auxiliary bishop of Krakow, the cardinal presented him to a group of priests, saying "Habemus papam" ("We have a pope").

"In the light of later events, one could say those were prophetic words," the pope wrote.

Cardinal Wyszyński also told him at the 1978 conclave, "If they elect you, do not refuse it."

The newly elected Pope John Paul told the cardinal there would have been "no Polish pope" without his "faith, heroic hope and limitless confidence in the Mother of God."

Among the other decrees Dec. 18, Pope Francis recognized the heroic virtues of three priests, three religious women and one Italian laywoman.



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Sunday, December 24: 10:30 a.m. — TV Mass, WFFT, Fort Wayne
 Sunday, December 24: 5:00 p.m. — Vespers with Franciscan Friars Minor and Poor Sisters of Saint Clare, St. Andrew Church, Fort Wayne
 Sunday, December 24: 10:30 p.m. — Christmas Eve Mass, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
 Saturday, December 30: 5 p.m. — Mass, St. Joseph Church, Lancaster, PA
 Sunday, December 31: 6:30 p.m. — Mass, Our Lady of Consolation Church, Parkesburg, PA
 Thursday, January 4: 9 a.m. — Mass, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Fort Wayne
 Thursday, January 4: 6:30 p.m. — Vespers with Knights of Columbus and Franciscan Friars Minor, St. Andrew Church, Fort Wayne
 Friday, January 5: 9 a.m. — Mass and Pastoral Visit, St. Joseph School, Decatur

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CHOOSE ONE

- SATURDAY VIGIL MASS
- SUNDAY MASS
- CHRISTMAS EVE VIGIL

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- CHRISTMAS EVE VIGIL
- MIDNIGHT MASS
- CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

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The weary world rejoices: Nativity scenes bring joy to hardened hearts

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square is not getting rave reviews: The backdrop does not look like a stable and the characters in need — hungry, naked, dead, imprisoned — don't exactly evoke a silent night when all was cozy, calm and bright.

Franciscan Father John Puodziunas said he didn't like it at first.

In addition to Mary and Joseph — baby Jesus will appear only on Christmas — the scene includes figures of people who illustrate the ongoing need for the corporal works of mercy, including feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, burying the dead, caring for the sick and visiting those in prison.

As Father Puodziunas, a friar from Philadelphia who is now general treasurer of the Order of Friars Minor, stood in St. Peter's Square, he said he realized "this really captures what I believe the Nativity set is about. It's about 'Where am I today? Where is the world today? Where is the Church today?'"

The Vatican display, he said, "brings the manger scene into our present world reality to remind us that this is a God who continues to step into our world. It isn't just something that happened 2,000 years ago."

According to legend, it was St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of Father Puodziunas' order, who invented the Nativity scene in 1223 by bringing straw, an ox and an ass to the side of a



CNS photo/Junno Arocho Esteves

Life-size statues depict the corporal work of mercy of visiting the sick in the Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Dec. 14.

hill where Christmas Mass was about to be celebrated.

Father Puodziunas conceded Nativity scenes may have been around before St. Francis brought one to life in Greccio, Italy, but the Franciscan is certain the friars were responsible for spreading the tradition and bringing it into people's homes.

"Why did St. Francis do the crib scene on the side of the mountain? Because the people were not able to receive the child

into their lives," he said. Back then, like today, the obstacles may have been "busyness or anger or war or the past or concerns."

But by bringing the people of Greccio to the manger, he said, St. Francis hoped they would be able to experience again the power and awe of God taking human flesh, becoming one of them and then offering his life for them.

"The whole idea of the

crèche speaks to so many feelings and emotions we have," Father Puodziunas said. "The child, manger, animals, night, outdoors, emptiness" — they all communicate feelings that endure through time and can be recreated anywhere.

St. Francis, he said, was focused on "the crèche and the cross. The wood of the manger becomes the wood of the cross. This Christ that steps into a messy world — whether at the time of Christ, the time of St. Francis or our own time — is the same Christ that takes us to the cross and is the source of our salvation."

While there probably was a catechetical element to St. Francis' crèche, Father Puodziunas believes it was more spiritual and experiential than

education. "It was about making the story of Christ come alive in their lives. ... This child steps into the world we have today, into our own lives, not as a child, but as a savior."

The scene also is a reminder of humanity's poverty, not in the sense of things that people do not have, but in the sense that there is a void in everyone that only God can fill, he said. "Love, peace, mercy, freedom, joy — these are the real poverties of the world" and the gifts that the Christ child brings.

St. Francis believed that "we're not all that bad," but that God steps into the world to offer more, he said.

"As pretty as our manger sets are," he said, "the reality is that that first manger wasn't a pretty sight and that the world that this child steps into isn't always pretty. And yet, this child chooses to step into this world."

The inclusion of animals in a Nativity scene not only helps illustrate Jesus' birth in a stable, he said. "Clearly, the Incarnation touches all of creation" and "all things are created for the purpose of praising God."

But, he said, "we are not a 'Hallmark Christmas' people," life gets messy, but in the Gospel Jesus talks about the truth being revealed to the smallest children.

As they "grow up," Father Puodziunas said, many people build walls and other obstacles to experiencing God's love for them and to seeing how God is stepping into their lives.

When he was in parish ministry, he said, he would bring the little children up to the Nativity scene and tell them there was something they must tell their parents and older siblings "because they forget," and that is: "Jesus is born." And after Mass, he would tell them, "You need to bring them up to the manger scene."

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Dr. Andrew J. Mullally, MD

St. Vincent de Paul Society, Goodwill announce alliance

SOUTH BEND — The St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County Inc., and Goodwill Industries of Michiana Inc., announced Dec. 12 that the two nonprofit organizations will form a strategic alliance for their clothing and furniture program.

St. Vincent de Paul will close its thrift store locations on Dec. 23, and in the future will provide vouchers to families in need that can be redeemed at any Goodwill Store in St. Joseph and Elkhart counties.

SVDP has operated thrift stores in St. Joseph County since the 1960s to support its material giveaway program and provide financial support to other St. Vincent de Paul programs. However, over the last 10 years, the current store model has become unsustainable. The increase in lower-cost retailers entering the community has provided customers who shop regularly at SVDP stores the opportunity to find new goods at similar prices elsewhere. With the advent of online retail sites such as eBay, Craigslist and other online garage sale sites, many donations that the St. Vincent de Paul Society would have normally received are being sold on the secondary market.

Anne Watson, executive director of St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County, said, "The alliance with Goodwill empowers the society

to focus on the core of our mission — providing emergency help to those in need. The society will continue to provide food and financial assistance, and in partnership with Goodwill, will also continue to provide material goods to those in need."

St. Vincent de Paul focuses on survival, stability and support programs such as its food pantry, clothing certificates, financial assistance, Bridges out of Poverty and other programs. Goodwill focuses on self-sufficiency programs aimed to help create job readiness.

"As we continue to move forward, it is exciting to work more closely with St. Vincent de Paul. When both organizations focus on their strengths, we become better for our community," said Debie Coble, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries of Michiana Inc. "Together, we will be able to provide our neediest citizens with emergency services to self-sufficiency. It is an exciting opportunity."

As part of the strategic alliance with Goodwill, all SVDP employees displaced by the closing of the thrift stores will be offered an equivalent position by Goodwill.

The last day of retail sales at St. Vincent de Paul thrift stores at 1827 N. Bendix Dr. and 2302 South Bend Ave. in South Bend will be Dec. 23. Special sales of fixtures and equipment

will be announced after that date.

All material goods be donated to local Goodwill stores. Donations of food may be dropped off at the St. Vincent de Paul Center at 520 Crescent Ave. in South Bend, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Established in 1904, the St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County Inc. is a Catholic lay organization that engages people to join together to provide for the emergency needs of those experiencing poverty and to empower those they serve to attain self-sufficiency. St. Vincent de Paul provides help in the form of food, financial assistance, furniture and clothing and offers three educational courses to promote self-sufficiency. To learn more visit svdpsb.org, email svdpsborg@gmail.com, like St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County Indiana on Facebook or follow "SVDPSB" on Twitter.

Goodwill Industries of Michiana Inc. began in 1936 providing services to individuals who are looking to move to self-sufficiency. Its mission is to strengthen local communities by empowering individuals and families through education, job training and placement. For more information, visit Goodwill Industries of Michiana Inc., at www.goodwill-ni.org.



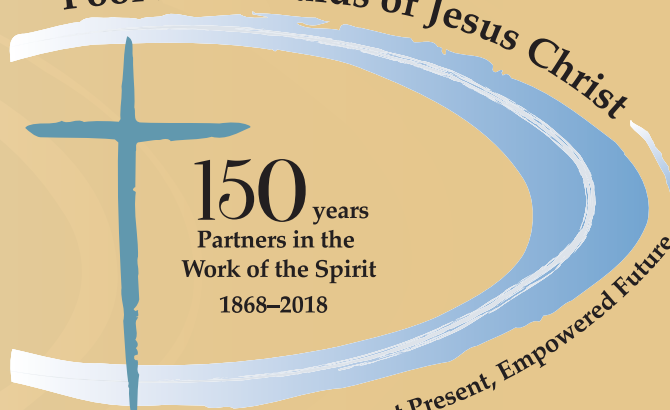
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Bishop Siegel arrives in Evansville seeking to listen, learn

BY TIM LILLEY

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (CNS) — Bishop Joseph M. Siegel, the sixth bishop of Evansville, 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 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 from Pope Francis, which was



Priests of the Diocese of Evansville, Ind., applaud Bishop Joseph M. Siegel following his installation Mass Dec. 15 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville. Bishop Siegel became the sixth bishop of the diocese.

