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TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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Marking feast day, pope asks Mary's care of families seeking refuge

BY CINDY WOODEN

ROME (CNS) — In the heart of Rome, near streets of fancy shops already blinged out for Christmas shopping, Pope Francis prayed for Romans struggling to survive and for families in the city and around the world who face the same lack of welcome that Mary and Joseph experienced.

The pope concluded his public celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, by making the traditional papal visit to a statue of Mary erected in Rome's historic center to honor Catholic teaching that Mary was conceived without sin.

The statue is located near the Spanish Steps and Rome's most expensive clothing and jewelry stores; it is also next to the building housing the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

Instead of making a speech near the statue, the pope composed and read a prayer, and he left a basket of roses at the statue's base.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, page 3



File photo

The central stained-glass window at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne, depicts the Immaculate Conception of Mary, whose feast day was Dec. 8. Speaking in Rome during a public celebration Sunday, Pope Francis called attention to the difference between Adam, who sinned, and Mary, who was conceived without sin and offered her life to the Lord.

Seminarians seek repeat in Cupertino Classic

Priests aim to reassert basketball dominance

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne, will host the fifth annual Cupertino Classic basketball game on Thursday, Dec. 27. Once again, diocesan seminarians will face the priests in a fierce battle for bragging rights.

Last December, the seminarians pulled off their first win in the game's history. Now the priests, coached by Father Jacob Runyon, seek revenge. Among those returning to the team are the wildly athletic Coonan brothers — Father Matthew and Father Terrence. New additions include the recently ordained Father Jay Horning, Father Thomas Zehr and Father Patrick Hake.

What does Father Horning think it will take for the priests



to win the game? "An exceptional amount of athleticism from the new priests — and for some of the seminarians to not play," he joked.

He then baited the opposing team of future priests, saying: "I was once like you but now I am not: Good luck, and be nice to those who give you the sacraments."

While the priests attempt to reassert their dominance on the hardwood, the seminarians, coached by seminarian Sam Anderson, seek back-to-back wins. Team captain

Ben Landrigan spoke of the team's preparedness for the upcoming match.

"The seminarians are absolutely ready for this year's game. Ever since handling the priests last year, our goal has been to get the repeat," he said. They have prepared by playing basketball together as much as they can, and watching Notre Dame basketball, "which is "our own version of studying film."

As captain, Landrigan wants

his fellow seminarians to "have no fear — whether that's taking a big shot, trying to defend one of the Fathers Coonan, or pushing a priest out of the way for a rebound. All they've got to do is go out there and take the victory that's waiting for them."

Regarding his roster, Landrigan said seminarian Holden Berg might be their best player this season. "I've never seen him play, so he is a total wild card."

The seminarian team expressed a pre-game desire for their opponents to know how much they are loved, and that they are appreciated for all they do. "However, if they never win a game the rest of my time as a seminarian, that's cool, too," Landrigan added.

CUPERTINO, page 16

CUPERTINO, from page 1

The Cupertino Classic is named after St. Joseph of Cupertino, a Franciscan who learned to love God through devotion to prayer and voluntary acts of penance. He was known to levitate while in prayer, especially when Christmas carols were sung at Mass. St. Joseph of Cupertino was chosen to represent the annual priests vs. seminarians game because it takes place in a season where Christmas carols proclaim the joy over the coming of the Messiah. St. Joseph of Cupertino is also the prime saint to represent the diocesan basketball tradition, because both sides are presumably praying for the gift of levitation at the moment of the game-winning dunk.

The Cupertino Classic is an event for people of all ages. Everyone is invited to gather as a community to bond over not only the game, their shared faith and the fun of watching parish priests and the seminarians compete against each other.

"I'd add that our main goal as always is to have a great night with the Catholic community," said Landrigan. "We love seeing everyone and hanging out with them after the game. In the midst of anything else happening in the Church right now, this is a great way to celebrate and support the health of priests and vocations in our diocese."

The event is free. The game begins at 6:30 p.m. and will be broadcast by Redeemer Radio on 106.3 FM.



Photos from Facebook

The priests of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend seek revenge in the Cupertino Classic basketball game. The game tips off at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 27 at Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne. Admission is free.



Priests roster:

Coach-Father Jake Runyon - Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception - FW	
Father Andrew Curry 23	St. Robert Bellarmine - N. Manchester
Father Jason Freiburger 7	St. Thomas the Apostle - Elkhart
Father Matt Coonan 33	St. Vincent de Paul - Elkhart
Father Terry Coonan 12	St. Therese Little Flower - South Bend
Father Zak Berry 11	Queen of Angels - Fort Wayne
Father Jonathon Norton 2015	Sacred Heart - Warsaw
Father Mark Gurtner 3	Our Lady of Good Hope - Fort Wayne
Father Jay Horning 1	St. Vincent de Paul - Fort Wayne
Father Patrick Hake 14	St. Vincent de Paul - Elkhart
Father Thomas Zehr 24	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton - Fort Wayne
Father David Violi 72	St. Joseph - Bluffton

Seminarians roster:

Coach - Sam Anderson		St. Vincent de Paul - Fort Wayne
Ben Landrigan - Captain 22		St. Elizabeth Ann Seton - Fort Wayne
Brian Florin 2		St. Pius X - Granger
Brian Isenbarger 26		St. John the Baptist - Fort Wayne
Deacon Spenser St. Louis 14		St. Vincent de Paul - Fort Wayne
Jake Schneider 20		St. Charles - Fort Wayne
Vince Faurote 3		St. Mary of the Assumption - Decatur
Nick Monnin 9		St. Matthew Cathedral - South Bend
Holden Berg 34		St. Vincent de Paul - Fort Wayne
Zane Langenbrunner 31		St. Bavo - Mishawaka

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Difficult 2018: For pope, it was year to come to terms with abuse crisis

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis marked the fifth anniversary of his election in March in the midst of a firestorm over his handling of clerical sexual abuse and bishops' accountability in Chile.

He soon apologized for his slow response and invited Chilean abuse survivors to the Vatican and then all the country's bishops to meet with him in May. By mid-October, the pope had dismissed two Chilean bishops from the priesthood and accepted the resignations of seven others.

The firestorm began when Pope Francis visited Chile and Peru in January, but the trip also included a meeting with the region's indigenous peoples, marking an important stage in the preparation for the 2019 special Synod of Bishops on the Amazon, which will focus on safeguarding creation and on the pastoral care of the people who live in the region.

Also during 2018, Pope Francis traveled to the Geneva headquarters of the World Council of Churches to celebrate the ecumenical body's 70th anniversary; he went to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families; and he visited the Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

He spent most of October presiding over the Synod of Bishops on young people, and during the synod, he celebrated the canonizations of St. Paul VI, St. Oscar Romero and five others.

But the sex abuse crisis dominated news coverage of the pope's year, particularly after accusations were deemed credible that former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, had abused a minor and for years had sexually harassed seminarians.

The pope accepted his resignation from the College of Cardinals, forbid him from publicly exercising priestly ministry and ordered him to "a life of prayer and penance until the accusations made against him are examined" in a canonical process.

Less than a month later, Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, the former nuncio to the United States, inflamed the situation by claiming that Pope Francis had known of Archbishop McCarrick's history of sexual misconduct and of supposed sanctions imposed on him, but ignored or lifted them. Archbishop Vigano later admitted sanctions were never formally imposed, but he continued to insist Pope Francis ignored warnings about



CNS photo/Eduardo Munoz, Reuters

Juan Carlos Cruz, a victim of clerical sexual abuse in Chile, becomes emotional after speaking to reporters outside the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus in New York Feb. 17. In a letter released April 11, Pope Francis said he had been mistaken in his assessment of the sexual abuse situation in Chile, and he begged the forgiveness of survivors and others he offended.

Archbishop McCarrick.

In mid-September, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis was calling the presidents of all the world's bishops' conference to a four-day meeting at the Vatican in February to address the abuse crisis and better ways to protect children.

At the synod on young people, faith and vocational discernment, some bishops — especially from Australia and the United States — insisted the abuse crisis be a topic of discussion.

Australian Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney used his speech at the synod to formally apologize to young people for all the ways the Catholic Church and its members have harmed them or let them down.

In the presence of Pope Francis, he apologized Oct. 4 "for the shameful deeds of some priests, religious and laypeople, perpetrated upon you or other young people just like you, and the terrible damage that has done."

He apologized "for the failure of too many bishops and others to respond appropriately when abuse was identified, and to do all in their power to keep you safe; and for the damage thus done to the church's credibility and to your trust."

U.S. Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, a member of the synod council that planned the gathering, had asked Pope Francis in August to cancel the synod and focus instead on the abuse crisis.

In his speech to the synod, he

urged his fellow bishops to reaffirm strongly and clearly Catholic teaching on sex, sexuality and sexual morality.

"Explaining why Catholic teaching about human sexuality is true, and why it's ennobling and merciful, seems crucial to any discussion of anthropological issues," the archbishop told the synod.

"The clergy sexual abuse crisis is precisely a result of the self-indulgence and confusion introduced into the Church in my lifetime, even among those tasked with teaching and leading," he said. "And minors — our young people — have paid the price for it."

While each of the 14 working groups at the synod reported having discussed the abuse scandal, in the end the final document removed a reference to "zero tolerance" of abuse that had been in the draft document.

But members retained a passage saying, "The Synod expresses gratitude to those who have had the courage to denounce the evil they have suffered: they help the church become aware of what has happened and of the need to react decisively" to ensure abuse does not continue to occur.

The synod was enlivened by the presence of three dozen young people in their 20s and 30s who addressed the assembly, participated in the small groups, spoke at press briefings and — uncommonly at a synod — cheered for some of the speeches of bishops and other observers.

In the end, the synod affirmed that the Catholic Church and all its members must get better at listening to young people, taking their questions seriously, recognizing them as full members of the Church, patiently walking with them and offering guidance as they discern the best way to live their faith.

Pope Francis' trip to the former Soviet republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in September coincided with the announcement that after decades of talks with China's communist government officials, the Vatican had reached a provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops.

Giving the government input on bishop candidates in exchange for official recognition of their office was a move widely debated. Some people, including the pope, saw it as an essential step toward ensuring the unity of Catholics in China with the universal Church, while others viewed it as an unacceptable concession to the Chinese government and a betrayal of Chinese Catholics who have risked their lives for decades by refusing to allow the government to control the Church.

One positive result, however, was that for the first time, two bishops from mainland China were allowed to attend a Synod of Bishops, although they had to leave early.

Canonizing St. Paul VI and St. Oscar Romero during the synod, Pope Francis focused on Jesus' call to leave everything behind and follow him. "Do not walk behind Jesus only when you want to, but seek him out every day," the pope said. "Do not be content to keep the commandments, to give a little alms and say a few prayers: find in him the God who always loves you; seek in Jesus the God who is the meaning of your life, the God who gives you the strength to give of yourself."

