

# TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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## 'Let perpetual light shine upon them'



Luminarias line the walkway entrance to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne, Sunday, Nov. 29, for "An Evening of Heavenly Lights" memorial prayer service and tree lighting. Those present prayed for their departed loved ones.

BY JENNIFER BARTON

In the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the month of November ended as it began – in remembrance of those who lived in God's light and have passed on into the next life.

At "An Evening of Heavenly Lights" on Sunday evening, Nov. 29, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades presided at a special prayer service. Luminarias, or small paper lanterns, purchased in memory of family members and friends who have died were lit and blessed by the bishop during the service.

He pointed out the significance of light at the beginning of the Advent season. "The perpetual light is the light of heaven. It is the light of Christ, who, at Christmas, brought heaven to earth. He came to earth to enlighten us and to

guide us to salvation. Jesus is the light of the world, the light that prevails over darkness, the light of good that overcomes evil, of love that overcomes hatred, and of life that overcomes death."

White luminarias lined the walkways leading to the cathedral doors, their lights driving away the evening gloom and casting a reverent glow on the scores of people who gathered to pray. The luminarias were incorporated into the service because of an old tradition that states Mary and Joseph were led to the stable in Bethlehem by the lights of luminarias. The practice is reflected particularly in Hispanic culture, where luminarias are lit to welcome the Christ child.

Additionally, a special tree placed in front of the cathedral was lit at the event, with young



Photos by Jennifer Barton

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades blesses the luminarias and those who came to pray for the souls of deceased family members and friends.

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**PUBLISHER:** Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

**Editorial Department**

**PUBLICATIONS MANAGER:** Jodi Marlin  
**STAFF WRITER:** Jennifer Barton  
**PAGE DESIGNER:** Francie Hogan  
**NEWS SPECIALIST:** Mark Weber

**Business Department**

**BUSINESS MANAGER:** Jennifer Simerman  
**BOOKKEEPING/CIRCULATION:** Geoff Frank  
circulation@diocesefwsb.org  
**BUSINESS SALES MANAGER:** Erika Barron  
ebarron@diocesefwsb.org

**Website:** [www.todayscatholic.org](http://www.todayscatholic.org)  
260-456-2824

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**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.

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**Today's Catholic may be reached at:**  
Today's Catholic,  
P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN  
46856-1169; or email:  
[editor@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:editor@diocesefwsb.org)

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# Use of Pfizer, Moderna COVID-19 vaccines is morally acceptable, say bishops

BY JULIE ASHER

WASHINGTON (CNS) — While confusion has arisen in recent days in the media over “the moral permissibility” of using the COVID-19 vaccines just announced by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna, it is not “immoral to be vaccinated with them,” the chairmen of the U.S. bishops’ doctrine and pro-life committees said Nov. 23.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, addressed the issue in a memo to their brother bishops. A copy of the memo was obtained by Catholic News Service Nov. 24.

“Neither the Pfizer nor the Moderna vaccine involved the use of cell lines that originated in fetal tissue taken from the body of an aborted baby at any level of design, development or production,” the two prelates said. “They are not completely free from any connection to abortion, however, as both Pfizer and Moderna made use of a tainted cell line for one of the confirmatory lab tests of their products.

“There is thus a connection, but it is relatively remote,” they continued. “Some are asserting that if a vaccine is connected in any way with tainted cell lines, then it is immoral to be vaccinated with them. This is an inaccurate portrayal of Catholic moral teaching.”

Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann cited three Vatican documents that “treat the question of tainted vaccines”: the 2005 study by the Pontifical Academy for Life, “Moral Reflections on Vaccines Prepared from Cells Derived From Aborted Human Fetuses”; paragraphs nos. 34-35 in the 2008 “Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions” (“Dignitatis Personae”) by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; and the 2017 “Note on Italian Vaccine Issue,” by the Pontifical Academy for Life.

“These documents all point to the immorality of using tissue taken from an aborted child for creating cell lines,” they explained. “They also make distinctions in terms of the moral responsibility of the various actors involved, from those involved in designing and producing a vaccine to those receiving the vaccine.

“Most importantly,” they added, “they all make it clear that, at the level of the recipient, it is morally permissible to accept vaccination when there



CNS photo/Dado Ruvic, Reuters

**The word “COVID-19” is reflected in a vaccine drop that dangles from a syringe needle in this illustration photo Nov. 9.**

are no alternatives and there is a serious risk to health.”

In a Nov. 21 statement, the president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, Mercy Sister Mary Haddad said CHA ethicists, “in collaboration with other Catholic bioethicists,” used the guidelines released by the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy for Life in 2005 and 2017 on the origin of vaccines and “find nothing morally prohibitive with the vaccines developed by Pfizer and BioNTech (Pfizer’s German partner) and Moderna.”

She also said CHA “believes it is essential that any approved COVID-19 vaccine be distributed in a coordinated and equitable manner,” because COVID-19 “has had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, low-income communities, persons with preexisting health conditions, and racial and ethnic minorities.”

CHA encouraged Catholic health organizations “to distribute the vaccines developed by these companies.”

Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann did not point to any specific media outlets claiming the moral unsuitability of the vaccines. However, after Pfizer and Moderna announced their vaccines, at least two Catholic bishops warned against using them, saying they are morally tainted.

On Nov. 11, Pfizer and BioNTech announced that results of a large ongoing study show its vaccine is 95% effective; the vaccine is already being manufactured and has been since October. Five days later, Moderna said preliminary data from its phase three trial shows its coronavirus vaccine is 94.5% effective in preventing COVID-19.

Pfizer and Moderna are applying to the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration for emergency approval of the vaccines, which would quickly pave the way for distribution of the vaccines. The FDA is to meet Dec. 10.

On Nov. 16, Bishop Joseph E. Strickland of Tyler, Texas, tweeted the Moderna vaccine “is not morally produced. Unborn children died in abortions and their bodies were used as ‘laboratory specimens.’ I urge all who believe in the sanctity of life to reject a vaccine which has been produced immorally.”

In a Nov. 18 video posted on his diocesan website and subsequent interviews with local media, Bishop Joseph V. Brennan of Fresno, California, weighed in on the vaccines, saying: “We all want health for ourselves and for others. We want to promote that also ... but never at the expense of the life of another.”

In May, the Trump administration launched Operation Warp Speed, the moniker of its initiative to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to Americans as quickly as possible. The program has funded the manufacturing of six promising vaccine candidates, two of which are the ones announced by Moderna and Pfizer.

As soon as the FDA approves their vaccines for distribution, Operation Warp Speed hopes to distribute 300 million doses around the country by January. Because Moderna and Pfizer’s vaccines involve two shots per person, this would be enough to immunize 150 million Americans.

Other COVID-19 vaccines on the horizon include one being developed by AstraZeneca with Oxford University.

Like Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann, John Brehany, director of institutional relations at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, said a recent interview on the

“Current News” show on NET TV, the cable channel of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, that the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines were not themselves produced using cell lines derived from aborted fetal tissue.

He expressed “great respect for Bishop Strickland,” calling him “a bold courageous witness to the faith,” who is saying “some true things about issues that go back decades in pharmaceutical research and development,” in the production of vaccines for measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox and other diseases.

But in the case of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, Brehany emphasized, any connection to aborted fetus cell lines is extremely remote.

For Dr. Robert Tiballi, an infectious disease specialist in Chicago and a member of the Catholic Medical Association, this indirect use raises an ethical issue for Catholics.

“The fetal cell lines were not directly used in the Moderna vaccine, but they were indirectly used several steps away from the actual development of the vaccine,” he told “Currents News” in a separate interview.

Any such cell lines were derived from tissue samples taken from fetuses aborted in the 1960s and 1970s and have been grown in laboratories all over the world since then.

In its 2005 study, the Pontifical Academy for Life said Catholics have a responsibility to push for the creation of morally just, alternative vaccines, but it also said they should not sacrifice the common good of public health because there is no substitute.