CNS photo/Peewee Vasquez, The Message

announced 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 nearby St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, 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, Illinois, and was raised on a farm in Lockport Township, Illinois. He is the youngest of nine children. Ordained a priest for the Joliet Diocese March 4, 1988, Bishop Siegel was appointed auxiliary bishop in 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI. He served as vicar general under Bishop

R. Daniel Conlon of Joliet until his appointment to head the Evansville Diocese.

More than 20 bishops celebrated 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 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 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."

Tim Lilley is editor of The Message, newspaper of the Diocese of Evansville.

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Author shares stories from meals with St. John Paul II

BY CINDY WOODEN

ROME (CNS) — For some 25 years as pope, St. John Paul II would invite people to his table each day — sharing breakfast, lunch, dinner and conversation with a wide variety of cardinals, bishops, theologians, writers and friends.

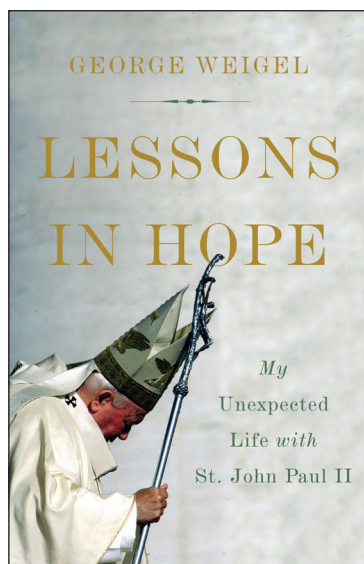
George Weigel, the author and scholar, was one of those guests on dozens of occasions and it was over a meal that he asked Pope John Paul the questions that form the core of "Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II," published in 1999. The meals and conversations continued, providing information for the sequel, "The End and the Beginning: Pope John Paul II — The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy," published in 2010.

His last dinner with St. John Paul II was Dec. 15, 2004.

Now, Weigel is sharing the mood, anecdotes and reflections on the table talk in the more personal "Lessons in Hope: My Unexpected Life with St. John Paul II."

"What people really wanted was not more heavily footnoted, annotated scholarly biography," Weigel said. "What people wanted were stories, stories that would make him come alive again."

Interviewed in Rome Dec. 12, Weigel said he decided "to tell the story of our conversations," which took place over a dozen



CNS photo courtesy of George Weigel
In his book "Lessons in Hope: My Unexpected Life with St. John Paul II," George Weigel recounts the story of and anecdotes from his mealtime conversations with St. John Paul II.

years. But for that to make sense, he said, he also had to write about events and experiences in his life that prepared him to understand the history, philosophy and theology discussed around the table.

Of course, he said, the conversations also included both lighter moments and personal ones, such as when Pope John Paul asked how Weigel's mother was doing after his father died.

Sharing a meal and a table was important to Pope John Paul, Weigel said, because he "under-

stood that a pope who relies only on the official channels of information — nuncios, Curia, bishops' conferences — is not going to get all the information he needs because that information is being filtered bureaucratically."

"The table rather than the desk was his favorite point of encounter," the author said.

The conversations gave the pope different points of view on the situation of the Church, on issues of theology and on political and social realities around the world, Weigel said.

Then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, once told Weigel that "major documents and audience themes would be hashed out over lunches in the papal apartments."

But, he said, at the same time, friendships were very important to him and he made sure to nourish them at the dinner table.

Pope John Paul would ask his guests their opinions about books, films, world leaders and political situations. "He was the most insatiably curious man I have ever met," Weigel said. "He always wanted to know what was happening."

The pope's curiosity, he said, was less a "tic" than a sign that "he really did believe in the providential guidance of history," which meant he needed to stay informed "in order to find the providential footprints."

Conscientious Christmas Cafe



Provided by Lisa Kochanowski

The Saint Joseph High School Social and Ecological Concerns Organization and Future Business Leaders of America club united in December for a Conscientious Christmas Cafe. Guests were invited to shop for Christmas presents while learning about the benefits of shopping locally. Organizer, junior Emily Smith, above, said the event was a celebration of ethically made products while promoting a fair Christmas for everyone.



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Bishops condemn selling of Nigerians into slavery in Libya

LAGOS, Nigeria (CNS) — A trio of Nigerian bishops condemned the enslavement of Nigerians who traveled to Libya for work, calling the practice a horrific abuse of human dignity. Bishop Joseph Bagobiri of Kafanchan, retired Archbishop Alaba Job of Ibadan and retired Bishop Julius Adalakun of Oyo called on the Nigerian government to act on behalf of Nigerian nationals in Libya and elsewhere who have been victimized by modern-day slave traders. They also suggested the government discourage Nigerians from traveling to other countries for work because of dangers posed by the illicit labor market. Their comments came after Nigerian officials had repatriated 3,000 Nigerians from Libya through Dec. 4 following reports of inhumane treatment in the North Africa nation. Bishop Bagobiri expressed concern that Nigerians were willing to pay as much as \$1,400 to travel to Libya and other countries to seek “greener pastures.”

Press must be factual, free from manipulation, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — People need factual and trustworthy news that avoids sensationalism and whipping up heated reactions, Pope Francis said. It is important the press not be “constantly at the mercy of easy slogans or improvised information campaigns, which show the intention of manipulating reality, opinions and people themselves, often creating worthless ‘media dust storms,’” he told members of the press. “Your voice — free and responsible — is fundamental for the growth of any society that wishes to call itself a democracy, so that the continuous exchange of ideas and a fruitful debate based on real and correctly reported information may be guaranteed,” he said. The pope spoke Dec. 16 with members of the Italian Periodical Press Union and members of the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies, which represents nearly 200 Catholic newspapers. He praised in particular the value, necessity and effectiveness of diocesan weeklies, which he said require “a renewed commitment” from priests and the whole church community, and “kind attention from public authorities.”

Chaplain says 40 years with Badgers ‘a wonderful experience’

MADISON, Wis. (CNS) — When the Wisconsin Badgers’ football team travels to the Orange Bowl to play Miami Dec. 30, the players will take a 12-1 record with them — one of the best in team

NEWS BRIEFS

Vietnamese Auxiliary Bishop Dominic Mai Luong dies



CNS photo/Peter Finney Jr., Clarion Herald

Auxiliary Bishop Dominic Mai Luong of Orange, Calif., is pictured in 2003 being greeted by a congregant in Orange. The first U.S. Catholic bishop of Vietnamese descent, he died in Orange Dec. 6 at age 76. He was the founding father of the Vietnamese Catholic community in the Archdiocese of New Orleans and had been an auxiliary bishop for Orange since 2003. Then-Father Luong established the parish of Mary Queen of Vietnam Parish in New Orleans East for the thousands of Vietnamese refugees who had fled their country. “When the Vietnamese community came to New Orleans in the mid-1970s, he was in many ways their priest,” New Orleans Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond acknowledged.

Pope Francis celebrates 81st birthday with children, pizza



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano

history. Accompanying them will be Msgr. Michael Burke — better known as “Father Mike” to the coaches and players. He has been the team’s chaplain for 40 years. He began working with the team when he was on the faculty of Madison’s Holy Name Seminary. The Badgers used the seminary fields and facilities for their summer training camp for many years. Msgr. Burke was a faculty member, rector, and vocation director during the years from 1977 until the closing of the seminary in 1995. He remembers the training camps well. “The team was usually at the seminary for over three weeks,” he recalled in an interview with the *Catholic Herald*, newspaper of the Diocese of Madison. “They were locked in and had to stay there the entire time. They certainly got focused, since there were no distractions.”

Natural disasters prompt church to raise millions for aid

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In Puerto Rico, Texas, Florida, California and Mexico City, recovery was slow and deep pain remained from a string of natural disasters as 2017 ended. Hurricanes, wildfires and earthquakes from August through December caused widespread destruction and claimed hundreds of lives. Rebuilding in the affected areas will take years to complete. Catholic agencies responded with emergency aid and undertook fundraising campaigns to help people of different walks of life who lost homes and livelihoods. The USCCB collected \$38.5 million for hurricane relief and another \$1.3 million for Mexican earthquake relief. Catholic Charities USA raised \$24 million for disaster assistance. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul also was on the scene in various locales coordinating its response through parish and diocesan councils.

Pope Francis blows out a candle on a 13-foot-long pizza during a celebration for his 81st birthday Dec. 17 at the Vatican’s Paul VI hall. A group of children receiving assistance from the Vatican’s St. Martha Dispensary, a maternal and pediatric clinic, had given the pope a cake adorned with gold and white fondant decorations. They also rolled out a large pizza with a single lit candle on it. “Eat the 4-meter pizza: Eat well, it will do you good and make you grow,” the pope told the children.

Young adults: Hike the Camino de Santiago

SOUTH BEND — A trip to Spain to hike the Camino de Santiago is being organized for young adults in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

The diocese is teaming up with Verso Ministries for the pilgrimage, which is geared for those who are in their 20s and 30s. It will take place from Saturday, June 16, through Sunday, June 24, 2018.

The Camino is a popular walking pilgrimage route in northern Spain that ends at the cathedral in the city of Santiago de Compostela. The main destination is the tomb of the apostle St. James, who is buried in the cathedral. For centuries, pilgrims have traveled this route in search of forgiveness, healing and answers to any number of other prayers. Each day on the Camino consists of about 12-16 miles of hiking and pilgrims will stay in family-run hostels along the way, making it a true pilgrimage experience.

For more information visit www.diocesefwsb.org/yam-pilgrimages, like South Bend Area Catholic Young Adults on Facebook or follow @FWSBYoungadults on Twitter.

Retreat path leads from Genesis to Jesus

DONALDSON — Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center offers "A Journey Through Scripture from Genesis to Jesus," a seven-part series that begins

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Young Vincentians attend annual Mass, dinner



Provided by Anne Hosinski Watson

A group of Young Vincentians from St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend, attended the annual Mass and dinner offered Nov. 28 by the St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, who celebrated the Mass, and leaders of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County are pictured with the youths. Young Vincentians seek to grow closer to God by service to others; they participate spiritually through prayer as well as by assisting with St. Vincent de Paul projects.