The sainthood ceremony came seven months after Pope Francis published his third apostolic exhortation, "Gaudete et Exsultate" ("Rejoice and Be Glad") on how every person is called to holiness.

"We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves," he said, citing the example of "saints next door," as seen, for example, in "parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile."

Woman who once assisted with abortions to address March for Life

BY DENNIS SADOWSKI

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Abby Johnson, who early in her career assisted in carrying out abortions, will be among the speakers during the 2019 March for Life rally Jan. 18 on the National Mall in Washington.

Johnson, a one-time Planned Parenthood clinic director, is the founder of And Then There Were None, a ministry that assists abortion clinic workers who have left their position.

“Unique From Day One: Pro-Life Is Pro-Science” is the theme of the 2019 march, Jeanne Mancini, March for Life president, said during a media briefing Dec. 5 in Washington.

Mancini said this year's events will focus on the scientific discoveries that have led to new understanding about life in the womb.

“Science and technology are on the side of life in large because they show the humanity of the child at a very young age,” Mancini told Catholic News Service after the briefing.

“We can hear and see a baby's heartbeat now at six weeks. There are blood tests to know a baby's gender at seven weeks. Now that's changed enormously over the course of the last few years,” she said.

The annual march for Life events mark the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade* and its companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, that legalized abortion.

The 2019 march follows encouraging news for the pro-life movement that abortions overall as well as the country's abortion rate continued to decline in 2015, according to data compiled by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CDC determined that 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.



Abby Johnson, who early in her career assisted in carrying out abortions, will be among the speakers during the 2019 March for Life rally Jan. 18 on the National Mall in Washington. She is pictured in a 2011 photo.

CNS photo/Jose Luis Aguirre, Catholic San Francisco

Science and technology are on the side of life in large because they show the humanity of the child at a very young age

JEANNE MANCINI,
MARCH FOR LIFE PRESIDENT

The number of legal abortions in the United States peaked in the 1980s before beginning a slow but steady decline, interrupted only by the slight rise in, or holding steady of, numbers in the late 2000s.

Two days of events open with the annual March for Life conference and expo Jan. 17. A panel discussion during the conference will include Dr. Grazie Christie, a policy adviser for the Catholic Association; Dr. David Prentice, vice president and research director of the Charlotte Lozier

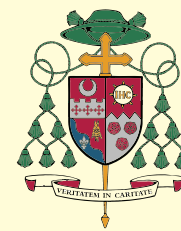
Institute; Rick Smith, founder of Hope Story, a nonprofit organization that helps families with a Down Syndrome child; and Christine Accurso, executive director of Pro Women's Healthcare Centers.

In addition, popular commentator Ben Shapiro planned to bring his podcast to the march for live recording at 10 a.m. (EST) Jan. 18.

The main event, the March for Life Rally, is set for noon at 12th Street NW on the National Mall between Madison Drive and Jefferson Drive. Afterward, participants will gather for the official march on Constitution Avenue between 12th and 14th streets and make their way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The annual Rose Dinner closes the observance the evening after the march.

Details of events are online at <http://marchforlife.org/mfl-2019/rally-march-info/>.



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

- Sunday, December 16: 10 a.m. — Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph Church, LaGrange
- Tuesday, December 18: 11 a.m. — Mass and Luncheon for Diocesan Employees of Fort Wayne Area, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
- Wednesday, December 19: 11 a.m. — Mass and Luncheon for Diocesan Employees of South Bend Area, St. Francis Convent, Mishawaka
- Thursday, December 20: 11 a.m. — Mass and Lunch for Seminarians, their Families and Serra Club of South Bend, St. Jude Church, South Bend

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, from page 1

In the prayer addressed to Mary, he said, “In this Advent time, thinking of the days when you and Joseph were anxious for the imminent birth of your baby, worried because there was a census and you had to leave your village, Nazareth, and go to Bethlehem — you know what it means to carry life in your womb and sense around you indifference, rejection and sometimes contempt.

“So, I ask you to be close to the families who today in Rome, in Italy and throughout the world are living in similar situations,” the pope continued. He asked Mary to intervene “so that they would not be abandoned, but safeguarded with their rights, human rights that come before every other, even legitimate, demand,” an apparent reference to rights of migrants and refugees and the right of nations to control their borders.

Earlier, under brilliantly sunny skies, some 30,000 people gathered in St. Peter's Square to recite the midday Angelus prayer with Pope Francis.

Before leading the prayer, he offered a meditation on the Bible readings for the day's feast, highlighting the difference between Adam, who sinned and then hid from God, and Mary, who was conceived without sin and offered her life totally to doing God's will.

“The ‘Here I am’ opens one to God, while sin closes, isolates, keeps one alone with oneself,”

the pope said.

“‘Here I am’ is the key to life,” he said. “It marks the passage from a horizontal life focused on oneself and one's own needs, to a vertical life, reaching toward God.”

Openness to God and to doing God's will “is the cure for selfishness, the antidote to an unsatisfying life where something is always missing. ‘Here I am’ is the remedy to the aging of sin, the therapy for remaining young at heart.”

“Why don't we begin each day with a ‘Here I am, Lord’? It would be beautiful to say each morning, ‘Here I am, Lord, may Your will be done in me today,’” he said.

Turning one's life over to God and to doing His will does not mean life will be free of troubles and problems, he said. Mary's wasn't.

“Being with God does not magically resolve problems,” he said.

In fact, the pope said, for Mary the problems began immediately. “Think about her situation, which according to the law, was irregular, and the torment of St. Joseph, the life plans that were overturned, what people would say. But Mary put her trust in God.”

The “wise attitude” of Mary, which all Christians should try to imitate, is not to concentrate on the succession of life's problems — “one ends and another presents itself” — but to trust in God and entrust oneself to Him each day, Pope Francis said.

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Women religious launch Advent with the light appearing in darkness

BY KATIE RUTTER

BEECH GROVE, Ind. (CNS) — A few purple hangings and an Advent wreath were the only signs of the season in the dark chapel of the Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

In the hallway just outside, the Sisters of St. Benedict quietly assembled, intentionally stopping to gather their thoughts and silently reflect.

The light appearing in darkness served as a metaphor for the 38 women religious during their Dec. 1 evening prayer as they marked the beginning of Advent, four weeks of preparation before Christmas.

Outside of the monastery walls, Christmas decorations, shopping and celebrations were in full swing. Silent, sparse and contemplative, the religious house was a stark contrast.

One expert called this liturgical season of Advent a “radical critique” of the human tendency to binge on celebration.

“We need times to contemplate and to await the coming of that which is to come, and we need time to celebrate that which is here,” said Timothy O’Malley, academic director for the Center for Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame.

“In a kind of perpetual cycle of wanting to move from event to event, to have no preparation but just to celebrate and move, Advent is a radical critique,” O’Malley told Catholic News Service.

For these monastic sisters, the period of preparation began with their Dec. 1 evening prayer service. They first observed “statio,” or a short period of silent prayer and reflection before their communal service.

Then their prioress, Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner, led the way into the dark chapel carrying a single lit candle. The sisters’ handbell choir and a flutist



CNS photo/Katie Rutter

Benedictine Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner, prioress of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Beech Grove, Ind., holds a candle intended to symbolize the light of Christ as the sisters begin their first prayer service of Advent Dec. 1 at the Our Lady of Grace Monastery.

played the haunting melody of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” as the women filed into their seats.

“For us it’s really a time of opening our heart so that we’re really ready to receive Christ when he comes at Christmas,” Sister Horner said.

“I’m waiting for Christ to come and be my light and give me a few more hints on how to live, how to live better,” added Sister Harriet Woehler.

The candlelit procession into the dark chapel, they said, symbolized Christ breaking through the darkness of the world.

Sister Horner led the sisters in a blessing before using the flame to light the first candle of their Advent wreath. The four candles serve as a visual reminder of the time passing before Christmas.

“For me, seeing those candles lit each week, it’s a way for me to look and say, ‘Oh, where am I right now?’” said Sister Marie Therese Racine, the director of

liturgy at the monastery.

One candle of the Advent wreath, the candle that will be lit on the third week, is pink to symbolize joy. The remaining three candles are purple. This color, prevalent in the seasons of Advent and Lent, is meant to represent penance.

“It actually was a very rich color, so it was a sign of this desire to pour out the fullness of one’s heart to God,” O’Malley told CNS.

“It was an expensive color, so it was a sign of real commitment,” he said.

During their evening prayer, the voices of the sisters echoed through the chapel as they chanted passages from the Book of Psalms. They also listened to a reading from the Book of Isaiah, a prophet who predicted the Messiah’s coming.

Readings from the biblical prophets are frequently contained in Advent liturgies, as are passages about Mary. O’Malley explained that Mary serves as the model for the “three comings” of Christ anticipated by Advent.

“There’s Christ coming at the

end of time, there’s Christ coming as the baby, there’s Christ coming into the heart of each and every Christian who prepares a space for Christ to come,” O’Malley said.

For the sisters, the sparseness of their environment pointed to the need for this interior preparation.

“We walk around our monastery now, it’s still that quiet waiting time. You walked into our lobby and you saw the purple, it’s just a reminder that we’re not quite there yet and we need to be prepared so we really can enter the Christmas season fully,” Sister Horner explained.

Neither O’Malley or the sisters criticized the many Christmas-oriented activities that often take place during Advent, such as decorating, baking and Christmas card-writing. However, both suggested that the lay faithful integrate the spirit of penance and prayer into their Christmas commitments.

“I know for myself, yes you have to write the Christmas cards, but it’s the spirit that you do it in,” Sister Horner said.

“For me, (I) think of people and pray (over) the cards as I’m writing them, not just get them done. Not that I don’t do that toward the end,” she added with a laugh.

“This preparation is the real thing, the main thing of Christmas,” Sister Woehler said.

“It’s not all the tinsel and the elaborate — that’s nice, but the main part is the inside, the heart. To me Advent is the heart of Christmas,” she said.

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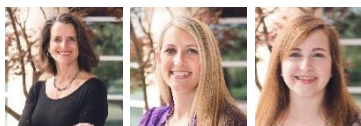
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Consecrated virgin named to BBC 100 Women of 2018 list

BY KEVIN KILBANE

Jessica Hayes of Fort Wayne attracted international news coverage when she became a consecrated virgin in August 2015. Hayes' faith put her back in world news again in late November when she was named one of the BBC network's 100 Women of 2018.

The BBC story about this year's 100 Women list identifies Hayes as "a consecrated virgin - vowing perpetual virginity as a bride of Christ - who teaches high school theology classes and serves as a vocational adviser."

"I'm pleased they would consider putting me on the list because of my consecrated life," Hayes said, noting the mention informs more people about the consecrated virgin vocation. She believes she currently is the only consecrated virgin in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Hayes, 41, teaches the subjects of Dignity of Women, Sacraments and Morality at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne. As an adviser for the diocese's Vocations office, she also assists people considering the consecrated life.

