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Volume 93 No. 39

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Today's Catholic — connecting beyond the pages

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

(ISSN 0891-1533)
(USPS 403630)

Official newspaper of the
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend
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Fort Wayne, IN 46856

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Published weekly except for the last Sunday in December; and every other week from third Sunday in May through fourth Sunday in August, by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, 915 S. Clinton St., P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, IN 46801. Periodicals postage paid at Fort Wayne, IN, and additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Today's Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN 46856-1169 or email: circulation@diocesefwsb.org

MAIN OFFICE: 915 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802. Telephone 260-456-2824. Fax: 260-744-1473.
BUREAU OFFICE: 1328 Dragoon Trail, Mishawaka, IN 46544. Telephone 260-456-2824. Fax 260-744-1473.

News deadline is 10 days prior to publication date. Advertising deadline is nine days before publication date.

Today's Catholic may be reached at:
Today's Catholic,
P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN
46856-1169; or email:
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U.S. bishops examine challenges faced by Church, society

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

BALTIMORE (CNS) — During their Nov. 11-13 meeting in Baltimore, the U.S. bishops elected new officers and discussed challenges in the Church and the nation. They spoke of their renewed efforts to help immigrants, youth and young adults, pregnant women and the poor, as well their steps to combat gun violence and racism.

Unlike recent previous meetings, their response to the clergy abuse crisis was mentioned but was not the primary focus.

On the second day of the meeting, Nov. 12, the bishops elected Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles to a three-year term as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of Detroit as conference vice president.

Archbishop Gomez, the first Latino to be elected to this role, was chosen with 176 votes from a slate of 10 nominees. He has been USCCB vice president for the past three years and his new role began at the end of the Baltimore gathering.

At the start of the meeting, the bishops voted overwhelmingly on a revised set of strategic priorities to take them into the next decade. The next day, they approved adding new materials to complement "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," their long-standing guide to help Catholics form their consciences in public life, including voting. The addition included the statement that called abortion the preeminent social issue of our time.

The second day of the bishops' meeting coincided with oral arguments at the Supreme Court over the fate of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA. Bishops at the Baltimore meeting spoke up in defense of DACA recipients on the floor and in interviews with Catholic News Service.

Bishops also heard a wide-ranging report on immigration Nov. 12 that included updates of policy; how programs to resettle refugees, including those run by the Catholic Church, have closed or reduced activity because the administration has moved to close the country's doors to those seeking refuge; and efforts on the border to help asylum cases.

The bishops' second day of meetings also included a presentation of the pope's document "Christus Vivit," which was issued following the 2018 Synod



CNS photos/Bob Roller

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, outgoing president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, smiles during a news conference at the fall general assembly of the USCCB in Baltimore Nov. 11. Also pictured are: Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Va., and Auxiliary Bishop Robert P. Reed of Boston.

on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment. Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia and Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut, collaborated on the presentation, which included two young adults.

Brenda Noriega, a young woman from the Diocese of San Bernardino, California, said the document "lays out some areas that are especially important to encounter, including young people impacted by marginalization and poverty, young people feeling overwhelmed by culture, family or judgment, young migrants and refugees and those impacted (by the) immigration situation." These areas also are important, she added, to youth who are bullied or ostracized online, people who feel unloved, "youth or young adults experiencing or witnessing abuse in all forms."

The bishops also heard that a new "pastoral framework for marriage and family life" should be ready for a vote by the U.S. bishops by next November at the latest, according to Archbishop Chaput, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

He said the document might be ready for a vote when the

bishops meet in June 2020 but stressed that it is not a "plan," since it is intended to be applied within parishes and dioceses.

On the first day of the meeting Nov. 11, the bishops raised pressing issues that included the priesthood shortage, gun violence, young people leaving the Church and the need to provide support services for pregnant women.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, papal nuncio to the United

States, mentioned some of these challenges in his opening remarks, along with the need to welcome migrants and fight racism. He also urged the bishops not just to focus on the challenges before them but to consider how they could further develop collegiality and collaboration with one another.

In his final address as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic

Bishops, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston told his fellow bishops that it has been "an honor to serve you, even in the difficult times."

The 70-year-old prelate thanked the bishops, whom he called brothers, for the past three years and was thanked by them in return when the group gave him a standing ovation at the end of his nine-minute presenta-

tion.

"Let's begin anew," he said at the close of his address, veering away from prepared remarks, and quoting St. Augustine.

The cardinal, who suffered a mild stroke earlier this year, did not elaborate on specifics of the abuse crisis in the Church, particularly highlighted this past year, but spoke of the bishops' continued work of transparency related to dealing with the crisis. He said the abuse measures adopted by U.S. bishops at their meeting last June are "only a beginning. More needs to be done."

In another vote, the bishops voting overwhelmingly on a revised set of strategic priorities to take them into the next decade. They also discussed upcoming votes during their gathering, such as news materials to complement "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," their long-standing guide to help Catholics form their consciences in public life, including voting.

Retired Army Col. Anita Raines, who chairs the National Advisory Council, said in a report to the bishops that the group supported the prelates' effort to promulgate its "Faithful Citizenship" document and supplemental materials.

The bishops also heard about societal issues such as gun violence and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, said Catholic clergy and lay leaders can play a role in bringing together people along the rural-urban divide to build understanding of the need for sensible policies that can end the scourge of gun violence.

The bishop, who is chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, outlined the USCCB's long-held stance of the need for "common sense" legislation that governs the availability of guns. But he also said it was time for people to come together so that there is greater understanding of how gun violence affects urban communities in particular.

He told Catholic News Service that the USCCB's work on the legislative front was important, but that a pastoral response to gun violence was needed.

"It's time for a different approach," he said.

In a new approach for the bishops' pro-life efforts, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, invited his fellow bishops to devote a year of service to pregnant

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Bishops agree with call to have St. Irenaeus declared doctor of the Church

BY MARK PATTISON

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The U.S. bishops added their assent to a call to have St. Irenaeus declared a doctor of the Church.

The action came Nov. 12, the second day of their Nov. 11-13 fall general meeting in Baltimore.

"This is perhaps a way to correct an oversight of history," said Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine.

St. Irenaeus was born sometime between A.D. 120 and A.D. 130 in Smyrna in Asia Minor, according to Bishop Rhoades. He was a disciple of St. Polycarp, who was himself a disciple of St. John the Apostle, he added. He died around 202, and the Catholic Church also deems him to be a martyr.

St. Irenaeus' ministry took him to present-day France. There, he waged theological battle against the Gnostics, who emphasized personal spiritual knowledge over faith in orthodox teachings and in ecclesiastical authority. This is relevant, Bishop Rhoades said, because "we see a reemergence of gnostic ideas and what it means to be human."

The saint, he added, "consistently upheld the unity of God in three persons, the unity of salvation and the unity of the Church."

At a time when much in the early Christian Church had yet to be codified, St. Irenaeus wrote the book "Against Heresies," and is credited with being the first to declare the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to be read by all Christians.

There are 36 declared doctors of the Church. As doctors — think "teachers" — they are recognized for their significant contributions to theology or doctrine through their research, study and writing.

The first four doctors, declared in 1298, are St. Gregory the Great, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose and St. Jerome. The last three, all declared in this decade, are St. John of Avila and St. Hildegard of Bingen, both in 2012, and St. Gregory of Narek in 2015.

The other doctors of the Church, listed in chronological order of when they were so declared, are: St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Athanasius, St. Bonaventure, St. Anselm, St. Isidore of Seville, St. Peter Chrysologus, St. Leo the Great, St. Peter Damian, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Hilary of Poitiers,



CNS photo/The Crosiers

The likeness of St. Irenaeus is seen at the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate in Guelph, Ontario. The U.S. bishops, on Nov. 12, the second day of their fall general assembly in Baltimore, gave their assent to a call to have the saint declared a doctor of the Church.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Francis de Sales, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. John Damascene, St. Bede the Venerable, St. Ephrem, St. Peter Canisius, St. John of the Cross, St. Robert Bellarmine, St. Albertus Magnus, St. Anthony of Lisbon and Padua, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Catherine of Siena (Sts. Teresa and Catherine are the first two women declared doctors, both in 1970) and St. Therese of Lisieux.

Half of the doctors lived prior to the Latin-Orthodox schism of 1054, and they are generally regarded in high esteem by the Orthodox, although they do not use the phrase "doctor of the church."