Jan. 8 and continues Jan. 15, 22 and 29, and Feb. 6, 13 and 20. The cost for the series is \$120, which includes lunch each day, refreshments and materials. This series is led by Christopher Thelen, director of Lindenwood, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. EST.

Register for this series by Jan. 1. For more information, visit www.lindenwood.org; email lindenwood@poorhandmaids.org; or call 574-935-1780.

Artistic retreat and studies on Merton

HUNTINGTON — Victory Noll Center is offering a retreat: "Co-creating with God: Living and Praying with Imagination and Joy," will explore the creative gifts God offers us. Participants are invited to co-create through art, poetry, and crafts to restore hope and joy.

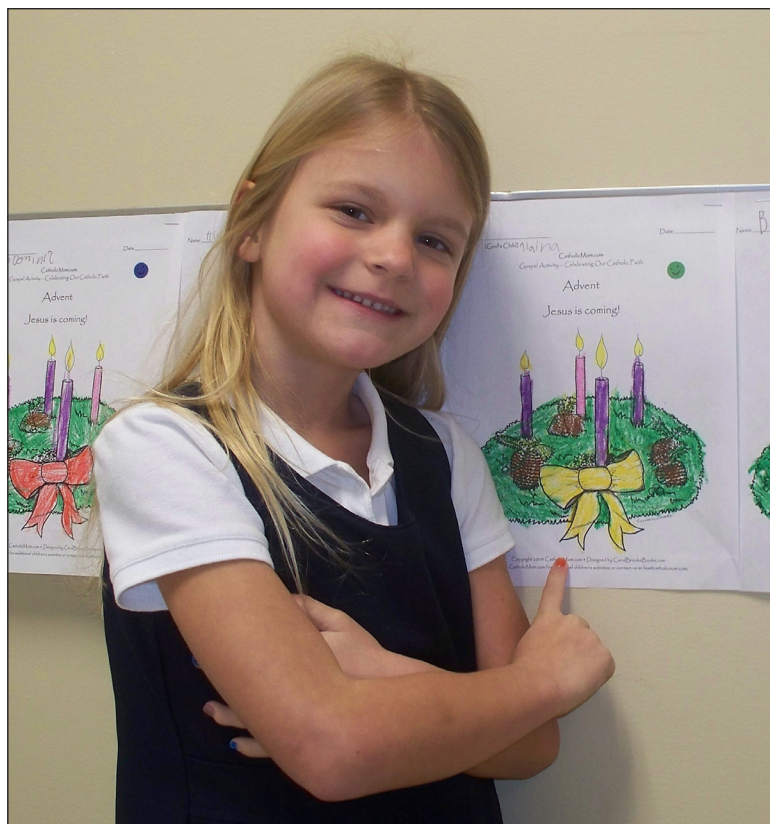
This retreat will begin 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 26 and continue through 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 27. Participants are welcome to bring supplies, although some art supplies will be available. There is a cost to attend the retreat.

Two series are also being offered: "Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton," books 2 and 6, will begin in February.

The retreat and the studies will be facilitated by Sue Wilhelm, executive director of Victory Noll Center.

Victory Noll Center is located at 1900 W. Park Drive in Huntington. For more information call 260-200-1740, email info@victorynollcenter.org or visit www.victorynollcenter.org.

Lighting the way in Advent



Provided by Stephen Donndelinger

First-grade student Alaina Stammich points out the Advent wreath she colored at St. Jude School, South Bend, as part of her classroom's study of the liturgical season. Catholics' preparation for the birth of the Savior ends Dec. 25, when the Savior is born and the Octave of Christmas begins.

Student Council members spread cheer



Provided by Sara Lake

St. Mary of the Assumption, Avilla, Student Council members and friends braved the wind and cold to support the Salvation Army in Noble County in early December. They rang bells and spread some holiday cheer, all in the spirit of helping others in their community.

Migrants and refugees: men and women

BY POPE FRANCIS

The following is a message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the celebration of the 51st world day of peace, Jan. 1, 2018.

HEARTFELT GOOD WISHES FOR PEACE

Peace to all people and to all nations on earth! Peace, which the angels proclaimed to the shepherds on Christmas night, [1] is a profound aspiration for everyone, for each individual and all peoples, and especially for those who most keenly suffer its absence. Among these whom I constantly keep in my thoughts and prayers, I would once again mention the over 250 million migrants worldwide, of whom 22.5 million are refugees. Pope Benedict XVI, my beloved predecessor, spoke of them as “men and women, children, young and elderly people, who are searching for somewhere to live in peace.” [2] In order to find that peace, they are willing to risk their lives on a journey that is often long and perilous, to endure hardships and suffering, and to encounter fences and walls built to keep them far from their goal.

In a spirit of compassion, let us embrace all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands.

We know that it is not enough to open our hearts to the suffering of others. Much more remains to be done before our brothers and sisters can once again live peacefully in a safe home. Welcoming others requires concrete commitment, a network of assistance and goodwill, vigilant and sympathetic attention, the responsible management of new and complex situations that at times compound numerous existing problems, to say nothing of resources, which are always limited. By practicing the virtue of prudence, government leaders should take practical measures to welcome, promote, protect, integrate and, “within the limits allowed by a correct understanding of the common good, to permit [them] to become part of a new society.” [3] Leaders have a clear responsibility towards their own communities, whose legitimate rights and harmonious development they must ensure, lest they become like the rash builder who miscalculated and failed to complete the tower he had begun to construct. [4]

WHY SO MANY REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS?

As he looked to the Great Jubilee marking the passage of two thousand years since the proclamation of peace by the angels in Bethlehem, Saint John Paul II pointed to the increased numbers of displaced persons as one of the consequences of the “endless and horrifying sequence of wars, conflicts, genocides and ethnic cleansings” [5] that had characterized the twentieth century. To this date, the new century has registered no real breakthrough: armed conflicts and other forms of organized violence continue to trigger the movement of peoples within national borders and beyond.

Yet people migrate for other reasons as well, principally because they “desire a better life, and not infrequently try to leave behind the ‘hopelessness’ of an unpromising future.” [6] They set out to join their families or to seek professional or educational opportunities, for those who cannot enjoy these rights do not live in peace. Furthermore, as I noted in the Encyclical *‘Laudato Si’*, there has been “a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation”. [7]

Most people migrate through regular channels. Some, however, take different routes, mainly out of despera-



CNS photo/Hannah McKay, EPA

A boy holds a sign during a children's refugee protest in 2016 in London. Build peace by welcoming migrants and refugees, Pope Francis said in his message for World Peace Day 2018.

tion, when their own countries offer neither safety nor opportunity, and every legal pathway appears impractical, blocked or too slow.

Many destination countries have seen the spread of rhetoric decrying the risks posed to national security or the high cost of welcoming new arrivals, and thus demeaning the human dignity due to all as sons and daughters of God. Those who, for what may be political reasons, foment fear of migrants instead of building peace are sowing violence, racial discrimination and xenophobia, which are matters of great concern for all those concerned for the safety of every human being. [8]

All indicators available to the international community suggest that global migration will continue for the future. Some consider this a threat. For my part, I ask you to view it with confidence as an opportunity to build peace.



CNS photo/Paul Jeffrey

A woman waits with her child in an outreach clinic in the Rhino Refugee Camp in Uganda May 3. Uganda is housing 1 million refugees from South Sudan.

WITH A CONTEMPLATIVE GAZE

The wisdom of faith fosters a contemplative gaze that recognizes that all of us “belong to one family, migrants and the local populations that welcome them, and all have the same right to enjoy the goods of the earth, whose destination is universal, as the social doctrine of the Church teaches. It is here that solidarity and sharing are founded.” [9] These words evoke the biblical image of the new Jerusalem. The book of the prophet Isaiah (chapter 60) and that of Revelation (chapter 21) describe the city with its gates always open to people of every nation, who marvel at it and fill it with riches. Peace is the sovereign that guides it and justice the principle that governs coexistence within it.

We must also turn this contemplative gaze to the cities where we live, “a gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their houses, in their streets and squares, [...] fostering solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth and justice” [10] – in other words, fulfilling the promise of peace.

When we turn that gaze to migrants and refugees,



CNS photo/Damir Sagolj, Reuters

A young Rohingya refugee carries a child Oct. 10 while walking in a camp near Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Pope Francis, who visited Bangladesh Nov. 30-Dec. 2, has appealed for their protection of the Rohingya on several occasions, calling them “our brothers and sisters.”

we discover that they do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their courage, skills, energy and aspirations, as well as the treasures of their own cultures; and in this way, they enrich the lives of the nations that receive them. We also come to see the creativity, tenacity and spirit of sacrifice of the countless individuals, families and communities around the world who open their doors and hearts to migrants and refugees, even where resources are scarce.

A contemplative gaze should also guide the discernment of those responsible for the public good, and encourage them to pursue policies of welcome, “within the limits allowed by a correct understanding of the common good” [11] – bearing in mind, that is, the needs of all members of the human family and the welfare of each.

Those who see things in this way will be able to recognize the seeds of peace that are already sprouting and nurture their growth. Our cities, often divided and polarized by conflicts regarding the presence of migrants and refugees, will thus turn into workshops of peace.

[1] Luke 2:14.

[2] Angelus, 15 January 2012.

[3] JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, 106.

[4] Luke 14:28-30.

[5] *Message for the 2000 World Day of Peace*, 3.

[6] BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 2013 World Day of Migrants and Refugees*.

[7] No. 25.

[8] Cf. *Address to the National Directors of Pastoral*

Care for Migrants of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Europe, 22 September 2017.

[9] BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 2011 World Day of Migrants and Refugees*.

[10] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 71.

[11] JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, 106.

[12] *Message for the 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees*.

[13] Hebrews 13:2.

[14] Psalm 146:9.