In addition, Hayes serves as a teacher in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program at her parish, St. Vincent de Paul in Fort Wayne, and occasionally speaks at various parishes on topics such as the dignity of women and vocations.

The BBC 100 Women list each year recognizes a diverse range of women from across the world and explores their stories through documentaries, features and online content, BBC publicist Suzie Schilling said in response to questions asked by email.

Suggestions for women to include on the list come from journalists working for the BBC World Service's 42 language services, Schilling said.

The 100 Women list for 2018, which Schilling described as a "momentous year for women's rights," includes women ages 15-94 from more than 60 countries who are trying "to spark positive change in the world around them" or who are less well-known "but still have done

something inspirational ..."

The BBC also featured Hayes in a separate story about consecrated virgins, which the network published the evening of Dec. 6 Fort Wayne and South Bend time.

As of August, 254 women lived as consecrated virgins in the United States, the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins reported on its website, www.consecratedvirgins.org. About 4,000 consecrated virgins served the Church worldwide in 2015, the most recent figure available, the website said.

Hayes learned she would be included on the 100 Women of 2018 list when a BBC correspondent called her in August to interview her about "Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago," an instruction the Vatican issued in July about the vocation of consecrated virgins. Hayes wasn't aware of the 100 Women list before that call.

Becoming a consecrated virgin has had a major impact on her spiritual life, Hayes said.

"It is entirely different to relate to the Lord as spouse rather than as the sons and daughters we all are," she said.

"My life is primarily about growing in knowledge and love of the Lord and learning to be more of an attentive listener (so that I can live my life according to His will," Hayes said. "The Lord gives Himself to us in the measure we open ourselves to grace, to his life and love. My days are arranged so that there are many opportunities for me to return to the Lord in prayer, particularly in the Blessed Sacrament.

"As a bride of Christ," she added, "I am seeking to live, as far as possible in this life, the reality that all of us hope to enjoy in heaven: the union of the soul with God alone."

Being a consecrated virgin also has prompted her students to ask many more questions about vocations than they did previously, said Hayes, who is grateful for that impact.

"The most-oft asked question is: 'How did you know your vocation?'" she said. "They want to be sure that they are following God's will, and they don't

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BBC 100 Women 2018: Who is on the list?

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Photos by Joe Romie

Jessica Hayes, theology teacher at Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne, is pictured at left and above during her Mass of consecration to a life of virginity in 2015. Her vocation is attracting the attention of media again this year: The British Broadcasting Corporation has included her in its yearly list of 100 inspiring women.

know what that certainty looks like.

"They also ask how I was able to give up marrying and having a family," she added. "They see this as a great sacrifice. I have to explain to them that it is normal to desire marriage and children — the question to put before the Lord is: How do you want me to love: to be a mother or a father?"

Since her consecration, Hayes said she also has had some female students speak to her outside of class about consecrated life.

"It is new (for me) to have them considering at all, and seeking, to discern God's will for their life with an openness to consecrated life. I've even had a couple of girls say aloud to the class that they were considering this for themselves and interested in going on discernment retreats. This did not happen at all in the first 15 years of my career."

When students have possible interest in the priesthood or consecrated life, Hayes offers them this advice:

"I always emphasize personal prayer and the sacraments," she said. "They can only be certain of God's will by drawing near to Him in prayer, by discerning in time the sound of His voice. There are no shortcuts to this."

People with questions about the consecrated virgin vocation can contact Hayes at JHayes@bishopdwenger.com.



NEWS BRIEFS

11th Circuit ruling 'finally' ends EWTN court fight over HHS mandate

IRONDALE, Ala. (CNS) — The chairman and CEO of the Eternal Word Television Network said the global Catholic media organization is "grateful that finally" it no longer "has to worry about being forced to choose between massive fines and following our faith. It shouldn't take years to prove the obvious: You can't tell a religious media network to say one thing and do another," said Michael P. Warsaw in a statement issued from EWTN's headquarters in Irondale. Warsaw's remarks came Nov. 30 about a ruling issued a day earlier by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit that vacated a lower court's ruling that EWTN had to comply with the Obama administration-era mandate to cover contraceptives and abortifacients for employees or pay huge fines. The Washington-based Becket non-profit law firm that represented EWTN in the case — *Eternal Word Television Network v. Azar* — said the circuit court's ruling "comes on the heels of a settlement with the federal government" and "ends EWTN's seven-year legal battle." "Azar" is Alex Azar, who is the current HHS secretary. It also follows an HHS rule put in place Nov. 7 finalizing interim rules issued by the Trump administration in October 2017 to expand the religious exemption to the mandate to religious employers; the new rules maintain the existing federal contraceptive mandate for most employers.

Pope to make historic visit to United Arab Emirates in February

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis will visit the United Arab Emirates next year, becoming the first pope to visit the Arabian Peninsula, the Vatican announced. In a Dec. 6 statement, the Vatican said the pope will "participate in the International Interfaith Meeting on 'Human Fraternity'" after receiving an invitation by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi. "The visit will take place also in response to the invitation of the Catholic Church in the United Arab Emirates," the Vatican said. The trip Feb. 3-5 will take place less than a week after Pope Francis returns from his Jan. 23-28 visit to Panama for World Youth Day. Shortly after the announcement, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, welcomed the announcement of the pope's visit in a post on his personal Facebook page.

Guadalupe cowboys ride in Illinois



CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Chicago Catholic

Members of Club Los Vaqueros Unidos (United Cowboy Club) from the Chicago area are blessed with holy water as they arrive at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Des Plaines, Ill., Dec. 1, as part of a pre-celebration for Mary's Dec. 12 feast day. The feast celebrates her appearance to indigenous peasant St. Juan Diego in 1531 near present-day Mexico City.

Pope offers condolences for death of former President Bush

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis expressed his condolences for the death of the 41st president of the United States, George H.W. Bush. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, sent a telegram to the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, telling him the pope was "saddened to learn of the death" of the former president. "Pope Francis offers heartfelt condolences and the assurance of his prayers to all the Bush family," he said in the telegram published by the Vatican Dec. 5. "Commending President Bush's soul to the merciful love of almighty God, His Holiness invokes upon all who mourn his passing the divine blessings of strength and peace," Cardinal Parolin wrote. Bush died Nov. 30, at the age of 94 at his home in Houston. He was to be honored with a state funeral in Washington Dec. 5.

Catholic Relief Services marks 75 years of restoring people's dignity

BALTIMORE (CNS) — As Catholic Relief Services staffers and supporters spent an evening marking 75 years of service in the world, one word recurred: dignity. Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, who chaired the CRS board of directors from 2010 to 2013, spoke of it in his homily at a special Mass Dec. 5 in St. Stephen's Chapel at the organization's Baltimore headquarters. Every day, he said, Catholic Relief Services is trying to bring the world that is, the world that God intends. In most cases, this means "giving some sense of dignity to people robbed of their dignity." Bishop Kicanas, who often visited CRS projects when he was chairman of the board, spoke of all the places he saw this occur: in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, where children scrounge for food; in India's Uttar Pradesh state, where CRS helps women fight infant mortality. In Peru, he said, he saw an indigenous woman speaking at a meeting in her newly learned Spanish, "and

the men were listening. Amazing! CRS for 75 years has been hovering over the vulnerable," he said, calling the international relief and development agency determined, resolved and patient. "CRS will not fail," he said, urging staffers to continue their work for another 25 years.

Vatican urges adoption of global compacts on migration, refugees

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Welcoming the finalization of global compacts on migration and on refugees, the Vatican urged nations to adopt the non-binding agreements to protect people who are on the move and to promote their orderly acceptance in new countries. "Greater cooperation and responsibility sharing are important themes running through both compacts," said a statement Dec. 6 from the Vatican's Migration and Refugees Section. In anticipation of the adoption Dec. 10-11 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Vatican noted, however, that it had registered some "reservations and comments" on references in the com-

pact to "the so-called 'Minimum Initial Service Package,'" which includes the distribution of condoms, and to "sexual and reproductive health services," which could include abortion. Those provisions, the Vatican said, "are neither agreed language in the international community nor in line with Catholic principles." Still, the Vatican said, the compact is an essential recognition that the phenomenon of migration is universal and that international cooperation is required to protect the rights and dignity of migrants and to assist the nations that welcome them. The global compact offers "a menu or a toolkit of actions that states -- and other actors -- can choose to do internally, bilaterally and even regionally, depending on their circumstances and needs," the Vatican statement said.

A Norbertine abbey, steeped in tradition, uses modern outreach

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Norbertine Fathers at St. Michael's Abbey in Silverado, California, just opened their doors, so to speak, to the world at large. The priests and seminarians who live a monastic life at the abbey but also have apostolic ministries at schools, parishes and prisons in Southern California, recently developed an online platform for their donors and subscribers to essentially take part in the life of the abbey — gaining access to spiritual writings of the priests, audio to their Gregorian chants and video clips including links to a series they produced last year about themselves called "City of Saints." The site is called the Abbots Circle — www.theabbots-circle.com — and is akin to a digital library, but it also provides opportunities for subscribers to ask questions. "God is asking us to reach the Church in new ways," said Norbertine Father Ambrose Criste, novice master and director of vocations and formation for the order. The new platform enables the priests to give back to their supporters and "provide spiritual nourishment," he added. It also responds to those who come to the abbey seeking spiritual direction and often ask for more, wondering if they can read homilies or other works by the priests. "They are thirsty for sound instruction, teaching nourishment and real-time questions and answers," the priest told Catholic News Service Dec. 4.

Catholic groups push for strong climate deal at U.N. summit in Poland

KATOWICE, Poland (CNS) — Catholic representatives worked to keep negotiations on track for a comprehensive deal to address global warming as the U.N. climate change conference entered its second and final week in Katowice, Poland. The effort was complicated by the actions of U.S., Russian, Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti delegates, who objected to a note by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP24, “welcoming” an October report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The report warned that greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels would need to be reduced by 45 percent by 2030 for global warming kept to a maximum of 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit under the 2015 Paris climate accord or risk worsening drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty. After hours of negotiations Dec. 8 and with no consensus reached, the note was dropped under U.N. protocol. Still, the Church continued to press for sustained action on climate change. “The church is exerting pressure and showing really significant commitment. We must hope countries match this,” said Rebecca Elliott, communications director of Global Catholic Climate Movement, a coalition of more than 650 Catholic organizations. “Besides acting as a moral voice and providing a robust faith-based response, Catholic organizations are relating stories about the experiences of people from Latin America, Africa, India and the Pacific islands who are gravely affected by climate change.”