How does one become a doctor of the Church?

"It typically begins with the originator of the cause for sainthood who has already done the extensive research and analysis required," said a message from Bishop Rhoades. However,

since St. Irenaeus was canonized before the schism — the Orthodox also consider him a saint — that does not apply here.

"If there is a desire to have the saint named a doctor of the Church, the promoter of the cause must do further research and study and reach out to solicit broader consensus across nations that this would be a worthy pursuit," Bishop Rhoades said. "The congregation has said that the support of entire episcopal conferences is very helpful in discerning these types of petitions."

Msgr. Jeffrey N. Steenson, the retired head of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter — established by Pope Benedict XVI for former Anglicans who have joined the Catholic Church — waxed enthusiastic about St. Irenaeus' virtues.

"He had a wonderful way of speaking about the nature of apostolic traditions," Msgr.



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Saturday, November 30: 4:30 p.m. Mass, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Lakeville

Steenson said, quoting one adage of St. Irenaeus: "Where the Holy Spirit is, there is the church. And where the church is, there is the Holy Spirit and all of its graces."

He added, "St. Irenaeus again is an incredibly important patron and saint today in rebuilding the Church of God," calling him "the first systematic theologian of the Church, literally, the first text that we have that speaks to the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the Church," He

said that the notion of Mary as mother of the Church originated with St. Irenaeus.

The request came to the U.S. bishops from Cardinal Philippe Barbarin of Lyon, France — the region where St. Irenaeus ministered — as the diocese is preparing a yearlong celebration of the saint in 2020. "The cardinal particularly sees Irenaeus' teachings as speaking to our times, when there seems to be a reemergence of gnostic ideas," Bishop Rhoades said.



CNS photo/Bob Roller

Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell of Los Angeles and Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, share a light moment after Archbishop Gomez was named the new president during the fall general assembly of the USCCB in Baltimore Nov. 12.

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women starting next March.

He said Catholic parishes can be one of the first places a woman facing an unexpected or challenging pregnancy can turn to for assistance rather than think of seeking an abortion and they could offer a variety of support services to women who may be thinking about whether to carry their child to term.

The bishops also heard about plans to revise the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' existing Program of Priestly Formation for U.S. dioceses.

In his homily at the Nov. 11 Mass in the hotel ballroom, Cardinal DiNardo stressed that St. Martin of Tours, whose feast was celebrated that day, offered them a fitting example.

He said little is known about what the saint wrote in the late 300s but plenty is known about what he did: "reconciling the Christian community and reconciling the clergy, even then."

"Brothers, we have someone to imitate tonight," he told them.

Contributing to this report were Rhina Guidos, Mark Pattison and Dennis Sadowski.

Practices of gratitude make every day Thanksgiving

BY JANET PATTERSON

It's that time of the year, when Americans post gratitude lists to social media and share what they're thankful for with the family over dinner. But giving thanks is also an important everyday practice.

The young family of Lewis and Angela Pearson of Fort Wayne starts and ends every meal with prayers of thanksgiving, and the things they are thankful for are also among their prayer throughout and at the end of each day, Lewis said.

The seven Pearson children range in age from 2-month-old Mary to 11-year-old Samuel. They are encouraged by their parents to "talk to our brothers and sisters in the communion of saints," and to thank God for giving them the hosts of holy men and women like Pope St. John Paul II, Raphael the Archangel, St. Lucy and Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The family also says bedtime prayers together, and every verbal member gets to participate. Four-year-old Lewis Jr. typically prays, "Thank you for Mom and Dad, Amen."

The older children, Lewis said, "are usually more focused on the providential moment at hand, regularly thanking God for the day we just had ... or the playground we just went to, or the show we got to watch on TV that day."

The St. John the Baptist parishioners also encourage external expressions of gratitude

toward others on this side of eternity. Instead of waiting for Christmas, they may purchase small gifts for family and friends when they see something the person might like.

"And our kids — the six out of seven who can hold a pen — write thank-you letters just about every week. We also send probably more than our fair share of letters to local establishments," Lewis said.

He bets their letters and artwork are probably on restaurant refrigerators from the coast of Oregon to central Texas, in addition to the Fort Wayne area.

For some, private moments of prayer offer the best time to take stock of the moments or people for which someone is grateful.

Father Royce Gregerson, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Goshen, said he makes gratitude part of his daily prayer. "One practice that I have is to make gratitude for the Lord's blessing a part of my evening examination of conscience."

Justin Aquila of Most Precious Blood Parish in Fort Wayne recalls the moment he realized making gratitude part of his daily prayer was important.

"A few years ago, I read a quote from Dorothy Day. She was asked toward the end of her life why she didn't write a memoir." Day responded that she started to think back and consider how to begin. "I try to think back; I try to remember this life that the Lord gave me; the other day I wrote down the words 'a life remembered' and I was going to try to make a sum-

What the saints say about gratitude ...



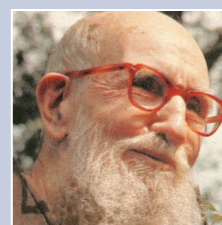
"The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for what He is sending us every day in His goodness."

— St. Gianna Beretta Molla



"Remember the past with gratitude. Live the present with enthusiasm. Look forward to the future with confidence."

— St. John Paul II



"Worry is a weakness from which very few of us are entirely free. We must be on guard against this most insidious enemy of our peace of soul. Instead, let us foster confidence in God, and thank Him ahead of time for whatever He chooses to send us."

— Blessed Solanus Casey



"Happiness can only be achieved by looking inward and learning to enjoy whatever life has, and this requires transforming greed into gratitude."

— St. John Chrysostom



"Jesus does not demand great action from us but simply surrender and gratitude."

— St. Therese of Lisieux

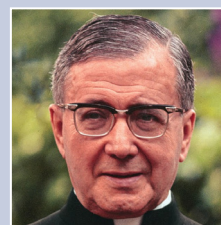
"In all created things discern the providence and wisdom of God, and in all things give Him thanks."

— St. Teresa of Avila



"Get used to lifting your heart to God, in acts of thanksgiving, many times a day. Because he gives you this and that. Because you have been despised. Because you haven't what you need or because you have. ... Thank him for everything, because everything is good."

— St. Josemaria Escriva



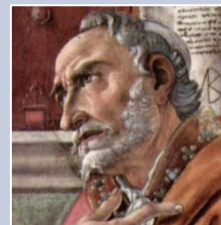
"The best way to show my gratitude is to accept everything, even my problems, with joy."

— St. Teresa of Kolkata



"O my God, let me remember with gratitude and confess to thee thy mercies toward me."

— St. Augustine of Hippo



"No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks."

— St. Ambrose



Provided by Angela Pearson

Part of the Pearson family of Fort Wayne gathers around the dinner table to give thanks and to remember the marriage proposal of Lewis, fourth from left, to Angela, at left. The couple and their seven children pray together daily, thanking God for each other and for their many additional blessings.

mary for myself, write what mattered most — but I couldn't do it. I just sat there and thought of our Lord, and His visit to us all those centuries ago, and I said to myself that my great luck was to have had Him on my mind for so long in my life."

Aquila said that after reading the quote, he was moved to begin his daily prayer with "an inventory of things I was grateful for that day and in my life in general. This fundamentally changed my prayer life from a lot of listing of needs to a spirit-led focus on gratitude. I still pray for what I need, but only after I first pray in gratitude for what I received."

He said this shift in his prayer life has been helpful in his work with Campus Ministry at the University of Saint Francis.

"As I mentor students in prayer, I encourage them to do the same. Often, for those who

don't have much experience with prayer, it's a very practical first step they can take as they grow in the school of prayer."

Prayer journals also can provide a means for intentionally expressing gratitude. Janet Abbott of Immaculate Conception Parish in Kendallville received a prayer journal for a birthday gift, and it has inspired her prayers of gratitude.

She keeps a list of the people for whom she has promised prayers. "Many times we say, 'I am praying for you.' This journal gives me a place to write my prayer requests and keep them fresh in my mind. It often prompts me to give that person a call to check on them or offer encouragement."

Writing in the journal, she said, gives her a place to refer to her prayer requests "and see the

GRATITUDE, page 5



Provided by Angela Pearson

Among the blessings for which they're grateful: The Pearsons welcomed baby Mary this summer. Pictured with the family at her baptism are godparents Cadence Faurote, holding Mary; Father Patrick Hake; and Tom Scheider.

