



The first Sunday of Advent

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TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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Kingdom based on love, not power, brings true peace, pope says

BY JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Jesus showed His authority as king not through the power of weaponry, violence or deceit but by the power of His love for the world through His death on the cross, Pope Francis said.

Kingdoms founded "on the power of arms and on abuses of power" are frail and often collapse while God's kingdom is founded on love that gives "peace, freedom and fullness of life to those who accept it," the pope said Nov. 25 during his Sunday Angelus address.

"This is the divine truth which is ultimately the essential message of the Gospel: 'God is love' and He wants to establish in the world His kingdom of love, justice and peace," he said.

Despite cold rains showering down on Rome, the Vatican reported an estimated 25,000 people stood outside to listen to and pray with the pope, covering part of the square in a colorful array of umbrellas.

"My compliments because you are very brave (to) come with this rain!" the pope exclaimed. "You are courageous. Bravo!"

In his address, the pope reflected on the Solemnity of Christ the King. The feast, he said, not only marks the end of the liturgical year but also serves as a reminder that in creation, all



CNS photo/Claudio Peri, EPA

Pope Francis greets the crowd from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square during the Angelus at the Vatican Nov. 25.

life does not advance "by chance but proceeds towards a final goal: the definitive manifestation of Christ, Lord of history and of all creation."

He also reflected on the day's Gospel reading from St. John, in which Jesus tells Pontius Pilate that His "kingdom does not belong to this world."

Jesus, the pope explained, has no political aspirations and the

true power that He wishes to wield is the power of love "by bearing witness to the truth" of God's infinite love for all men and women.

Pope Francis said that by accepting Jesus as king, Christians can receive meaning and enlightenment "to our existence marked by doubt, fear and everyday trials."

However, he added, this can

only be experienced "on the condition that we do not follow the logic of the world and its 'kings.'"

"We all want peace, we all want freedom and we want fullness," the pope said. "And how do we (obtain) it? Let the love of God, the kingdom of God, the love of Jesus take root in your heart and you will have peace, freedom and fullness."

Bishop Dwenger High School takes football 4A state championship in historic game

FORT WAYNE — The Saints of Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne, ended their quest for a fifth football state championship title last week with a matchup against Evansville Central that went down in the record books.

Although the highly touted Fort Wayne team left Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis satisfied, their 16-10 win tested everything from the team's faith to the limits of IHSAA playoff rules.

If the players thought their hard-fought season had forged



John Martin

them into a playoff-ready team, they may have been caught off guard by a Friday morning reminder to continue to look to the Lord — when their bus broke down on the way to the stadium.

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Head Coach Jason Garrett of Bishop Dwenger High School signals during the Class 4A state championship game Friday, Nov. 23, at Lucas Oil Stadium. The Fort Wayne school bested Evansville Central 16-10.

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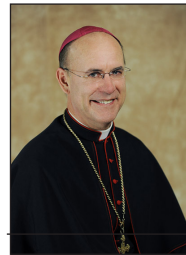
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Citizens of the Kingdom Not of This World

IN TRUTH
AND
CHARITY

BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

The following is the homily preached by Bishop Rhoades at St. Joseph Parish in Mishawaka on Nov. 25th, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe:

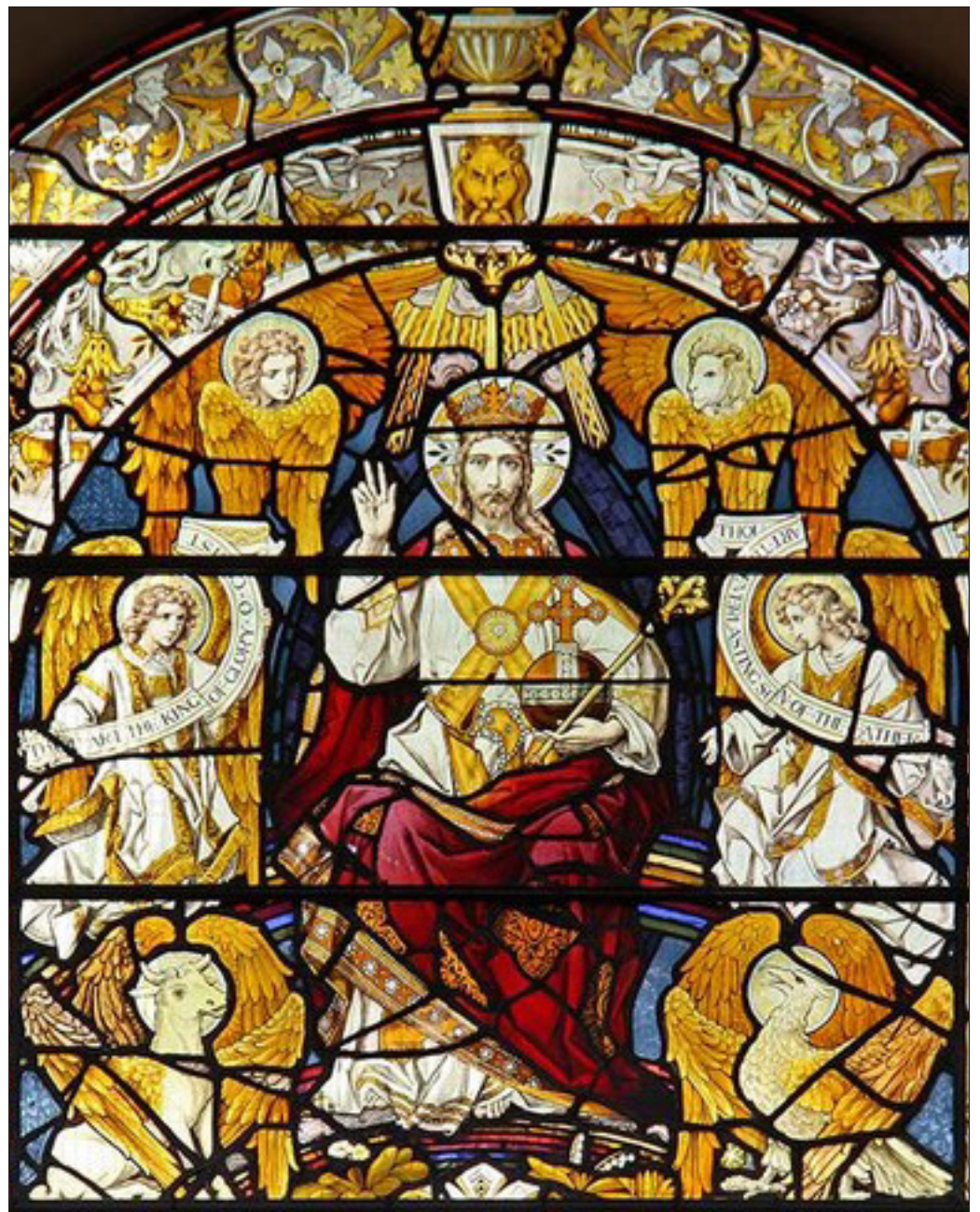
On this last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Church celebrates this Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. In the prophecy from the Book of Daniel, we heard about the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven. We heard that "His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away" and that "His kingship shall not be destroyed." As Christians, we recognize this prophecy as referring to Our Lord's Second Coming in glory, when His kingship will be fulfilled.

In the second reading from the book of Revelation, we also heard a reference to the kingship of Christ since it refers to Jesus as "ruler of the kings of the earth."

In the Gospel, we learn even more about the kingship of Jesus. We heard St. John's account of the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Jesus was standing before this earthly ruler, accused by the religious leaders of treason, of claiming to be king of the Jews. This was a very serious charge: sedition, rebellion against Rome, a crime that was punishable by death. So naturally, Pilate asks Jesus during the interrogation: "Are you the king of the Jews?" Our Lord explains that His kingdom does not belong to this world. This was a puzzling answer. Jesus admits that He is a king and that He has a kingdom. But it is not of this world. Our Lord teaches the complete otherness of His kingdom. He told Pontius Pilate that if His kingdom did belong to this world, His attendants would be fighting to keep him from being handed over to the Jews. But no one was fighting for Him or battling for His kingship.

Jesus had no military power. He had no political power. He had no armies. There was no threat to Rome. Pilate probably had no idea what Jesus was talking about — a kingdom not of this world. It probably sounded crazy to him. He didn't know what to make of Jesus' words. The question for us is: "what do we make of it?" How do we see Jesus as King and what does His kingdom mean to us? How often we pray in the Our Father, "Thy kingdom come." What are we praying for? What is our faith and intention when we pray these words, "Thy kingdom come?"

Our Lord's other words to Pilate in today's Gospel shed some light on these questions. When Pilate asked Jesus further on, "then you are a king?" Jesus answered with these words: "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." So Jesus the King came to witness to the truth. His kingdom, therefore, is a kingdom of truth. This is the essence of His kingship. Elsewhere, Jesus identifies Himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life. The Son of God entered the world and history as our Savior, as the truth that sets us free. He revealed to us the truth about God and about humanity. Sin and evil can enslave us. We are tempted by the devil, the father of lies. Jesus comes to rescue us, to free us, to liberate us. His kingship is cen-



Creative Commons

St. Botolph without Aldersgate Church, near London, features this stained glass window depicting "Christus Rex."

tered on truth, the truth of God and His love.

Our King is victorious in the battle for our liberation from the slavery of sin and the reign of death. But how does He do it? How does He reign as King? Kingship is always connected with power. In fact, dominion demands power. Jesus speaks of His mission as king as testifying to the truth. This truth of Jesus, the truth that sets us free, is outwardly powerless in the world. Christ the King was powerless according to the standards of the world. But it is in this powerlessness that He is powerful. It's in weakness, stripped naked and hanging on the cross, that Christ the King reigns.

God's love is victorious. It conquers the enemy — Satan, sin, evil and death. This is the revolution of Christ the King and of Christianity. Real power is the strength to love. Real life is found only in dying to self. Christ the King turns the values of the world upside down. He proclaims a new and radical form of kingship. He inaugurates a new kingdom, a kingdom not of this world. It is a kingdom of truth and love.