Pope: Prepare for Christ's birth by recognizing mistakes, sowing peace

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Advent is a time for people to think about what they can change about themselves so that they can sow the seeds of peace, justice and fraternity in their daily lives, Pope Francis said. The Advent season is a call for personal conversion, “humbly recognizing our mistakes, our infidelities, our failure” to do one’s duty, he said Dec. 9 before praying the Angelus with visitors gathered in St. Peter’s Square. Celebrating the second Sunday of Advent, the pope said the attitudes of vigilance and prayer that characterize the Advent season and preparations for Christmas include a journey of conversion. “Let each one of us think, how can I change something about my behavior in order to prepare the way of the Lord?” the pope said. Preparing the way entails making straight

“His paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low,” the pope said, citing the day’s Gospel reading according to St. Luke.

Everyone must respect the basic human rights of all human beings, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The fundamental rights of all human beings, especially the most vulnerable, must be respected and protected in every situation, Pope Francis said, marking Human Rights Day, Dec. 10. “While a part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees their dignity denied, ignored or infringed upon and their fundamental rights ignored or violated,” he said. Such a contradiction leads one to ask “whether the equal dignity of all human beings — solemnly proclaimed 70 years ago — is truly recognized, respected, protected and promoted in every circumstance,” he said in a written message. The message was read aloud by Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, at a Dec. 10-11 conference at the Pontifical Gregorian University discussing the “achievements, omissions and negations” in the world of human rights today.

Christian, Muslim young people spread pre-Christmas cheer in Beirut

BEIRUT (CNS) — On a gloomy, rainy Saturday morning in Beirut, 92-year-old Julia enthusiastically greeted her visitors, Christian and Muslim youth, who had come to set up a Christmas tree in her modest apartment. “Welcome. I love you,” she said to her guests, who each greeted the beaming woman with kisses before breaking out in a chorus of “Jingle Bells.” Julia, a Maronite Catholic, was one of 10 beneficiaries Dec. 8 of a Christmas tree decoration project for poor elderly that brought together Lebanese volunteers from the Knights of Malta, a Catholic organization, and “Who is Hussein,” a Muslim Shiite organization, as well as Girl Guides associated with the local St. Vincent de Paul. Widowed for 40 years, Julia had spent her life as a homemaker. She lives with her 66-year-old unmarried son, Nicholas, who has difficulty finding work in his trade as a house painter. There are no government-sponsored services for the needy in Lebanon. Julia is one of the beneficiaries of the Knights of Malta Lebanon’s Elderly Guardianship Program, in which the order’s youth volunteers visit the homes of elderly on a monthly basis.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

FaceTime with the bishop



Jodi Marlin

Father Mark Gurtner, vicar general and pastor of Our Lady of Good Hope Parish, Fort Wayne, brings eighth-grade students from Our Lady School in on a FaceTime call from Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades at the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center on Dec. 7. The students visited the Archbishop Noll center and were given a tour by Father Gurtner as part of a daylong outing that included stops at several downtown locations.

Students raise funds to purchase, donate winter gear



Provided by Jill Hamblin

The Student Council at St. Joseph School, Garrett, recently hosted a cookie walk at the school’s HASA holiday sale. The students raised a little over \$260 and used the proceeds to buy gloves, hats and mittens to contribute to the school’s “Mitten Mass” collection for St. Martin Clothes Closet, which is affiliated with St. Joseph Parish. They are pictured purchasing the outerwear at a nearby dollar store.

FINDING INSPIRATION:

Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters

offer thoughts on the founding fathers of Victory Noll

HUNTINGTON — Father John Joseph Sigstein founded the community that would become Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters in 1922. Archbishop John Francis Noll was the main benefactor of the community, providing them with a home and motherhouse in Huntington. OLVM Sisters Valeria Foltz and Alma Bill discussed their memories and inspirations of the two men.

What do you remember about Archbishop Noll?

Sister Alma: From my earliest age, I was somehow afraid of the hierarchy. Living in a farming community, we saw the bishop only once every four years when he came to our parish to administer the sacrament of confirmation. However, after I entered Victory Noll and had the opportunity to meet [then-] Bishop Noll, and after hearing stories of his interest and generosity in the founding and growth of our community, my attitude completely changed. Perhaps it would be interesting if I recall some interesting incidents that “broke the ice.”

The Noll family had a cottage on Sylvan Lake, about 40 miles from Victory Noll. Every summer the postulants and novices would go there for a week of vacation. Invariably, Bishop Noll would come to spend time with us. When I saw him in his overalls, baiting our hooks for fishing, taking us for a ride in his boat, playing horseshoe on the porch — well, I was never afraid of bishops again!

I will always remember his humility, good humor, naturalness, kindness, care for people and deep spirituality — a profoundly human member of the hierarchy.

Sister Valeria: I remember that he had a deep faith in God and trusted God and he saw Christ in everyone regardless of whether they were rich or poor. He would come in once a month or so when we were novices and postulants. Victory Noll was a special place to him. It was like home for him. He did so much for the community.

What do you remember about Father Sigstein?

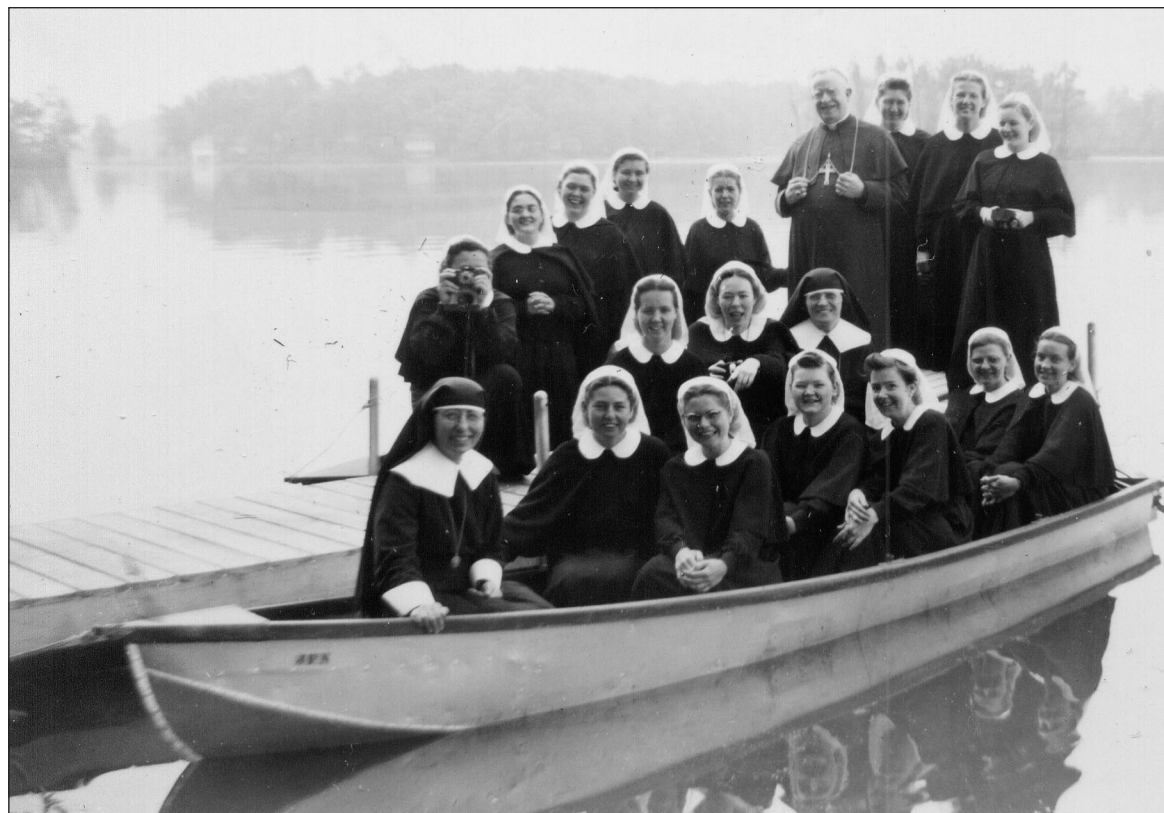
Sister Alma: I met Father Sigstein only once — briefly, the summer before he died. I had just returned from summer school at Notre Dame. As I walked across the front lawn, I met one of the sisters who was



Sister Alma Bill



Sister Valeria Foltz



Photos provided by Paul Siegfried

Archbishop John F. Noll would often take OLVM novices and postulants on short vacations to his house on Sylvan Lake, where he would take them on boat rides and teach them fishing, and they could play horseshoes.

guiding him in his wheelchair. She stopped and introduced me. His message guided the founding and life of our community. The depth of his commitment to help the poor, his originality in outlining ways of ministry beyond the founding of schools and hospitals, his persistence in prayerful living, and his tireless zeal in breaking boundaries and inventing new options for service guided our lives.

Sister Valeria: When he came back to Victory Noll, I used to clean his apartment. He was a very quiet man, but he put a lot of life into this community. You can still feel his spirit here.

What about Bishop Noll inspired you?

Sister Alma: At the time when the hierarchy was sometimes

viewed as “a notch above” the rest of us, Bishop Noll broke the pattern and proved his relationship with “every man — and woman.” He was someone who reacted fearlessly in defending the faith and generously in providing for the means of spreading the faith. At the same time, he never neglected the ordinary means of helping others.

Sister Valeria: He inspired me to have a great devotion for our

Blessed Mother and to God. Our motto was “All for Jesus through Mary,” so he taught us to stay close to our Blessed Mother. He had a great love for the poor. He saw Christ in them. He inspired me through his kindness to others.

What about Father Sigstein inspired you?

Sister Alma: How a man with poor health forged ahead in providing for the needs of others, inspired people to begin years of service, found means to encourage new modes of ministry, and overcame many obstacles to realize his life’s work — is conclusive evidence of deep love, commitment, and service in the Lord’s vineyard.

Sister Valeria: Father Sigstein founded us to help the poor. His spirituality and his prayer life inspired me. He was a very holy man.

Describe how you witnessed Bishop Noll’s care for the poor and devotion to Mary.

Sister Alma: According to my experience, Bishop Noll’s care for the poor was demonstrated by his support for our community in our efforts to serve the poor in whatever circumstances we may find them. He originally founded the means for our living situation by managing the purchase of land and buildings for our motherhouse; he supplied the funding for Redlands, the large home base for sisters ministering in the Southwest; he provided advertising space in *Our Sunday Visitor*, the means by which many of our sisters first learned of our ministry; he constantly lent his support and encouragement by spending time with us at Victory Noll.

“Devotion to Mary” was one of the spiritual highlights of our dedication as Victory Noll sisters. From our early beginnings, we were introduced to this devotion by Father Sigstein, and it continued as our public demonstration of devotion.

Sister Valeria: I remember as a child they were building the basilica in Washington, D.C., and they ran out of money. Bishop Noll stepped in and led the way to raise the rest of the money needed to finish the building. I was in elementary school in Humphrey, Nebraska, and the sisters would have a jar for us to put in our coins to help complete

the basilica. That's how I got to know Bishop Noll, through *Our Sunday Visitor* asking us to send money. Sometimes it was only pennies, but we knew we had a hand in it.