“Catholics can have confidence if there is a great need and there are no alternatives, they are not forbidden from using these new vaccines,” Brehany told “Current News,” but he added: “There is much the Church calls us to do in seeking out alternatives and advocating for alternatives.”

Catholics “need to provide the urgency and advocacy” to get pharmaceutical companies to understand there are alternatives to using fetal cell lines to develop vaccines, “so they can see the need for this,” he added, echoing the Pontifical Academy for Life.

A case in point is the decision by Sanofi Pasteur to no longer use an aborted fetal cell line in producing its polio vaccines, a move recently approved by the FDA.

Sanofi is one of the companies currently developing a COVID-19 vaccine by utilizing “cell lines not connected to unethical procedures and methods.” Inovio Pharmaceuticals and the John Paul II Medical Research Institute are other such companies.

**LIGHTS, from page 1**

Hannah Hastings throwing the switch to illuminate it. This tree will remain lit inside the cathedral throughout Advent, reminding all to continue praying for their loved ones. Hannah also helped fill the luminaria bags, prayerfully giving each person a candle of remembrance.

During his remarks, Bishop Rhoades gave a brief explanation of the Christmas tree in Catholic tradition.

"Though we might think of the Christmas tree as a secular symbol of Christmas, I invite you, when you put up your Christmas tree, to give it a Christian meaning in your home." He went on to explain how St. Boniface, apostle to the Germans, purportedly gave Christian meaning to the fir tree when converting the Germanic peoples. In place of an ancient oak tree that the pagans held sacred, St. Boniface gave them the fir tree, explaining that its evergreen boughs represent eternal life, its triangular shape is reminiscent of the Trinity and its tip points toward heaven.

"May this Christmas tree and the lights and candles remind us of the great mystery we prepare to celebrate: the mystery of the Word who came down from heaven, who became flesh and dwelt among us, whose light the darkness cannot overcome."

The reading for the service was taken from Ezekiel 17, which compares the restoration of the Davidic dynasty to the replanting of the humblest part of a cedar tree on a high mountain, thus pointing to Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's covenant. This idea, along with the lights of the tree, held great significance for the occasion.

Bishop Rhoades stated, "In John's Gospel, darkness is a symbol for sin, the spiritual condition of alienation from God, and of death. The eternal Word who became flesh, Jesus, is the true light that the darkness does not overcome. ... The love of God triumphs through Jesus' death and resurrection."

"The great truth of our faith can dispel the pessimism and despair that we might sometimes feel. It fills us with hope and joy. In this Advent season, even in the midst of a pandemic and in the midst of sorrow and grief at the death of loved ones, may we experience this hope and interior joy."

The Bishop Dwenger High School choir provided recordings of their songs to be played for those in attendance, including beautiful renditions of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" and "People Look East."

The prayer service was organized by Elisa Smith, parish auditor for the diocese. Smith knew from personally losing her father, grandfather and grandmother during past Christmases how difficult the holidays can be when dealing with the loss of a loved one. She



Photos by Jennifer Barton

**An attendee at "An Evening of Heavenly Lights" searches the luminarias lining the walkway at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne, for her loved one's name. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades blessed Christmas tree ornaments bearing the names of the beloved dead, and many who attended said the event brought them strength to face the holiday season while still in mourning.**

wanted to find a way to help ease that pain in a Catholic manner.

"I noticed that secular organizations would hold memorial events around the holidays to remember the lives of deceased loved ones. However, for me, the Catholic or Christian aspect was lacking." While working for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, she instituted an event in early December "whereby individuals and families could come together to remember and pray together for their loved ones." She shared this idea with Bishop Rhoades, who was open to holding one in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

The name refers to a passage in the book of James that states that every blessing comes from "the Father of lights." With the success of this year's service, Smith and the bishop said they are eager to continue the tradition in the future.

Donations made for the luminarias went to support the mission of Catholic Charities. In total, 122 luminarias were donated.

Nancy Duffy, who had read about the event in Today's Catholic, donated one in memory of her son, who had passed away 22 years ago. She stated that the event was "absolutely beautiful. The luminarias are so beautiful, and it was such a

calm, peaceful time." More than that, it gave her a feeling of hope.

Her good friend, Theresa Joy Burkett, also attended to honor her husband, Norman, who had passed away a short seven months earlier. Burkett helped hand out programs and Christmas tree ornaments to those who attended, radiating peace and joy despite her recent loss.

Whether it had been more than 20 years or less than one since the loss of a loved one, Smith said she believes the event and the bishop's words gave a measure of peace to those in mourning. "With the pandemic, I think this prayer service brought comfort. When so many events have been canceled, this prayer service was one thing that people could still attend," she remarked.

The evening proved to be an illuminating opportunity for evangelization as well. Smith related how it attracted a homeless man who said he had been looking for a place to pray and a church he might join. Also, during the evening's setup, a young family who was walking past the church spotted three familiar names and took photos of the luminarias to send to family members of the deceased persons.



## Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Monday, December 7: 7 p.m. — Vigil Mass for Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Immaculate Conception Church, Ege  
Tuesday, December 8: 11 a.m. — Virtual Meeting of Catholic Relief Services Committee on U.S. Engagement  
Tuesday, December 8: 3 p.m. — Meeting of Indiana Bishops, Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis  
Wednesday, December 9: 10 a.m. — Meeting of Indiana Catholic Conference, Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis  
Thursday, December 10: 11:30 a.m. — Virtual Meeting of Board of Directors of Catholic Relief Services



# Black Catholics express joy at elevation of first African American cardinal

BY MARK ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — To Father Robert Boxie III, the Catholic chaplain at Howard University in Washington, the naming of Washington's archbishop "as a cardinal is huge, it's historic."

On Nov. 28, Pope Francis elevated 13 new cardinals from around the world to the College of Cardinals at a consistory in Rome. Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, who has been Washington's archbishop since 2019, was among them. The pope had announced the new cardinals Oct. 25.

"The fact that it comes in this month of November, Black Catholic History Month, is also very symbolic," said Father Boxie.

A priest of the Archdiocese of Washington, he was one of several Black Catholics who spoke to the Catholic Standard, Washington's archdiocesan newspaper, about what Cardinal Gregory's elevation means to them and to the Church as a whole.

A native of Lake Charles, Louisiana, Father Boxie was ordained in 2016 and began serving this summer as the chaplain at Howard, one of the nation's historically Black colleges and universities.

"This is a long time coming. We will be witnessing and experiencing something in the Church that has never happened before, an African American cardinal. In the Church's 2,000 years this has never happened, and we have the great gift, the great privilege to witness this," Father Boxie said.

The priest noted that Cardinal Gregory's elevation "puts the stamp of approval on the ministry, the service, the pastoral leadership that Archbishop Gregory himself has done for our Church in the United States, all of his accomplishments and his contributions individually."

It also "is a stamp of approval for the community that he represents, the community that he comes from and the community that formed him, African American Black Catholics," Father Boxie added.

"It says that the faith, the contributions, the witness, the experience of Black Catholics truly do matter, and that's an important voice and an important gift to the Church universal," he said. "The voice of Black Catholics will be now that much closer to the Holy Father."

The elevation of Cardinal Gregory makes Father Boxie feel "extremely excited and proud, especially as an African American priest, I hold my head up a little bit higher, I stick out my chest a little bit more, because one of our own, from



CNS photo/Vatican Media

**Pope Francis places the red biretta on new Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington during a consistory for the creation of 13 new cardinals in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 28.**

our community is now a prince of the Church, especially when for so long in our country, Black men were denied the opportunity to even enter into seminary here."

Washington Auxiliary Bishop Roy E. Campbell Jr., who serves as the president of the National Black Catholic Congress, said Cardinal Gregory's elevation "is significant because there's so many different firsts" for the churchman.