[15] Deuteronomy 10:18-19.

[16] Ephesians 2:19.

[17] “20 Pastoral Action Points” and “20 Action Points for the Global Compacts”, Migrants and Refugees Section, Rome, 2017. See also Document UN A/72/528.

[18] *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2004*, 6.

[19] James 3:18.

in search of peace



CNS photo/Nikos Arvanitdis, pool via EPA

A volunteer from a humanitarian organization embraces refugee children in 2016 at a makeshift camp in near Idomeni, Greece.

FOUR MILEPOSTS FOR ACTION

Offering asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and victims of human trafficking an opportunity to find the peace they seek requires a strategy combining four actions: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating. [12]

“Welcoming” calls for expanding legal pathways for entry and no longer pushing migrants and displaced people towards countries where they face persecution and violence. It also demands balancing our concerns about national security with concern for fundamental human rights. Scripture reminds us: “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” [13]

“Protecting” has to do with our duty to recognize and defend the inviolable dignity of those who flee real dangers in search of asylum and security, and to prevent their being exploited. I think in particular of women and children who find themselves in situations that



CNS photo/courtesy CISOM

Volunteers of the Order of Malta's Italian Relief Corps provide assistance to an infant rescued in the Mediterranean Sea.

expose them to risks and abuses that can even amount to enslavement. God does not discriminate: “The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the orphan and the widow.” [14]

“Promoting” entails supporting the integral human development of migrants and refugees. Among many possible means of doing so, I would stress the importance of ensuring access to all levels of education for children and young people. This will enable them not only to cultivate and realize their potential, but also better equip them to encounter others and to foster a

spirit of dialogue rather than rejection or confrontation. The Bible teaches that God “loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.” [15]

“Integrating”, lastly, means allowing refugees and migrants to participate fully in the life of the society that welcomes them, as part of a process of mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation in service of the integral human development of the local community. Saint Paul expresses it in these words: “You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people.” [16]

A PROPOSAL FOR TWO INTERNATIONAL COMPACTS

It is my heartfelt hope this spirit will guide the process that in the course of 2018 will lead the United Nations to draft and approve two Global Compacts, one for safe, orderly and regular migration and the other for refugees. As shared agreements at a global level, these compacts will provide a framework for policy proposals and practical measures. For this reason, they need to be inspired by compassion, foresight and courage, so as to take advantage of every opportunity to advance the peace-building process. Only in this way can the realism required of international politics avoid surrendering to cynicism and to the globalization of indifference.

Dialogue and coordination are a necessity and a specific duty for the international community. Beyond national borders, higher numbers of refugees may be welcomed – or better welcomed – also by less wealthy countries, if international cooperation guarantees them the necessary funding.

The Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has published a set of twenty action points that provide concrete leads for implementing these four verbs in public policy and in the attitudes and activities of Christian communities. [17] The aim of this and other contributions is to express the interest of the Catholic Church in the process leading to the adoption of the two U.N. Global Compacts. This interest is the sign of a more general pastoral concern that goes back to the very origins of the Church and has continued in her many works up to the present time.

FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Let us draw inspiration from the words of Saint John Paul II: “If the ‘dream’ of a peaceful world is shared by all, if the refugees’ and migrants’ contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true ‘common home’.” [18] Throughout history, many have believed in this “dream”, and their achievements are a testament to the fact that it is no mere **utopia**.

Among these, we remember Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini in this year that marks the hundredth anniversary of her death. On this thirteenth day of November, many ecclesial communities celebrate her memory. This remarkable woman, who devoted her life to the service of migrants and became their patron saint, taught us to welcome, protect, promote and integrate our brothers and sisters. Through her intercession, may the Lord enable all of us to experience that “a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” [19]

*From the Vatican, 13 November 2017
Memorial of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini,
Patroness of Migrants*

FRANCIS

Distressed crèche restored at St. Charles Borromeo

BY BARB SIEMINSKI

The healing hands of a carpenter and a restorer have taken a broken, tattered crèche at St. Charles Borromeo Church, Fort Wayne, and made it whole again — taken it from the ashes of a fire so it can retell the old, old story of a stall in Bethlehem.

The church, founded in 1957, displayed an original Nativity scene on Christmas Eve 1958 at its first midnight Mass. The crèche was created with vibrantly-colored ceramic figurines, a wooden stable and greenery. In 1963 a fire rushed through the parish, damaging the crèche; but Father Edward I. Hession (later Msgr. Hession) had the figurines painted gold in time to celebrate Christmas 1964 with them on display. The figures continued to be used for 11 more years.

A new church was built, and the first Mass was celebrated on Christmas Eve 1975. However, the old gold figurines were put away in storage, because a new Nativity display was constructed for the modern church.

About 20 years ago the old statues were brought out of storage, badly in need of repairs. Parishioner Ken Toki made the repairs, fixing chips and broken pieces and then painting them a terra cotta color. While the new Nativity figures retained their place of honor in the front of the church, the historic ones were exhibited at the back of the church.

"Unfortunately, they were displayed at floor level," said parish pastor Father Tom Shoemaker, "where eventually a young child knocked over several figures.



Joe Romie

Father Tom Shoemaker, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Fort Wayne, stands with the parish crèche he helped restore. The figures were first displayed in the original St. Charles Church, right, in 1958. Damaged by fire, they were salvaged but fell into disuse; Father Shoemaker and restoration artist Bridgett Santiago reconstructed them for display this year. More photos of the crèche are available at www.todayscatholic.org.

Mary and Joseph were broken in many pieces, which necessitated another trip to storage."

In light of the parish's 60th anniversary this year, it was decided to bring back the historic figurines again and put them to use while creating a Nativity scene worthy of display in the church.

Father Shoemaker used his woodworking, painting and crafting skills to bring the burned and smoke-stained Nativity figurines back to life. Bridgett Santiago, a Fort Wayne restoration artist, was commissioned to restore the broken statues.

"The most challenging repair was to the St. Joseph figure,"

said Santiago. "St. Joseph was smashed into almost 100 pieces. I had to put it together like a puzzle and fill it upside down with plaster because it was hollow and the opening was at the bottom, so as it was repaired I filled it with plaster. That statue alone took a few months to completely restore it."

The other pieces of the Nativity set were chipped, and some of the broken lambs were shattered pretty badly, she said.

"All the items needed to be painted the same terra cotta color and then sprayed with Clear Coat to protect the finish," explained Santiago.



Theresa Lolmaugh, St. Matthew Cathedral —

Catholic school teachers shine the 'Light of Learning'

BY JENNIFER MILLER

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend celebrates its outstanding educators each year by announcing "Light of Learning" award recipients. The award goes to an educator at each diocesan Catholic school whose skills as an educator and catechist are deemed outstanding by his or her peers and by school parents. The nominees will be recognized at a banquet during Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 28-29-Feb. 2.

Among this year's nominees is Theresa Lolmaugh from St. Matthew Cathedral School, South Bend.

Walking into Theresa Lolmaugh's classroom, the students are on task and learning together as a community — as any master educator would have them be. But they also are enjoying themselves and having fun. They clearly respect each other and their teacher, and there is a presence of deeper friendship and faith.

Lolmaugh has taught at St.

Matthew Cathedral School in South Bend for the past 41 years. Her fellow teachers say of her things like, "Theresa is a beautiful example of Christ the Teacher for all of her students. She models the love and compassion of Jesus while still calling her students to excel in and out of the classroom. With new technology and science curriculum, Theresa has learned how to adjust to new concepts of work with her students in a whole new way."

Lolmaugh works incessantly to build the kingdom of God here and now, particularly through work with the Young Vincentians. Her work seems to positively affect the community throughout the year, with food donations for the food pantry and hygiene and clothing for the poor, said one teacher. "Her giving spirit truly inspires students through out the school, not just those in her class."

Married with two daughters, Lolmaugh holds a B.S. in elementary education and a M.S. in elementary education with a



Jennifer Miller

Theresa Lolmaugh works with a third-grade student at St. Matthew Cathedral School, South Bend.

minor in science. She has taught third through sixth grades and first grade, all at St. Matthew.

"A lot has changed over the years, but there is one constant factor that keeps me coming back for so many years: the students. I love watching them grow in wisdom, knowledge and grace during the year as third graders. The faculty and staff also make it a great place to teach. I would not want to teach anywhere else," she said.

Lolmaugh felt called to be a Catholic school educator in the seventh or eighth grade, so that she could share her faith with her students. She attended Saint Joseph High School in South Bend.

Her classroom is "a great Catholic setting, where her students learn and grow during an especially tough transition year for children," said principal Sister Gianna Marie Webber. "Mrs. Lolmaugh's consistency and high expectations are steadfast, always with the growth of her children at heart."

What is your New Year's resolution?

FORT WAYNE — It will soon be New Year's Eve, the time of year when many people give thought to adopting a New Year's resolution.

The practice of making a New Year's resolution can also be applied to one's spiritual life. The approaching new year on the calendar, much like the start of the new Church year, is an opportunity to reflect on the previous year and make plans to do at least one small thing differently in the next.

Several clergy and employees of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend were asked what New Year's resolution they planned to make that would help them grow closer to Christ in 2018, and what their advice would be to others who wish to endeavor toward the same end.

Msgr. William Schooler, pastor, St. Pius X Parish, Granger:



My New Year's resolution is to take more time in prayer, especially not to rush through praying the Liturgy of the Hours.

Recommendation: If you want to deepen your prayer life, try praying some of the hours of the Breviary. There is a free app: iBreviary.

Rob Sordelet, principal, St. Charles Borromeo School, Fort Wayne:



The one spiritual New Year's resolution I am planning is to attend Mass an additional day each week. The presence of the Eucharist, the reflections upon the readings and the homily, the community of togetherness and taking the time to gather my thoughts and pray for my family and those in my community only add God's positives to my life and, through prayer and reflection, to others' lives.