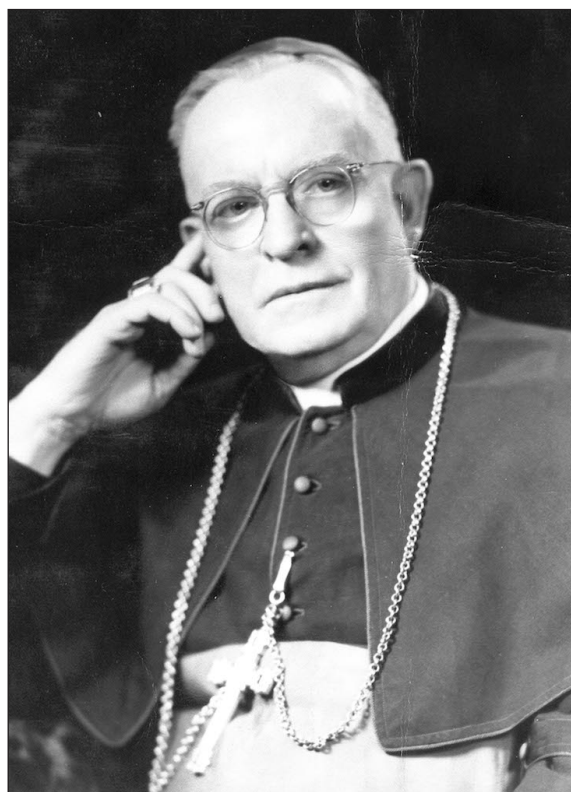
Describe how you witnessed Father Sigstein's care for the poor and devotion to Mary.

Sister Alma: Father Sigstein's whole life story contains a constant account of his concern for the poor, and his efforts to provide for their care. From his early days in Chicago, when he worked with men suffering from the Great Depression, through his founding and growth of our community, his basic tenet of "care and concern" was evident. It governed every facet of our ministry. The section on "Devotion to Mary," as recorded above, mentions our commitment and devotion to Mary. Upon our entrance, we were immediately introduced to this devotion, recited our Act of Consecration often, and held a monthly procession with rosary, as we carried the statue of Mary in procession. Our oft-repeated short prayer, "All for Jesus through Mary" and "Thanks to Jesus and Mary" indicated our commitment.

Sister Valeria: He had a great devotion to our Blessed Mother. He would say that when we find Jesus in the Scriptures also find Mary. That was important for us in our mission work.

How did Bishop Noll influence your spirituality?

Sister Alma: Bishop Noll was a well-known bishop throughout the country. Through his writings, his publication of *Our Sunday Visitor*, he strengthened the faith of the people and provided for their development and celebration.



Archbishop John Francis Noll



Father John Joseph Sigstein

Sister Valeria: We used to have talks with him in the summer we would go to his lake house. He was very fatherly and very understanding and kind and helpful getting us prepared for the work we were going to do. He was filled with knowledge of spreading the Gospel.

How did Father Sigstein influence your spirituality?

Sister Alma: Father Sigstein's spirituality was deep and prayerful, always aware of the poor and their needs. In the early days, he himself provided classes on spirituality for those preparing for ministry.

Father Sigstein's tenet of deepening spirituality influenced my technique of training catechists in the parishes where I ministered. In preparing them for the ministry of Proclaiming the Word, we studied Scripture together, considered world situations, studied child psychology, and advanced in knowledge and appreciation of the gift of the sacraments.

Sister Valeria: We want our charism to carry on, the work of Father Sigstein and Archbishop Noll and I think it will — the devotion to Mary, the kindness, helping the poor, and drawing people closer to God. Hopefully, when people come up here, that they can feel the spirituality. It's kind of like holy ground. It was blessed by Archbishop Noll and Father Sigstein and their strong faith in God and our Blessed Mother.



Bishop Noll, left, and Father Sigstein lead the procession at the dedication of the motherhouse at Victory Noll on July 5, 1925, in Huntington.

Reprinted with permission from Visions magazine, November 2018.



Bishop Noll poses in the main courtyard of the motherhouse during the building's dedication at Victory Noll on July 5, 1925.



Father John Joseph Sigstein spent his final years at Victory Noll, where he was cared for by the sisters. Father Sigstein died in 1963 and is buried in Victory Noll Cemetery next to Archbishop Noll, who died in 1956.

How Catholic Charities is creating Generation Zero with Stay the Course

BY GLORIA WHITCRAFT

Editor's Note: Earlier this year, Catholic Charities introduced a new concept in its efforts to eradicate poverty in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend: Generation Zero, the first generation of children free from poverty. This is the story of how one of its programs, Stay the Course, is helping families achieve that goal.

Marcus (whose name has been changed to maintain privacy) had a rough beginning. He dropped out of high school to support his pregnant girlfriend. Eventually they got married, but with no education, they could only find minimum-wage jobs that barely paid the bills. Tragedy struck when opioid addiction claimed the life of his young wife. Marcus and his daughter suddenly found themselves homeless, with very poor prospects for improving their circumstances.

A friend introduced them to Catholic Charities. First, Marcus' daughter received grief counseling to deal with the loss of her mother. Meanwhile, Marcus got help earning his GED diploma, which in turn allowed him to



Provided by Catholic Charities

Stay the Course, a program of Catholic Charities' Generation Zero concept, is helping achieve the goal of a generation free from poverty by offering low-income students like Marcus, a single father, the opportunity to earn a community college degree.

enter Stay the Course, a free program offered through Catholic Charities to low-income students that offers them the opportunity to earn a community college degree. Now, with greatly enhanced earnings potential, Marcus is looking forward to advancing in a career. Moreover, he is a model for success for his daughter, who is on course to join the ranks of Generation Zero.

For families in Marcus' situation, the key to their success is most often receiving case-management services from a professional social worker over an extended period of time.

"The reason [for case-management services] is that seemingly small things can become major obstacles," said Senior Administrative Officer Bobbie Golani, who oversees the program. "Our navigators help participants eliminate personal

barriers and teach techniques to persevere through difficult times. We have discovered that this long-term commitment yields the greatest success for those we serve."

Stay the Course originated at Catholic Charities of Fort Worth and was evaluated by researchers with the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities at the University of Notre Dame. Since the inception of Stay the Course, LEO has been gathering data on

the progress of the participants in the Fort Worth, Texas, area and the results to date are very encouraging:

1. After three years, Stay the Course students were two times more likely to stay in school; female Stay the Course students were almost four times more likely to stay in school.

After three years, Stay the Course students were two times more likely to stay in school; female students were almost four times more likely to stay in school.

CHARITIES, page 11



Merry Christmas

FROM GENERATION ZERO

THE FIRST GENERATION OF CHILDREN FREE FROM POVERTY

The Nativity of Our Lord reminds us of the great potential that comes into the world when a child is born. We see this potential everyday in the families we serve and strive to create a generation of children free from poverty — what we call Generation Zero. Blessedly this is a reality we see daily as we work with those families to cultivate their God-given gifts, help them achieve self-sufficiency and leave poverty behind. So in this holy season, we renew our commitment of service to the families of our diocese and offer our heartfelt thanks to all who make our work possible.



St. Teresa of Kolkata: a saint of Advent joy

BY JEANNIE EWING

Likely one of the most beloved saints of modern time, St. Teresa of Kolkata (the city formerly known as Calcutta, India) was known worldwide for her smile. Standing at a mere 5 feet, she appeared frail to some, donned in wrinkles from years of hard work. But her smile supplanted her stature, and her interior strength, fostered amidst great virtue and fortitude, was what largely made her spiritually attractive to many.

Perhaps that is why author and editor Heidi Hess Saxton chose to make St. Teresa a spiritual companion for Advent. In her book, "Advent with Saint Teresa of Calcutta: Daily Meditations," Saxton incorporates inspirational quotes from the saint of mercy, as well as interesting stories from her life, into the thematic element of Advent joy. An excerpt from the book's introduction, by Bishop Robert Barron, states thus:

"Though she was 'Mother' to thousands, she did not always feel the love and joy she espoused; rather, she chose it, and in so doing she embodied the kind of faith that speaks hope and courage to those who likewise struggle. For those who wander in darkness, St. Teresa of Calcutta is a true patron of joy yet to be discovered."

Indeed, even Christians are

often veiled under the shadows of darkness through sin, grief and suffering, and find it difficult to choose joy under such circumstances. We weep. We are burdened. It's hard to see God's plan in the uncertainties of daily life, and it's hard to rejoice when the literal darkness of short, cold days of winter tempt one to hole within himself or herself.

But St. Teresa's life, though cloaked in the dark night of the soul for decades, is a testament to those who still seek the light – the light of the world, Jesus. There is a reason candles are lit during Advent and fill parishes with their light at midnight Mass on Christmas. It is because Jesus has overcome every darkness that man has or will experience. St. Teresa knew this well. She lived it well.

Her joy can be imitated this Advent as the reader accompanies her simple wisdom through the pages of "Advent with Saint Teresa of Calcutta: Daily Meditations." During the Second Week of Advent, Saxton quotes St. Teresa with these fitting words: "If your heart is full of worldly things, you cannot hear the voice of God. But when you have listened to his voice in the silence of your heart, then your heart is filled. Then, from the fullness of the heart the mouth will speak ... When you look at people, they must be able to see God in your eyes."

Nestled in this devotional

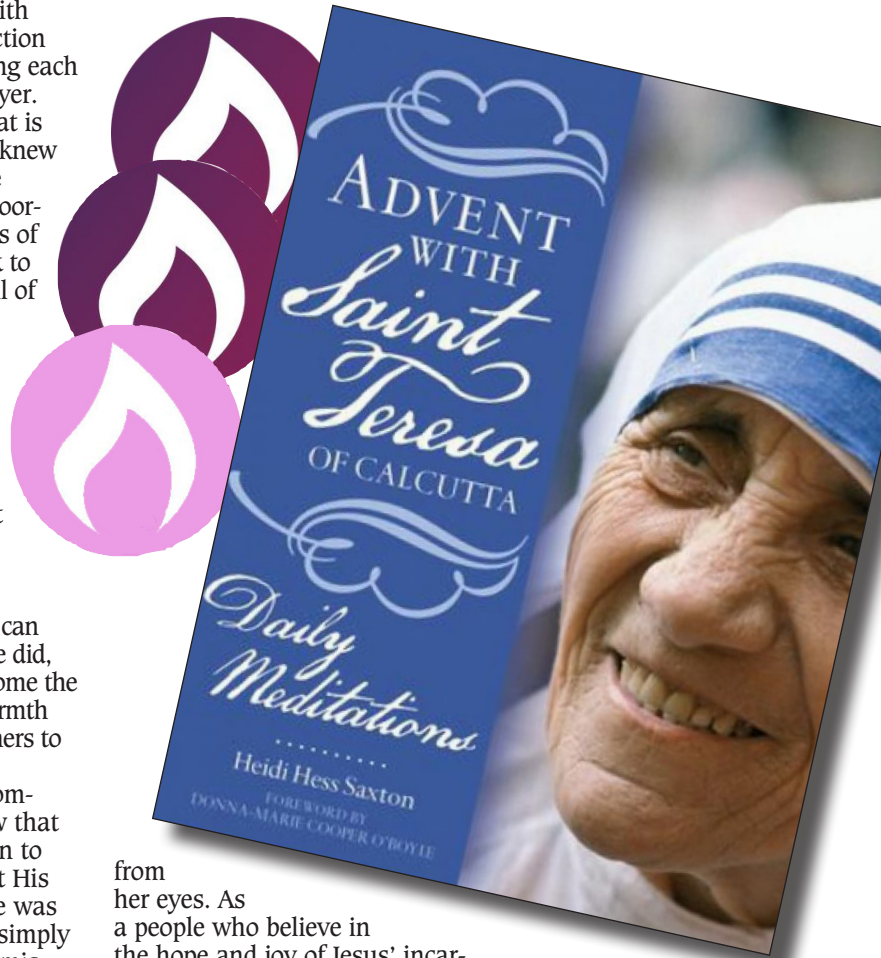
are similar gems, along with Scripture verses and reflection questions, while concluding each day's meditation with prayer.