"This is a man, who as a boy, embraced the faith that he was not baptized into and reared into until he chose to follow it," explained Bishop Campbell, who also is pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Largo, in Largo, Maryland. "And then to go on to become a priest and to do wonderful things as a bishop of Belleville (Illinois) and then to lead the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops (as president), especially when we had to deal with the outbreak in 2002 of the clergy sexual abuse scandal throughout the country, and as archbishop of Atlanta and then coming here."

He's the first Black archbishop in Washington, "the seat of democratic power and importance in the world," the bishop said, and now "to be named a cardinal, the first Black cardinal from the United States — that's significant."

"And it shows that the Church recognizes that everyone has gifts to offer to the Church, to their community, to their fellow man wherever they are, and they recognize that in naming him a cardinal," he said. "And young Black men who may wonder, 'Could I be called to the priesthood?' can see that, yes, not only

can you be called, but the gifts that you bring with that call will be recognized by the Church."

For Black Catholics, Cardinal Gregory's elevation means "our faith, our talents, our willingness to be part of and work for the Church in our community, we have an impetus to continue to do that because a leader who looks like us has been recognized at the highest level in the universal Church, that means influence in the direction the Church takes in reaching all of the people of the world."

"His talents for helping the Church, for helping Black Catholics, for helping all Catholics and all people in this country, and now worldwide have been recognized," Bishop Campbell added, "and the Church wants to put them to use."

Sister Patricia Chappell said Cardinal Gregory's elevation "is good news" and "a very historic moment."

"I certainly rejoice. ... For those of us who are African American Catholics, to have the first African American cardinal named, is just wonderful," said the Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, who is the former president of the National Black Sisters' Conference. She also is the former executive director of Pax Christi USA and now serves on the leadership team for her religious order.

Pope Francis, she believes, also particularly understood there is "much healing that certainly needs to take place with the Catholic Church in the United States, so I think he's made a wise decision in calling forth a holy man ... a man who really listens to the people, a man who

is steeped in his faith, and a man who will journey with the people. So I'm just blessed, I'm grateful."

Asked about Cardinal Gregory's leadership qualities, Sister Chappell pointed to "his ability to listen" and be able "to listen to diverse opinions and to try to find the common threads that somehow can unite people. And yet, he's also a man of integrity, he's a man also rooted in prayer and his faith, so he doesn't back away from his beliefs. What I have seen him do is to try to bring people together, to look at how do we make it better, how do we bring the good news to all God's people."

Msgr. Raymond East, pastor

of St. Teresa of Avila Parish in Washington, and a nationally known evangelist and speaker, said Cardinal Gregory's elevation is "a great sign of encouragement" the Church is recognizing "the gifts of the Black Catholic community, which is both African Americans who have been here for a long time, newly-arrived African immigrants, people from the Caribbean, Afro-Latinos, people from Haiti and from all the islands, the whole African diaspora."

Cardinal Gregory "who is one of the most gifted Church leaders in the whole country," Msgr. East said. "He's been a great light to us, and we're so blessed to have him here in this diocese, and to have him in this very special place, in our nation's capital, to be the first African American Catholic cardinal, it's tremendously exciting."

Hilda McDougald, a 100-year-old parishioner of St. Luke Parish in Washington, attended a Mass then-Archbishop Gregory celebrated at St. Luke Church Oct. 24, one day before Pope Francis named him as a new cardinal.

When asked what it meant to her that the pope named Archbishop Gregory as a cardinal, she said, "Things are changing, times are (changing) ... What a change, what a change!"

She recalled how during times of segregation, Black Catholics had to sit in the back of church and wait until the end of the Communion line to receive Communion after white Catholics.

As for Cardinal Gregory, she said, "I just love him. I admire him, I really do. In fact, I admire all of our priests. All (of them)."

*Zimmermann is editor of the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington.*

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# Thanksgiving Mass, meals at St. Mary's Soup Kitchen



Photos by Georgia Lieb

Volunteers at St. Mary's Soup Kitchen, Fort Wayne, attend a Thanksgiving Day Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and concelebrated by Father Wimal Jayasuriya at St. Mary, Mother of God Church prior to preparing and serving meals. The meals were takeout only this year.



Above, volunteers Mike Streicher, Emily Lynn and Jeff Hill, from left, work in the kitchen to prepare gravy for the meals, which consisted of turkey, gravy, green beans, dressing, mashed potatoes and pumpkin pie. The food was served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Above right, Bishop Rhoades leads the volunteers in prayer after Mass. At far right is Pat McBride, coordinator of the annual community event.

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Parishioners of St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

## Extension's 'Advent Alms' program aims to help poor US Catholic communities

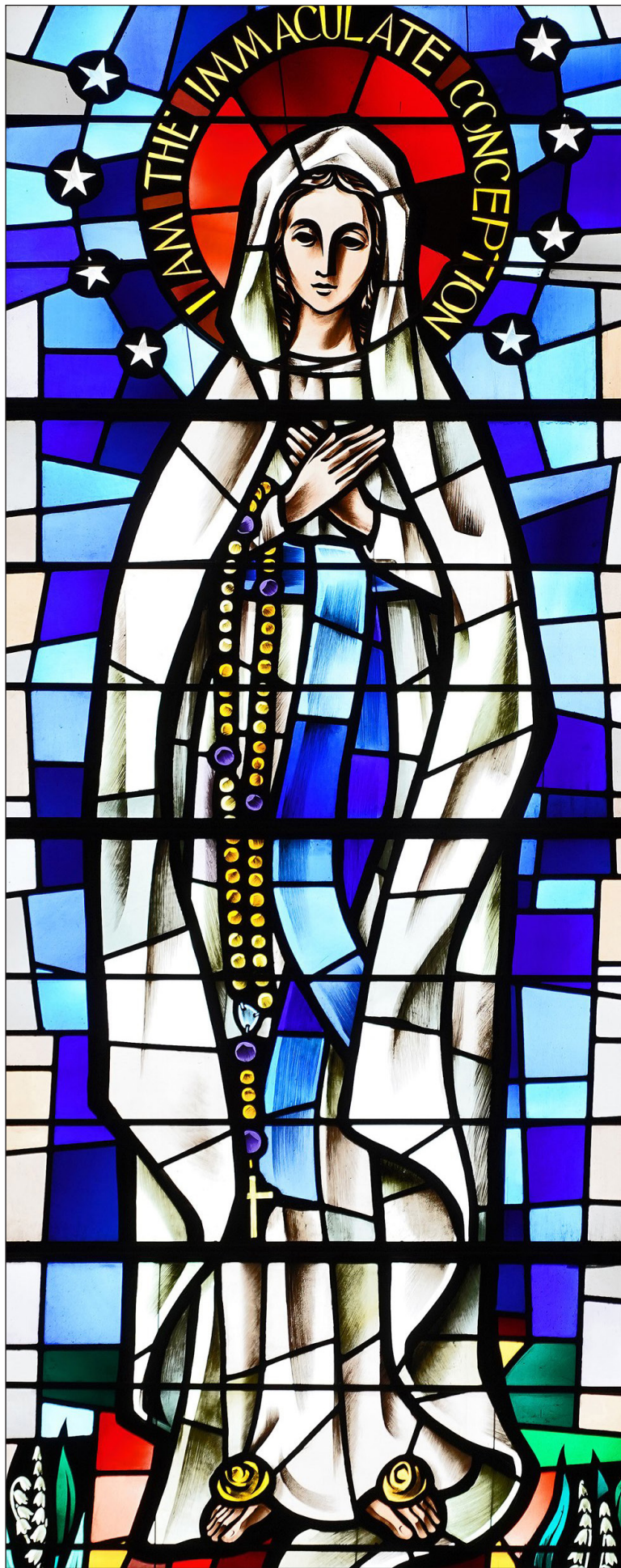
CHICAGO (CNS) — To support poor faith communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic Extension is launching "Advent Alms for America," a program that aims to match poor parishes in one part of the U.S. with parishes that have more resources in another part of the country. The initiative is seeking 1,000 faith communities to raise \$1,000 each during the Advent season. Such monies "would be transformative to the parishes" supported by Catholic Extension, which "were barely surviving economically prior to the pandemic," according to the Chicago-based organization. "These are areas where a \$1,000 gift is the equivalent of 10 weeks of Sunday collections," Extension said in announcing the program. The funds will allow pastoral leaders to do the core spiritual work of the Church among the poor as well as share the corporal works of mercy with those who are suffering." The Catholic Extension website has information about the Advent Alms" initiative — <http://www.catholicextension.org/advent-alm-across-america>.