Recommendation: Just plan one achievable spiritual goal this year and work to make it a habit. Pray a decade of the rosary a day; nightly prayer before bedtime; visiting a lonely

or elderly neighbor or relative; signing up as an usher at Mass. Whatever direction you feel God is pulling you, select one goal and build from there.

Tami DeLucenay, DRE, St. Thomas the Apostle, Elkhart:



My husband and I are going on 33 years of our sacrament of marriage, and in 2018 we will be full-time empty nesters. My resolution is to deepen our couple prayer time together and discover how God is calling us to live out our sacrament and be a witness of His love to each other and to all we encounter.

Recommendation: When I was sharing my resolution with our daughter, she told me about a new devotional book for married couples written by Jackie Francois Angel and Bobby Angel: "Forever: A Catholic Devotion for Your Marriage." Check it out, or find a daily devotional that will help your marriage grow and inspire you to live out the glory of God's love and His call to love freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully.

Lisa Everett, director of Marriage, Family and Pro-Life Ministry:



I plan to spend ten minutes a day doing some spiritual reading, especially from the lives of the saints. I am always deeply inspired by the witness of faith of these close friends of Christ whenever I read about their lives or read their own writings, and I would like to do this in a more disciplined way in the new year.

Recommendation: Start with a saint who particularly inspires you or appeals to you, and get a good biography or a book that contains the saints' own writings, if one exists.

Slowly read a few pages before your daily prayer time, if possible, so that you can speak to God about what you have read and continue to ponder it as the day unfolds.

Deacon James K. Fitzpatrick, Office of Worship:



My New Year's Resolution for 2018 is to read for 15 minutes a day the books of the New Testament, starting with the Gospels.

Recommendation: I would suggest that you find a quiet comfortable place in your home, a place conducive to reading and reflection. Read slowly and deliberately; re-read passages. Some days you may read quite a bit, and on others you may read only a few verses; but spend more time reflecting on them.

Sister Clare, Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration:



My resolution is to be aware of the many blessings I receive from our Lord, and to take a moment to keep a list as I notice these blessings. There

are so many blessings in my life, even simple things, like the smell of hot coffee in the morning or the sun shining through stained-glass windows in the chapel!

Recommendation: I recommend that everyone consider doing this, because I believe it is a way to see endless gifts and be able to focus on God's goodness, generosity and mercy.

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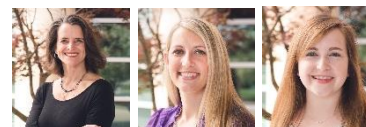


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Full house for the Patroness of All the Americas

BY NICK STUMP

On Tuesday night, Dec. 12, St. Joseph Parish in Fort Wayne was packed. It was so full that two pews of Franciscan friars, upon seeing the number of families standing in the back, gave up their seats for them. The friars then retrieved chairs from storage, creating row after row of makeshift pews. Even after their efforts, people still lined the walls as so many had come to celebrate a special Mass with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

It was no ordinary Mass, of course, but one celebrating the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. A new image of Our Lady was to be blessed at the Mass by Bishop Rhoades, and as he invited the congregation to renew their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, he went to the image and sprinkled holy water on it. In his homily, Bishop Rhoades briefly recounted the history of St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe.

In December 1531, an elderly Juan Diego walked to his catechism class early in the morning. Born Aztec, he had embraced Catholicism. Juan Diego was a laborer and farmer, with no education. His wife had died two years prior, and he continued to eke out a living with his uncle. He was a simple man, and very humble. It was perhaps because of these qualities that he encountered an apparition of the Virgin Mary on Tepeyac Hill, where a former Aztec temple had stood.

Mary appeared to him as a beautiful native woman and spoke his native language. She told him to visit the bishop so that a temple could be built on the site of her appearance; a temple where the people could express their sorrows and anguish, the bishop said.

Dutifully, Juan Diego went to his bishop and recounted what he had seen. The bishop, unsure of what to make of this humble farmer at first, listened politely to Juan Diego, but ultimately dismissed his claims. Back and forth Juan Diego went between Tepeyac Hill, where Mary appeared to him twice more, and the bishop. The bishop required a sign. So, Juan Diego brought him roses from the top of Tepeyac Hill in his tilma, a significant event in itself considering roses rarely bloom in December. But the roses were not what surprised the bishop: It was the image of Mary imprinted on the cloak of Juan Diego that finally convinced him that Our Lady of Guadalupe truly was acting through Juan Diego.

It is this sign, the imprinted tilma, that drew millions of pilgrims and converted so many natives. This miraculous image remains in the basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City to this day.



Photos by Joe Romie

After the homily on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades blesses and sprinkles with holy water a new image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the sanctuary of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Fort Wayne.



Nearly 500 years later, Bishop Rhoades told the overflowing congregation at St. Joseph that Our Lady of Guadalupe wanted to do it again. "But this time, she wants to impress her image in our souls, in our hearts, in our lives.

"What does the Virgin Mother want from us, her children?" Bishop Rhoades continued. "The answer is simple, what every mother wants from her children: that they love God, practice their faith, keep the commandments and stop fighting. She wants us to forgive the offenses made against us and to go forward as brothers and sisters."

As Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patroness of all the Americas, the Mass was said in both Spanish and English before the new image of Our Lady and featuring upbeat, traditional Mexican music. St. Joseph parishioners celebrate both English and Spanish Masses on a regular basis: But to com-

More photos are available at www.todayscatholic.org



bine both languages together in this Mass was symbolic, because Our Lady

of Guadalupe does not love only one America, or the United States of America, but all the Americas and all the people who live in them.

As Bishop Rhoades transitioned from speaking one language to the other, it seemed as though he spoke one united language. The parishioners, a great many of them fluent in Spanish, switched between English and Spanish as well. Exchanging signs of peace was a lingual coin-flip: Some wished peace in English, others said it in Spanish. Regardless of how they said it, everyone got a handshake or hug.

In doing this, St. Joseph parishioners were already practicing what Bishop Rhoades preached: "Just as the Virgin Mary commanded St. Juan Diego with a mission, so she does the same with her children today. She gives us the mission of sharing our Catholic faith, our love for Jesus and our Marian spirituality." No language barrier, if there was one at all, could stop the parishioners from doing this.

The image of the Patroness of all the Americas hangs, on the wall of St. Joseph Parish as a model after which our hearts, souls and lives should follow.



The Rivera family brings up the offertory gifts during the Dec. 12 Mass.



After Mass, Bishop Rhoades blesses Our Lady of Guadalupe icons and statues.

St. Adalbert Mass spotlights Dreamers

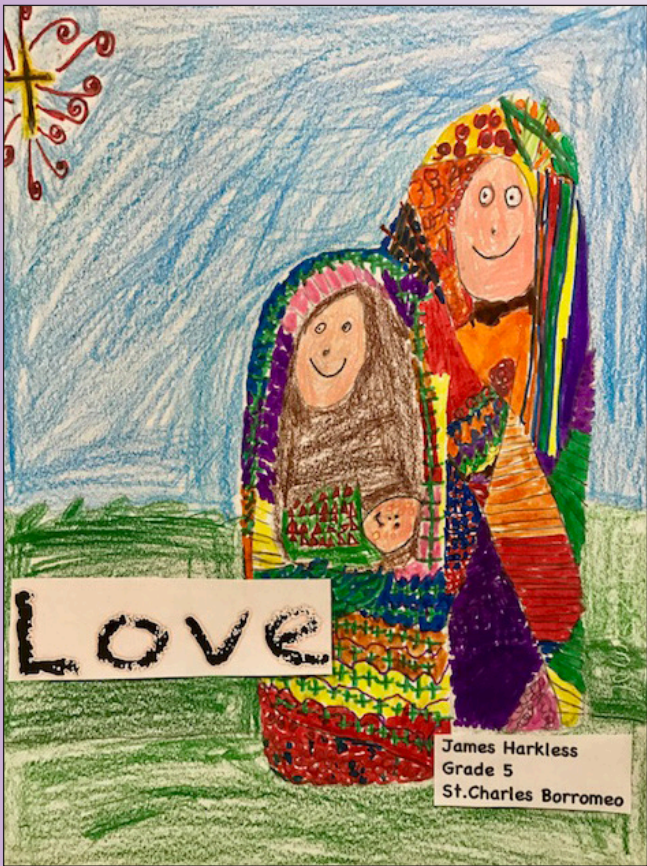


Jennifer Miller

St. Adalbert Parish, South Bend, was among the Hispanic parishes in the diocese that celebrated a special Mass on the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. At St. Adalbert, Father Paul Ybarra, CSC, reminded the faithful of Mary's constant, special protection of the most vulnerable in society, which today are the DACA students. Dreamers brought up the gifts during Mass, and one young Dreamer shared her testimony of living a faith-filled life during this uncertain time.

The love of Advent

During the Fourth Week of Advent we are awed by the depth of the love God has for us, the love made flesh in His Son, our Savior.



James Harkless
Grade 5
St. Charles Borromeo



Andrew Sorg, Age 9, Northeast Indiana Catholic Home Educators



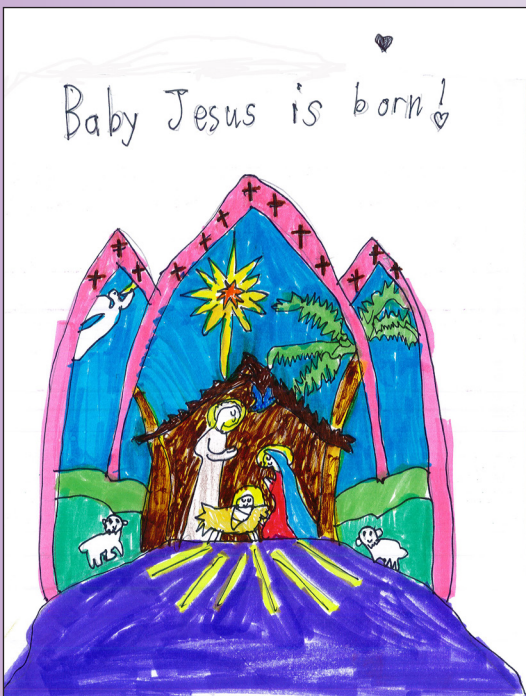
Panagiotis Holdsworth, Fourth grade,
Holy Cross School, South Bend



Maria Ivancsics, junior, St. Joseph High School, South Bend



Sarah Sorg, Age 4, Northeast Indiana Catholic Home Educators



Luz Ahuatl, Fifth grade, St. Anthony School, South Bend

Advent
 Jesus is coming!
 Set up the Jesse tree.
 Purple and pink candles
 On my Advent wreath.
 Give up stuff for Jesus
 To show I love Him.
 Get ready for Christmas
 It's coming again.