Let's get back to that question: "What do we mean when we pray 'Thy Kingdom come?'" And let me add this question: "do we live as loyal subjects of Christ the King?" To be His loyal subjects means that we accept His truth and bear witness to it. In the spiritual battle of life, we are to be on the side of truth, the truth of the Gospel, even if it's unpopular.

We are part of Christ's Kingdom that is

not of this world. Do we live that way? In the Our Father, immediately after praying "Thy Kingdom come," we say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Do we truly seek to conform our will to the will of our King? Does Christ reign or rule in our lives, or do other things or people rule in our lives? When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," do we mean it? We're saying to God that we want Him to rule in our lives and we want His truth and love to rule us.

Today's Solemnity of Christ the King reminds us of what should have priority in our lives: God and His will, His Kingdom — not any earthly nation, political party, or government. Sometimes I fear too many Christians receive their formation more from the secular media, blogs, and social media postings than they do from the Gospel and Christ's Church. The most important and fundamental law in the Kingdom of Christ is this: "Love one another as I have loved you." If we are loyal subjects of Christ the King and faithful citizens of His Kingdom, we seek to care for one another, to defend the poor and the weak, the unborn and the refugee, the sick and the suffering.

My brothers and sisters, as we prepare for the season of Advent and to celebrate the Birth of our King, let us reflect on our citizenship in His Kingdom. Nothing should take precedence over following and serving Christ our King and to extending His kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.

CDC report shows continued decline in U.S. abortion rate

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The abortion rate in the United States continues to decline, as do the number of abortions overall, according to a report issued Nov. 21 by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

The drop in both abortions overall and the abortion rate has declined each year for a decade.

According to the new report, the abortion rate in 2015 — the last year for which statistics are available — is at 11.8 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44. The rate has dropped eight of the past nine years since 2006's rate of 15.9; the rate of 15.6 held steady in 2008.

The overall number of abortions also continued to slide. The 2015 number of reported abortions was 638,169, about one-fourth less than the 852,385 reported in 2006. It is down 2 percent from 2014's figure of 652,639.

Over the past decade, the ratio of abortions to live births has also trended downward. The ratio rose slightly from 2007 to 2008, and held steady in 2009 and 2010, but has declined from 2006's 233 abortions per 1,000 live births to 2015's 188 abortions per 1,000 live births.

The number of legal abortions in the United States peaked in the 1980s before beginning a



NS photo/David Maung

Young people participate in the annual Walk for Life in San Diego Jan. 20. A report released Nov. 21 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says fewer U.S. women are having abortions than at any time since Roe v. Wade.

slow but steady decline, interrupted only by the slight rise in, or holding steady of, numbers in the late 2000s.

The CDC's numbers are not complete. They do not include California, Florida, Maryland, New Hampshire and Wyoming because they either "did not report, did not report by age, or did not meet reporting standards," the CDC report said.

The abortion rate is highest for women in their 20s. Women ages 20-24 had an abortion rate of 19.9, and women ages 25-29

had an abortion rate of 17.9 per 1,000 women in their age group. Together, they accounted for close to 60 percent of all abortions.

White women had an abortion rate close to one-fourth that of black women. White women accounted for an abortion rate of 6.8, while black women had an abortion rate of 25.1. The CDC report, though, noted that abortion rates, ratios and numbers have gone down among all racial and ethnic groups.

Religious leaders in Colombia form coalition to defend rainforests

BY MANUEL RUEDA

BOGOTA, Colombia (CNS) — Religious leaders in Colombia promised to step up efforts to prevent the destruction of rainforests in the South American country, as they launched a coalition known as the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative.

After meeting with scientists and indigenous leaders at the Jesuit-run Pontifical Xaveriana University, the group of more than a dozen faith leaders called on Colombia's government to uphold the land rights of indigenous people who are living in the country's jungles.

The group, which included Catholic, Anglican, Buddhist and evangelical leaders, also said it would work closely with indigenous people to build up their capacity to defend forests from "irrational" oil and mining projects. Leaders said they would be advocates for environmental consciousness.

"We need to add a moral, ethical and spiritual dimension to the defense of tropical rainforests," the group said in a statement. "And we need to spread that message among members of our religions and spiritual groups."

The interfaith meeting was convened by the U.N.

Environment Programme. The international organization is planning to set up similar coalitions of religious leaders in Brazil, Peru, Indonesia and Congo. Those four countries, along with Colombia, hold 70 percent of the world's rainforests.

"We are losing tropical forests at a speed that has no precedent," said Juan Bello, Colombia director for U.N. Environment. "We need new kinds of leaders who complement the work that governments and NGOs are already doing to prevent deforestation."

Scientists believe that tropical forests, like the Amazon rainforest, are crucial to slowing down climate change, due to their massive concentration of plants and trees, but these ecosystems are increasingly threatened by mining, illegal logging, oil drilling and agriculture.

A recent study conducted by the University of Maryland found that, in 2017, the world lost 39 million acres of tropical tree cover, or an area the size of New York state. The study said it was the second-worst year on record.

In Colombia, the deforestation rate has risen as cattle ranchers, gold miners, drug producers and illegal loggers move into areas formerly occupied by the

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a guerrilla group that made peace with the Colombian government two years ago.

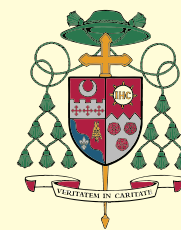
Religious leaders in Bogota are still trying to define concrete steps that they can take to prevent deforestation. One proposal is to develop educational materials and hold workshops that teach rural communities about the value of preserving rainforests.

"It's important to unite in our efforts to develop teaching materials" said Episcopal Bishop Francisco Duque, head of Colombia's Interreligious Council. "We need humanity and nature to reconcile."

Jesuit Father Alfonso Ferro, a member of the Pan-Amazonian Church Network, said religious communities should support groups that are trying to find political solutions for deforestation.

"We need to find a way to have a political impact," he said. "If we don't find a way to influence public policy, we will end up delivering beautiful speeches that might not end up in action."

Father Ferro lives in Leticia, a small town in the Amazon rainforest. Throughout the region priests are already holding meetings with community leaders to develop proposals for a Synod of Bishops on the Amazon next October in Rome.



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Sunday, December 2: 11:45 a.m. — Mass with Confirmation and Rite of Reception into Full Communion, Basilica of the Sacred Heart, University of Notre Dame
 Tuesday, December 4: 3 p.m. — Meeting of Indiana Bishops, Indianapolis
 Wednesday, December 5: 10 a.m. — Meeting of Indiana Catholic Conference, Indianapolis
 Thursday, December 6: 8 a.m. — Meeting of Board of Directors of Catholic Relief Services, Baltimore, Maryland
 Saturday, December 8: 10:30 a.m. — Confirmation Mass, St. Charles Borromeo Church, Fort Wayne
 Saturday, December 8: 6 p.m. — Holiday Happenings for Hannah's House, Dahnke Ballroom, University of Notre Dame



Vicars Forane appointments

The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, has made the following appointment of Vicars Forane (Deans) for the six vicarates of the diocese, effective on Dec. 1, 2018, for a three-year term.

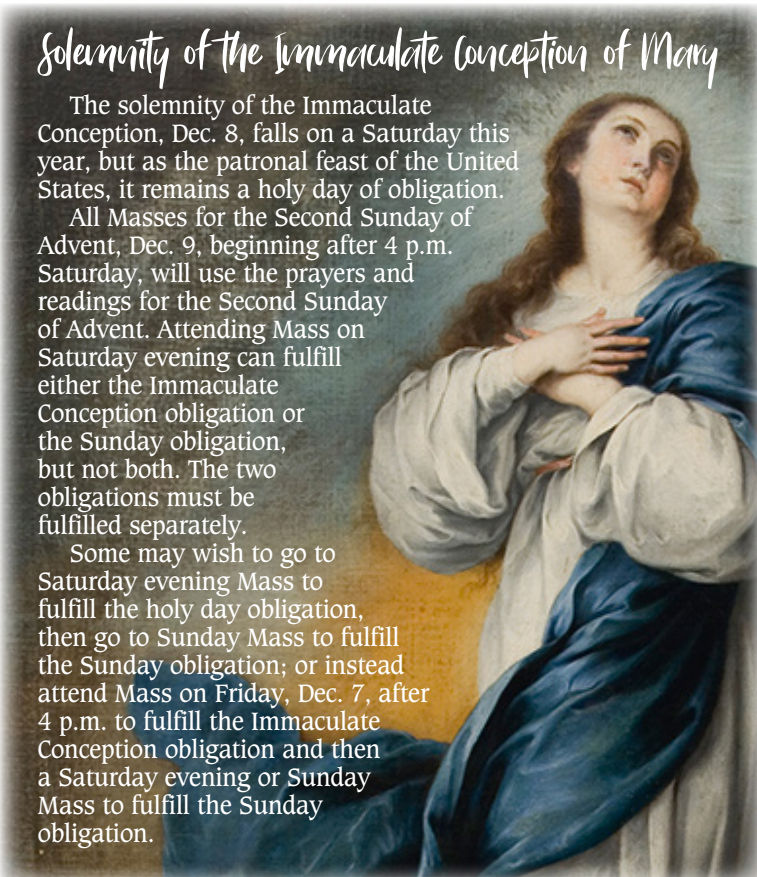
Vicarate A - Rev. Msgr. William C. Schooler
 Vicarate B - Rev. Christopher Lapp
 Vicarate C - Rev. Robert Van Kempen
 Vicarate D - Rev. Thomas Shoemaker
 Vicarate E - Rev. William J. Kummer
 Vicarate F - Rev. David Ruppert

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

The solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, falls on a Saturday this year, but as the patronal feast of the United States, it remains a holy day of obligation.

All Masses for the Second Sunday of Advent, Dec. 9, beginning after 4 p.m. Saturday, will use the prayers and readings for the Second Sunday of Advent. Attending Mass on Saturday evening can fulfill either the Immaculate Conception obligation or the Sunday obligation, but not both. The two obligations must be fulfilled separately.