## Miami archbishop: Catholic social teaching can bridge divisions

MIAMI (CNS) — Catholic social teaching, "with its understanding of natural law," can bridge the divisions that exist in U.S. society between religious adherents and secularists, said Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami. Archbishop Wenski portrayed the divide this way: "One side, the secularists, holds for a radical autonomy by which truth is determined not by the nature of things but by one's own will. The religious side — our side — holds that men and women are not self-creators but creatures, that truth is not constructed but received, and that it must reflect the reality of things. Catholic teaching proclaims the dignity of every human being but also acknowledges the reality of sin," Archbishop Wenski said in his column for the November issue of the Florida Catholic, Miami's archdiocesan newspaper. "Our police forces, our social services agencies, our schools, our courtrooms deal with the consequences of sin every day," he added. "Today we see much anger in our society. And much of that anger is seen in our streets and expressed in social media," the archbishop said. "We hear warring slogans: 'Black lives matter,' 'blue lives matter,' 'all lives matter,' and from those who identify as pro-life, 'unborn lives matter.' And they all do matter — beneath these slogans there is an argument about 'who truly belongs to our society?' and 'who is shut out?'"

# NEWS BRIEFS

## Feast of the Immaculate Conception



CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

Mary is depicted in a stained-glass window at Immaculate Conception Church in Jamaica Estates, N.Y. The solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the patronal feast of the United States and a holy day of obligation, will be celebrated Dec. 8.

## Archbishop calls latest California church closures 'blatant discrimination'

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco described as "blatant discrimination" a return by California to more severe COVID-19 restrictions that closed churches in two of the three counties that comprise the San Francisco archdiocese. On Nov. 29, the First Sunday of Advent, Catholic churches in San Francisco and San Mateo counties were closed as of noon. The two counties are among the 41 counties deemed to be in a "purple tier" by California Gov. Gavin Newsom in response to an "alarming surge" in COVID-19 cases. These counties account for 94% of the state's population. Every county in California is assigned to a tier based on its test positivity and adjusted case rate. The purple tier is the most restrictive. With a curfew in place — and set to last until Dec. 21 — all nonessential activity is limited between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., including in-person dining. "After weeks of demonstrating we can celebrate the Mass safely, the state of California has put San Francisco and San Mateo counties into the purple tier, which bans indoor worship altogether" and considers religious worship "non-essential," Archbishop Cordileone said in a Nov. 28 statement.

## Supreme Court says NY pandemic limits on houses of worship restrict religious freedom

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In a 5-4 decision issued just before midnight Nov. 25, the Supreme Court lifted the pandemic restrictions on congregation sizes at houses of worship imposed by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, and two Orthodox Jewish synagogues in separate filings appealed to the nation's high court, claiming the governor's executive order violated their free exercise of religion and was particularly unwarranted during a time when area businesses were open. Chief Justice John Roberts dissented, along with Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan. "I am gratified by the decision of the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court who have recognized the clear First Amendment violation and urgent

need for relief in this case. I am proud to be leading the Diocese of Brooklyn and fighting for our sacred and constitutional right to worship," said Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio in a Nov. 26 statement. The bishop noted the governor's restrictions "were an overreach that did not take into account the size of our churches or the safety protocols that have kept parishioners safe."

## Like their counterparts a century ago, seminarians serve others amid pandemic

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — A century ago, seminarians from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood helped bury Philadelphia's dead in the global Spanish influenza pandemic. This year, the young men of St. Charles are helping to keep hungry people alive during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Apostolic work in addition to classroom studies has long been a regular part of the seminarians' formation in which they fan out two-by-two to schools, senior facilities and other settings to serve people in the community. But because of the social restrictions of COVID-19, those opportunities for service are gone this year. In their place arose a partnership between the seminary's apostolic formation program, led by Father George Szparagowski, and Caring for Friends, a private multiservice organization feeding hungry people throughout the area for 46 years. Sixteen seminarians of St. Charles' College Division traveled to Northeast Philadelphia Nov. 5 for a four-hour shift at Caring for Friends, assembling meals and boxing them for distribution to people in the five-county region of southeastern Pennsylvania.

## Pandemic, economy worsen situation for Syria's minority Christians

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS) — The worsening coronavirus pandemic and economic conditions in Syria are further deepening poverty and hardship for Christians, who find themselves trapped in a political stalemate, religious freedom advocates say. "The situation is becoming worse, people are calling me every day and asking for help. I speak with people in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus, and they don't know what to expect in the coming days," a Syrian religious told Catholic News Service by phone. He asked that his name not be used due to security reasons. The Syrian currency's worth has plummeted against the dollar, leading to what analysts say is a significant rise in prices of basic commodities, like bread, gasoline and heating fuel by more than 15% in November. "Everything now is skyrocketing and there is no electricity," the religious said.

## Virtual Marian retreat for high school students

NOTRE DAME — High school students looking for an opportunity to connect spiritually with other students their age are invited to participate in an upcoming online retreat.

The Saints and Scholars Institute at Holy Cross College will offer the retreat, coinciding with the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Saturday, Dec. 12. Registrants will receive digital resources for self-guided prayer and reflection. Holy Cross College will also offer several additional online events throughout the day to enhance the retreat experience.

In addition to meeting Holy Cross faculty, staff and current students, retreat participants will interact with high school students from across the country. The retreat structure will allow the building of one's own schedule and is designed to move at the participant's individual pace — the day is theirs to design. There is no cost to participate.

Sessions are available in English and Spanish. To register, visit <https://admissions.hcc-nd.edu/register/climb>.

## Seven make first commitment to PHJC Associates

DONALDSON — St. Katharina Kasper suffered many hardships in her personal life as she listened to the voice of God. Through her persistence in the most difficult of times, she founded the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, a congregation of women religious in 1851. Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ communities now exist in nine different countries. Lay individuals also responded to following in the light of St. Katharina, forming Associate Communities in many of these same countries.

Through their own persistence in this difficult COVID-19 year, seven individuals completed a year of formation. After careful discernment in responding to the call of the Holy Spirit to live in the light of St. Katharina Kasper, they made their commitment as members of the Associate Community of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ in the Ancilla Domini Chapel, Donaldson, Nov. 8.

Joining the Associate Community are Matthew Celmer, Plymouth; Mary Kay Davis, Plymouth; Kathleen Gilliland, Donaldson; Catherine Pavlina, Donaldson; Rosemary Pavlina, Crown Point; Mary Schmierer, Lafayette; and Lynda Klekowski, Highland.

Each associate lives in different circumstances and contributes to prayer and service in ways depending upon their personal commitments, such as family and work. All associates are committed to listening attentively to the Holy Spirit, to praying and sharing their faith with others, and to courageously and joyfully meet the needs of the times.

# AROUND THE DIOCESE

## Avilla first reconciliation



Facebook

A socially distant "Peace Party" was thrown Nov. 19 for second grade students at St. Mary of the Assumption School, Avilla, who had met Jesus that day in the sacrament of reconciliation. The students celebrated the peace that Jesus gives through the sacrament.

## Knights install memorial to victims of abortion



Provided by Justin Purdy

Members of St. Charles Knights of Columbus Council No. 451 dug a hole for a concrete base on which was installed a monument memorializing the innocent victims of abortion. The new monument is next to the entrance to St. Charles Borromeo Church, Fort Wayne. In October, numerous Knights also hand-dug and poured the concrete base that the monument sits on. All concrete materials were donated — as was the monument itself.