GRATITUDE, from page 4

grace and glory of God in action as I record my answered prayers, often in astounding and unexpected ways. This is a wonderful chance to count His blessings and express my gratitude."

Abbott said she also records "praises" to recall "all the random things I am grateful for that week that I didn't even have to ask for: the beautiful weather, special time with family, safe travels, wonderful people God has put in my life and the lives of my children."

Applying intentionality

Mary Kay Helmkamp of St. Joseph Parish in LaGrange finds gratitude in nature.

"I've been a grateful observer of nature my entire life. I have always been that person who stops to listen to the birds or watch one of God's creatures in action."

For others, gratitude becomes prayer in action. Tim Bir of St. Mary Parish in Huntington was widowed suddenly 4 1/2 years ago, when his wife Jody went to the hospital for a heart procedure and developed complications.

Bir said it would have been easy to become bitter and reclusive after the devastating loss. "But I thank God for having had her every day."

And every day he fulfills his mission of gratitude by helping someone. "If I'm not out and about, I miss an opportunity."

Bir not only lives and prays his gratitude but evangelizes it as well. "I might be in a fast-food restaurant, and I'll speak to someone about being thankful."

Those conversations included

a couple who were preparing to go on a mission trip, and "we prayed together for their mission."

The Magnavox retiree said he is grateful for the gift of time to be able to listen to people, or to give a person an unexpected gift. "It's important to let God love others through you."

Sister Anita Holzmer of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration said she learned one of her gratitude practices while serving as a missionary in Honduras.

"Whenever someone tells me something that amounts to an answered prayer, or whenever I'm telling another about an answered prayer, I say, 'Thanks be to God' aloud so the other can join me in thanking God."

The people in Honduras were "exceedingly poor, and I had actually experienced the poverty of some of their homes," she said. But no matter how poor they were, "Thanks be

to God' ('Gracias a Dios') was always on their lips. This was a real lesson to me, coming from a country where, by comparison, we have everything we need and

much of what we want."

St. Charles Borromeo parishioner Tricia Bugaski said she brings gratitude practice into her professional life as well as her personal prayer.

In addition to writing out three things that she is grateful for every day, she practices gratitude when negativity enters her thoughts or a conversation. "I require myself to list five things I am grateful for when I say something negative about myself or my life."

The practice, she said, "has been a very big help in my life — I might even say a game-changer for me."

In her job at the University of Saint Francis, she has extended the idea to her colleagues.

"At least once a month, I'll start a meeting with everyone going around the table and saying what they are grateful for instead of using a rote prayer." One result has been that it begins meetings on a positive note.

Each person said adding gratitude to their daily prayer has made a difference in how they live not just at Thanksgiving, but in every season of the year.

"Thanks be to God"

("Gracias a Dios")

was always on their lips.

This was a real lesson to me,

coming from a country where,

by comparison, we have

everything we need and much

of what we want."

SISTER ANITA HOLZMER



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Catholic leaders thank Rodney Reed supporters, pray for justice

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Five days before the scheduled execution of death-row inmate Rodney Reed — who gained attention of Catholic leaders and celebrities alike -- the top criminal appeals court in Texas granted an indefinite stay of his execution and said they were sending his case back to trial court for further review. The late-day decision Nov. 15 by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals came just hours after the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles had recommended delaying Reed's death by lethal injection. Catholic leaders who had urged people to speak up about Rodney's case, citing lack of evidence of his guilt, took to social media after the decision was announced thanking people for their support and praying for justice. Sister Helen Prejan, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille, who is a longtime opponent of the death penalty, thanked the "millions of people who signed petitions, made phone calls, wrote letters and advocated" for Rodney Reed, saying in a Nov. 15 tweet that they "helped save an innocent man's life!" Catholic Mobilizing Network, a group that works to stop the death penalty, similarly thanked all who "took action to advocate on Rodney's behalf."

NEWS BRIEFS

Archbishop urges L.A. Catholics to join him in prayer for shooting victims



CNS photo/KHTS Radio via Reuters

Sheriffs in Santa Clarita, Calif., escort students and faculty out of Saugus High School Nov. 14. Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez asked Catholics of the archdiocese to pray with him for the victims of the shooting at the high school in Santa Clarita, about 30 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. "May God comfort their families and loved ones and bring healing. May Our Blessed Mother keep them all in her maternal care and may God give them peace," he said in a tweet a few hours after the shooting. Two students and the shooter died, and three students were injured in the incident.

Archbishop Sheen will be beatified Dec. 21 at Peoria's cathedral

PEORIA, Ill. (CNS) — Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen will be beatified Dec. 21, Bishop Daniel R. Jenky of Peoria announced late Nov. 18. He said the Vatican had just notified him of the beatification and he was announcing the news "with great joy and thanksgiving." Plans for the beatification are already underway, the bishop said. The ceremony will be at 10 a.m. local time at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria. "This is the same cathedral where (Archbishop) Sheen was ordained a priest 100 years ago on Sept. 20, 1919," said a Peoria diocesan news release. "It seems entirely fitting that the beatification will take place at the end of this 100-year anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood." The cathedral also is the current resting place for the archbishop, who is entombed in a marble vault next to the altar where he was ordained. The diocese planned to release more information about the beatification over the next few days. News about the beatification and the life of Archbishop Sheen can be found at celebratesheen.com.

iViva Cristo Rey!

BY SISTER THERESA MARIE NGUYEN, OP

"Who is this King of glory?"
— Psalm 24:10

"iViva, Cristo Rey!" was the resounding battle cry of the Cristeros in their struggle against the violent imposition of a secularist, anti-Catholic, anti-clerical state in Mexico during La Cristiada (1926-29), a war described by Graham Greene as "the fiercest persecution of religion anywhere since the reign of Elizabeth."

"iViva Cristo Rey!" was also the final confession on the lips of Blessed Miguel Agustín Pro, a martyr of the Cristeros war. He was not a resistance fighter, but a Catholic priest of wit and courage who selflessly ran a clandestine ministry during the treacherous reign of President Plutarco Calles. In 1927, Father Pro was falsely charged and sentenced to death without due trial for the attempted assassination of Mexico's former president, President Álvaro Obregón.

The photographs of his execution were ordered by President Calles and were intended to show the cowardly death of a Catholic priest. Ironically, what has been seared into our collective historical memory is the very opposite of what Calles intended. The photographs immortalize an otherworldly truth.

Both literally and figuratively, Father Pro's life and death take the form of the cross. With arms outstretched in cruciform, rosary in one hand and a crucifix in the other, facing the firing squad with fierce and fearless serenity, Miguel Pro defied every worldly power. It is said that he cried out in a clear and steady voice, "iViva Cristo Rey!" just as the bullets riddled his body.

As with the Cristeros war, the fight to protect religious freedom today is a fight for the right to live and love, to serve and worship the one true God. Like Blessed Miguel Pro, Catholics today also seek to testify to the truth of the kingship of Jesus Christ in all of life. When they confess with their lips and know in their hearts that Christ is Lord

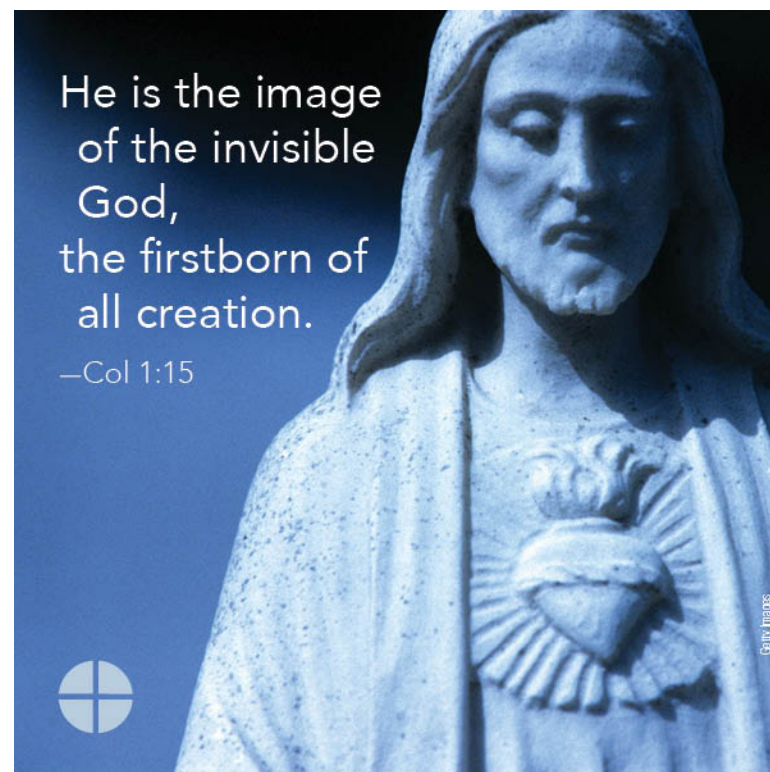
and King, they come to experience the "glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rm 8:21) just as Blessed Miguel Pro and the cloud of witnesses who have gone before them experienced.