Some may wish to go to Saturday evening Mass to fulfill the holy day obligation, then go to Sunday Mass to fulfill the Sunday obligation; or instead attend Mass on Friday, Dec. 7, after 4 p.m. to fulfill the Immaculate Conception obligation and then a Saturday evening or Sunday Mass to fulfill the Sunday obligation.



Positives seen since 1978 pastoral on persons with disabilities

BY MARK PATTISON

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The 40th anniversary of the U.S. bishops' "Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons With Disabilities" is a cause for celebration, said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, episcopal moderator of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability.

The pastoral looked at persons with disabilities and "their ability to be more fully engaged in the life of the Church," Archbishop Kurtz said Nov. 14 during the fall general meeting of the U.S. bishops in Baltimore.

"Now you can look at your own local churches" he added, and see that their participation

has "enriched not only their own lives but the lives of so many other people."

The NCPD board issued a statement, "A Call to Encounter and to Wholeness," on the 40th anniversary of the U.S. bishops' pastoral. In it, the board affirmed the bishops' 1978 statement. "The pastoral statement issued a call for a re-examination of attitudes, for a renewed commitment to ensure the well-being of persons with disabilities, and for concrete steps to safeguard the full integration and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the church," the NCPD statement said.

"The pastoral statement cautioned that when that inflated sense of self-importance is given

free reign, it can drive the wedge of prejudice and injustice into the heart of the Christian community. Even if there is no outright hostility from non-disabled Christians toward Christians who have a disability, the presumption that they are not one of us undermines the integrity and communion of the parish community."

The NCPD board also took stock of developments in the Church over the past 40 years. They include: catechetical guidelines in the 1979 document "Sharing the Light of Faith"; the bishops' own 10th- and 20th-anniversary reflections on the 1978 statement; their 1995 "Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities" with updates

in 2017; and the bishops' approval in 2003 of the publication of the National Directory for Catechesis, which included an extended section with guidelines on religious instruction and sacramental catechesis for persons with disabilities.

Another moment was the creation in 1982 of the National Catholic Office for Persons With Disabilities, which changed its name 20 years later to the National Catholic Partnership on Disability.

The NCPD board in its statement issued a fivefold affirmation of Catholic teaching, including:

— "The inalienable dignity of every human being, formed in the image and likeness of God;

— "The respect, honor, and protection that are due to every person from conception to natural death;

— "That Christ's saving grace and call to personal friendship extends to every member of the human family;

— "That no psychological or physical condition on its own can separate someone from encountering the love of God in Christ;

— "And that each person baptized and incorporated into the body of Christ is called to holiness and given the grace to respond to this call."

"Persons with disabilities have the proper right to be active participants in the life of the church. We recognize that the bare assertion and protection of rights can become a sterile exercise whenever it lacks the Christian presumption of our common call to friendship with one another in Christ," the NCPD board said.

"For these reasons, we seek

to foster the full and meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities in the life of their parish communities by offering NCPD resources and training to assist diocesan efforts to educate clergy, pastoral staff, and lay leaders to further their outreach to and support of parishioners with disabilities in every aspect of parish life."

It added, "No parish community is healthy and flourishing if it does not welcome persons with disabilities. Vulnerability, limitation and dependency are an ordinary part of every particular human life."

Archbishop Kurtz lauded the NCPD, which he said was "formed following that pastoral letter. From all the many efforts that have promoted, the welcoming and the engagement of persons with disabilities within our Church and within our society, their work has been mighty."

He added the NCPD statement is "both an affirmation of what has happened, and a commitment of what we're making as a board, and something you as bishops might take back to your diocese in the hopes that you might do the same."

Archbishop Kurtz gave a special word of thanks to Jan Benton, who he said was in her last year as NCPD executive director, and been involved as a staff person since "right after the pastoral letter was promulgated."

The 1978 "Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons With Disabilities" can be found at <https://bit.ly/2z6HjmE>. The statement of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability board, "A Call to Encounter and to Wholeness," can be found at <https://bit.ly/2qPjefq>.



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Catholic migrant advocates have mixed reaction to border events

BY DAVID AGREN

MEXICO CITY (CNS) — The chaotic scene in Tijuana Nov. 25 — when migrants, including women and children, were repelled from the U.S. border with tear gas — prompted the closure of one of the world's busiest border crossings. It also showed the increasing impatience and despair of thousands of caravan participants, who could spend months in an uncomfortable camp as they wait to present asylum claims to U.S. officials.

And while some Catholic migrant advocates criticized U.S. reaction as excessive, some who work with migrants through a network of shelters stretching the length of the country said they tried warning the caravan participants and a migrant advocacy group accompanying it, Pueblo Sin Fronteras, that — unlike past years, when smaller caravans would cross Mexico — times had changed. Resources for sustaining thousands of migrants in Tijuana are stretched thin and the current U.S. government has showed few signs of speeding up the process for accepting asylum applications.

Press reports from Tijuana described a peaceful protest, in which the migrants planned to present their case: that they had come only to work and save their own lives. But the protest was met by a wall of Mexican police officers, prompting the migrants to detour the barricade and head to a train border crossing.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in a tweet that some migrants “threw projectiles.” In response, “Border Patrol agents deployed tear gas to disperse the group because of the risk to agents’ safety. Several agents were hit by the projectiles.”

The caravan has crossed closed borders and pushed past police barricades since depart-



CNS photo/ Kim Kyung-Hoon

A Honduran migrant family who are part of a caravan trying to reach the U.S. run from tear gas released by U.S. border patrol near Nov. 25 the fence between Mexico and the United States in Tijuana, Mexico.

ing San Pedro Sula, Honduras, in mid-October. Parishes have assisted the original caravan and several subsequent caravans as they passed through southern Mexico; a group of religious offered medical attention, and dioceses have taken up collections.

But now the migrants have run up against the U.S. border and a U.S. administration that has warned that the caravan will not enter the country. The U.S. has allowed fewer than 50 claims to be made daily, even as thousands wait their turn in Mexico.

The caravan also risks becoming unwelcome in Tijuana, where hostile attitudes have already been expressed, border closures hurt the economy and the local government warned resources were running low.

Taking that many people to one border crossing and organiz-

migrant shelters, called the U.S. response “excessive.” In the spring, Andrade said caravan organizers “have good intentions, but they’re exposing (the migrants) to danger.”

“Unfortunately, there are groups (of migrants) there that want to cross the border under these circumstances,” he said in late November.

Father Andres Ramirez, who works with migrants in Tijuana, called the response “unprecedented” and said such a border closure as occurred Nov. 25 had not happened since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Father Solalinde has refused to accompany migrants farther north than Mexico City, saying the road poses risks such as kidnapping. He recounted how one group of migrants, who were evangelicals, and told him: God will take care of us and “touch the heart” of president Donald Trump.

“They truly thought that God was going to move the heart of this person, but no! no! no! It wasn’t like that,” Father Solalinde said. He added that some in that group of 250 migrants had gone missing since setting out from Mexico City for Tijuana.

“They wouldn’t take into account the current political climate, the (Dec. 1 presidential) transition in Mexico, the bad organization that they had, because they didn’t see the opportunity for people to help them,” Father Solalinde said, speaking to the haste of many to

rush to the border and not fully consider the opportunity to work in Mexico or apply for asylum there.

“These are difficult times (but it’s as if they have this chip, ‘They have to go north’ and they think that it was going to be the same as the previous times, but it’s not like that.”

The Mexican government said in a Nov. 25 statement it had detained 98 migrants who were involved in scuffles with police and tried to cross the border at Tijuana.

It added more than 7,400 migrants from various caravans were currently in the border state of Baja California, while 11,000 migrants had been repatriated or deported to Central America since Oct. 19.

The *Washington Post* reported Nov. 24 the United States and Mexico’s incoming government had reached an agreement known as “Remain in Mexico,” in which asylum seekers would wait south of the border while their claims are processed in U.S. courts. Incoming Mexican Interior Minister Olga Sanchez Cordero later denied the story, but did not disavow her comments to the *Post* confirming a deal.

She also denied Mexico would become a “safe third” country, which would mean migrants in Mexico would be considered to have already found safety.

In effect, “Remain in Mexico is the configuration of Mexico as a safe third country,” said Andrade.

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Catholics in California join effort to consecrate state to Mary

SAN DIEGO (CNS) — An effort is underway to consecrate California to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and all California Catholics are invited to take part. Many will gather in prayer from noon-2 p.m. local time Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, at several participating parishes statewide. The basic schedule calls for Mass to be celebrated at noon, followed by a walk to a designated location where the rosary and special consecration prayers will be recited. The organizers of this statewide effort are seeking Mary's intercession to combat several moral evils they see as prevalent in the state. The effort has a website, www.consecratecalifornia.com, which lists parishes that are signing on to participate in the campaign. Those unable to make it to a participating church are encouraged to recite the rosary and prayers provided on the website either on their own or as a group. One of the prayers available on the website includes a request "to be spared the just punishment for our souls that our state deserves from killing our unborn, sick, elderly, unwanted, and for the violence, sex abuse, drugs, alcoholism and sex trafficking."

Helping others can change the world, pope tells young people

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a video message to young men and women around the world, Pope Francis called on them to provoke an uprising of change by serving others. In helping those who are suffering, both young believers and nonbelievers can find "a strength that can change the world," the pope said in a video message to youths for the upcoming World Youth Day in Panama. "It is a revolution that can overturn the powerful forces at work in our world. It is the 'revolution' of service," he said in the message released by the Vatican Nov. 21. The theme for the World Youth Day celebrations, which will take place Jan. 22-27, is taken from the Gospel of St. Luke, "May it be done to me according to your word." In his message, the pope said those words uttered by Mary during the Annunciation are "the positive reply of one who understands the secret of vocation: to go beyond oneself and place oneself at the service of others."