## New podcast connects faith with everyday life

NOTRE DAME, Ind. — "Ave Spotlight" is a new podcast from Ave Maria Press that considers timely issues from a faith perspective.

Hosts Katie Prejean McGrady and Chenele Shaw talk with special guests about culture, current events and all things Catholic. Listeners will walk away with a better understanding of their faith and how to live it in the world today.

Guests have already included Chika Anyanwu, Haley Stewart, Gary Zimak, Jessica McMillan, Meg Hunter-Kilmer and Father David Guffy, CSC.

Prejean McGrady is an international Catholic speaker, the author of "Follow and Room 24," and the coauthor of "Advent: One Day at a Time for Catholic Teens" and "Lent: One Day at a Time with Catholic Teens." She is the project manager and podcast host of "Ave Explores."

Shaw is a Catholic speaker and a graduate student studying marriage and family life. A former teacher and youth minister, Shaw works to foster dialogue about racial justice and engaging young people in the life of the Church.

Listen to "Ave Spotlight" on the Ave Maria Press website, Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Podcasts.

# Campus disciples sustain Guadalupe con

BY WILLIAM SCHMITT

Prayerful pageantry generated by the Latino student community at the University of Notre Dame will not electrify a campus congregation this Dec. 12 like it has in past years. With most of the fall semester population dispersed amid preoccupations both local and global, an internet alternative planned for that day will help maintain the close ties of faith evoked by music, ritual gestures and movement and other enduring impressions, both traditional and new.

The occasion is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose inspiration is especially profound among Catholics from Mexico and all of Latin America. The feast's high-energy celebration of Mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart has expanded as a centerpiece of fellowship among students from that vast region. It is also a chance to share cultural values across multiple boundaries.

A core message of the devotion is God's closeness to humanity through the mother of Jesus, manifested in apparitions of Mary to St. Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac in 1531 and affirmed when Pope St. John Paul II proclaimed her the patroness of the Americas.

This year, the university's Campus Ministry office plans to post a link to the streaming video of Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, according to Becky Ruvalcaba, assistant director for outreach.

"We hope students and alumni will seek out celebrations in their hometowns, but this is also an opportunity to enter into prayer with the world — and especially with Mexico, which has a special relationship with Notre Dame," said Ruvalcaba, who oversees Latino ministry as well as multicultural and interreligious faith-sharing. The university's outreach to Mexico extends back to 1850.

The number of students with roots from that country and all of Central America and South America increased in the past decade, and Ruvalcaba estimates about 200 entered as first-year undergraduates this fall.

"It's a growing community and a faithful community," said Ruvalcaba, who, prior to pandemic restrictions, had joined pastoral care coordinator Father Joe Corpora, CSC, in leading annual student pilgrimages to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Mexico City.

Many students are assumed to be "disconnected" from their religion these days, according to Ruvalcaba, but travels to Guadalupe bring hope to her and her pilgrims. "They have a desire



Photos by Matt Cashore/University of Notre Dame

Students from the University of Notre Dame, Holy Cross College and Saint Mary's College celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 2019 in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Notre Dame.

for an encounter with a loving father; to enter into that walk with them has been beautiful, and to celebrate with them in these cultural, traditional, beautiful [liturgies] augments that love."

In Mexico City, South Bend and elsewhere, Latinos honor "Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe" as the Mother who came to the Americas at a time of great conflict and oppression, Ruvalcaba said. Mary entered into the story of the Indigenous people to introduce God's mercy through Jesus present in her womb.

"That historical piece is still embedded in our hearts as Latinos," she explained, noting that the feast helps connect students to the traditions of their families, who may be far away. They are encouraged by Juan Diego — as a model not only to receive the good news from Mary, but to accept "the responsibility to invite others in" for renewal.

Ruvalcaba believes that is part of the dynamic that has grown around the Dec. 12 Mass. Latino students take pride in organizing it as an annual liturgical highlight for Notre Dame, and it is expected to return to the basilica in 2021. They share their enthusiasm with the whole campus through a wide array of talents, using the Spanish language, cultural garb and the presentation of roses while the vivid image of the Guadalupe tilma



is displayed. Those eager to respond to the experience have been known to fill every pew.

It's a reminder that a "familia" of believers, even in new surroundings that are possibly daunting for travelers and newcomers, can feel at home in spreading their faith. "They can enter into the largeness of the Church," Ruvalcaba said.

She recalled that, as a Latina born and raised in South Bend, she came to know the beauty of Guadalupe celebrations as a child by accompanying her parents, who formed the choir for local Spanish-language Masses. Later in life, she and her husband planned a pilgrimage to Mexico with her parents. It was a first trip for all of them, resulting in joyful memories and spiritual bonding.

What's more, Ruvalcaba prayed at the Tepeyac apparition site, thanking Mary for carrying Christ's love. She says she felt moved to promise: "I will come back and bring your children to you so you can take them to your Son."

She could not have imagined that today, as she enters her fifth year with the university's Campus Ministry, she has routinely co-hosted student groups

An altar dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe is decorated for her 2019 feast day.



# Connections

on their own pilgrimages.

Father Corpora, who co-hosts the pilgrimages, personifies the campus connections to Mexico. In his writings, which have included blogs and two books, he recalled that he first lived in Mexico City as a Notre Dame sophomore in the 1970s. His love for the country, its people and its vibrant expressions of faith have only grown: "I have traveled back at least a hundred times over the past 46 years."

The geographical, academic and religious connections are two-way streets. Notre Dame operates a Mexico City Global Center and other activities in Latin America. On the campus, the basilica and dorms host Spanish-language Masses on a regular schedule — currently modified due to COVID-19 restrictions — and students recite the rosary in Spanish at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes. Many Latinos gather

for fellowship every month, and some have joined in tri-campus faith events along with Saint Mary's College and Holy Cross College. Before leaving for home this fall, the three communities built altars to remember loved ones on the Día de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead.

Ruvalcaba said this year's technological alternative, focusing on the Mexico-based celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, is the latest reflection of the connection-making for which Mary intercedes continuously, throughout the Americas and the world. Especially in tough times, she said, students and others naturally turn to their mothers, their fathers, their sources of love and hope, and their homes.

This year and every year are good times to make the course correction toward Nuestra Señora. "That's what she is: She's our home," said Ruvalcaba.



Matt Cashore/University of Notre Dame

Pilgrims in folkloric dress carry an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe inside the basilica.

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CNS photo/Carlos Jasso, Reuters

Pilgrims pray outside the old Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe during the annual pilgrimage in her honor in Mexico City Dec. 11. Mexico's bishops, the Mexico City government and other religious and civil authorities have announced the closure of the basilica Dec. 10-13, due to COVID-19 concerns. Normally an estimated 8 million pilgrims visit the basilica for the Dec. 12 feast of the national patroness.

## No pilgrims at basilica for Guadalupe feast this year

BY DAVID AGREN

MEXICO CITY (CNS) — Mexican Church and civic officials have canceled public feast celebrations for Mexico's patroness at her shrine in Mexico City due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The celebration normally attracts 10 million pilgrims to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the world's most-visited Marian shrine.

At a joint news conference Nov. 24, Mexico City Cardinal Carlos Aguiar Retes and Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum urged pilgrims to stay away from the basilica and to avoid congregating in the area. Pilgrims normally descend on the area — often arriving on foot from cities and towns surrounding the Mexican capital — and gather at midnight prior to the Dec. 12 feast day to serenade Mary.

Church officials instead urged devotees to celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe at their local parishes or at home via broadcasts from the basilica online and on public television.

"We already know that the Virgin moves and moves to where her sons and daughters are, especially those who are

grieving," Archbishop Rogelio Cabrera López, president of the Mexican bishops' conference, said at the news conference.

"We want to collaborate with our local authorities ... to implement, for the good of all of Mexico, these measures that are necessary and do not in any way try to eliminate the fervor, devotion and faith of those who celebrate Holy Mary of Guadalupe."