Joy is not something that is necessarily felt. St. Teresa knew this all too well: When she began her work with the poorest of the poor in the slums of India, she often felt so sick to her stomach with the smell of decaying bodies that she couldn't handle the work without exceptional grace from God.

Most readers are not likely to face such squalid conditions or such an extreme call to poverty. But like she was, all are called to reflect God's joy in what that they do. Despite the difficulties of life, everyone can choose joy the way that she did, every day. Anyone can become the light, offer a smile with warmth and sincerity, and draw others to Jesus through love.

A saint of genuine accompaniment, St. Teresa knew that people would not be drawn to Christ if she did not reflect His joy. This did not mean she was a stranger to suffering. It simply meant that her heart and mission were elevated above emotions. She did not allow her feelings to dictate the great work to which God was calling her.

This Advent, learn from the life of a beautiful saint who embodied joy in every movement of her heart and every glance



from her eyes. As a people who believe in the hope and joy of Jesus' incarnation, Catholics must mirror, as St. Teresa did, the gift of the faith to all whom they encounter. May this be the reader's goal as he journeys with St. Teresa through the pages of this encouraging and inspirational Advent devotional.

"Advent with Saint Teresa of Calcutta: Daily Meditations" by Heidi Hess Saxton (Servant, 2016) 144 pp., \$12.99

CHARITIES, from page 10

2. Twenty-five percent of female Stay the Course students completed a degree or certificate after three years, compared to almost no one in the relevant comparison group

3. After completing one year in the program, the second group of students were two times less likely to drop out of school than the relevant comparison group.

The local Catholic Charities organization was selected as a Stay the Course replication site from a competitive field of other organizations across the nation. Like Fort Worth, it is collaborating on this program with LEO, which is gathering data on the program here. Students participating in Stay the Course attend Ivy Tech Fort Wayne.

"We were thrilled to be chosen to participate in this project because it's such a great fit for us," said Golani. "We have been operating our ECHO program for more than 20 years, so we know the great value that Stay the Course will add to our community."

ECHO stands for Education Creates Hope and Opportunity. The program has helped thousands of pregnant teens graduate from high school, with many going on to post-secondary education. Catholic Charities began the program because, sta-

tistically, girls who get pregnant in high school only have a 40 percent chance of graduating. This typically consigns them to a life of poverty. If they enter ECHO, however, their graduation rate climbs to 90+ percent. Like Stay the Course, ECHO clients frequently receive years of support to help them overcome obstacles, adjust to motherhood and build a better future through education.

Programs such as Stay the Course and ECHO help achieve Catholic Charities' ultimate goal, which is to eradicate poverty in this diocese. These are just two possible components in its continuum of services that it calls The Bridge to Self-Sufficiency, an approach that emphasizes cultivating talents, addressing complex social barriers and inculcating those it serves with a sense of independence and personal achievement.

To learn more about the work of Catholic Charities, visit www.ccfwsb.org. To help, prayerfully consider sponsoring a family like Marcus and his daughter. This can be done online at www.ccfwsb.org/donate or by emailing ccoffice@ccfwsb.org.

Gloria Whitcraft is the CEO of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

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Being open to God's future

"There is an appointed time for everything ...
A time to plant and a time to uproot the plant
A time to tear down and a time to build
A time to rend, and a time to sew
A time to hold and a time to let go."

(Ecclesiastes 3, adapted)

In *Visions* magazine, January 2017, I wrote about the "critical time in history for Sisters and their congregations in the United States" and in *Visions*, June 2017, I wrote about "how Victory Noll Sisters are called to pass on their mission and charism as they grow smaller." In this issue I want to reflect with you about "our planning for the future and how navigating the change is a deeply spiritual journey and that this is a common journey for all of us, not just the Victory Noll Sisters."

Each of us has a story of change: of starting a family and moving out of the family home because it is too big and no longer meets our needs; of shaping a career and leaving it because we have entered into another phase of our life; of being the picture of perfect health and receiving the devastating news of a terminal illness.

The Victory Noll sisters also

have a story of change. We have experienced changes throughout nearly 100 years of presence and service: working and living in small groups in neighborhoods to returning to Victory Noll for the latter part of our lives; witnessing a great growth of members in the congregation as well as experiencing the community growing smaller.

In all the changes in our lives, we are invited into a deeper journey with God. We are invited to grieve and transform our lives — to take a long, loving look at our whole life: to name its blessings and to name the losses experienced in our families and communities. We are called to see with new eyes, to connect our story to the story of all people, to be with God in a new way, and to find a new way to be for others.

All of us — you and the Victory Noll sisters — continue to experience changes that are uninvited, but nonetheless demand our open heart, open mind and open will.

The Victory Noll sisters are on a two-fold journey. The first part of our journey is to complete our "estate planning" — this includes exploring a collaborative plan with other congregations for our archives and heritage items and telling our story to future generations. It also includes com-

In all the changes in our lives,
we are invited
into a deeper journey
with God.



GUEST COMMENTARY

SR. MARY JO NELSON

pleting a plan for our corporate governance and congregational leadership. In this planning we have sought the assistance of consultants, sisters from other congregations and colleagues on our boards and committees. They are working with us and offering their insights, questions, and wisdom, as no congregation can do this work alone.

Currently, the most visible planning is related to our motherhouse. As many of you know, Victory Noll has been a place to train catechists and prepare sisters for mission. As we grew smaller, we were able to establish the Victory Noll Center, which prepares adults and young people to deepen their journey with God and to be of service to others. At this time, because the buildings are only 22 percent occupied, and because we are growing smaller each year, we need to sell our Victory Noll buildings. But more importantly, we need to claim anew that we are a temple of God, that we do not need buildings to continue the mission of God.

Our deepest hope is that we can sell them to someone who will be able to continue our charism and mission in some

NELSON, page 13

Ecclesial déjà vu all over again

After a surprise derailment by the Vatican of a long-awaited vote of the U.S. bishops, tempers were frayed. "I feel frustrated," said one powerful cardinal.

An influential archbishop added, "The thinking came a little late. ... It makes it a little awkward for us."

If you think this is a report on the recent meeting of U.S. bishops and the surprising news that the Vatican had nixed a vote on controversial proposals to hold bishops accountable for sins of omission and commission regarding sex abuse, you would be wrong.

The cardinal quoted was John J. O'Connor of New York. The archbishop quoted was Thomas C. Kelly of Louisville, Kentucky. And the event that provoked their reactions took place in 1988.

To quote the *Los Angeles Times* report at the time, "An unexpected Vatican directive received by American Roman Catholic bishops just hours before they opened their annual meeting here Monday forced them to put off approving guidelines to resolve disagreements between themselves and theologians."

It turns out that when it comes to Vatican-U.S. relations, if history doesn't repeat itself, it sure as heck rhymes.

Thirty years ago, tensions between the Vatican and the U.S. hierarchy had reached a boiling point. Rome reportedly was upset with what they saw as aggressive and divisive actions by U.S.



AMID THE FRAY

GREG ERLANDSON

bishops:

The famed war-and-peace pastoral that in early drafts had appeared to condemn even the holding of nuclear weapons. Worries about a draft pastoral on women. And the proposed document to resolve disagreements between bishops and theologians — sparked in part by "Humanae Vitae" — that Rome thought treated the two groups as having equal authority.

The U.S. bishops were themselves chafing at Rome's actions: An investigation of Seattle Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen. Frustration with a draft Vatican document on bishops' conferences. Criticism of their pastoral letters. And the appointment of bishops seen as more traditional and supportive of Pope John Paul II's vision for the Church.

Flash-forward 30 years and the roles have switched. Pope Francis and his advisers are seen by some as the meddling progressives while others see the U.S. bishops as too rigid and ideological. Rome may question the loyalty of the Americans, while

ERLANDSON, page 13

Rejoice in the Lord, the one whom John the Baptist foretold



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Third Sunday of Advent Luke 3:10-18

An atmosphere of delighted expectation overtakes this weekend's liturgy. It is Gaudete Sunday, a name taken from the Latin rendition of the first word of the Entrance Antiphon, "To rejoice." The Lord is near!

Priests may opt to wear rose vestments. These vestments symbolize that the brightness of the Lord's coming already is creeping across the horizon. Night is ending.

It is the Third Sunday of Advent. The Book of Zephaniah furnishes the first reading. It is a short book, only three

brief chapters. This much is known about Zephaniah: He was the son of Chusi and traced his ancestry to Hezekiah, presumably King Hezekiah of Judah.

Evidently, the book was written between 640 B.C. and 609 B.C., or during the reign of King Josiah of Judah. Josiah was a reformer, and his reforms were religious in intent and in impact. The kings saw themselves as representatives and agents of God. Aside from all else, their duty was to draw the people more closely to God. When the people were faithful to God, they brought peace and prosperity upon themselves.

Zephaniah believed this. He was a good king. This weekend's reading is an exuberant and bold exclamation of joy.

The Epistle to the Philippians provides the second reading. Philippi was a city in what today is Greece, founded centuries before Christ and named in honor of King Philip, the father of Alexander the Great.

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

Such centers often became the sites of Christian communities, as there was much movement of people through the empire. People moved to the great cities, bringing their ideas and values, such as Christianity.

As was the reading from Zephaniah, this reading is filled with excitement and joy. It predicts the coming of the Lord, and the Lord will come soon. Such was the assumption of many of the early Christians. They thought that when Jesus came, all wrongs would be righted. Evil would be defeated. To prepare, devout Christians sought to conform themselves as much as possible to the Lord.

The epistle proclaims that this holy transformation is occurring, declaring that the Christians of Philippi are unselfish and committed.

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

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

John also tells a tax collector to assess only the fixed amount. The Roman system of taxation was in effect legalized extortion. The law required taxpayers to meet these demands.