Victims of violence at Chicago hospital, St. Louis store mourned

CHICAGO (CNS) — A gunman opened fire at a Chicago Catholic hospital Nov. 19, setting off a frantic scene that ended with three victims killed and

Vatican Christmas tree



CNS photo/Paul Haring

People look out from the dome of St. Peter's Basilica as workers decorate the Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Nov. 26. The tree from the northern Italian region of Veneto will be lit Dec. 7.

the assailant dead, police said. The same day in suburban St. Louis, another gunman entered a Catholic goods store, sexually assaulted several women and shot one of them. The woman later died, police said. The incidents shocked Catholic leaders, including Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich and Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and they offered words of condolence to the victims and their families. The Chicago incident occurred at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center on the city's South Side. The dead included a young police officer and two hospital employees, among them a doctor and a pharmacy resident. Police said the gunman also died, but that they were unsure if he turned the gun on himself or was shot by responding officers. In West St. Louis County, police were looking for a gunman Nov. 20, a day after his attack on a Catholic Supply store. He shot one woman, 53, who died hours later, and sexually assaulted at least one other woman. The attack at the store in suburban Ballwin was apparently a random act. "Our hearts go out to the victims of this horrific tragedy at Catholic Supply," St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson shared in a tweet.

Bishop Morlino dies; increasing vocations was one of his top priorities

MADISON, Wis. (CNS) — Bishop Robert C. Morlino, the fourth bishop of Madison, died Nov. 24 at St. Mary's Hospital in Madison. He was 71. The bishop was undergoing planned medical tests when he suffered what doctors described as "a cardiac event" at the hospital and he never recovered. Funeral arrangements were pending. "All objective indicators point to the fact that Bishop Morlino accomplished what he set out to do in the diocese" after his Aug. 1, 2003, installation, the diocese said in a statement. Among his "three expressed priorities" was increasing "the number and quality of the men ordained to the diocesan priesthood," it said. "Fostering greater priestly vocations" resulted in his ordination of 40 men to the priesthood during his tenure. Another 24 are currently in formation. He also instilled "a greater sense of reverence throughout the entire diocese, especially through our worship of God, celebrated in the holy sacrifice of the Mass," the diocese said, and "made inroads" in challenging Catholic institutions in

the diocese "to live out their professed faith in Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, through their ministry in the secular community."

Pope changes date of World Day of Migrants and Refugees to September

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — At the request of various bishops' conferences, Pope Francis has changed the date of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees to the last Sunday of September. While the 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees was celebrated Jan. 14, in 2019 it will be celebrated Sept. 29, also the feast of the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Greg Burke, head of the Vatican press office, said in a communique that "as usual, the text of the Holy Father's message will be released some months before" the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The day, which was instituted in 1914 by Pope Pius X, had most recently been celebrated in January each year, usually the second Sunday after the Epiphany.

Cardinal makes 'urgent call' to combat antibiotic overuse, misuse

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Antimicrobial resistance poses a "great challenge" to global public health and puts the most vulnerable in our society at risk, said Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. "Our time is running out, and we must act to initiate and animate the necessary behavior change to strengthen awareness and action on infection prevention and control and (to) promote the appropriate stewardship of antimicrobials," he said in a message for World Antibiotics Awareness Week. The World Health Organization says antibiotic resistance, also referred to as AMR, occurs when microbes, such as bacteria, become resistant to the drugs used to treat them. While antibiotics saves millions of lives and alleviate much illness and suffering, "the persistent overuse and misuse of antibiotics in human and animal health have encouraged the emergence and spread of AMR," it said.

Pope names organizing committee for abuse conference in February

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis named U.S. Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago to be part of the organizing committee preparing for a meeting of the world's bishops' conferences and representatives of religious orders to address the abuse and protection of minors. The Feb. 21-24 Vatican meeting is not only "about keeping children safe from harm worldwide," said Greg Burke, head of the Vatican press office, in a written statement Nov. 23. "Pope Francis wants Church leaders to have a full understanding of the devastating impact that clerical sexual abuse has on victims," he said, soon after the Vatican announced the members of the preparatory committee. Together with Cardinal Cupich, the committee will include Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Mumbai, India; Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna of Malta; and Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, president of the Centre for the Protection of Minors at the Pontifical Gregorian University and a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, headed by Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, and some survivors of abuse by members of the clergy also will be involved in the preparatory work for the meeting, the Vatican said. "This a critical moment for the universal Church in addressing the sexual abuse crisis," Cardinal O'Malley said, and the February meeting "will be an important moment for developing a clear path forward for dioceses around the world."

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Family fun at Christmas at The Center

DONALDSON — Christmas at The Center at Donaldson will be Sunday, Dec. 9, from 4-5:30 p.m. Join in for an afternoon of family fun. Activities will include cookie decorating, face painting, pictures with Santa and a live Nativity. Each family will also receive a keepsake ornament.

All are welcome to this free event at The Center at Donaldson, 9601 Union Rd., Plymouth. Refreshments will be served. The Center at Donaldson is sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

Father Jacques Philippe Talk: 'How to Grow through the Trials and Suffering of Life'

GRANGER — St. Pius X Church is set to welcome internationally renowned spiritual author Father Jacques Philippe. He will be speaking on the topic, "How to Grow through the Trials and Suffering of Life," on Dec. 6, 7-9 p.m. in the church.

Join Father Philippe as he shares practical yet profound spir-

itual reflections about discerning God's will in real-life situations of growth, difficulty and pain. This complimentary event will be followed by light refreshments with books available for purchase in the Parish Life Center.

Child care will be available with advanced registration. Complete the form at <https://www.stpius.net/frjacquesphilippe> to register no later than Tuesday, Dec. 4.

Visit www.stpius.net/frjacquesphilippe for more information.

Christmas schedule at Saint Meinrad

ST. MEINRAD — The public is welcome to join the Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey at St. Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, Indiana, as they celebrate Christmas in the Archabbey Church. All times are Central Standard Time.

On Christmas Eve, Monday, Dec. 24, vigils will begin at 7 p.m. and Mass will be celebrated at 10 p.m.

The Mass of Christmas Day will be celebrated at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 25.

Mass is celebrated each day in the Archabbey Church at 7:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday and at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday and feast days. However, during the

Christmas season, Mass will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 26 and 27.

The Mass on Tuesday, Jan. 1, for the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, will begin at 9:30 a.m.

Also, the Archabbey Library will be closed Dec. 22-25 and Dec. 29-Jan. 1. The Saint Meinrad Archabbey Gift Shop will be closed Dec. 24, 25 and 31; and Jan. 1. The Scholar Shop will be closed Dec. 23-Jan. 1.

City of Churches tour

FORT WAYNE — Referred to often as a "city of churches," Fort Wayne boasts some amazing examples of religious architecture. Historic churches face their own unique set of challenges, however. They are often large buildings that require a lot of maintenance and aging or shrinking congregations find it difficult to keep up with the building's demands. The City of Churches tour aims to showcase the great number and variety of churches by allowing visitors to experience these buildings' unique beauty. By making people aware of the buildings, there is hope that there will be a desire to preserve them for future generations. The tour will be Friday, Dec. 7, from 6-10 p.m.

For more information on the tour visit www.facebook.com/citychurches or contact Cornelia Schulz klaus_schulz@comcast.

Blessing of cemetery corpus



Provided by Dennis Fech

On a crisp Saturday morning, Nov. 3, some 100 hearty souls gathered for the annual outdoor Mass honoring deceased members of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne. During Mass, Father Daniel Scheidt blessed a corpus mounted on the cross in the parish's old cemetery, where several founding members rest in the Lord. The altar and original cross were erected in 1920 by Father Joseph Lynn; the cross was replaced in 2000 by the St. Vincent Knights of Columbus Council No. 11353, who maintain the cemetery and recently commissioned the corpus for it.

Loving one another in faith: ICCL Panthers

BY BARB SIEMINSKI

Sometimes a story comes along that touches the heart and begs to be shared. So it was with Suzanne Letherman, Granger, whose husband, Pete, is a varsity Panther football team coach and whose son, Andrew, is a quarterback on the team. The team is comprised of players from St. Pius X Parish, Granger, and St. Anthony and St. Joseph parishes in South Bend who compete in Inter-City Catholic League games in the fall.

The Panthers are more than an excellent team, a team that has taken the championship three years in a row. The players and their coaches have formed a bond.

"From the grueling conditioning and workouts they have endured, to the Saturday morning walk-throughs with doughnuts and chocolate milk, these young men have learned more than just the game of football," said Suzanne. "Not only did they come together to achieve a common goal on the gridiron, their

connection goes all the way to the heart."

This season was particularly hard on for Pete, the receivers and defensive-backs coach, and Andrew.

"Pete's brother Rob became ill halfway through the season and was hospitalized for an extended period," said Suzanne. Unfortunately, Rob passed away just days before the championship game.

"Preparing for that game was a great distraction for both Pete and Andrew, while funeral arrangements were being made. Who would have known how much the game of football could help a broken heart?"

Rob was an avid football fan who had played ICCL football while at St. Thomas the Apostle School in Elkhart. He also played football in high school, at Marmion Academy in Aurora, Illinois, and was a student athletic trainer for the University of Notre Dame football team during college. He came to some of Andrew's games.

"The day after winning the championship, Rob's view-

ing was held in Elkhart," said Suzanne. "I drove to the funeral home and as I was turning into the parking lot, my eyes filled with tears. In the parking lot was a gathering of Panther players and coaches. The boys all dressed in their game jerseys coming to pay their respect and support my husband and son at this difficult time in their lives.

"I think that Rob looking down would have appreciated the team being there for Pete and Andrew. He thoroughly enjoyed the game of football as a player and a fan."

The team does not know how much that meant to the family, said Suzanne.

"It is the incredible leadership these boys have received from their coaches, who are amazing role models, teaching them more than just a game of football. They teach them leadership, determination, the importance of academics and what it means to be a good teammate. These are all lessons that will benefit the boys throughout their entire lives."



Provided by Suzanne Letherman

The day after winning the ICCL varsity championship this fall, the Panthers football team surprised teammate Andrew Letherman and his father, Panthers coach Pete Letherman, by accompanying them at a viewing for Pete's brother, Rob. Several of the boys, the eighth-graders, have been playing ICCL football together since fifth grade.