The announcement to close the basilica from Dec. 10 to 13 reversed previous plans to allow limited access to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, while implementing health measures and canceling liturgical celebrations.

"It's understandable that, like every year, millions of people wish to attend (the basilica celebrations) in search of comfort in the face of desperation and abandonment being experienced due to the pandemic and other difficulties," Church and civic officials said in a joint statement Nov. 23.

"It is important to emphasize that the health conditions the country is experiencing as a result of COVID-19 do not allow us on this occasion to celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe together

at her shrine."

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remains strong in Mexico City, and civic officials have spoken of possibly returning to widespread closures of nonessential businesses. Cardinal Aguiar said Catholic parishes have avoided being sources of contagion as preventive measures have been taken and attendance is limited to 30% capacity.

It remains uncertain if the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe has previously canceled public celebrations, though journalistic reports showed the site closing its doors between 1926 and 1929 due to the Cristero Rebellion, when the Church was persecuted, according to The Associated Press.

Earlier in 2020, an annual passion play that draws more than a million spectators to the Iztapalapa borough was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Attempts at celebrating the St. Jude Thaddeus feast day Oct. 28 were fraught with difficulties as devotees showed up early and waited in long lines, despite admonishments to stay away.

# Writer finds inspiration in his Catholic faith

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Joe Mauck has seen most of the country and met many Broadway and Hollywood stars during his lifetime. But he said his greatest life experiences were the “other blessings; very powerful blessings” he has received.

Mauck recently turned this perspective into a novel with a distinctly Catholic flair. “The Cross and the Godless” will go into print in early December.

The storyline revolves around a wooden cross that is somehow linked to the mysterious deaths of Central American immigrants along the U.S.-Mexico border. The case brings together a male FBI investigator and a pregnant social worker with ties to the deaths. Much research went into the writing, and Mauck’s travels to the area years ago provide a solid backdrop for the story. Numerous characters are devout Catholics, and there is a distinctly pro-life message woven throughout.

“I wanted to write my book to be an answer to the constant stream of hating religion and hating America, hate, hate, hate,” Mauck explained. “I said, ‘I can write a mainstream thriller in the same style as any of these great thriller writers ... I can do it with Catholic characters and not apologize, and I can make it pro-life and not apologize.’

“That’s why I wrote it. It’s my protest.”

The initial idea for the story came to Mauck almost 20 years ago but became “stuck in limbo.” It would not exist in its present form without a conversion story — his own.

Mauck had been raised in the Midwest in a Protestant denomination. When he was 5 years old, he was hit by a car and nearly died. For years afterwards, he suffered the effects of brain damage and epilepsy. He has been seizure-free since seeking healing through prayer as a teenager.

After high school, he hitchhiked across the country for two years, stopping to stay with relatives in California occasionally. He moved to New York City to pursue acting and graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1974. From there, Mauck worked off-Broadway at the Corner Loft Theater before going back to California to care for his aging relatives. There he wrote scripts for sales and training videos, six screenplays, and co-authored the techno-thriller film “Claw.” Eventually, he settled in the Midwest to raise his sons.

From a young age, Mauck had had encounters with Catholicism that helped lead to his eventual conversion. But it wasn’t until later in life that he fully connected with the faith. Nearly 20 years ago while living in Plymouth, Mauck remembered in a dream a long-forgotten



Photos provided by Joe Mauck

**Catholic writer Joe Mauck meets with his friends in the faith for breakfast at the Yellow Cat Café in South Bend. This has been a tradition for the past 12 years: The men, who are from various parishes, support and pray for each other. They have also encouraged Mauck in his writing.**

conversation in which his father explained that the reason he survived the car accident was because a religious sister had heard him screaming on the street and rushed outside to wrap him in her habit and stop the bleeding, saving his life.

Around the same time he had that dream, he began seriously questioning where his faith laid. His landlords at the time, Jim and Linda Houin, were Catholic, and Mauck asked them about the faith. He began to spend a great deal of time with the couple and eventually began preparation classes for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults at St. Michael Parish. He was received into the Catholic Church in 2004.

During this time he wrote poetry, also beginning a full-length play. Of his poetry, he is particularly pleased with those on the sanctity of life, one of which is framed on the wall at Right to Life Michiana.

Standing up for the unborn is a cause dear to Mauck. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus at St. Therese, Little Flower Parish and is proud to be part of the group that helped fund ultrasound machines for apostolates like the Women’s Care Center. “The Knights have found a real calling that fits the spiritual message. I was really proud to be part of that group.”

Soon after he became Catholic, Mauck moved to South Bend and joined St. Joseph Parish, becoming involved with Christ Renews His Parish. “That’s where I made friends that are still my friends. I had just finished writing a play,



**Mauck is the author of a new book called “The Cross and the Godless,” which was inspired by his conversion to the Catholic faith and features Catholic characters and plotlines. It is expected to be published in early December.**

which I was encouraged to write during CHRP. My friends I made in that group were very supportive of my writing.”

The play is called “Quinn’s Gift” and Mauck explained that, while it is a murder mystery, it has strong Christian undertones and Catholic characters. It also explores the question of one’s purpose in life. He has not been able to put the play into production as of yet but hopes to find a stage producer willing to work with him on bringing it to the masses.

As for “The Cross and the Godless,” it is his first book since “Claw.” It took seven years

to bring to completion and is partially based on actual events and Central American people. Included is the historical figure of Antonio De Valdivieso, a Dominican priest from Italy who became Nicaragua’s first bishop.

The cross in the title refers to an ancient artifact owned by Bishop De Valdivieso and sought by many of the characters — a simple wooden cross.

When not writing, Mauck enjoys spending his semiretirement working as an ambassador in the North Dining Hall at the University of Notre Dame. “We sit with the kids, especially the freshmen. You talk about their pains and sorrow, what they’re feeling good about, give them a

little encouragement. I used to go from table to table, get to know these kids, and by the time spring comes around, they all knew me.”

Because of COVID-19 restrictions he was placed in charge of the condiment table this year instead, but still ensures that he gets to know the students and that they know him. He came up with an idea to ask them what he calls “the question of the day.”

“I always pick something that, as smart as they are, it might stump them. ... I get ‘em every time,” he joked.

He also looks forward to publication of “The Cross and the Godless,” which will initially be available from Amazon.

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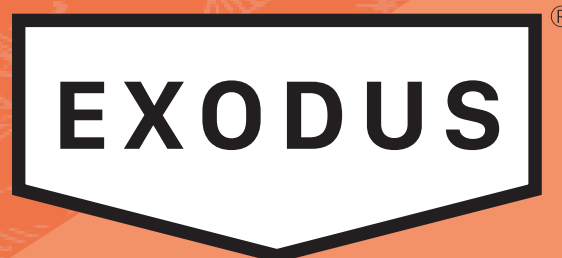
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## A still small voice

This week, I took the train from Washington to New York. It was spooky. Union Station in Washington, usually bustling at 6:30 in the morning, was deserted. A man in blue overalls silently swept the Main Hall. One lady joined me on the Acela. I had the quiet car to myself.

Manhattan was naturally busier, but cabs moved freely around town. I had a meeting on Park Avenue, about 20 floors up. I looked across the street into dark, empty rooms. The lawyers, bankers, financial firms, insurance companies, ad agencies are all working from home.

It was a warm night when I got back to Washington, and I sat outside for a bit before bed. We live on the campus, and ordinarily you hear students walking around and talking. Not now. It's so quiet that the deer came out of the woods across the road to feast on our shrubs and trees. At 8:56 p.m., you can hear taps a mile away at the Old Soldiers' Home.

For us who live in the city, COVID-19 has wrought a real change in our surroundings. Things are quieter, darker, slower. I find my mind works differently. The world obtrudes less on my thoughts. It got me thinking what it might be like if it were really dark and quiet.