The Roman authorities were not able, or even inclined, to send citizens of Rome into the far reaches of the empire to collect taxes. Locals had to be induced to do the work.

Local tax collectors were seen as greedy and, moreover, as turncoats. They surrendered all honor and loyalty for a monetary profit, achieved through the crooked process of Roman taxation.

When the Messiah is acknowledged, goodness and peace will prevail.

Reflection

These readings all predict the coming of God's power and justice. Such is the Lord's

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

In the long run, Advent's advantage is that it prompts us to bring Jesus into our own hearts and surroundings.

READINGS

Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a (Ps) Is 12:2-6 Phil 4:4-7 Lk 3:10-18

Monday: Gn 49:2, 8-10 Ps 72:3-4b, 7-8, 17 Mt 1:1-17

Tuesday: Jer 23:5-8 Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 1:18-25

Wednesday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6b, 16-17 Lk 1:5-25

Thursday: Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-6 Lk 1:26-38

Friday: Sg 2:8-14-18a Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 Lk 1:39-45

Saturday: 1 Sm 1:24-28 (Ps) 1 Sm 2:1, 4-7, 8abcd Lk 1:46-56

The challenge of John Chau

Perhaps you've heard the extraordinary story of John Chau, the young Christian missionary who tried to bring the Gospel to North Sentinel Island, one of the most remote and isolated communities in the world, and who, for his trouble, was killed before he even got past the beach. His endeavor has inspired a whole range of reactions — outrage, puzzlement, sympathy, deep admiration — and has stirred up in many people, both religious and secular, questions about the missionary nature of Christianity.

To his critics, Chau was not only foolhardy but also culturally insensitive and imperialistic, trying to impose a doctrine and style of life on a people who had no interest in it. He called to mind, his detractors say, the worst of the Christian missionary era, during which the faith was introduced at the point of a bayonet and backed up by gunboats and armies of eager colonizers. Haven't the religions finally eschewed this aggressiveness and allowed for tolerance and diversity? Even some Christians who shared his missionary zeal questioned the prudence of his methods.

I had a passing acquaintance with Chau's adventure when I chanced upon a lengthy piece in the *New York Times*, which provided extensive background. The mission to North Sentinel Island was not a lark, nor was it decided upon spur of the moment. Chau in fact had first learned of the inhabitants of the island in the Indian Ocean when he was in high school. A 21st century anomaly, the people of North Sentinel have had virtually no contact with the wider world, still live according to customs 10,000 years old, and exhibit extreme aggression toward any visitors who, by chance or design, have found their way to their shores. Fired by Christ's call to bring the Gospel even to the ends of the world, Chau resolved to venture to this dangerous and primitive place.

For a number of years, he carefully prepared himself through cultural and linguistic

study, through exercise, through spiritual discipline. His fondest hope was to establish a Christian community on North Sentinel Island and to translate the Bible into the language of the people. As the day of his landing approached, he was filled with trepidation — we know this from a journal he kept — but he pressed on. He arrived on shore wearing only a pair of black shorts, convinced that such simple garb would strike the native people as less threatening, but within a few minutes, he was killed in a hail of arrows. Later, some fishermen saw islanders dragging the missionary's body with a rope.

Again, I realize that even the most sympathetic of observers might well be tempted to see this simply as a waste of a life, a debacle born of naïveté and foolish zeal. And yet ... Jesus did indeed instruct His disciples to bring the Gospel to every nation — it was in fact His final command. And the Christian church has honored missionaries up and down the centuries, from St. Paul and St. Patrick to St. Francis Xavier and Dr. Livingstone. It offers particular homage to those brave spirits who have brought the Christian faith to a region for the first time and who met, typically enough, enormous, even lethal, opposition. Think, to give just one example, of the great St. Isaac Jogues, 17th century French Jesuit missionary to North America, who had his fingers chewed off by those he attempted to evangelize and who, in a subsequent mission, was put to death. When I first heard the story of John Chau, what came to my mind immediately was the great film "The Mission," which is the fictionalized account of the Jesuit outreach to the Guarani tribes of South America. Who can forget the scenes depicting Father Gabriel, played by Jeremy Irons, making his way up the steep cliff face behind a waterfall in order to reach the plateau where the Guarani lived? Once he got past that obstacle, the missionary was faced with a group of tribespeople, initially curious,



BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

WORD ON FIRE

then hostile, and finally charmed by his playing of a flute. Part of what makes that scene so memorable is the clear sense that things could easily have gone the other way and Father Gabriel been put to death in a manner reminiscent of Chau.

My point is that Christianity is a missionary religion and that Christians, across the centuries, have been willing to risk everything in order to bring the Gospel of Christ to those who do not know it. Has this outreach been frequently compromised by its association with imperialism and cultural aggression? Absolutely. But that says nothing against the courage and zeal of those who did the preaching.

But even if we grant that there is a warrant for Chau's mission, wouldn't we have to admit that it was a tragic failure, a miscalculation? I don't think so. Mother Teresa famously commented that the Lord does not ask us to be successful, but rather to be faithful. Was young Mr. Chau faithful? It is hard to deny it. Might his success be measured not so much in converts made but in witness offered? And was he an avatar of Western intolerance? I don't know: a kid wading ashore, unarmed, wearing only a pair of shorts, and carrying only a Bible? Say what you want about his prudence. I will speak of him with honor.

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.

ERLANDSON, from page 12

U.S. eyebrows are being raised at some episcopal appointments boosting those deemed supporters of Pope Francis.

The roles may be reversed, but the lack of understanding remains the same. Today, the U.S. bishops are frustrated that while their homegrown critics ignore all the strides that have been made in protecting children since 2002, their Vatican critics do not understand the enormous pressure they are under from the media, lawyers, wealthy donors and Catholics in the pews.

Rome feels the bishops are caving too quickly to pressure

and worries that precedents are being set and canonical changes being proposed that may harm the Church elsewhere.

As in 1988, it may be that neither Rome nor the United States is understanding each other very well, despite all the talk about listening and accompaniment.

How this plays out is anyone's guess. A bishops' retreat in January may allow the Holy Spirit to get a word in edgewise. A meeting of the presidents of the world's bishops' conferences in February is already burdened both with exaggerated expectations and predictions of failure. But if history does repeat

itself, we might do well to remember that in spring 1989, Pope John Paul II summoned all the U.S. metropolitan archbishops to Rome. There they held a four-day closed-door meeting that by all accounts cleared the air and led to a gradual easing of tensions.

The crises of the past may hold lessons for our leaders today.

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

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for December 16, 2018

Luke 3:10-18

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Third Sunday of Advent, Cycle C: the teachings of John the Baptist. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

SHARE WITH COLLECTORS	HAS NONE WAGES	FOOD PEOPLE
CHRIST THONG	COMING SANDAL	NOT WORTHY HOLY SPIRIT
FIRE TO CLEAR CHAFF	WINNOWING THRESHING BURN	HIS HAND WHEAT GOOD NEWS

NOT THE CHRIST

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

NELSON, from page 12

way. Although selling is very hard to do, it is an expression of being good stewards of all our resources. Another way we are stewarding our resources is through our foundation, which we started a few years ago. This helps us serve God's mission through others who also carry our mission and charism.

The second part of our journey is to deepen our commitment to the core of our life as sisters — prayer, relationships and the vowed life. The best gift we can now give to the Church and the world is to live our life in a deep and alive way without our active ministries of the past. We are also being called to articulate anew our mission and charism as we enter into a new phase of our life as a congregation.

The faithfulness of our lives is not about having buildings, nor is it about having large numbers in our congregation. It is about presence, encounter and communion not just with ourselves, but with all who share life with us in some way. We are on this journey of life together. Everything in your life connects with us and our life connects with yours. And, deep in our hearts we know that there is a time for everything ... there is a time to hold, and a time to let go. There is a time to be open to God's future, and that time is now.

Sister Mary Jo Nelson is the president of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters. *Reprinted with permission from Visions magazine, November 2018.*

Virginia Centurione Bracelli



1587-1651
Feast Dec. 15

Unable to persuade her parents that she had a religious vocation, Virginia was married at age 15 to the son of another notable Italian family. But he gambled, lived dissolutely and died after only five years. Virginia, despite her unhappiness in the marriage, nursed him at the end. She vowed to live celibately thereafter, bringing up her two daughters and caring for abandoned children, especially girls. She founded several schools and the Sisters of Our Lady of the Refuge on Mount Calvary. She was canonized in her hometown, Genoa, in 2003.

Two new books give parents ideas to help raise kids Catholic

BY REGINA LORDAN

Throughout his papacy, St. John Paul II called on parents to recommit themselves to the vows they made in matrimony and again during their children's baptisms: to raise their children in the faith. He called parents "the first and foremost educators of their children."

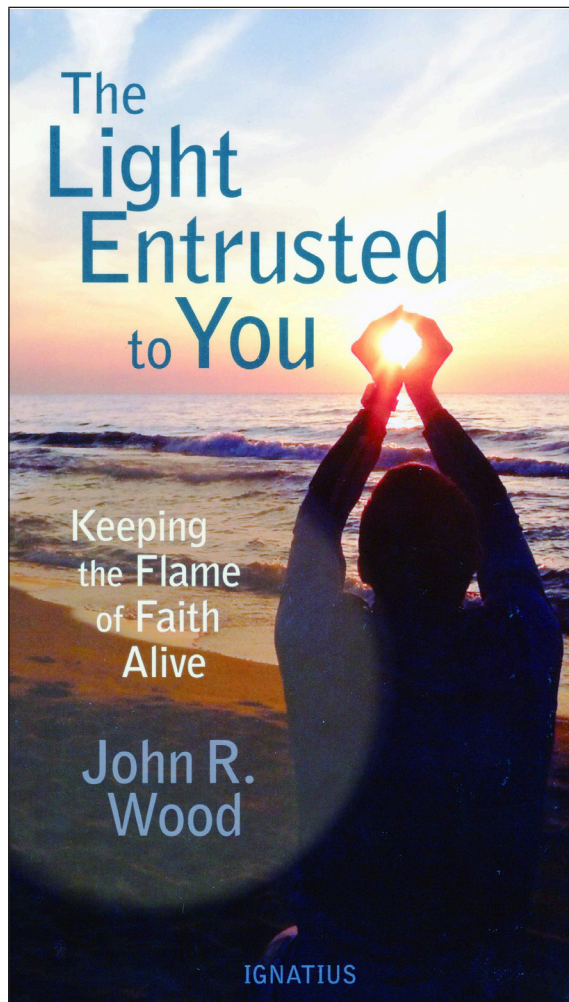
Two recently published books encourage parents in this crucial role for the future of the church and give them the tools they need to do it in today's world.

Dr. John Wood, a mobile eye doctor and father of four from Ohio, created a curriculum to help guide parents on their journey to make their kids saints. Neither overbearing nor overly academic, Wood tells readers in his book "The Light Entrusted to You: Keeping the Flame of Faith Alive," that helping children to become saints is the most important job parents will have. Wood is passionate, and he uses that fire to provide pragmatic ways for parents to pass on the torch of faith onto their children.