Blessings for the

Blessing of a Christmas Tree

The use of the Christmas tree is relatively modern. Its origins are found in the medieval mystery plays that depicted the tree of paradise and the Christmas light or candle that symbolized Christ, the Light of the world. According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany. The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing.

In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, in connection with the evening meal on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day.

When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung.

The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply "Amen."

The leader may greet those present in the following words:

Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:
My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, Titus 3:4 (lines 4-7) or Ezekiel 17:22 (lines 22-24 4; I will plant a tender shoot on the mountain heights of Israel.)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

The intercessions are then said. The leader says:

Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. R/.

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord. R/.

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord. R/.

After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.

The leader says the prayer with hands joined:

Lord our God,

we praise you for the light of creation:

the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.

We praise you for the light of Israel:

the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.

We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:

he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,

who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,

let your blessing come upon us

as we illumine this tree.

May the light and cheer it gives

be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.

May all who delight in this tree

come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

The blessing concludes with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer

our spirits by thine advent here;

disperse the gloomy clouds of night

and death's dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

shall come to thee, O Israel.

—From *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

About Advent wreaths

Traditionally, Advent wreaths are constructed of a circle of ever-green branches into which four candles are inserted, representing the four weeks of Advent. Ideally, three candles are purple and one is rose, but white candles can also be used.

The purple candles in particular symbolize the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and goods works undertaken at this time. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, when the priest also wears rose vestments at Mass; Gaudete Sunday is the Sunday of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas.

The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead.

The Advent season

Blessing of an Advent wreath

The use of the Advent Wreath is a traditional practice that has found its place in the Church as well as in the home. The blessing of an Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent or on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent.

When the blessing of the Advent Wreath is celebrated in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another member of the family.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Response (R/.) Who made heaven and earth.

Then the Scripture, Isaiah 9: (lines 1-2 and 5-6) or Isaiah 63 (lines 16-17 & 19) or Isaiah 64 (lines 2-7) is read:

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

With hands joined, the leader says:

**Lord our God,
we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:
he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,
he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,
he is the Savior of every nation.**

**Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we light the candles of this wreath.
May the wreath and its light
be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.
May he come quickly and not delay.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R/. Amen.**

The blessing may conclude with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

**O come, desire of nations, bind
in one the hearts of humankind;
bid ev'ry sad division cease
and be thyself our Prince of peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**

— *From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

Blessing of a Christmas manger or Nativity scene

In its present form the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas crèche, or manger, for Christmas Eve of 1223.

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time.

When the manger is set up in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another family member.

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R/. Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, Luke 2:1 (lines 1-8) or Isaiah 7:10 (lines 10-15, the birth of Emmanuel).

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The leader prays with hands joined:

**God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:
when our need for a Savior was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy, and love.**

**Lord, bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.
R/. Amen.**

— *From Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*



Preparing our hearts for Christ's light

BY JENNIFER MILLER

"The people in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who lived in a land of gloom, a light has shone" — Isaiah 9:1

Recently, there have been many deep, dark days. Between current events in politics and the Church, senseless acts of violence and terror, not to mention natural disasters, the days hold a heaviness.

When we are surrounded by negative headlines, constantly unveiling new, ungodly falsehoods or heartbreaking losses, it is hard to imagine that life will improve anytime soon. But how new is the doom and gloom? The people the prophet Isaiah spoke to in the above Scripture were living in the midst of dark days as well. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had collapsed, and the fierce Assyrians attacked the very walls of the holy city of Jerusalem. Political intrigue, confusion and unethical ways of living abounded. Where was God in all of this darkness? Where was the Great "I Am," "He who is?" How can one live faithfully in the midst of such obscurity?

The liturgical season of

Advent points us the way. The four weeks of Advent begin a new liturgical year that follows Jesus' own life. They begin where we all began, in utero. Christ is present there too, in the darkness. There, in the small, quiet, dark space of a mother's womb, He is there. Growing, week-by-week, nourished by God's own transforming love, Jesus took upon Himself our very human nature. This means He too, like the ancient Israelites, knew what it feels like to live in utter darkness, hoping for the light of new life. Isaiah calls Him, Emmanuel, "God who is with us."

He lived there during the preparation, in the growing, for His coming.

This too is what our Advents can look like. Advent can be a time of active waiting:

Of training our hearts to stay the course, to hold tight to what is most true and desire the good

Of cleaning our ears so we can hear the whisper of God's voice, and of following our Good Shepherd, who leads us back to Him

Of clearing our eyes so we can see His presence, even though He is hidden from sight as an infant in His mother's

womb

Of training our minds to discern truth

Of releasing our hands from the bondage of our will to the freedom of following His will

Granted, much of this will, externally, look like nothing for a while. Months go by before a woman looks pregnant. But it is not the outward appearance that matters. Advent is a time to develop one's interior life. That is precisely though how the Spirit moves, in the small spaces, in the cracks and through seeds, through those who allow Him to be.

Making room in one's life for Christ's coming is first done in the darkness. In acknowledging the difficult, dark days and simultaneously hoping for the full light of eternal happiness, faith can be found. In the midst

of our deepest despair, our confusion and cross, the light of the world is still present.

Jesus proclaims, in John's Gospel, "I am the light of the world." He is described as "the light, which dispels the darkness." Think of how the sun rises in the morning: First a small ray appears on the horizon, then the globe brightens the gray and soon the light changes the whole sky. It is this full light, seeing God as He is, face-to-face, that we desire, and that in Advent we begin and continue to hope and long for.

But first comes the preparation, the work of Advent. To be with our beloved requires the small, slow, faithful work of today. Advent asks of us to choose Jesus' way, moment by moment — to give of ourselves as Mary did to the growing babe

in her womb, nourishing selflessly the life of God within us.

The coming of Christ happened one time in history and happens again every Christmas, when He comes anew, asking to be born in the space we offer Him in the stable of our life. Christmas is the most radical, novel idea of God: to send His Son to become one of His own creatures and save them from the darkness of sin. This rescue, begun at Christmas and fulfilled at Easter, is done through the everyday miracle of the birth of a baby.

God chooses the small, the simple and the lowly as His vehicles for the magnificent and the divine. May we, too, prepare ourselves to be humble and quiet, that His Spirit may grow within us.

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Advent hope from St. Vincent de Paul

BY JEANNIE EWING

Referred to as the apostle of charity, St. Vincent de Paul is best known for his love for the poor and for founding the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) and the Daughters of Charity. As one who knew well the interrelationship of the theological virtues, St. Vincent de Paul didn't often reflect on Advent or Christmas in his writings; yet author John E. Rybolt, C.M., collected some beloved comment on both, offered by St. Vincent at what are known as his "conferences" — talks given to both the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity.

In "Advent and Christmas: Wisdom from St. Vincent de Paul," Rybolt begins each daily meditation with an excerpt from one of St. Vincent's conferences, followed by an appropriate Scripture verse, prayer and what he terms "advent action," which is a brief personal reflection that concludes with a question or suggestion for further enrichment.

Simple in its format, this Advent devotional is apt for those who do not want a lot of dense, extra reading, yet desire a

little extra something to ponder throughout the liturgical season and Octave of Christmas. Written in short, digestible sections, readers have the opportunity to adapt St. Vincent de Paul's quotes to their own lives, as well as incorporate them in journaling for further spiritual growth.

In addition to the daily reflections, Rybolt has included two formats for nightly prayer and reading, similar to Night Prayer from the Office of Readings. The reader has the option to examine his or her conscience, sing Advent hymns and pray Psalms, canticles and antiphons either individually or as a family. Therefore, this particular Advent meditation book is appropriate to use with the Advent wreath and candles as the family gathers together for brief prayer each day.

On Day 24, the quote from St. Vincent de Paul's conference reads:

"God gives us His graces according to our needs. God is a fountain from which each of us draws water according to the need we have of it. Just as a person who needs six buckets of water draws six, and someone who needs three draws three, a bird, who needs only a bill

full, just dips in his beak, and a pilgrim scoops up a handful to slake his thirst. That's how God acts with us."

As we strive to hope in the midst of the world's desolation, we find words of inspiration and encouragement here. St. Vincent reminds us that God gives us exactly what we need: no more, no less. Therefore, we have no need to worry, fear or compare ourselves to others who seem to have their lives put together perfectly.

When we hope, we keep our eyes focused upward rather than outward. We do not concern ourselves with what others are doing, with appearances or with secular and societal pressures. Hope is the virtue that keeps the flame of charity alive in our hearts; that we turn to God time and again without despairing or becoming hopeless, despondent or discouraged when we inevitably suffer.

Rybolt writes on how we can imitate the hope and the other virtues of the saints:

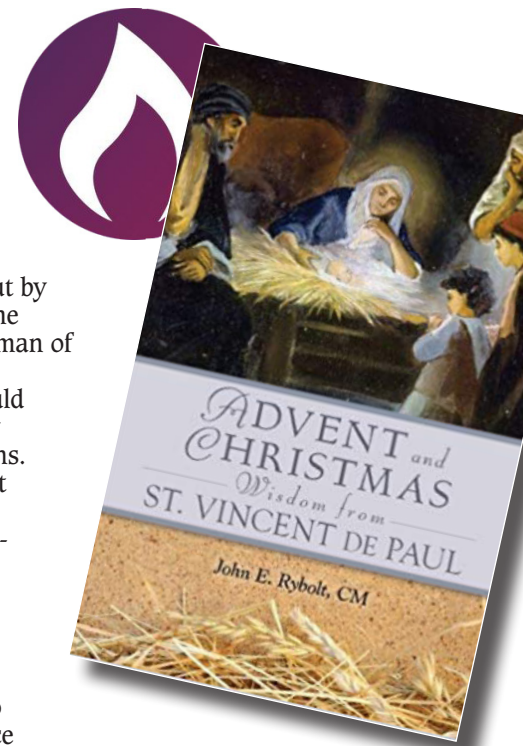
"God offers us the saints both for our imitation and comfort. We can imitate their spiritual strengths and take

comfort in their difficulties. Sometimes these stemmed from their own characters. Saint Vincent de Paul began as a harsh and demanding person, but by the practice of virtue he became 'the meekest man of his time.'"