I once worked on a ranch in Montana. It never gets dark there. The air is so clear the sky blazes at night. And you can hear the cows, and coyotes, and the Missouri River. If you want real quiet, it's got to be a

desert like the Sahara or the Dry Valleys in Antarctica where there are no plants or animals or rivers, just sand and rock.

Microsoft built an anechoic chamber at its headquarters in Redmond, Washington, to test new equipment. The background noise level there is -20.6 decibels. (The limit of human hearing is 0 decibels, but there are quieter sounds we can't hear; hence the negative number.) The chamber has a lot of sound-absorbing foam; it floats on vibration-damping springs. If a tree fell in the forest outside, you would definitely not hear it. Inside the chamber it's so quiet you can hear your blood flow.

I'm not sure what the visual counterpart of this would be. Cities have lights on all night. Deserts have the moon and the stars and Montana has the northern lights. You have to go underground to get away from light. The basement of my parents' house was cinderblock and had no windows. When the lights were off, it was pretty dark.

Black is the absence of color. When there is no light, everything is black. A few years ago, Surrey NanoSystems developed a material that absorbs 99.965% of visible light. Made of vertically aligned nanotube arrays, it's called Vantablack. It's so black it makes you dizzy. It can be applied in sprayable paint. At the Frankfurt Auto Show last year BMW unveiled a concept car in Vantablack.

It's curious, the force that pulls us toward quiet places and



JOHN GARVEY

### INTELLECT AND VIRTUE

dark things. At some point along the line we find it beautiful. But it would be odd to say that the endpoint — the anechoic chamber, Vantablack — is beautiful. Music and art are beautiful; the natural world is beautiful. But with no sound and no light we are shut off from these things.

When I go on the occasional retreat, I find I spend hours chasing thoughts of home and work out of my mind before I can settle down. It is so easy to be distracted when we pray. Maybe that's the appeal of the desert and the cave. We need to shut out everything else before we can hear the still small voice that spoke to Elijah.

John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

## Hold fast to the truth

The day after Donald Trump won the presidential election in 2016, I wrote a short column about the chief challenge that those who had voted for him would face over the next four years. I had not voted for Trump — nor did I vote for Hillary Clinton — but I knew many people who had, and I understood why. In contrast to the caricatures painted by much of the media, they had voted for Trump for good reasons: some had been convinced that he had truly had a conversion on abortion and other life questions; others were voting in favor of a more modest foreign policy, including Trump's promises to end foreign wars that had been opposed by all of the last three popes; still others found his plan to strengthen the economy of Main Street rather than that of Wall Street refreshing.

The chief challenge that Trump voters would face, I argued, was one that has become worse and worse across the political spectrum with every passing election cycle. Let's call it political Manichaeism, after the ancient religion that saw all of the world in stark black and white, good and evil. We start out agreeing with a candidate on Issue X and disagreeing with him on Issue Y; but when he's attacked on Issue Y by other people who disagree with him on Issue X, we're tempted to defend him anyway.

And in the process, our disagreement with "our" candidate on Issue Y begins to erode, and we find ourselves adapting our



SCOTT P. RICHERT

### ALL THINGS NEW

views to the candidate we voted for, rather than holding his feet to the fire on issues where we disagree.

Sadly, that became the reality with Donald Trump, as many of his supporters ended up defending him across the board, including on issues where, in November 2016, they would have said they disagreed with him. In a democracy in particular, political division tends to wipe out all nuance, to erode principle, to push issues to the side and elevate the man.

Four years later, the shoe is on the other foot. Donald Trump will leave office in January, and Joe Biden, a baptized and practicing Catholic who dissents from Church teaching on several essential matters, will become president of the United States. (For the record, I voted for neither Trump nor Biden in 2020.)

Some Catholics who voted for Joe Biden are themselves dissenters from Church teaching on abortion, embryonic stem-cell research and marriage. The rest of this column isn't for them. It's for those Catholics who accept the Church's teaching on these matters but convinced them-

RICHERT, page 13

## Make clear the way of the Lord by dedicating ourselves to Him



### THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

### Second Sunday of Advent Mark 1:1-8

The second part of the Book of Isaiah provides the first reading for this Second Sunday of Advent.

When this book was written, God's people were very happy. Their long, dreary exile of four generations in Babylon was about to end. They were looking forward to returning to their homeland. This reading well captures the people's joy and relief. It clearly reveals their longing to return to their homeland.

Also, and importantly, these verses well convey the sense that this happy circumstance

has occurred as a result of God's mercy and of God's faithfulness to the Covenant.

It was not as if the people had earned God's munificence in this regard, or that they had been unusually loyal to the Covenant themselves. To the contrary, their sins had brought misery upon themselves; but, nevertheless, God's mercy endured.

So the prophet insists that upon returning to their homeland, the people must go to Jerusalem, to the holy mountain where stood the temple, and there proclaim aloud the goodness of God.

For its second reading this weekend, the Church presents a passage from the Second Epistle of Peter. Its theme differs from that of the first reading. The first reading was wonderfully optimistic. This reading is grim in its predictions of dark days and of unwelcome possibilities in the future.

This is critical, however. Things are bad, but it does not predict everlasting death. Difficult times will not vanish, but God always will protect the faithful. In this reassurance, the

reading parallels the message of the first reading.

St. Mark's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is the beginning of the Gospel, as the first verse of the reading states, and the very opening verse states the purpose of this Scripture. It is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In these relatively few words, the entire reality of salvation is revealed. Something new is being proclaimed, utterly different from the sad moods and dreariness of human life, totally unbound by the variances of earthly existence. The news is good. Jesus, the Son of God, both conveys this good news and brings its effectiveness into human life.

This reading quotes Isaiah's prophecy that God will send a representative to guide the people from death to life, from the deadly effects of their sins to the bright realms of God's forgiveness. God has been true to this pledge. He gives us Jesus.

The Gospel then tells of John the Baptist, who went throughout Judea calling people to repentance. John

recognized Jesus. Anyone can recognize Jesus, the Son of God. Too many people yield to an unrealistic assumption, to take the easy way out or to dilute the requirement of absolute conversion.

### Reflection

In Advent, the Church clearly, frankly and directly calls people to remember who they are as humans and importantly also to realize sin's devastating results. Such was the message of John the Baptist.

These steps require frankness and humility. We first must admit our sin and our human limitations. We must see what sin, or total estrangement from and rejection of God, actually means. It is the cause of eternal death, and often of misery, in earthly existence.

The ultimate message is not of doom and gloom, and impossible goals. While we are limited and have sinned, while we may be weak, while we may have made quite a mess of things, this weekend's readings remind us that God's mercy is

overwhelming and unending. So, we have reason to hope. God will forgive us. God will strengthen us.

The key to obtaining this mercy is in truly dedicating ourselves to the Lord. God does not drag us kicking and screaming into heaven. We must make ourselves worthy of heaven. Jesus will help us.

### READINGS

**Sunday:** Is 40:1-5, 9-11 Ps 85:9-14 2 Pt 3:8-14 Mk 1:1-8

**Monday:** Is 35:1-10 Ps 85:9ab-14 Lk 5:17-26

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

**Wednesday:** Is 40:25-31 Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10 Mt 11:28-30

**Thursday:** Is 41:13-20 Ps 145:1, 9-13b Mt 11:11-15

**Friday:** Is 48:17-19 Ps 1:1-4, 6 Mt 11:16-19

**Saturday:** Zec 2:14-17 (Ps) Jdt 13:18bc, 19 Lk 1:26-38

# If COVID-19 restrictions seem like a sacrifice, they have nothing on the rations of WWII

Tired of restrictions imposed to control the COVID-19 virus, facemasks, social distancing, reduced hours at stores and closed offices? Will it ever end?

Americans have seen similar conditions and much worse. The United States entered World War II in December 1945, and the lives of almost all Americans were upended for more than three long years. Mandated rationing prevented everybody from buying on impulse, even necessities. People bought what the government allowed them to buy. Money was not the problem. It was the law.