This year's Solemnity of Christ the King occurs one day after the 92nd anniversary of the martyrdom of Blessed Miguel Agustín Pro. May this Solemnity of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, as well as its prelude in the anniversary of Blessed Miguel Pro's death, remind all of the true King who stoops to wash the feet of others, who turns the other cheek, who reigns from the cross with a mighty scepter of love, and who wields the powers of mercy and forgiveness and lays down his life for love. His kingdom is not of this world, (Jn 18:36) but of the next.

May we always keep that at the forefront of our minds. "iViva, Cristo Rey!"

He is the image
of the invisible
God,
the firstborn of
all creation.

—Col 1:15



The feast of Christ the King is Sunday, Nov. 24, an occasion to pray that all would someday enjoy the liberty to profess Jesus Christ as lord and king of the universe.



BY JENNIFER BARTON

Gift Guide

The gift of salvation, made available through Christ Jesus, is the best gift mankind could ever receive. Even so, expressing love to others in the giving of gifts is a time-honored tradition in Christmas celebrations. And since it's not always easy to find the right gift for friends and family members, Today's Catholic has several recommendations to ease the stress of gift-giving.

The gift of experiences

As the celebration of Jesus' birth draws near, Mary comes to the forefront as well. From Nov. 30-March 8, loved ones can view images of Mary through a membership at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, which is hosting the exhibit



"Theotokos: Contemporary Visions of Mary." Various membership levels are available and gallery admission can be enjoyed year-round. Visit fwmoa.org/membership for more information.

In 2020, Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center is offering an overnight retreat package, including three meals on the relaxing campus to be used whenever the recipient chooses. Packages are \$65 and available at Lindenwood.org/gifts.

The gift of beauty

During the cold winter months when the Earth is dormant and bare, the gift of flowers can brighten the season with bold splashes of reds,

greens and cool whites. Or how about a genuine evergreen Advent wreath or garland to celebrate the coming of Christ?

Area florists also offer a wide assortment of holiday decor. Even decorative treat baskets can be delivered locally. Visit Wygant Floral Co. in South Bend (wygantfloral.com) or Cottage Flowers in Fort Wayne (cottageflowersinc.net).

The gift of taste

The holiday season often revolves around sharing a festive meal at the table with friends and family. So why not gift the meal itself?

Fresh or smoked meats please the palate of even the most difficult to buy for. Beef jerky and snack sticks are perfect for care packages for loved ones who cannot make it home for Christmas, especially those serving in the military during the holidays. Or even give the cook a break from the stress and work by having the Christmas meal catered through a local restaurant or butcher shop such as Feders Meats in Fort Wayne (federsmeats.com).

For the chocolate and coffee, connoisseurs there are



gift-giving opportunities that come with the bonus of supporting monks and nuns throughout the country. Mystic Monk Coffee sells numerous blends, including specialties for Christmas, available at some Catholic bookstores and online at mysticmonkcoffee.com.

Cloistered nuns at Monastery Candy produce a variety of delicious caramels and chocolates to support their lives of prayer, which can be purchased at monasterycandy.com.

The gift of knowledge

One should never stop learning, and to learn about the beauty of the Catholic faith is a far more precious gift than fine jewelry or expensive electronics.

For young children, there are many wonderful books such as the Magnificat Bible, Book of Saints and Little Catechism. If children learn through play, toy Nativities such as the Little People set and Mass kits are appropriate gifts.

For Catholic moms, Colleen Duggan's book "Good Enough is Good Enough" and Lisa Hendey's updated "A Book of Saints for Catholic Moms" are great options for spiritual growth.

"The Catholic Gentleman: Living Authentic Manhood Today" by Sam Guzman is a man's guide on how to live a virtuous life in our modern age.

An excellent answer to "Why do we do that?" is Father William Saunders' "Celebrating a Merry Catholic Christmas," which gives parents the answers to common questions and provides a guide for family spiritual life through Advent and Christmas.

The gift of holiness

In the true spirit of Christmas, a gift that points a loved one toward Jesus is profoundly appropriate. Catholic bookstores are treasure troves of gift ideas, and not only for books and sacramentals. Statuary, crucifixes, wall hangings and even kitchen items are available at stores such as Good Shepherd Books & Gifts in Fort Wayne and Divine Mercy Gifts in the South Bend area. If you are looking for an item that is not in store, chances are it can be ordered.

Another interesting household item is the wall rosary, a beautiful piece for decoration and a reminder to call Mother. Along with handmade rosaries, rosary hangers and other inspired items, they can be found in various colors at etsy.com/shop/smallthingsgr8love.

The gift of fun

The Catholic Card Game is a mix-and-match game that Catholics will find hilarious, clean and sure to liven up any family gathering. Aside from the base deck, there is an expansion pack for teens and one for generations. Available at catholiccardgame.com.

"Drinking with Saint Nick: Christmas Cocktails for Sinners and Saints." The title says it all. Christmas is meant to be enjoyed, and none celebrate it better than the saints. And after all, who wouldn't want to celebrate Christmas with Jolly Ol' St. Nick?





Special events and festi

November 24

HAM AND TURKEY DINNER

NEW HAVEN — The St. Louis Besancon community will host a meal of ham and turkey, mashed potatoes and all the fixings from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24, in the parish hall, 15535 Lincoln Hwy. E. A live auction by Mike Roy will take place at 1:30 p.m., in addition to a silent auction, 50/50 raffles and the Country Craft Store. Tickets: \$10/adults, \$5/kids 5-12, and under 4 years old free. Drive-through option from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

PRESENTATION

GARRETT — A presentation of 'Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary' will examine what Scripture, the life of Christ and the early Church fathers reveal about Mary. Dr. Brant Pitre examines the connections between the Old and New Testaments from 6:30-8 p.m. Nov. 24 at St. Joseph Parish, Bennett Hall. Information will also be shared about an opportunity to walk with Mary during a Bible study. Contact Eileen Sarrazine at sarrazine@stjosephgarrett.org for information.

VESPERS SERVICE

SOUTH BEND — Christ the King Parish will pray the Liturgy of the Hours at a vespers service led by profes-

sional singers from the community from 7-8 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24, at the church, 52473 SR 933. Contact Jessica Roberts at 574-272-3113 or jroberts@christthekingonline.org for more information.

November 27

NIGHT OF LIGHTS

FORT WAYNE — Celebrate Night of Lights from 5-9 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 27. Enjoy the lighting of all the Christmas displays in downtown Fort Wayne. Good Shepherd Books & Gifts will offer 20% off customers' entire purchase and free hot wassail and cookies. Free parking in the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center garage, 915 S. Clinton St., until 9 p.m. Contact Kara Slocum at 260-399-1442 or info@goodshepherdbookstore.org.

November 30

HOLLY TROLLEY SHOPPING

FORT WAYNE — Shopping will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. throughout downtown Fort Wayne on Saturday, Nov. 30. Good Shepherd Books & Gifts will offer a 20% discount on customers' entire purchase and free hot wassail and

cookies. Free trolley rides around downtown and free parking in the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center garage, 915 S. Clinton St., until 4 p.m. Contact Kara Slocum at 260-399-1442 or at info@goodshepherdbookstore.org.

December 3

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE NOVENA

KENDALLVILLE — A novena to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe will begin at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3, at Immaculate Conception Church, 319 E. Diamond St.