So, Christians should not be discouraged by their own imperfections. Hope is the virtue that buoys us above such frustrations or egocentric thoughts, so that we are better able to see the silver lining of the weaknesses of our temperaments.

For example, one who struggles with patience might also recognize that he is a passionate and zealous person — qualities that can be used to glorify God through evangelism.

St. Vincent de Paul's words are simple in "Advent and Christmas: Wisdom from St. Vincent de Paul," but he speaks to the heart of humanity in such a way that the reader will have phrases or sentences that remain with him throughout the day.



While it's true that everyone is fighting a battle about which few others may know or understand, St. Vincent de Paul's honest and piercing words are a reminder that Christians are a people of hope, and Advent is the season that grants a renewed sense of purpose, strength and meaning in our losses and struggles.

ADVENT CALENDAR FOR 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<p>December 2</p> <p>Begin this journey of Advent by blessing your Advent wreath. Light the first violet candle and sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."</p>	<p>3</p> <p>In today's Gospel, the centurion says, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof." Make reading the daily Mass readings a part of your Advent this year.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>As you reflect on Mary's journeys to see her kinswoman Elizabeth and then to find shelter in Bethlehem, pray for migrants traveling to find family, hope, and safe haven around the world today.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>"If we say that we have not sinned, we make [God] a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 Jn 1:10). Go to confession this season and enjoy Christmas with a clean heart and a peaceful soul, thanks to God's mercy.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>On this feast day of St. Nicholas, consider purchasing a gift for a giving tree in your parish or office. St. Nicholas was known for abundant generosity to the poor.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Today is the Memorial of St. Ambrose, one of the Doctors of the Church. He baptized St. Augustine and is the patron saint of catechumens. Pray for those seeking to join the Church today.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>On this Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, attend Mass and pray the Hail Mary before meals. As Mary is also the patroness of the US, take time to also pray for our country today.</p>	
<p>9</p> <p>On this Second Sunday of Advent, light the second violet candle on your Advent wreath and consider donating to a special collection for retired religious today.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>"The Lord promises refreshment and freedom to all the oppressed of our world, but he needs us to fulfill his promise. He needs our eyes to see the needs of our brothers and sisters." (Pope Francis, July 6, 2018)</p>	<p>11</p> <p>"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph themselves were refugees in Egypt . . . the Holy Family has become a figure with whom Christian migrants and refugees throughout the ages can identify, giving them hope and courage in hard times." (USCCB, <i>Strangers No Longer</i>, no. 26)</p>	<p>12</p> <p>On her feast day, pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe, that she may "help us never see others as burdens," especially migrants to our country and communities.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Today is the Memorial of St. Lucy, whose name means "light." Think about how you can bring the light of Christ to newcomers and migrants in your community.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>St. John of the Cross, whom we honor today, was known for his deep spirituality and compassion. Reflect today on what more you can do to prepare spiritually for Christmas in these last 10 days of Advent.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>How much do you know about the plights refugees face today? Use this guide from Pope Francis's Share the Journey Campaign to find out more.</p>	
<p>16</p> <p>Las Posadas, a reenactment of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter before the birth of Jesus, traditionally begins today. Pray for migrants currently seeking shelter around the world.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Yesterday was Gaudete Sunday when we shifted our reflection from "the Lord is coming" to "the Lord is near." Rejoice! You are more than half way to Christmas!</p>	<p>18</p> <p>"Christ saved men not with thunder and lightning, but as a wailing babe in the manger and as a silent sufferer upon the cross" (St. Jerome, <i>Letters</i>, 82.1). Reflect on the humility of Christ today and on how you can see Christ in the poor and humble.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Ever wonder where the phrase "O Root of Jesse's stem" comes from? Research how to make a Jesse tree and dive into Christ's lineage.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Take time today to bless the family crèche. (Based on your family's tradition, you may choose to hide the baby Jesus until Christmas morning.)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>On this last Friday of Advent, make it a movie night with your friends or family and watch a Christmas classic.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>We learn in today's Gospel that Mary spent three months with her kinswoman Elizabeth before returning home. Thousands of migrants today are traveling to look for a new home. Read some of their stories.</p>	
<p>23</p> <p>Add this "O Antiphon" to your daily or meal-time prayer today: "O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law: come to save us, Lord our God!" (Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, Revised Edition, 77)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" (Mt 1:23)</p>	<p>Copyright © 2018, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved. Quote from Pope Francis, copyright © 2018, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City State. All rights reserved. Quote from 1 John is taken from the <i>New American Bible, Revised Edition</i>, copyright © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All rights reserved. Quotes from the <i>Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America</i>, second typical edition, copyright © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. Photo: CNS/Bob Roller.</p>					

Say an Ave there for me

The vote in Ireland in the spring to take away constitutional protection for the unborn came as an unhappy surprise to Irish Catholics in the United States. It was a piece of news we didn't want to hear or believe.

Far more Americans identify as Irish than the mere 5 million people who inhabit the Republic of Ireland today. Most have no idea how quickly the once-Catholic nation they think of so fondly is losing its faith, thanks in no small part to clerical scandals there.

What many Americans may still not realize is that Ireland is embracing the culture of death with a zeal and gusto that few other countries

— even traditionally secularized ones — would be so foolish as to imitate.

During the campaign to repeal Ireland's Eighth Amendment (its constitutional protection of the unborn), campaigners promised that it would be followed up with a moderate abortion law. That promise is not quite panning out.

The current Irish government is not content just to legalize abortion. It worries that abortions won't become widely enough available if providers aren't compelled to perform them.

As in the United States, most medical professionals don't go through years of training so they can do something so sordid. A poll of Irish general practitioners this year showed that 68 percent of them either could not or would not perform abortions. Regardless of their politics, doctors tend to view themselves as lifesavers, not life-takers. That's why Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and his cabinet are pushing a bill that would rope into the practice of abortion both taxpayers (who would fund it) and as many medical professionals as possible.

His original plan would have forced general practice physicians — the doctors the government is counting on to become the nation's new abortion corps — to specifically opt out of the program or else perform abortions. This roused the ire of the National Association of General Practitioners, which voted in June that no one should have to perform an

abortion without specifically opting in. The government finally yielded on that point this week — a small bit of good news.

But the government still wants all hospitals that receive public funding to perform abortions starting in the new year, including those traditionally tied

This would be a good time to spare a prayer or two for Ireland.

It's no longer the place you thought it was.



JOHN GARVEY

INTELLECT AND VIRTUE

to the Church and run according to the principles of Catholic medical ethics.

And all doctors will have to refer patients for abortion, no exceptions. So must Catholic crisis pregnancy centers, which are publicly funded in Ireland, but which were established specifically to give mothers better options than going abroad for an abortion. The bill also contains no exceptions for pharmacists who don't want to sell abortion drugs.

Abortion has long been illegal in Ireland, but the pendulum has swung back hard — so hard as to knock the common sense out of its leaders' heads.

This would be a good time to spare a prayer or two for Ireland. It's no longer the place you thought it was. It could use a new St. Patrick to drive out the snakes and scorpions again.

John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington. Catholic University's website is www.cua.edu.

Embracing divine revelations, accepting the unknown

It all started with a lost birth certificate. The Holy Spirit was at work that day and hasn't slowed down since.

My aunt Jan has always known she was adopted, and the many mysteries surrounding that reality had never haunted her. She raised her daughters near St. Paul, Minnesota, her husband's hometown, and cherished her Catholic faith. Now 56, she is an empty nester who volunteers often and paints religious icons.

Last summer, Jan was applying for her enhanced driver's license and couldn't find her birth certificate. Finally, she resolved to send for another one from Pennsylvania, where she was born and raised. The state website noted that it would soon be issuing original birth certificates.

Eventually she applied, and the following month a copy of her original birth certificate arrived, bearing two revelations: her birth name, Theresa Anne, and her birth mother's name, Judy. The unusual maiden name prompted an online search, and within minutes, White Pages churned up a 1940 census showing that Judy had grown up — of all places — in St. Paul! She is 80 and still alive, living in Florida.

Within a week, Jan was mining Ancestry.com. An obituary of her mom's brother listed his children, including one distinct name: a member of Jan's parish, St. Odilia, a



CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

TWENTY SOMETHING

thriving Catholic community in Shoreview, Minnesota.

Jan has known and worshipped alongside her first cousin for years!

The two have since forged a warm new friendship, meeting and texting regularly. Though her birth father's identity remains unclear, Jan has determined that she has five half-siblings, including one in Duluth. Many cousins live nearby, and Jan recently met an uncle in another St. Paul suburb.

Jan's spiritual life proved just as active as her adoption research. She took three icon classes and began the lay formation process for the Third Order Carmelites.

Reconnecting with her birth mom was never her goal, but suddenly it seemed prudent to reach out before someone else mentioned Jan to Judy.

And so, on a Friday night in August, Jan sat at her kitchen table and wrote a letter to her birth mom. The words and tears poured out.

"Thank you from the bottom

CAPECCI, page 13

The Son of Man will come again in glory



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

First Sunday of Advent Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

This weekend begins the Church's year. Usually Advent is seen simply as a time to prepare for the feast of Christmas. In the current American culture, a tempered, penitential season is not in order.

For us, the season is actually a new beginning. Advent summons us to consider the coming of Jesus into our own hearts, and it calls us to prepare ourselves for the final coming of Jesus at the end of time.

Christmas symbolizes these additional occasions of the Lord's arrival into our hearts. Advent is a penitential season. We must

focus upon Jesus, uprooting the tendencies, and even vices, that separate us from God.

Jeremiah is the source of the first reading. His theme, as it was the theme of all the prophets, was that God's people could expect no peace nor joy in their lives until they wholeheartedly returned to God.

In this reading, the prophet notes the sad state of affairs for God's people. Misery is their lot. Sin has produced this unhappy situation.