—Jada Jordan, Third grade,
 St. Charles Borromeo School,
 Fort Wayne



Sophia Hartz, Fourth grade, Holy Cross School, South Bend

A plea for our fellow Catholics

This Advent, stop worrying about Christmas presents and hanging lights, negotiating mall traffic or scouring the web for the perfect gift.

This Advent, imagine that you and your family lose everything. Home, neighbors, livelihood. This Advent, imagine that you have only one choice: Leave everything you know, you possess, you count on. Or die.

And then imagine that the only reason you have to do all of this is because you are Catholic. All those Masses you've hoped would end quicker, all those religious education classes you had to drag your kids to, all those bishops' appeals that you groused about paying: They mean a possible death sentence.

So, actually imagine you have a second choice: You can keep your home. Be at peace with your neighbors. Go on with your lives. All you have to do is give up your faith.

This Advent, imagine what you would choose. What your spouse would choose. What your kids would beg you to choose.

This Advent, imagine you are a Christian in Iraq.

Catholics in our country are barely aware that our coreligionists around the world are persecuted — sometimes subtly, sometimes cruelly — in dozens of countries. Pope Francis has said that there are “more martyrs today than in Christianity’s first centuries,” and many of them are in the region where Christianity was born.

When the United States invaded Iraq, there were 1.4 million Iraqi Christians. Targeted

first by terrorists and sectarian militias, then by the Islamic State group, today there are fewer than 250,000. Brutalized by the Islamic State and sometimes their neighbors, survivors have been displaced in Iraq or fled to foreign countries willing to take them.

And despite all this, says Archbishop Bashar Warda of Irbil, in Iraq’s Kurdistan region, their faith has persevered and grown even stronger. Organizations like the Knights of Columbus, Aid to the Church in Need and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association have given an apostolic partnership of Christian churches support. So has Hungary. Towns are being rebuilt. The Knights, for example, raised \$2 million to rebuild one Christian town, Karamles, in the Ninevah Plain, after it was freed from IS.

Archbishop Warda recently said, “Knowing we are not forgotten gives us hope.” But the bitter truth is that Iraqi Christians are forgotten by most Catholics in our country. We rarely hear about it from the pulpit, on the daily news or from each other. People who share our faith, who risk everything for it, are barely a blip on the radar.

In a recent speech, Carl Anderson, supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus, put it plainly: “Today the plight of Christians in the Middle East is one of the great human rights causes of our time. And in this century, Americans have a unique moral duty to come to their aid. Yet, to date, our



AMID THE FREY

GREG ERLANDSON

response has been far from adequate.”

Only recently has the U.S. government committed to aiding persecuted religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East, including Christians. But this is not a task for governments alone. These are our brothers, our sisters. Do we hear the searing words of Matthew 25 and think of them at all?

This Advent, imagine giving up one meal for our brothers and sisters in the faith. Give up one venti cappuccino. Give up one gift under the tree. As a family, donate to one of the organizations I mentioned who are dedicated to helping these Christians.

This Christmas season, as we hear about the slaughter of the innocents and the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, imagine that it is happening today. Imagine you are doing something about it.

Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.

Repeat after me

The Supreme Court heard arguments this month in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, a case about whether the government can make a Christian baker design a cake celebrating a same-sex wedding.

Jack Phillips, the shop owner, sells premade baked goods to anyone, but he won't create things that carry a message inconsistent with his faith. He won't make cakes that celebrate Halloween, or that carry vulgar or indecent words. For similar reasons, he turned down a request by Charlie Craig and David Mullins to make them a custom wedding cake.

They filed a claim under the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act with the state Civil Rights Commission. It had little sympathy for Phillips. One commissioner said, “It is one of the most despicable pieces of rhetoric that people can use ... to use their religion to hurt others.”

The commission ordered Phillips, if he wanted to do weddings at all, to design cakes for same-sex couples, and to teach his staff (basically, his family) that this was the right thing to do.

The Colorado courts agreed. The Supreme Court was more troubled. Justice Anthony Kennedy, who wrote the opinion in *Obergefell v. Hodges* protecting same-sex marriage, said he thought Colorado “ha(d) been neither tolerant nor respectful of Mr. Phillips’s religious beliefs.” But Kennedy worried about the implications of ruling for



INTELLECT AND VIRTUE

JOHN GARVEY

Phillips. Could he then “put a sign in his window, ‘We do not bake cakes for gay weddings,’” Kennedy asked.

Perhaps. But that would be a different case. Phillips was not going out of his way to proclaim his opposition to gay weddings. He just wanted to be left alone. Colorado insisted that he join in the celebration, and write out his support for Charlie’s and David’s nuptials with an icing nozzle.

The more likely scenario, if Phillips wins, is that Colorado will make him put a sign in his window saying, “We do not bake cakes for gay weddings,” and telling gay couples where they should shop instead.

That’s what California did in *National Institute of Family and Life Advocates v. Becerra*, another case pending in the court this term. California makes pro-life pregnancy centers post signs in their waiting rooms (in 22-point type) saying that the state provides free abortions, and telling women where to get them.

This is also what the Department of Health and Human Services did with its contraceptive mandate. HHS ordered the Little Sisters of the Poor, if

GARVEY, page 17

David’s kingship is fulfilled: To God be the glory



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Fourth Sunday of Advent Reading: Luke 1:26-38

The first reading for this weekend 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.

Scholars unanimously say that Paul of Tarsus indeed authored this epistle, and that this epistle was his theological masterpiece. For this reason, it appears first in sequence among the 14 epistles attributed to Paul, placed in Bibles immediately following the Acts of the Apostles.

As indicated by its title, Paul sent this epistle, or letter, to the Christian population of Rome. In the First Century A.D., Rome was the center of the Mediterranean world in every respect: political, economic and cultural. Also, it was 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 Gentiles” might believe in, and obey, God, “who alone is wise”.

For the final reading this weekend, the Church proclaims a beautiful part of St. Luke’s Gospel, of Luke’s infancy narrative. It is the story of the Annunciation, the event when Gabriel, the angel, came into the presence of Mary, a young Jewish woman, in Nazareth in Galilee, 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 maidservant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say.”

Reflection

In each of these readings, speaking through the Scriptures, the Church makes a vital point. God reaches out to us. This outreach is not vague, pointed to a few, or impossible to see. It came in the persons of individuals 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 God’s 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.

READINGS

Sunday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps

89:2-5, 27, 29 Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:26-38

Monday: Is 62:11-12 Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12 Ti 3:4-7 Lk 2:15-20

Tuesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Ps

31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc-17 Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday: 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Thursday: 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2 Pa 124L2-5, 7b-8 Mt 2:13-18

Friday: 1 Jn 2:3-11 Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6 Lk 2:22-35

Saturday: 1 Jn 2:12-17 Ps 96:7-10 Lk 2:36-40

The 'bitter pill' of false liberation

A major study published on Dec. 7 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* concludes that hormonal contraception increases the risk of breast cancer for women. The research used all of Denmark as its sample, following nearly 1.8 million Danish women of childbearing age for over a decade. The study, as described by the *New York Times*, "upends widely held assumptions about modern contraceptives for younger generations of women," especially the view that "newer hormonal contraceptives are much safer than those taken by their mothers or grandmothers." It also establishes that the risk to women increases with longer periods of use. Major media outlets have done their best to minimize the implications of the study and "soften the blow" for the millions who, for decades, have faithfully embraced a "contraceptive mentality."

This mentality has promoted contraception, especially "the pill," as a path for women to move toward equality with men by enabling them to reap the "benefits" of the sexual revolution.

But Mary Rice Hasson, J.D., director of the Catholic Women's Forum at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., notes that the reality for women is very different, and "our lived experience has shown that this is a false promise." Countless women, she emphasizes, have ended up being vulnerable to, and harmed by, the sexual revolution and its promotion of contraception as "the solution." They have been given a "bitter pill" in the form of "the pill."

In a remarkably prescient passage dating back to July 1968, Pope Paul VI already foresaw this in his encyclical "Humanae Vitae," the momentous and beautiful document explaining not only the moral problems with contraception, but also its devastating effects on men, families and women in particular.

Contraception, he writes, opens a wide and easy road "towards conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality. Not much experience is needed

in order to know human weakness, and to understand that men — especially the young, who are so vulnerable on this point — have need of encouragement to be faithful to the moral law, so that they must not be offered some easy means of eluding its observance. It is also to be feared that the man, growing used to the employment of anti-conceptive practices, may finally lose respect for the woman and, no longer caring for her physical and psychological equilibrium, may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and beloved companion."

Paul VI offers a profound, but unpopular, observation — that contraception is harmful to women, and is, in fact, anti-woman. The widespread adoption of the "contraceptive mentality" has led inexorably to a new perspective on women, namely, that they should be more like men, and therefore they should, like men, become impregnable, through the ongoing practice of contraception. Very young women, sometimes just entering puberty, are now placed onto regimens of hormonal contraception that can continue for years or even decades. From this perspective, their ability to conceive life becomes tantamount to a malady needing to be remedied, a "defect" that renders them "unequal" to men. Strikingly, though, ever greater numbers of women are discovering an authentic and liberating form of feminism as they come to the awareness that, in the words of Hasson, "we don't have a design flaw. Being a woman is good ... and it's a wonderful thing."