SCRIPTURE AND CAROLS

GRANGER — Enjoy Scripture readings, Christmas carols and other songs that reflect on the Scripture's message and embrace the beautiful season of Advent through prayer at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3, at St. Pius X Church, 52553 Fir Rd. Contact Jeremy Hoy at 574-272-8462 or jhoy@stpius.net.

December 4

SAINTS ALIVE LUNCHEON

FORT WAYNE — The annual Saints Alive Holiday Tables Luncheon will be 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4. It's the perfect way to ring in the holiday season, surrounded by Patsy Dumas' extensive collection of Christmas China in her home, 10109 Silver Lake Court. Every table will have a different setting of seasonal china and decorations. A goodwill donation will be collected during the event to support Bishop Dwenger High School. Contact Dayna Horner at dhorner@bishopdwenger.com.

LESSONS AND CAROLS

FORT WAYNE — John Angotti and Friends will begin the Advent season as he leads "Advent Lessons and Carols: A Journey to Christmas via Music and Scripture" at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4, at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1502 E. Wallen Rd. Grady Gambrell, JT Brown, Dion Clay and St. Vincent musicians will join Angotti in this musical reflection. Contact Tony Andorfer at 260-489-3537 or church@saintv.org.

December 5

ADVENT ROSARY

SOUTH BEND — Take some time away from hectic Christmas preparations by focusing on the spirit of Advent and preparing for the celebration. Participate in an Advent rosary, which will be prayed at Holy Cross Parish, 920 Wilber St., at 7 p.m. the Thursdays of Advent — Dec. 5, 12 and 19 — in the Mary Chapel. Sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 553.

December 7

COOKIE WALK, CRAFT SALE

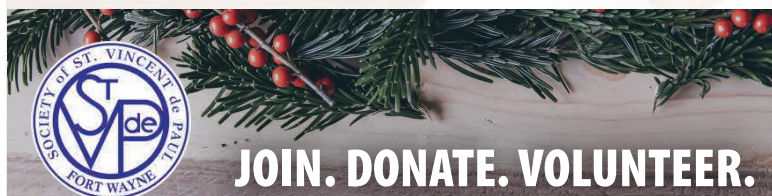
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November 30-March 8

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visit fwmoa.org



Fort Wayne Museum of Art

ivities

will offer a cookie walk and craft sale from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 7, in the school cafeteria, across Center Street from the church, 612 N. Center St. Cookies are \$4 per pound. Donated crafts are priced as marked. Contact Chris Morrow at 574-540-9686 or chris@morrowinsurance-agency.com.

MEET ST. NICHOLAS

FORT WAYNE — Meet and talk with St. Nicholas from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, at Good Shepherd Bookstore. Free gift for the children, free hot wassail and cookies and 20% off customers' entire purchase. Free parking in the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center garage, 915 S. Clinton St., until 4 p.m. Contact Kara Slocum at 260-399-1442 or at info@good-shepherdbookstore.org.

CRAFT FAIR

FORT WAYNE — Shop local from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, at the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Christmas craft fair, 10700

Aboite Center Rd. Find unique, handmade items perfect for gift-giving. The fair will feature handmade home decor, rosaries, wreaths, paper art, hand-sewn items, jewelry, pottery, prints, repurposed furniture, stocking stuffers and more. Chili, pizza and snacks will be available for purchase. Contact seaschristmascraftfair@gmail.com for information.

SAINT NICK SIX

SOUTH BEND — The 11th annual Saint Nick Six 6K/3K race takes place at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, at St. Joseph Parish, 216 N. Hill St. Proceeds from the race benefit St. Joseph Grade School. The event includes a 6K run, 3K walk and the popular Run, Run, Rudolph .06K for little reindeer in first grade and younger, as well as a pancake breakfast. Online registration at www.stjoeparish.com. Register by Nov. 22 to receive a long-sleeve race shirt. Contact Chris DeLuca at 574-234-3134 or cdeluca@me.com.

WINTER WONDERLAND BAZAAR

BRISTOL — St. Mary of the Annunciation annual Winter Wonderland craft bazaar and bake sale will be Saturday, Dec. 7, in Annunciation Hall, 411 W. Vistula St. Crafts, handmade items, baked goods and direct sales items will be available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Love and

Blessings Catholic Books and Gift Store will also be open. Concessions available. Contact Calla Patka at 574-848-4305 or saintmaryscraft-bazaar@gmail.com.

December 8

PENANCE SERVICE

GARRETT — St. Joseph Parish, 300 W. Houston St., will have a penance service at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8. Multiple priests will be available to hear all confessions. Contact Eileen Sarrazine at Sarrazine@stjosephgarrett.org.

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

SOUTH BEND — Christ the King Parish, 52473 SR 933, will have Taize - a candlelight service of prayer, song and contemplation - at 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8, to celebrate Advent. Contact Jessica Roberts at 574-272-3113 or jroberts@christthekingonline.org.

ST. NICHOLAS BREAKFAST

SOUTH BEND — A special pancake breakfast to celebrate the feast of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, will be Sunday, Dec. 8, at St. Anthony de Padua Parish, 2320 E. Jefferson Blvd. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, from 9 a.m. to noon guests will enjoy breakfast, a photo opportunity with the Bishop of Myra, crafts, a cookie sale and hot chocolate. Donations will be collected to benefit the Diocesan Seminarian Support Fund. Contact Tina Masterson 574-282-2308 or church@stasb.org.

ADVENT WITH ST. NICHOLAS

ANGOLA — A pancake breakfast hosted by the Knights of Columbus with the holy Bishop St. Nicholas will be Sunday, Dec. 8, in St. Francis hall, 700 W. Maumee

St., at 11 a.m. He will take pictures with the children and give them stockings filled with treats. There will also be an Advent wreath-making workshop free to all attendees. This is an event for the whole community. Contact Cathy Bryan at 260-665-2259.

December 9

LESSONS AND CAROLS

SOUTH BEND — This Advent service on the feast of the Incarnation will alternate lessons (Scripture readings or reflections) and carols to point participants toward the Incarnation and help them to walk with Mary as a model for welcoming Christ. Location is St. Joseph Church, 211 N. Hill St. Contact Theresa Slott at 574-234-3134 or tslott@stjoeparish.com.

December 10

TAIZE PRAYER SERVICE

GRANGER — St. Pius X Parish, 52553 Fir Rd., will offer Taize prayer at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10, in the church. Taize prayer is composed of songs that originated in the tiny French Village of Taize. These songs, known throughout the world, have led Christians of all languages to a pathway of prayer. The repetition of the text and music takes participants to the heart of the mystery of prayer, for prayer is not something that can be explained — it arises when individuals open themselves to God's love, together, in an atmosphere of simple trust. Contact Jeremy Hoy at 574-272-8462 or jhoy@stpius.net.

December 11

HOLY HOUR AND RECONCILIATION

SOUTH BEND — The sacrament of reconciliation will be available 6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 11 and 18, during the weekly holy hour at Holy Cross Parish, in the church. Contact the parish office at 574-233-2179 or parish@hcpsb.org.

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

SOUTH BEND — Students present Christmas Around the World Wednesday, Dec. 11, at Holy Family School, 56407 Mayflower Rd. Facts, snacks and crafts will take

attendees on a joy-filled journey around the globe. The junior high students have been hard at work handcrafting items that will be offered for sale at this event. All proceeds will help fund education scholarships for students at Bethany Miracle Village in Uganda, East Africa. For more information visit bethanymiraclevillage.org or call the school office. Contact Jennifer Veldman at 574-289-7375 or jveldman@hfssb.org.

December 12

MISA GUADALUPANA

KENDALLVILLE — Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be at Immaculate Conception Church, 319 E. Diamond St., at 5 p.m. Dec. 12.

December 14

WOMEN'S RETREAT

SOUTH BEND — An Advent gathering of all women — daughters and sisters, moms and grandmas, single or married — will be at noon Saturday, Dec. 14, at St. Thérèse, Little Flower Church, 54191 Ironwood Rd. A social will be followed by a talk broadcast (via Blessed is She) from Michelle Benzinger. Bring a dish to share. Infants-in-arms welcome. Contact Abby Kyle at 574-243-3441 or abby@littleflowerchurch.org.