Always merciful, always good and always protective, God will send into their midst a Savior, a descendant of King David. This Savior will bring justice.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians supplies the next reading. It is an appeal to the Christians of Thessalonica, now the Greek city of Saloniki, to love each other. This love will signify inwardly following the Lord. The message ends by "begging" the Christian Thessalonians to live their lives in a way pleasing to God. St. Luke's Gospel gives

this weekend's liturgy its third reading. It is forthright, even stark, as is typical of Luke's Gospel. Quoting Jesus, it states that suddenly and overwhelmingly will come signs in the sky, with the sun, the moon and the stars. Nations will be in anguish. The seas will roar. People will die of fright.

Amid all this great drama, Jesus will come in might and in glory. The Lord's arrival will be an occasion to rejoice. He will bring final redemption. All will actively anticipate the Lord's coming by praying and sacrifice.

This Gospel was written when, for Christians, the world was a difficult place to be. Certainly, the culture was against them. The political authority was turning against them. With Jesus, truly devoted followers prevailed.

Reflection

Christmas, in every culture, is soft and lovely. Such befits the commemoration of the loving

and forgiving redeemer, Jesus the Lord. It is the acclamation of life itself, and of redemption, even as it recalls the earthly birth of the Son of God to Mary in Bethlehem.

Still, the forthcoming feast of Christmas has profoundly personal, individual considerations, and in some respects it is a warning.

As St. Luke's Gospel so bluntly says, and as Advent says, Christ one day will confront us all. It may be a personal meeting, as many Christians already have experienced. It may be at the end of time, in some manner yet unknown but about which the Scriptures offer colorful hints.

In any case, we all shall meet Christ. It may be a victorious reunion for us. It will be such a day, if we have followed the Lord in our own lives. Jeremiah looks to this day of salvation and victory.

On that day, good will stand starkly opposite evil. We must choose the side toward which we will go. If we choose the side

of right, and of God, we will need strength. Evil is powerful. It lures us to death. God will strengthen us, but we must ask for this strength, and our request must be sincere, honest and uncompromised to be authentic. Thus, in Advent, by prayer and sacrifice, we strengthen our own resolve to turn to God, to meet Christ as our Lord and Savior.

READINGS

Sunday: Jer 33:14-16 Ps 25:4-5, 8-10, 14 1 Thes 3:12-4:2 Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

Monday: Is 2:1-5 Ps 122:1-9 Mt 8:5-11

Tuesday: Is 11:1-10 ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17 Lk 10:21-24

Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a Ps 23:1-6 Mt 15:29-37

Thursday: Is 26:1-6 Ps 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a Mt 7:21, 24-27

Friday: Is 29:17-24 Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14 Mt 9:27-31

Saturday: Gn 3:9-15, 20 Ps 98:1-4 Eph 1:3-6, 11-12f Lk 1:26-38

Abortion funding – cutting off the blood supply

Americans have long been disturbed by the fraud and waste that often surrounds the federal government's use of their tax dollars. They now have further reason to be up in arms because of the way those tax dollars support the practice of abortion, even though such support, technically speaking, remains illegal.

The 1976 Hyde Amendment, a rider attached by Congress to federal spending bills each year, states that federal tax dollars – particularly for Medicaid – cannot be used to pay for abortions. Yet, approximately half a billion dollars of taxpayer money is received annually by Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of “pregnancy terminations” in the United States.

Although Planned Parenthood does not directly receive Medicaid reimbursements for the abortion procedures it performs, the inherent fungibility of funds means that any money provided to Planned Parenthood ends up supporting and indirectly financing their primary business, which is elective abortion. Taxpayer funding props up the nation's largest abortion chain, with more than 300,000 abortions carried out under the auspices of Planned Parenthood each year.

Many Americans object to taxpayer subsidies for this organization, seeking to avoid any cooperation or involvement in the serious evils it promotes. This is why pro-life Americans and individuals of conscience are urging that the organization be defunded, to put a stop to the de facto circumventing of the Hyde Amendment that happens every time Planned Parenthood takes advantage of some form of government funding.

Yet Planned Parenthood continues to expand like a cancer not only in the U.S., but also globally. As cancer tumors need blood and oxygen for their continued growth, Planned Parenthood requires a lifeline of government aid to support its killing activities. As cancer tumors release special chemi-

cals to make new blood vessels sprout nearby to nourish themselves, so Planned Parenthood continues to tap into a number of federal and state governmental funding sources, including Medicaid and grants from Title X of the Public Health Services Act. Eliminating this financial lifeline would significantly decrease the availability of direct abortion and diminish its promotion, much as using selective pharmaceuticals to shut down the growth of new blood vessels in tumors can starve them of their lifeline so they wither away.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute, which functions as a research arm of Planned Parenthood, has plainly acknowledged the importance of governmental subsidies: “Because Title X grants offer up-front funding to providers (rather than payment after-the-fact, as with Medicaid or private insurance), the program provides essential infrastructure support that allows health centers providing family planning services to keep their doors open for clients. Up-front funding helps supply a cash-flow cushion for providers ...”

Despite their “health care provider” veneer, Planned Parenthood is much more of a menace than a benefit to the health and well-being of Americans. The organization has faced a string of scandals ranging from the sale of baby body parts to overbilling and unsanitary clinic conditions, from cover ups of sexual abuse of minors to botched abortions, from falsified medical information to LGBT activism, to the promotion of offensive forms of sex education to impressionable children. As House of Representatives member Diane Black notes, “Planned Parenthood is both the largest abortion provider in America and the largest recipient of Title X dollars. While Title X grants are intended to fund critical women's health services for low income Americans, Planned Parenthood misuses taxpayer dollars to [subsidize] its abortion services. ... Abortion is not



MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

FATHER TAD PACHOLCZYK

healthcare. It destroys one life and damages another.”

The United States needs to eliminate the financial lifeline of Planned Parenthood by defunding the organization of taxpayer dollars. Planned Parenthood supporters, however, argue that if this were to happen, low-income women would not be able to get needed health care. Yet federally qualified health centers (community health centers) could be encouraged to take up the slack. They receive broad government funding and offer care regardless of the patient's ability to pay, making available an even broader array of primary care services than Planned Parenthood does, so women would actually have more health care choices and options. Also, there are many more community health centers than Planned Parenthood clinics nationwide.

Jamie Hall and Roger Severino of the Heritage Foundation sum it up this way: “To ensure that taxpayers are not forced to subsidize America's number one abortion provider, Congress should make Planned Parenthood affiliates ineligible to receive either Medicaid reimbursements or Title X grants if they continue to perform abortions. Taxpayer money from these programs should instead be redirected to the more than 9,000 federally qualified health center sites throughout the country that provide comprehensive primary health care for those in need without entanglement in abortion.”

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia.

CAPECCHI, from page 12

of my heart for the gift of life and the gift of adoption,” she wrote. “Thank you for having me baptized Catholic. I know God has been with me from the very beginning.”

She expressed a willingness to meet but left it up to Judy.

“I have prayed in thanksgiving for you and my siblings and birth father for years,” Jan wrote in closing. “I will continue to do so.”

The letter was written in one sitting and in the mail the following morning.

Initially, Jan hoped for an

immediate reply. None has come, but she's OK with that.

“God is so amazing to allow me to see these connections this side of heaven,” she said. “He is working through me more and more!”

It's evident in her art: She has completed seven icons this year. Normally, she'd finish one or two. It's also evident in her abundant prayer life, including a daily rosary and many Masses offered for her birth parents and siblings.

“You have to be in motion for God to act,” she said. “Prayer is action.”

As the year draws to a close,

Jan has a peaceful acceptance of the many remaining unknowns – and a joyful optimism for the future.

She'd love to paint icons full time to give to churches in need. She plans to learn the violin after retiring and eventually walk El Camino. She's dreaming big and believing, like never before, that anything is possible in God.

“I am living it!”

Christina Capecci is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for December 2, 2018

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Advent, Cycle C: Signs of imminent change. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

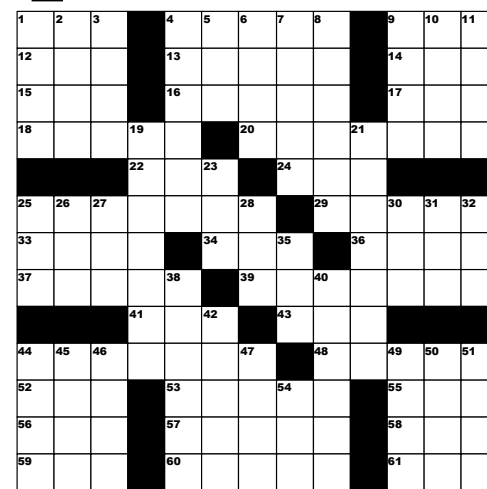
THERE WILL BE THE STARS WORLD COMING RAISE LIFE ESCAPE	SIGNS IN OF THE SEA POWERS CLOUD HEADS FACE STAND	MOON WAVES BE SHAKEN BEGAN DRUNKENNESS STRENGTH SON OF MAN
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STRENGTH TO ESCAPE

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

The CrossWord

December 2, 9
and 16, 2018



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Sunday readings: Jer 33:14-16; 1Thes 3:12-4:2; Lk 21:25-28,34-36; and Phil 1:4-6,8-11; Lk 3:1-6 and Zep 3:14-18a; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18

ACROSS

- 1 Santa helper
- 4 Slaw
- 9 Type of brakes
- 12 Court
- 13 South American nation
- 14 Type of rabbit
- 15 Pride
- 16 Angel glows
- 17 Her
- 18 Cowboy show
- 20 God's title
- 22 Pray with ____
- 24 "Blessed ____ you"
- 25 Nerved

29 Jewish scripture

- 33 Pear type
- 34 Help
- 36 Nothing
- 37 The tomb was
- 39 Resets the video
- 41 Electroencephalograph (abbr.)
- 43 Container
- 44 John was not worthy to untie
- 48 Turn against
- 52 From ____ to ____
- 53 Made wood planks
- 55 Hoopla
- 56 Fish arm

- 57 Tricycle
- 58 Priest title
- 59 Compass direction
- 60 Arab state in Asia
- 61 North northeast

DOWN

- 1 Jug used at Mass
- 2 Company symbol
- 3 John said to share this
- 4 Educate
- 5 Expression of discovery
- 6 An accent
- 7 Hawaiian 'hello'
- 8 Where John the Baptist lived
- 9 Ditto
- 10 Danish physicist
- 11 Hurried
- 19 Thrown out
- 21 Like a lion
- 23 Affirmative
- 25 Compass point
- 26 Male cat
- 27 Clairvoyance
- 28 Directory (abbr.)
- 30 Peter ____ to the tomb
- 31 Put together
- 32 Owns
- 35 Christmas month
- 38 A turbulent state
- 40 Prison head
- 42 Angry stare
- 44 Not hazardous
- 45 King of Sparta
- 46 Hawaiian goose
- 47 Move through the water
- 49 Wheat is gathered into this
- 50 First garden
- 51 "The (affection) ____ of Christ"
- 54 Stretch out money to make do

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Concert in preparation for Advent and the coming of our Savior

FORT WAYNE — St. Patrick Parish, 12305 Arcola Rd., will present a concert performed by Mary Hilger on Saturday, Dec. 1, from 6:30-8 p.m. at the church. Prepare for the season of Advent and participate with your family and friends in a time of song, prayer and reflection.