Wonderful, too, is that confident feminism and liberating sense of self-control that enables a woman to choose abstinence before marriage, rather than contraception, and, once married, to choose periodic abstinence in agreement with her husband if their circumstances indicate they ought to avoid a pregnancy.

Hormonal contraceptives, meanwhile, throw a wrench into the works on a number of



MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

FATHER TAD PACHOLCZYK

different levels. Beyond setting up a woman to be "used" by men, "the pill" (and hormone-releasing IUD's) cause significant alterations in her delicately-balanced physiology. These include restricting her ability to ovulate, altering her cycles and secretions, and modifying her uterine lining — in effect, forcing her body into a pseudo-pregnant state to exclude the possibility of a real pregnancy. Whenever a woman takes these kinds of steps to disrupt her natural fertility, it should come as little surprise that her body rebels in one fashion or another, including possible weight gain, headaches, depression, and the heightened and well-documented risk of thrombotic stroke, myocardial infarction (heart attack), and — as confirmed by the recent study — breast cancer. A woman's body doesn't stand in need of being "fixed" by these powerful drugs that wreak havoc on her biology.

The Church's ageless but countercultural teaching on contraception respects and uplifts women. It supports them in an authentic feminism that affirms their uniquely important maternal role in family and society, and esteems their fruitfulness in marriage not as a defect, but as a real gift.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States." It forbids laws like the English Test Acts (aimed at Catholics and nonconformists) that required people to take Communion in the Church of England in order to hold office.

And throughout the original Constitution, any clause requiring an oath allows people with religious scruples about swearing (Quakers were the group the framers had in mind) to "affirm" their obligation instead.

Those who fought and won the American Revolution were wiser and more tolerant than the winners of the sexual revolution. They refrained from making

religious outliers confess their belief in the majority's creed. I hope the court insists on the same degree of tolerance when it comes to our new fertility rites.

John Garvey is the president of The Catholic University of America.

GARVEY from page 16

they weren't going to provide their employees free contraceptives, to file a form cueing their insurance company to step in.

Why this passion for making people swear their allegiance to modern sexual orthodoxies? Before we had a First Amendment, the Constitution of 1789 said only two things about religion. Both were designed to prevent the government from making people subscribe to propositions they had religious scruples about.

The religious test clause in Article VI says that "no religious Test shall ever be required as

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for December 24, 2017

Luke 1:26-28

Following is a word search based on the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle B: the visit of Gabriel to the town of Nazareth. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

ANGEL	GABRIEL	NAZARETH
VIRGIN	JOSEPH	DAVID
GREETING	BEAR A SON	JESUS
GREAT	MOST HIGH	THRONE
JACOB	FOREVER	POWER
THE CHILD	ELIZABETH	OLD AGE
BARREN	NOTHING	IMPOSSIBLE

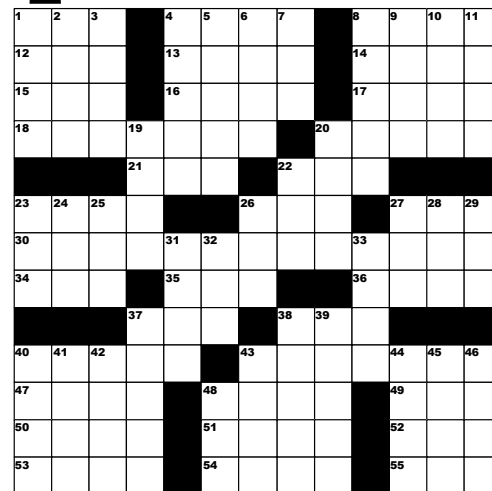
ANGEL GREETING

H J G K W L E I R B A G
 T T R O N E D D N A N R
 H P E S O J I N E I D E
 M O A R S V I L H H N E
 O W T L A G I T K O T T
 S E T D R Z O H R L H I
 T R Y I A N A H O D E N
 H J V B E I T N H A C G
 I D E R B G H O G G H V
 G T R E V E R O F E I Z
 H A I M P O S S I B L E
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The CrossWord

December 24 and 31, 2017



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Sunday readings: 2Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Lk 1:26-38 and Gn 15: 1-6; 21:1-3; Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40

ACROSS

- 1 Lent Wednesday
- 4 Hawaiian dancing
- 8 Edge
- 12 Hotel
- 13 Org. of Petroleum Exporting Countries
- 14 Make over
- 15 Next John Paul pope
- 16 Usages
- 17 Capital of Norway
- 18 Map collections
- 20 the Kingdom of Heaven
- 21 Position
- 22 Bother
- 23 El __ (Texas city)

DOWN

- 26 Used for anointing
- 27 Baby dog
- 30 Sinners
- 34 Kennel Club (abbr.)
- 35 Spider trap
- 36 Where Ark of Covenant dwelt
- 37 Calorie
- 38 Jesus came to do for us
- 40 House of
- 43 Nunc dimittis "now you
- 47 U.S. civil liberties group (abbr.)
- 48 Molten rock
- 49 Easter color
- 50 Jaw

- 51 Thought
 - 52 Bullfight cheer
 - 53 Stored
 - 54 Pear type
 - 55 Edge of chalice
- DOWN**
- 1 Israel's continent
 - 2 Jesus did to make mud
 - 3 Ave
 - 4 Temple was for Ark
 - 5 Fuming
 - 6 Dregs
 - 7 Cancer Society (abbr.)
 - 8 New York borough
 - 9 in Peace
 - 10 Lazy
 - 11 St. Benedict the
 - 19 Mary was promised one (2 wds)
 - 20 Snaky fish
 - 22 Contend
 - 23 School group
 - 24 Covenant vessel
 - 25 Pocket
 - 26 Globe
 - 27 Poet Edgar Allen
 - 28 Holds ashes
 - 29 Pacific Time
 - 31 Cotton ball
 - 32 Harden
 - 33 Tuber
 - 37 Abraham told to the stars
 - 38 Rich man in purple
 - 39 Abraham's son
 - 40 Lift for car
 - 41 Throb
 - 42 Holds hair
 - 43 Pedestal part
 - 44 Golden calf
 - 45 Old monetary unit in Guinea
 - 46 Ooze
 - 48 Library (abbr.)

Answer Key can be found on page 19

Star Wars: The Last Jedi

BY JOHN MULDERIG

NEW YORK (CNS) — Despite the high price of a movie ticket these days, patrons are unlikely to come away from a showing of the engrossing sci-fi epic “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” (Disney) feeling shortchanged.

Vast in scale and operatic in intensity, this 152-minute visit to that galaxy far, far away is both satisfying and, for the most part, family-friendly.

With the mayhem inevitable in a movie about a war kept gore-free, and only minor blemishes on the dialogue, parents may be more concerned about the nonscriptural notions centering on the famous Force that are here collectively referred to as the “Jedi religion.” Teens able to take this fictional faith, a sort of dime-store Taoism, as just one more element in a fantasy world will benefit from lessons about the value of hope and the true

nature of heroism.

The “Star Wars” saga has often been characterized as the Iliad of contemporary culture. So perhaps it’s fitting that the opening of writer-director Rian Johnson’s eighth episode of the narrative initiated by George Lucas in 1977 finds Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) imitating Homer’s Achilles by holding aloof from the great struggle in which he once took an active part.

Rather than sulking in his tent, as Achilles did, Luke is leading a solitary life of self-imposed exile among the small stone huts of a distant planet. (These scenes were shot on the Irish island of Skellig Michael, site of a medieval monastery.) His isolation is interrupted by the arrival of Rey (Daisy Ridley) who has come as a messenger from Luke’s twin sister, Leia (the late Carrie Fisher).

As the leading general of the embattled Resistance — the



CNS photo/Disney

Mark Hamill stars in a scene from the movie “Star Wars: The Last Jedi,” an engrossing sci-fi epic in which the leading general (Carrie Fisher) of an embattled group of rebels sends a messenger (Daisy Ridley) to the distant planet on which her brother (Mark Hamill), a famed warrior, is living in self-imposed exile. Fisher’s character summons his help in the desperate struggle against the rebels’ fascistic enemies, led by Andy Serkis.

latter-day version of the Rebel Alliance for which Luke once fought — Leia urgently needs her brother’s famed skills as a warrior if the struggle against the fascistic First Order (successor to the evil Galactic Empire), and its malignant leader, Snoke (Andy Serkis), is to continue.

Luke refuses to join the conflict. But he does agree to train Rey in the ways of the Force. Rey will need the power of this mysterious spiritual energy, the source of Luke’s own prowess, when she eventually confronts

Leia’s son, Ben Solo, aka Kylo Ren (Adam Driver).

Originally a good person, Ben has gone over to the side of darkness, and now serves as Snoke’s chief lieutenant. Even so, he still has some elements of good remaining in him, and his ongoing moral struggle has the potential to sway the outcome of the intergalactic battle.

Though it gets off to a slow start, once it hits its stride “The Last Jedi” sweeps viewers along with stirring action and audience-pleasing plot twists.

While not as taut as last year’s “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story,” this sprawling installment of the great franchise makes, in the end, for a more memorable experience.

The script’s portrayal of the Force as capable of endowing those who cultivate it either with goodness or iniquity may strike moviegoers of faith as establishing a false equivalence of power between these two poles of morality. Some may even see in this an implicit denial of the rule of divine providence and God’s ultimate supremacy over sin.

Yet, in keeping with a Christian worldview, characters do make their ethical choices more or less freely. And the idea that a change in basic identity should be reflected by a change of name echoes a recurring trope in Scripture — and in the church’s sacramental practice.