LIVE NATIVITY

ELKHART — St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, 1405 N. Main St., will have a live Nativity following the 4:30 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturday, Dec. 14. Come to the church for the Nativity and to enjoy live music. The animals will be outside and afterward and refreshments will be offered in the school. Contact the parish office at 574-262-1505 or office@stelkhart.com for more information.

Events continue on page 10.



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December 15**ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE**

AUBURN — Five priests will be available to hear confessions from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 15 at Immaculate Conception Church, 500 East Seventh St.

LESSONS AND CAROLS

MISHAWAKA — St. Bavo Church, 511 W. 7th St., will host the 15th annual "Festival of Lessons and Carols," on at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15. The program will feature the St. Bavo Parish Choir and the Schola from St. Joseph Parish, Mishawaka. Father Peter Pacini, pastor of St. Bavo, will preside. The festival of nine lessons and carols is a service celebrating the birth of Jesus. It is a brief journey through salvation history. Told in nine short Bible readings from Genesis, the prophetic books and the Gospels, interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols by the congregation, beautiful solos and inspiring choral music. Contact Joe Higginbotham, OFS at 574-255-1437 or office@stbavo-church.com.

ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS

SOUTH BEND — Christ the King Parish and school, 52473 SR 933, will present Advent lessons and carols from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15. Contact Jessica Roberts at 574-272-3113 or jroberts@christthekingonline.org.

NOVENA DE NAVIDAD

KENDALLVILLE — A nine-evening event with a rosary and novena prayer will begin at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15, at Immaculate Conception Church, 319 E. Diamond St. The final night will be Dec. 23 and will include Las Posadas.

December 16**QUIET EVENING OF PRAYER**

SOUTH BEND — In the busy-ness of the holiday season, it may be hard to remember to slow down and focus on what and who this time is all about. St. Joseph Church, 226 N. Hill St., will be open from 5-9 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16, for a little quiet time with the Lord in the blessed sacrament. Come for five minutes or come for an hour; all are welcome. The Knights of Columbus will lead a rosary beginning at 7:30 p.m. Contact Sean Driscoll at 574-234-3134 or sdriscoll@stjoparish.com.

ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE

FORT WAYNE — St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 10700 Aboite Center Rd., will have an Advent reconciliation service that begins at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16, and continues until all are finished, typically until 8-8:30 p.m. Contact Judy Middleton at 260-432-0268 or parish@seasfw.org.

LESSONS AND CAROLS

FORT WAYNE — St. Therese Parish will host a festival of lessons and carols at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16, at the church, 2304 Lower Huntington Rd. Presented by the music ministry under the direction of Beverly Rieger, the festival of lessons and carols is a candlelit service of carols and Scripture presented around the time of Christmas. After the service and closing remarks by the pastor, all are invited to a free reception in the nearby parish hall.

December 17**ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE**

GRANGER — Many priests will be available during an Advent penance service beginning at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 17, at St. Pius X Church, 52553 Fir Rd., in preparation for the beautiful season of Christmas and the coming of the Lord Jesus. Contact Jeremy Hoy at 574-272-8462 or jhoy@stpius.net.

December 24**MIDNIGHT MASS AT CATHEDRAL**

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate the 10:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass on Tuesday, Dec. 24, at Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 1122 S. Clinton St.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

GRANGER — Christmas Eve lessons and carols will be Tuesday, Dec. 24, with the choirs of St. Pius X, before each Christmas Eve Mass (4 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and midnight). The Children's Choir and Adult Ensemble will sing at 3:30 p.m. The Sunday Evening Choir will sing at 6 p.m. The Sunday Morning Choir will sing at 11:15 p.m. Instrumentalists will join all choirs. The parish adult and youth handbell choirs will play prelude music 15 minutes before Mass on Christmas Day at 9 and 11 a.m. Contact Jeremy Hoy at 574-272-8462 or jhoy@stpius.net.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

ANGOLA — St. Anthony Church, 700 W Maumee St. will have a children's Mass at 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve that will feature the preschool class presenting baby Jesus and have a live manger. The St. Anthony singing group "Higher Plain" will sing for the solemn Christmas Eve midnight Mass at 10 p.m. Christmas Morning Mass will begin at 10 a.m. Contact Patti Webster at 260-665-2259.

For other Christmas Mass times contact a parish near you. To find a parish visit www.diocesefwsb.org/find-a-parish

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Strzelecki wins championship with help from saints

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

Bishop Dwenger High School senior Erin Strzelecki won the Indiana High School Athletic Association state cross-country meet Nov. 2. The race marked the fourth state cross-country competition of the Fort Wayne student's high school career.

Strzelecki accomplished the first-place finish with the help of her teammates, coaches, fans and her Catholic faith, she said.

"As a team, we try to incorporate Christ in everything that we do together. We usually begin practice with a prayer, any intentions the girls have, a thought for the day, and any wise words of spiritual encouragement that (coach) Bob Sedlmeyer has to offer us."

Strzelecki said Father Matthew Coonan, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Elkhart, began running with the team this season because he was a friend of her family. "One of my favorite memories from this past state meet was having Mass in our tent — celebrated by Father Matt — just hours before my race."

"I also thought it would be nice to have someone pace me during workouts because I knew how strong of a runner he is," she added.

As Father Coonan continued to run with the girls, Strzelecki

said she began to notice that the others enjoyed his presence too. "They grew close in friendship with him fairly quickly because of how approachable and sociable he is, and we all look up to him as a spiritual and running mentor."

Maria Cavacini, a team captain, also believes that Father Coonan had a positive impact on the team this season, and recalled advice he gave them. "He told us to 'be on the mile you're on.' This meant to always be in the moment, and was a great lesson he taught us."

In addition to having spiritual leaders and coaches helping out this season, the team also adopted several patron saints to intercede for Strzelecki. "The team's patron saints remind us that there are saints in heaven that are cheering us on," said Anna Morris, another team captain. "The team's patron saints are Mary, Queen of all Saints; St. Sebastian; and St. Rose of Lima."

"We like to turn to Mary because she is such a good example to remain calm in all situations," Morris continued. "We ask for St. Sebastian's intercession because he's the patron saint of athletes. St. Rose of Lima is a little bit of a new saint — we just started including her, and we do a little something special when we ask for her inter-



Erin Strzelecki of Fort Wayne poses with her Most Valuable Runner award at the Bishop Dwenger High School cross-country team's annual banquet in November. Provided by Bob Sedlmeyer

cession," said captain Rachel Siela. Junior Jackie Miles would sing St. Rose's name, Siela said, and the team responded by singing, "Pray for us."

"I think that this part of our prayer is so special because it always brings a smile to everyone's face, and reminds us of the beauty of each of the saints." Several of the girls also pray throughout their workouts.

Not only do the team members strengthen each other's faith, but they do so in communion with several other Catholic teams.

Guerin Catholic High School, Noblesville, hosts the annual Indiana all-Catholic meet. "The Guerin Catholic meet is one of the team's favorite races because after the race, all the teams gather in the gym for Mass," said Morris. Cavacini added that she found it beautiful to see so many teams joined together for Mass after having just run.

While the Bishop Dwenger team did not qualify for the state competition, as it has in the past two years, consistent training and prayer qualified Strzelecki individually and brought her to the finish line 20 seconds in front of the runner-up at the championship meet in Terre Haute. In the days following, Strzelecki signed a letter of intent to run cross country and track for the University of Notre Dame this fall.

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Practice peace to prepare for Christmas

In his classic News Note "Peace: The Essence of the Christmas Message," Father James Keller, founder of The Christophers, tells the story of a woman who was out shopping on a cold December day. She stopped upon seeing a man in threadbare clothes, huddled on a bench, with a paper bag wrapped around his neck, trying to keep warm. Just then, a girl of about 11 or 12 years old approached the man, removed a bright woolen scarf from her own neck, wrapped it around the neck of this poor man, and then silently slipped away.

What a beautiful expression of the true Christmas spirit! To witness a completely selfless act of giving is to witness the peace of Christ alive within someone's heart. "Peace is the essence of the message of Christmas," wrote Father

Keller, and Christ's peace is special because of the way He gives, totally and completely, in a sacrificial way, to reveal the Father's love to us.

John wrote, "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him... should have eternal life." This is why Christmas is so much about giving, because adopting a giving spirit is the best way

to honor God's gift of His son to us. Giving gifts to others is a wonderful symbol of the love we have for them, but it's important to remember that our giving should always be rooted in the things of the spirit, just like the gift that girl gave of her own scarf.