Michael Horne, a doctor in clinical psychology and director of clinical services for Catholic Charities in Arlington, Virginia, shows his understanding of this tall order and how it is further complicated in a world laden with the pressures of digital technology.

Focusing on three areas that he says "arguably have the greatest influence on children and families today," Horne gives parents resources to help survive social media, video games and pornography. His book, "The Tech Talk: Strategies for Families in a Digital World," is a reminder that technology shapes children's understanding of the world and ability to distinguish what is real and normal. So parents best get involved and get involved fast.

Wood too writes with urgen-



"The Light Entrusted to You: Keeping the Flame of Faith Alive" by John Wood. Ignatius Press (San Francisco, 2018). 306 pp., \$18.95.

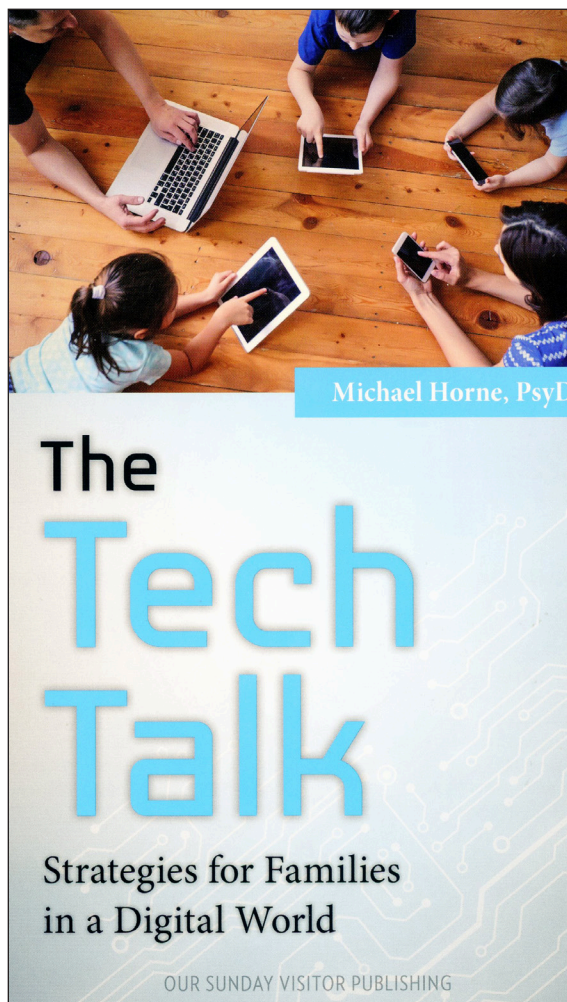
cy, calling parents to reprioritize their time and commitments in family life.

"I would say that becoming a saint is the only thing worth your time and energy. If what you have and do now are not helping you become a saint, then at the very best they are wasting your time," Wood wrote. "Become a saint. Nothing else really matters."

Wood's fire is stoked by some frightening statistics he includes in his book. Using data from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and the Dynamic

Catholic Institute, he reveals a pretty glum future of the church, emphasizing this staggering statistic: "Eighty-five percent of young adults leave their faith within 10 years of being confirmed."

His curriculum is called SIMU, which stands for Saints in the Making University, and the classes stand for Saving Grace, Athletics, Instructor's Manual, Need to Know Him, Theology of the Body and Sacrifice and Service. Of course, a savvy reader following the theme here will see that the classes are the acronym SAINTS.



"The Tech Talk: Strategies for Families in a Digital World" by Michael Horne. Our Sunday Visitor (Huntington, Indiana, 2017). 144 pp., \$14.95.

The other classes might seem somewhat obvious, but how does athletics fit in amid all the grace, theology and sacrifice?

For Wood, athletics taught him life lessons that lead him to God. He writes that this chapter can be summed up by "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). For him, that meant giving glory to God while playing ice hockey on a skating rink. For parents instilling the faith in their children, that means using athletics to teach lessons of self-discipline, perseverance and passion, obedience,

repetition and recreation, teamwork and sportsmanship. These qualities lead to obedience, sacrifice and giving glory to Christ.

"The Light Entrusted to You" offers resources and tools for parents to put an ignited fire into action, making this a great and useful read for all parents.

In "The Tech Talk," Horne gets down to the nitty-gritty of some of the challenges of parenting Catholic children in a world consumed with video games, social media and pornography.

Horne is funny, clever and straightforward. Written perhaps with busy and distracted parents in mind, Horne gets to the point, backs it up with reasons and evidence, and shares a memorable quip or story to help make his message stick. He also offers questions for reflection at the end of each chapter.

Although accessible in his writing, Horne uses key psychological and pedagogical theory. In addition, he uses Catholic teaching to encourage parental reflection. He asks parents to consider whether gaming actually leads to holiness or virtue, and uses the Catechism of the Catholic Church to define pornography from a Christian perspective.

Although Horne presents some pretty devastating data (the average age of first exposure to pornography is age 11), he offers so much hope.

Parents have a chance to address these societal issues head on, and re-engage in a positive way with their families. He offers chapters devoted to family connectivity and making change to help parents build a strong and healthy family ready to face the reality of the future together.

Lordan has master's degrees in education and political science and is a former assistant international editor of Catholic News Service. She is a digital editor at Peanut Butter & Grace, an online resource for Catholic family catechesis.

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Alumni appreciation night

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Dwenger and Central Catholic alumni may join fellow alumni and friends to support the Saints' varsity basketball team on Friday, Dec. 14, against the Concordia Cadets at 7:30 p.m. in the BDHS main gym, 1300 E. Washington Center Rd. Visit bishopdwenger.com for more information.

St. Thomas the Apostle School announces live Nativity

ELKHART — St. Thomas the Apostle Church and school, 1331 North Main St., will host a live Nativity on Saturday, Dec. 15, from 6:30-9 p.m. Students and live animals will bring the Nativity scene to life.

Knights host breakfast at Most Precious Blood

FORT WAYNE — St. Gaspar del Bufalo Council #11043 will be serving breakfast on Sunday, Dec. 16, from 9 a.m. to noon in the gymnasium at Most Precious Blood, 1515 Barthold St. Cost is \$8 for adults, \$4 for children 6-12, and \$20 per family. \$5 carryout packs will be available. Proceeds will benefit the needs of the parish.

Festival of lessons and carols

MISHAWAKA — A festival of lessons and carols will be Sunday, Dec. 16, from 4-5 p.m. at St. Bavo Church, 511 W. 7th St., and will feature the St. Bavo and Marian High School liturgical choirs and the Antioch youth group. This service celebrating

the birth of Jesus features nine lessons, or Scripture readings, and will present a brief journey through salvation history. The lessons are interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols by the congregation, beautiful solos and inspiring choral music.

Bishop Luers to present lessons and carols

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Luers High School will host a Festival of lessons and carols on Sunday, Dec. 16, at 4 p.m. in the Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi. The public is invited and admission is free.

Advent lessons and carols

FORT WAYNE — St. Therese Catholic Church, 2304 Lower Huntington Rd., will host a festival of lessons and carols on Monday, Dec. 17, at 7 p.m. There is no charge, but a free will offering will be taken up to benefit the St. Vincent de Paul Society of the parish. All are welcome.

Knights plan spaghetti dinner

SOUTH BEND — The Knights of Columbus Council 5521 will have a spaghetti dinner at the South Bend Francis Club, 61533 Ironwood Rd., on Friday, Dec. 21, from 5-7 p.m. Adults \$9.50, children 5-12 \$3.50, children under 5 free.

Benedictine Oblate chapter meeting

MISHAWAKA — A Chapter of Benedictine Oblates of Saint Meinrad Archabbey will meet Monday, Dec. 17, at 7 p.m. in the St. Monica School library, 223 West Grove St. Chapters come

together to support one another and strengthen spiritual life through prayer, liturgical celebration, instruction and fellowship in Christ on the third Monday of each month. Contact Dan Sheets at 574-255-1040 or drsheets@aol.com.

Las Posadas

SOUTH BEND — St. Adalbert and St. Casimir Parishes celebrate Las Posadas to prepare us to celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation at Christmas. Each day includes the posada, a rosary and then a social. The schedule is as follows:

REST IN PEACE

<p>Decatur R. Wayne Carpenter, 92, St. Mary of the Assumption</p> <p>Fort Wayne Shirley Morken, 76, St. Therese</p> <p>Anne Crew, 59, St. Therese</p> <p>Ann Barrett, 60, Most Precious Blood</p> <p>Charles Schenkel, 76, Most Precious Blood</p>	<p>Steve Stroncsek, 76, St. Vincent de Paul</p> <p>Goshen Vincent R. Traxler, 97, St. John the Evangelist</p> <p>Mishawaka Jean Gryp, 92, Queen of Peace</p> <p>New Haven Billy Dane Irvin, 72, St. Louis Besancon</p> <p>Plymouth Franaces Houin, 87, St. Michael</p>	<p>South Bend Chester J. Kolber, 90, Holy Family</p> <p>Norbert V. Kopinski, 88, St. Anthony de Padua</p> <p>Dimpna Naval, St. Jude</p> <p>Barbara Kellogg, 92, St. Anthony de Padua</p> <p>Marjorie A. Kloski, 91, Holy Family</p>
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Sun, Dec. 16: 10:30 a.m. 12 p.m.: St. Adalbert School; Mon, Dec. 17: 6-8 p.m.: St. Adalbert Rectory; Tues, Dec. 18: 6-8 p.m., St. Casimir School; Wed, Dec. 19: 6-8 p.m.: St. Casimir School; Thurs, Dec. 20: 6-8 p.m.: St. Adalbert School; Fri, Dec. 21:

7-9p; St. Casimir School; Sat, Dec. 22: 6-8 p.m.: St. Adalbert School; Sun, Dec. 23: 6-8 p.m.: St. Adalbert School. St. Adalbert is located at 2505 W. Grace St. St. Casimir is located at 1308 W. Dunham St.



Our calling to serve keeps growing.

Divine Mercy Funeral Home is excited to announce the addition of Stephanie Zelt to our staff of experienced funeral directors. Stephanie will join Bob Jesch and Monte Freeze in their calling to serve local families with compassion, understanding and kindness.

priced affordably to meet your budget. Also, if you've already pre-planned through another funeral home, you'll be pleased to know that you can quickly and easily transfer those arrangements.

Divine Mercy Funeral Home...
Serving all faiths.

With nearly 75 years of experience between them, our funeral directors serve all faiths and will thoughtfully guide you through our traditional and cremation funeral service options,



260.426.2044 | 3500 Lake Avenue | www.divinemercuryfuneralhome.com

Merry Christmas
from *The Galley!*

622 North 13th St., Decatur
260-724-8181
www.thegalleydecatur.com