Audience members young or old are unlikely to spend much time meditating on these aspects of the picture, however. Instead, they’ll be content to ride this cinematic whirlwind while it lasts, and leave its mythos behind them like so much popcorn on the theater floor.

The film contains frequent but bloodless combat violence, a scene of torture, a couple of mild oaths and a few crass terms. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

John Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send announcements at least two weeks prior to the event. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call the Today's Catholic advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

New Year's Eve party planned

SOUTH BEND — St. Hedwig Parish will host a New Year's Eve party Sunday, Dec. 31, from 6 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. at the memorial center, 331 S. Scott St. Cost of \$35 will include a Polish family style dinner, open bar, party favors, hors d'oeuvres, champagne and music by This End Up. Call 574-287-8935 or 574-282-1966 for details.

Young Adult Retreat: Speak Lord, Your Servants are Listening

NOTRE DAME — When you pray, does the Lord respond? Can you sense God speaking to you in any way? Would you like to hear the Lord more clearly? The Saturday, Jan. 13, retreat focuses on hearing the Lord better during prayer, providing practical guidance and tools for a fruitful conversation with God. Includes overnight lodging and meals at Sacred Heart Parish Center. For more information visit www.diocesefwsb.org/yam.

Theology on Tap with Bishop Rhoades

MISHAWAKA — Join Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades for Theology on Tap on Tuesday, Jan. 16, at Mishawaka Columbus Club, 114 West First St., from 6-8 p.m.

Christmas Concert

GRANGER — St. Pius X Music Ministry, under the direction of Jeremy Hoy, Beth Habas, and Sherrie Hoy will close the Christmas season with a con-

cert on Sunday, Jan. 7, at 2:30 p.m. in the church, 52553 Fir Rd. Featured choirs include: Children's Choir, Middle School Choir, Sunday Morning and Evening Adult Choirs, Adult and Youth Handbell Choirs and Instrumentalists.

A Christmas Concert

FORT WAYNE — A Christmas Concert will be held at Most Precious Blood Church, 1515 Barthold St., Thursday, Dec. 28, at 7 p.m. Music will be played and sung by Jim Didier and the Choir. Admission is free.

The CrossWord
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Submit obituaries to mweber@diocesefwsb.org

Catholic Business Network Breakfast

FORT WAYNE — The first Friday breakfast will be on Friday, Jan. 5, at the St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel, 1122 S. Clinton St. Guest

speaker will be Bob Buescher, who will share his story of "Bob the Builder: The Spiritual Journey of Building a Strong Foundation."



Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

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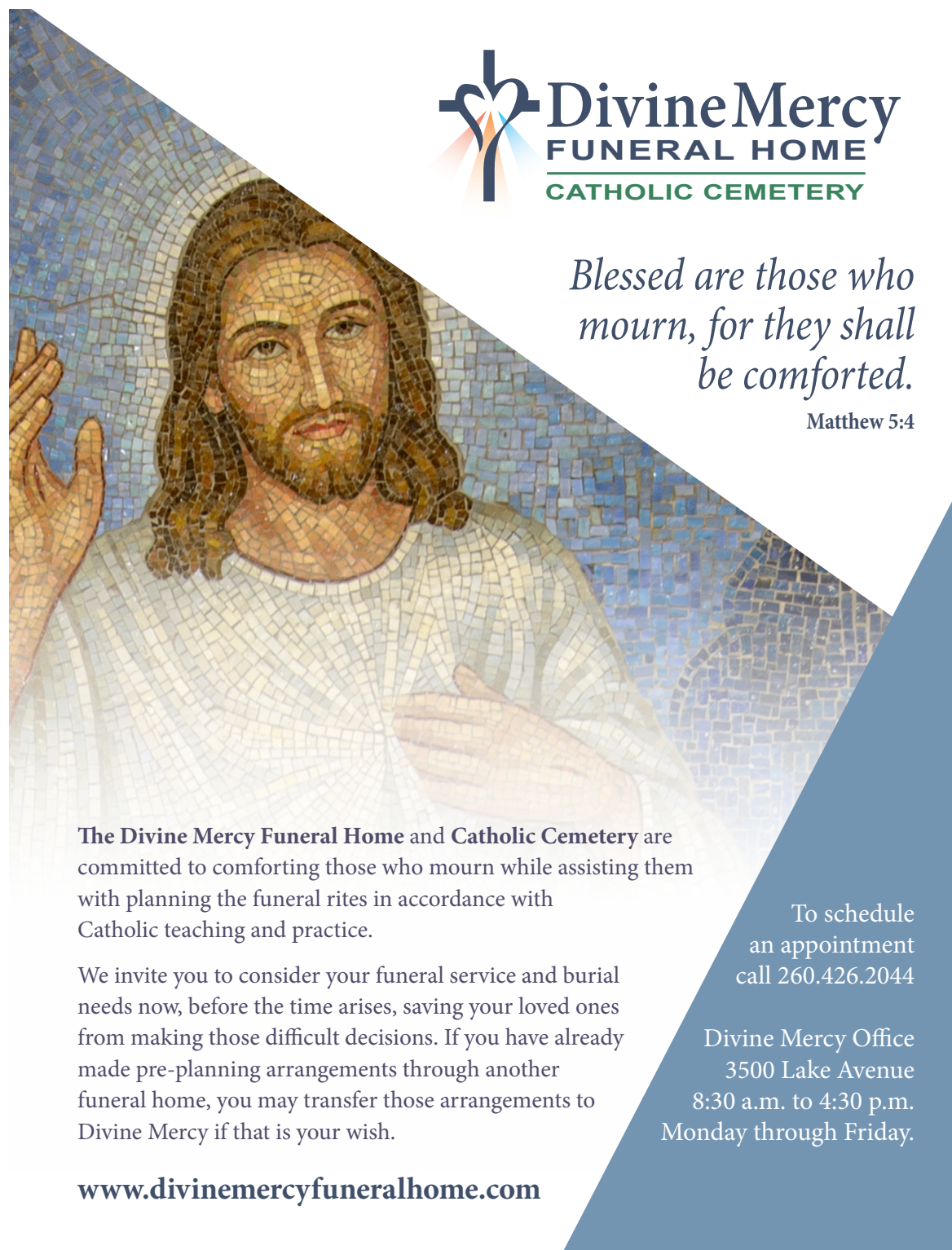
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Two Christmas Stories 112 Years Apart

Dr. Anthony F. Laviano

He rang the doorbell. It sounded his last stop. He arrived. It had been a long, cold, lonely, exhausting trip. When he started out a winter snowstorm was on the horizon and approaching at full force. Not deterred, he was determined to begin his journey. He needed to fulfill Her request.



On Dec. 20 1896, with luggage in hand at the Superior, Wis., depot he boarded the 11 p.m. train heading Southwest to St. Paul then taking him Eastward across Wisconsin to Milwaukee. The snowstorm was intense. The train slowed to a crawl having to plow its way through snowdrifts. Arriving in Milwaukee he stopped to visit the Capuchin seminary of St. Francis two miles from the depot. The following day he boarded the train to Chicago and upon arrival changed trains to Detroit. Heavy snow slowed the last leg of the train trip to 12 miles an hour. From the Detroit station he took the street car to 1740 Mt. Elliot Ave., St. Bonaventure Monastery. He arrived well after dusk and rang the door bell. It was now Dec. 24, Christmas Eve. - With anticipation he waited for the door to open. He knew that when he stepped through the doorway he would have completed Our Lady's desire. She related it to him on Dec. 8, 1896, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the last day of his novena asking guidance of the Blessed Mother. "Go to Detroit," She impressed upon him. Bernard Francis Casey had completed his initial step to becoming a Capuchin Friar. - The Capuchins at St. Bonaventure were expecting him. He was warmly welcomed by the porter who led him to a chair within the entrance. Unknown to him, such a station in life would be his and such entrances would one day become his office. The porter soon reappeared with Father Casimir, the superior, and Father Gabriel Messmer, his future novice master. They suggested that he have something to eat but his exhaustion satisfied his appetite. He wanted to sleep. - They led him up the stairs to his room behind a wood latch door. Soon he was fast asleep on the narrow iron bed. A one-drawer wooden desk with a straight back wooden chair, the only furnishings, kept watch. Light from the Christmas Eve sky coming through the one window blanketed the ascetic 9x12 room with restful comfort. - He had only been asleep an hour when the traditional procession before Midnight Mass began along the monastery corridors. He was awakened by bells and acapella singing scented with incense. The voices were singing Christmas carols in Latin and German. These languages would later confront him in his studies. Listening, he could hear Friars joining the carolers. Approaching his door he joined them. The procession moved into the chapel. His heart was uplifted and "Silent Night" echoed in his ears. - Father Solanus often told the story of his first Capuchin Christmas and how he felt a flood of happiness during the Midnight Mass. - The words in the Last Gospel of the Latin Mass that Christmas remained a Christmas crèche etched in the soul of Father Solanus Casey.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."



Blessed Solanus Casey, OFM, Cap
Christmas at the Manger

My Christmas story is a simpler one but heartfelt. It took place 112 years later. It is told in an unnoted footnote in the unpublished portfolio of Solanus miracles.



"Anthony F. Laviano was cured of prostate cancer during the 2008 Christmas season through the intercession of Father Solanus Casey. Deo Gratias!"

Et Verbum Caro Factum

Est, et habitavit in nobis.

Deo gratias!

Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year

Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!

Alles schläft, einsam wacht

Nur das traute heilige Paar.

Holder Knab im lockigten Haar,

Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!

Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!

To report favors received through the intercession of Father Solanus, please direct correspondence to the official office in Detroit; The Father Solanus Guild.

www.solanuscasey.org

Dr. Anthony F. Laviano, Chairman and Founder, NANOworld® • Pacific Palisades, California

Editors Note: If you have been uplifted by this story and would like it to appear in Today's Catholic each year, please email a.f.laviano@earthlink.net