Gifts of the spirit are often less tangible but they can have a profound effect on people's lives by revealing the love of God to them. A gift of the spirit can be a gift of time – we can share a meal with someone, an old friend or someone we know who suffers from loneliness. We can also give the gift of hope by living in a way to raise the spirits of those in our lives. We can give the gift of peace by setting aside differences and showing an enemy what it means to forgive. And we can give of ourselves by performing random acts of kindness.

Another story Father Keller recounts in his classic Christmas News Note is that of a 7-year-old boy whose mother was busy with seasonal chores just three days before Christmas. The mother asked her son to shine her good shoes, so he went off and set about the task with love and devotion. Returning a short while later with a giant smile,



FATHER ED DOUGHERTY, THE CHRISTOPHERS

LIGHT ONE CANDLE

he presented the shoes to his mother for inspection. She was so happy with the job he had done that she rewarded him with a quarter. But on Christmas day, when she went to put on her shoes, she felt a lump in the toe, so she pulled it out. Inside was the quarter she had given him, wrapped in a piece of paper. Upon the paper, the boy had written, "I done it for love."

This is the essence of Christmas – to act out of love for others without care for personal gain, and this is what helps to bring about the peace of Christ in the world. Only when each individual understands the selfless gift God has made in His only Son, will peace truly reign. So allow Christ to work through you during this Advent season, performing random acts of kindness, and you will see hearts opened and the peace of Christ transform people's lives.

For free copies of the Christopher News Note "Peace: The Essence of the Christmas Message," write: The Christophers, 5 Hanover Square, New York, NY

"Peace is the essence of the message of Christmas."

FATHER JAMES KELLER

Grandma remembers: the secret of 90

It has become a four-generation tradition to head south of the cities and take in a small-town celebration of fall. Our route winds between soaring bluffs and a shimmering lake. It feels like a narrow passageway, a tunnel back in time.

We perused antique dolls at a whimsical toy store in Wabasha, Minnesota. Grandma recognized a Shirley Temple doll on display; she'd had the same one.

Then we climbed aboard the hand-carved carousel. Grandma in a gilded chariot pulled by an ostrich, the baby on her lap. It seemed a fitting placement for our freckled matriarch, who turns 90 this month: a few musical loops for the woman who has circled the sun 90 times, all while remaining in close orbit with the Son.

On the drive home, we gazed at blazing maples and listened to "How Great Thou Art" — a song played at Grandpa Jim's funeral, she told me.

In the back of the van, a great-grandchild snapped her reverie, and stories of toddler antics ensued. Again she seamlessly spanned the decades, recalling her days with young children. She laughed about the time her son Michael got stuck in a muddy field at stern Farmer Sperl's. A neighbor boy breathlessly alerted her, advising: "You might need boots."

The lake danced behind us, and I circled back to her milestone birthday.

"I feel pretty much the same



CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

TWENTY SOMETHING

as 70," she said.

Grandma stimulates her mind and soul: daily Mass and crosswords and journaling, weekly adoration, frequent phone calls and chocolates. She credits "God's grace and the luck of the Irish, which includes my genes."

She does not look 90. She is spry, plucking out songs at the piano, scooping up great-grandbabies, serving guests.

She is beloved by everyone she encounters — a universal Grandma, a stand-in with a ready hug and listening ear, a candy dish and a crackling fireplace.

She makes each visitor feel understood and embraced. That is her superpower: She remembers. She is 90 and also 50 and 20 and 5. She recalls each stage — not only where she was and what she did, but how she felt.

She is still a redheaded girl living in St. Paul with her grandparents, tormented by the neighbor boy Donny Stulhman, determined to prove she is taller than he (though she is not).

She is still a teenager, dreaming of motherhood and sobered

CAPECCI, page 13

Christ is the image of God, and our redeemer



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Feast of Christ The King Luke 23:35-43

The Second Book of Samuel furnishes the first biblical reading for this feast, marking the close of the Church year.

Once, the two books of Samuel composed a single volume. In time, editors divided the volume into the two books now seen in Bibles. The book records the major events of the reign of King David in Israel, which was from 1004 to 971 B.C. It is classified as a history book in the Old Testament.

In this weekend's reading, David becomes the king of Israel.

He was more than a governmental authority or political figure. His task as king was to strengthen the union between God and the people. He was God's instrument, not in a plan to control people. After all, people had free wills allowing them to choose the course of their actions.

Rather, David was God's gift to the people. By bringing them more closely to God, David assisted in bringing them to prosperity, peace and life.

For its second reading, the Church presents a passage from the Epistle to the Colossians. This epistle was written to the Christians of Colossae, a moderately important city of the Roman Empire.

Jesus is the absolute keystone of creation. In the Lord come together all human beings and certainly all Christians. Through Jesus, all people possess the hope of eternal salvation. Through Jesus, all Christians share in the very life of God.

Magnificent in its imagery, this reading acclaims Jesus as the "image of the invisible God."

St. Luke's Gospel supplies the last reading. It is a passage from Luke's powerful Passion Narrative that recounts the trial and execution of Jesus.

Central in the story is the inscription placed above the head of Jesus on the cross. It read, "The King of the Jews." It is easy and probably accurate to assume that this inscription was placed on the cross above the Lord's dying body by the Roman authorities to warn potential rebels of the plight awaiting anyone who dared to defy Rome. It was intended to mock Jesus.

Instead of mockery, the sign was a revelation. It situated Jesus in the full sweep of salvation history, that pattern of encounters between God and the Hebrews. Jesus was of the Hebrews. He was a Jew. Most importantly, Jesus was the first among the Jews, the king.

The Gospel then gives the story of the criminals being executed beside Jesus. One cynically blasphemes. The other beautifully professes Jesus as

Savior. To him, Jesus promises life eternal. It is a majestic act of divine love and forgiveness.

Reflection

The Church closes its year with a brilliant and joyful testimony of Jesus as Son of God and redeemer. He is the only source of true life. Furthermore, the Lord is the very embodiment of God's endless love. Jesus frees us from our sins, as He forgave the dying thief on the cross at Calvary.

As Son of God, Jesus is God, possessing all authority over everything. Nothing can overcome or daunt the Son of God, not even death on the cross.

Americans never understand the European concept of royalty. Monarchs exist to inspire their people. In Britain, a heroine of the Second World War was Queen Elizabeth, wife of King George VI and mother of the present queen. She made herself a part of the people's sufferings and worries, constantly visiting military hospitals and

neighborhoods in London destroyed by German bombing.

On one such visit she was asked if she would send her daughters to Canada, where they would be more secure. The queen replied that her daughters would not go away without their parents, and that the king would never, ever desert his people in their trials.

Christ the King never deserts us. He died for us.

READINGS

Sunday: 2 Sm 5:1-3 Ps 122:1-5 Col 1:12-20 Lk 23:35-43

Monday: Dn 1:1-6, 8-20 (Ps) Dn 3:52-56 Lk 21:1-4

Tuesday: Dn 2:31-45 (Ps) Dn 3:57-61 Lk 21:5-11

Wednesday: Dn 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28 (Ps) Dn 3:62-67 Lk 21:12-19

Thursday: Dn 6:12-28 (Ps) Dn 3:68-74 Lk 21:20-28

Friday: Dn 7:2-14 (Ps) Dn 3:75-81 Lk 21:29-33

Saturday: Rom 10:9-18 Ps 19:8-11 Mt 4:18-22

Fearlessness and the American bishops in Rome

Once knew a Congregationalist minister — Yale Divinity School graduate, decorated World War II chaplain, veteran campaigner for then-unpopular liberal causes — of whom it was said (sometimes by himself) that “David Colwell so fears God that he fears no one else.” It was a striking statement, redolent, perhaps, of the Jonathan Edwards (“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”) School of American Protestant Homiletics. But the source of this man’s fearlessness was rather different than that of a man I was just coming to know when David Colwell and I were friendly jousting partners on questions theological and political.

That man was Pope John Paul II. The dissident Yugoslav Marxist, Milovan Djilas, who had seen a lot in his life, once said that the Polish pope impressed him as a man utterly without fear. As I wrote in “Witness to Hope,” however, John Paul’s fearlessness was neither stoic nor driven by concerns about post-mortem divine retribution. Rather, it was a fearlessness rooted in John Paul’s rock-solid faith that God’s kingdom had broken into history in the death and resurrection of the Son of God. Because of that, those who became friends of the Lord Jesus and entered the communion of his Church could live beyond fear, here and now, because they had been empowered to live the life of the kingdom, here and now.