Bach Collegium Messiah sing-along

FORT WAYNE — The audience is the choir as Handel's great masterpiece, "Messiah," is sung on Sunday, Dec. 2, from 2-4:15 p.m. at Queen of Angels Church, 1500 E. State St. This is a great

opportunity to experience this music from the standpoint of a performer. Musical scores are provided if needed. Cookies and coffee will be served at intermission. Cost is \$5. Visit www.bachcollegium.org for information.

Notre Dame Advent lessons and carols

NOTRE DAME — The annual Advent lessons and carols service will be Sunday, Dec. 2, from 7:15-8:30 p.m. at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart and feature all of the Notre Dame Basilica choirs, including the Notre Dame Liturgical Choir, Women's Liturgical Choir, Folk Choir, Handbell Choir and

Basilica Schola. All are welcome to attend. Visit campusministry.nd.edu for details.

Festival of lessons and carols

ELKHART — A festival of lessons and carols will be Monday, Dec. 3, from 7-8 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1108 S Main St. Three choirs from St. Vincent church and two from St. Vincent school will present choral music of the season accompanied by Scripture readings, pastoral reflections and congregational hymns. A light reception will follow in Vincent Hall.

REST IN PEACE

Decatur

Tony Woodworth, 69, St. Mary of the Assumption

Mason C. Hammond, 29, St. Mary of the Assumption

Fort Wayne

Doris Jean Pucher, 91, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

South Bend

Ralph J. Folkner, 84, Holy Family

Waterloo

Louis M. Boyer, 85, St. Michael the Archangel

Advent lessons and carols

GRANGER — An Advent lessons and carols service will be held Tuesday, Dec. 4, at 7 p.m. at St. Pius X, 52553 Fir Rd. This service will include readings, carols and choral pieces by the Sunday morning and evening choirs, handbell choir and instruments.

Christmas bazaar

NOTRE DAME — A Christmas bazaar sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Cross will be Wednesday, Dec. 5, from 1-7 p.m. and Dec. 6, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the Lillie O'Grady Center on the campus of Saint Mary's College, SR 933.

The CrossWord

December 2, 9 and 16, 2018

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LITTLE FLOWER HOLY HOUR

Dec. 4
7 p.m.

Fort Wayne, Indiana
St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel
with Father Zak Barry



Please, come and pray for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

St. Michael Parish, Plymouth

NOW HIRING DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The DRE is a member of the pastoral staff and shall be responsible for the Faith Formation of children and adults of the parish to be carried out according to the catechetical norms of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

www.saintmichaelplymouth.org/p/dre-job-description.html

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John Martin

The Saints prepare to take the field for the championship game, led by alumnus and school chaplain Father David Hunek.

DWENGER, from page 1

The Fort Wayne *Journal Gazette* quoted senior linebacker TJ McGarry later as saying: "Coach (Jason Garrett) always said, 'What more could we want than adversity?' We fight through adversity in every single way. So why not, in this last final game, biggest game of the season, have as much adversity as can be thrown at us and still come out on top?"

"We had an impromptu speech from the graduating class of '83 in the rest stop, for the first bus, getting us hyped," McGarry said. "They told us everything it meant to them and the alumni. And the whole situation was handled very well by everyone on the team."

Once the game began, a pattern of missed field goals on both sides, the evenly matched offenses and strong defenses meant that four quarters and two overtimes weren't enough for either side to break through and put points on the scoreboard. It was the first high school state championship game to end regulation play with a 0-0 score.

No previous title game had gone more than two overtimes, but in the second OT each team completed field goals, which tied them at 3 points. In third over-

time, both scored touchdowns: The 10-10 score forced a fourth overtime, during which Bishop Dwenger's T.J. Tippmann scored for the win.

"I'm sorry somebody had to lose that one," head coach Garrett said. "My hat's off to Evansville."

Following the game, the IHSA Executive Committee named senior linebacker and team captain McGarry the win-

More photos are available at www.todayscatholic.org



ner of the Phil N. Eskew Mental Attitude Award in Class 4A Football for his

outstanding athletic skills in football and track, his academic achievement and his extracurricular involvement.

This is the fifth state title in Bishop Dwenger history, and Garrett's first win – in his first season as the team's head coach. He gave the credit, however, to his players.

"We knew it was going to be a fight. We anticipated adversity, and they overcame," Garrett said.

Bishop Dwenger ends the season with a 14-1 overall record. The school hosted a championship celebration assembly for the team Wednesday, Nov. 28.

Order of Malta conducts Lourdes Days of Grace and Healing

BY CHRIS GODFREY

Now is a time of grace: a time when the miracle of change is possible through living testimony that people have no lasting place here. We make use of earthly realities, while not being at home in them.

The Order of Malta looks beyond besieged fortresses worn by conflict to the boundless spaces within people and the salvation of their souls. From the extract of its traditional rule comes this imperative: "When a sick person arrives, receive him thus: First having confessed his sins to a priest of the Religion, give him Holy Communion ..."

Such is the Order of Malta's motivation in conducting Lourdes Days of Grace and Healing. The outreach is an extension of an annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, but with a twist. Members of the order "re-present" the Lourdes experience with a rosary, washing and Mass for friends and neighbors in northern Indiana.

The tradition came in existence many years ago at one of the better-known Lourdes replicas: the grotto at the University of Notre Dame. Father Robert Dunn of the Westchester Area was so impressed that he adapted the devotion for use at an assisted living residence, adding a beautiful rosary meditation that equated the experience of its residents with that of St. Bernadette.

"Outremer" was a term for the Holy Land when the Knights of Malta were present and caring for pilgrims. Being a vast and inhospitable territory, they built a string of fortresses to serve as centers of respite and refuge. While northern Indiana is no longer the Wild West, it can still present difficulties for pilgrims on their way to the heavenly city.

St. Teresa of Kolkata often spoke of the aged and infirm. She encouraged her sisters to be "God's light" for them during their final days, like encouraging a runner who is tempted to quit before reaching the finish line. Without God's light, an enfeebled person can find it difficult to continue.

Like their Outremer predecessors, members of the Order of Malta are also geographically challenged. The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is a two-hour drive between its two principal cities, so the order's activities have remained largely in South Bend. But with Outremer in mind, they are beginning to string events across the territory, with plans for further expansion. They have also formed partnerships with other chivalry-minded Catholics, like the Knights of Columbus and chaplains from the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher.

Members wear their work uniforms and sometimes gowns while they show images from Lourdes and play soul-lifting music. A retablo, or decorated

panels, was commissioned for behind a portable altar created for the occasion. Presently the panels depict the Lord's crucifixion, Mary and Elijah, with a guardian angel and St. Michael the Archangel soon to join them. A booklet was created with related prayers, including instruction for saying the rosary, and an explanation of the artwork's elements and how they might apply to the residents' lives. Filling the panels is the deep blue sky, which, like God, is silent but unmistakably present.

After a particularly difficult time, Elijah was tired of living and wanted to die. But he, like the residents we visit are still around, meaning God's plan for them continues to unfold. During this time God cared for Elijah tenderly and simply, thereby preparing him for the journey ahead. Elijah is an example of prayerful, faithful patience.

The graces won by Jesus are distributed by Mary like the roses at Guadalupe, and her messages at places like Rue du Bac, Lourdes and Fatima. They flow as the water of life without cost to all who thirst. Mountains represent faith rising from the desert of this world, while John stands at the foot of the cross looking to Mary for wisdom. The white dog represents faithfulness, the prerequisite of wisdom.

A guardian angel accompanies and lead all to eternal life, while St. Michael quiets rebel-



Provided by Chris Godfrey

Order of Malta chairman Chris Godfrey and a student greet nursing home residents attending a recent Lourdes Day outreach event in South Bend.

lious attitudes. Both are invisible but powerful allies in the wilds of Outremer.

The order has received many positive follow-up reports from the residents and activity directors of the centers members have visited. One resident, many months later during a raucous Oktoberfest celebration, wistfully said, "It is so beautiful." The director asked, "Oktoberfest?"

"No, Lourdes Day!" she replied.

At another center, a resident was accompanied by her daughter, who took a bottle of the Lourdes water for her infant daughter going in for tests. Rather than identifying her disease, the tests failed to find any disease at all. Another woman decided to take instruction in the Catholic Faith, while another went to confession and returned

to the Church. One gentleman said it was the best thing his residence had done in years. Not a bad return for a small amount of effort.

A follow-up, weekly rosary also has begun, taking its inspiration from anchorites like Julian of Norwich who lived apart from the world to devote herself to prayer, meditation and study. In time, members of the Order of Malta hope Lourdes Days will become seeds for Outremer-like fortresses of prayer intercession for all, providing a vision for life and reassuring with Julian's words: "All will be well, all manner of things shall be well."

Chris Godfrey, KM, is the Area-Chair of northern Indiana and a graduate of the University of Michigan and the University of Notre Dame Law School.