That faith-based fearlessness might well inspire the bishops of the United States on their upcoming “ad limina” visits to Rome and the “thresholds of

the Apostles,” the pilgrimage that every bishop is required to make on a regular basis, during which the Americans will meet in regional groups with Pope Francis and officials of the Roman Curia. Why ought the bishops display fearlessness in Rome? Because their task during the ad limina cycle that began this month and concludes in February 2020 will be to correct the cartoon view of the Church in the United States that is widespread in the Vatican these days.

According to the cartoon, U.S. Catholicism is dominated by a rigid, legalistic cast of mind, more eager to condemn than to convert, warped by imports from the evangelical Protestant “prosperity Gospel” and beholden to wealthy Catholics with a hard-right political agenda. As

any serious student of U.S. Catholicism knows, this is a vicious lie. But it has been successfully sold in the Vatican (and then broadcast by the more hard-edged mouth-pieces of the present pontificate), despite the fact that an early version of the cartoon was propagated in Rome in 2013 by the now-disgraced Theodore McCarrick.

The developed cartoon was then used to bully Third World bishops at Synod-2018, where warnings were issued against forming alliances with the Americans, who were “against the Pope.”

That, too, was a lie. With the possible exception of the Italian conference, no bishops’ conference in the world has been more deferential to the Holy See than the U.S. conference. But then the people propagating that lie are over-the-top ultramontanists —

sing when they are new moms soothing colicky babies.

She is still a widower at 45, given to fits of uncontrollable crying, triggered by daily reminders like shoes in a closet, but also propped up by enormous kindness. (“I never knew there was such compassion,” she said. “I’ll never be the same.”)

She is still a program coordinator at a social service agency called Neighbors, determined to serve the needy in her midst.

She is still a grandma, floored by the joy of her baby’s baby.



GEORGE WEIGEL

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

papal absolutists — whose idea of the range of the Pope’s teaching authority, and the deference due it, might make even Pius IX blush, at least a little (and on his better days). To such minds, even respectful challenge is infidelity.

The cartoon view of the U.S. Church was most ludicrously limned in a 2017 article, co-authored by a close papal adviser, Father Antonio Spadaro, SJ, in the Rome-based Jesuit journal, *La Civiltà Cattolica*. Had I been given that article as a paper by a college freshman in American Religion 101, I would have returned it with an offer to the poor student-author: try again and do much better, or take an “F” for your paper. Yet a few weeks ago, while speaking with Jesuits in Africa, the Holy Father commended that very article; and while I would like to think that he commended it as a cautionary tale against publishing nonsense, I fear otherwise.

For all its faults — and they are many — the Catholic Church in the United States lives the New Evangelization better than any other local Church in the developed world. More acute minds in Rome know that, though many are afraid to say it lest they be labeled “enemies of the pope.” All the more reason, then, for the U.S. bishops to correct the cartoon, respectfully but firmly, so that a serious conversation between Rome and America about the Catholic future in the United States can begin.

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

CAPECCHI, from page 12

by news of World War II, listening to H.V. Kaltenborn on the radio with her grandpa.

She is still a kindergarten teacher, overwhelmed and inspired to teach 110 students.

She is still a newlywed, deeply in love, merging two lives.

She is still a stay-at-home mom, humbled by the task of raising children.

She is still a Girl Scout leader, teaching the third graders in Troop 551 a melody they will

She is still a great-grandma, elevated to “another whole level, floating above Never-Never Land, fully aware of each blessing but totally free of responsibility.”

She has kept all these things in her heart, and she can access any one at any time. At 90, she is ageless: tender and tough, young and wise, more alive than ever.

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

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for November 24, 2019

Luke 23:35-43

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Solemnity of Christ the King, Cycle C: a reminder of how Jesus chose to rule. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

RULERS CHOSEN OF THE JEWS SAYING FEAR THIS MAN TODAY	SAVED SOLDIERS SAVE YOURSELF THE CHRIST INDEED REMEMBER ME WITH ME	LET HIM KING CRIMINALS OTHER JUSTLY COME INTO IN PARADISE
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CRIMINALS

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



Blessed Mary Anna Sala

1829-1891

Feast November 24

The fifth of eight children in an Italian family, Mary Anna went in 1842 to a boarding school operated by the Sisters of St. Marcellina. She earned a teaching diploma in four years and wanted to join the order, but had to wait because of her mother’s illness and father’s financial reverses. After assisting her family, she entered the congregation in 1848 and professed her vows in 1852. Over a 40-year teaching career in the order’s schools, she was both popular and successful; one of her students was the mother of Pope Paul VI. She died of throat cancer and was beatified in 1980.

Eucharistic Miracles of the World



Jennifer Barton

At St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish a display of information about the many eucharistic miracles of the world was set up for viewing Nov. 16-17. The Vatican-approved exhibit was presented by the Real Presence Association, and its Fort Wayne appearance was the first in the state of Indiana.

Hill: Abortion provider's arguments 'fail as a matter of law'

INDIANAPOLIS — Attorney General Curtis Hill has asked a federal district court to reject challenges brought by the Whole Woman's Health Alliance and affiliated co-plaintiffs against Indiana laws designed to protect women seeking abortions.

"Unsurprisingly," Hill said, "there are not among the plaintiffs any pregnant women seeking to invalidate such safeguards. (The) plaintiffs attack nearly every Indiana abortion statute and regulation — from licensing to physical examination — including some that do not even affect them. And while plaintiffs invoke the rights of patients, their interests as abortion providers diverge from pregnant women."

WWHA operates a South Bend clinic that provides medication abortions, in which patients are

provided medications that cause fetal death and then cause the patients to expel the deceased fetuses after they leave the clinic.

Key arguments put forward by Hill challenge the plaintiffs' standing to sue, and Hill laments that WWHA treats as trivial the very real threats to women's mental and physical health inherent in abortion procedures. In documents filed as part of Indiana's Nov. 8 motion for summary judgment, multiple women's testimonies are included to help shed light on the experience of obtaining abortions.

Besides mental health concerns, women face significant threats to their physical health. Surgical abortion features such risks as "bleeding, infection, or injury to the cervix, vagina, or uterus," as described in one physician's testimony. Medication-induced abortions also carry risks to women's physical health, with many women experiencing far worse pain and bleeding than expected.

 A composite advertisement for Christmas at the University of Saint Francis. It features three main images: a large, ornate Christmas tree in a domed room; a priest in red and white vestments holding a young child; and a dining table set for a meal. The text in the center reads:

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 An advertisement for Source 1st Bank's Financial Wellness program. It features a photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a desk, looking at documents and a laptop. The text reads:

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WHAT'S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

Knights host breakfast at Queen of Angels
FORT WAYNE — St. Gaspar del Bufalo Council No. 11043 will serve breakfast on Sunday, Nov. 24, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Activities Center at Queen of Angels, 1500 W. State Blvd. Cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 6-12, and \$25 per family. \$5 carryout packs will be available. Proceeds this month will help support parish schools.

Allen County Right to Life to benefit from Panera orders
FORT WAYNE — Allen County Right to Life will benefit from a fundraising event Saturday, Nov. 30, 4-8 p.m., from purchases at Panera on 526 E. Coliseum Blvd. Contact Allison Maluchnik 260-471-1849 or allison@ichooselife.org.

Evening of Hope and Healing for those struggling with infertility and secondary infertility
SOUTH BEND — An Evening of Hope and Healing will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m. at St. Therese, Little Flower Church, 54191 N Ironwood Rd. This special gathering will focus on the Advent spirit of waiting with hope, and will feature a witness talk by Notre Dame theology professor Timothy O'Mally and his wife, Kara. The evening will also

include inspiring music, eucharistic adoration and an opportunity to receive healing prayer as individuals or as couples offered by Father Andrew Curry, Father Terrence Coonan, Deacon Frederick Everett and members of the prayer ministry team at Little Flower. Sponsored by Marriage and Family Ministry, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Contact Lisa Everett 574-234-0687 or leverett@diocesefwsb.org.

Visit todayscatholic.org/event for the complete events calendar.

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