Start with operating an automobile. Most citizens could purchase only three gallons of gasoline a week. People thought long and hard before they drove anywhere. My parents set priorities. Getting to Sunday Mass was first. Then came everything else.

Tires were made of natural rubber, most often grown in the Netherlands East Indies, now Indonesia, then overtaken by Japan. Japan sold no rubber to Dutch allies, including this country. Tires were precious. No new tires.

Congress imposed a national speed limit on highways, 35 mph, to save gasoline and to reduce wear and tear on tires.

Food was heavily rationed. Each household could buy one pound of coffee every five weeks. Brazil, an American ally, provided most of the coffee. The Germans disrupted merchant shipping on the Atlantic.

With one-half pound of sugar available per week, per family, few baked cakes or pies.

Beef, pork, lamb, butter,

cheese, lard, shortening, food oils, processed foods (canned, bottled and frozen), dried fruits, canned milk, jams, jellies, preserves and fruit butter were restricted. Margarine was invented to substitute for butter. Cereals replaced meat-based pet food, but cereals for humans or livestock were rationed.

Game, poultry, fish, fresh fruits and vegetables were not rationed. Front lawns in cities became vegetable gardens. Chicken coups filled backyards. Rabbit, wild duck, venison, more fish and even squirrel went onto menus, but no new guns, ammunition or fishing lures were made.

No new cars were manufactured. Dealers only sold used cars, with bald tires, at a premium. Mechanics could not find parts. No new typewriters, bicycles, stoves, lawnmowers, rakes, shovels, locks, chains, wheelbarrows, refrigerators, washers, pots and pans, toys, basketball hoops, tools — even telephones, or anything else metal or with wiring — could be had.

Groceries sold canned goods. The empty cans were returned, along with opened bottles.

For travel, nobody drove. Besides the rationing of gas, the speed limit made car travel agonizingly slow. Air travel was rare. Trains were the preferred option, but soldiers, sailors or Marines likely filled the seats. Civilians were turned aside. Railroads lacked enough supplies, rolling equipment for freight or passengers and personnel.

City bus systems were overwhelmed. No new buses were built. Repairs were difficult.

ries through on his promises to revoke the Mexico City policy, to overturn the Hyde Amendment, to enshrine Roe v. Wade into federal law in the wake of any U.S. Supreme Court decision to scale Roe back and to return the matter of abortion to the states, make it clear that you find such actions unacceptable.

The great danger here is not simply to the lives of unborn children; it's to your own soul. Donald Trump was no messiah; Joe Biden isn't, either. They're both politicians with some good ideas and many more bad ones. We don't have to accept the bad ones in order to embrace the



## GUEST COMMENTARY

MSGR. OWEN CAMPION

People stood in long, tiring lines in rain, hot sun, ice or dark for a bus. Silk, nylon and wool were hard to find. Coal and fuel for heating homes were rationed. People sat or slept in the cold. Undertakers had no metal caskets. Coastal cities were under blackout every night because enemy submarines, with bombs aboard, might target a light.

Everyone worried. Rumors had German missiles, already the scourge of Britain, on the way.

Toothache? Get to the dentist's office at the crack of dawn and hope to be seen by the end of the day. Same at the doctor's office. So many dentists and physicians were away at war. Druggists ran out of painkillers, antiseptics and therapeutics.

Taxes were raised. For quick cash, the government developed withholding, requiring businesses to add bookkeepers and pay their salaries. Everyone coped with red tape.

Rare was the family unrepresented in the military. Enlisted were 16 million people: 405,000 of them were killed in action; 671,000 were wounded, many incapacitated for life. Imagine the anxiety and grief.

History makes clear that nobody complained. Nobody revolted. Nobody gave up. Everyone cheerfully and willingly sacrificed to help each other, and to help the country survive, as an obligation and a privilege.

Msgr. Owen Campion is OSV's chaplain.

good ones; in fact, our support for the good ones becomes more valuable when we reject the bad ones.

But if we excuse the bad ones because he's "our guy," we may find, at the end of four years, that we've not simply made our peace with his dissent from Church teaching but, for all practical purposes, embraced such dissent ourselves.

Scott P. Richert is the publisher of OSV.

### RICHERT, from page 12

selves that they could vote for Joe Biden despite — not because of — his positions.

If you're one of those voters, resist the temptation to political Manichaeism. Don't fall into the trap of defending, or even simply excusing, Biden when he acts in ways contrary to the moral truths that the Church teaches. Don't say, "His position on abortion was clear; we can't expect him to change it." It was clear, but we can — and should — expect him to change it. We can — and should — encourage him to embrace the truth. If he car-

## SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for December 6, 2020

Mark 1:1-8

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

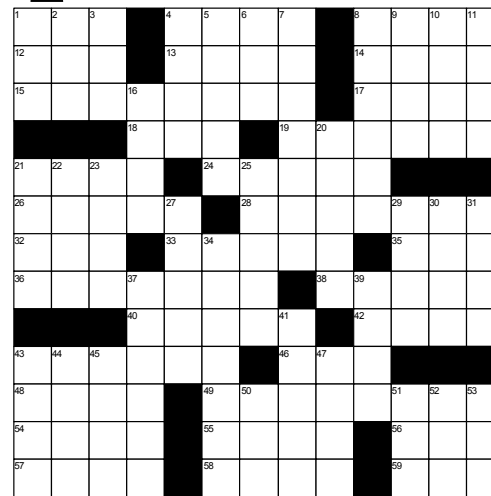
GOSPEL	JESUS CHRIST	SON OF GOD
WRITTEN	AHEAD OF YOU	VOICE
CRYING OUT	LORD	BAPTISM
FORGIVENESS	SINS	PEOPLE
CLOTHED	CAMEL'S HAIR	BELT
WAIST	LOCUSTS	HONEY
STOOP	SANDALS	SPIRIT

### THE START

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

## The Cross Word

December 6 and 13, 2020



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Readings: Is 40:1-5, 9-11; Mk 1:1-8 and Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

### ACROSS

- 1 Sliced
- 4 Jesus said it can corrupt treasures
- 8 When God \_\_ heaven and earth
- 12 Not amateur
- 13 Decorative needle case
- 14 Dialect for "against"
- 15 "The Christ"
- 17 The \_\_ God
- 18 Poem
- 19 Icons
- 21 Fresh
- 24 Grant an extension

### DOWN

- 26 Lion of \_\_
- 28 "Whoever is not for us is \_\_ us"
- 32 Also known as (abbr.)
- 33 Deep anxiety
- 35 Arrival time
- 36 Ouster
- 38 Ties sandal
- 40 Drive off
- 42 Brink
- 43 Discuss again
- 46 Peter's mother-in-law was
- 48 "The \_\_ One"
- 49 Homer's war saga
- 54 Glen
- 55 Goose cry

- 56 "We believe in \_\_ God"
- 57 "The \_\_ Begotten Son"
- 58 Church part
- 59 New York City

### DOWN

- 1 Certified public accountant
- 2 Holds ashes
- 3 Also
- 4 Tear
- 5 Speak
- 6 Take to court
- 7 Glad \_\_
- 8 African nation
- 9 Awe-struck
- 10 Dangerous
- 11 Don't justify means
- 16 Hawkeye state
- 20 Butcher's products
- 21 Open
- 22 Slang for nuclear
- 23 Swiss-like cheese
- 25 John the Evangelist symbol
- 27 \_\_ and have-nots
- 29 Brainy persons
- 30 Male deer
- 31 Package sealer
- 34 Flammable liquid
- 37 Verbally
- 39 William \_\_
- 41 Legal claims to property
- 43 Make over
- 44 Flat
- 45 Shall be made low
- 47 Enjoy
- 50 Skip
- 51 Charged particle
- 52 One of these
- 53 Advent month

Answer key can be found on page 15

# Pope meets with NBA players union delegation at the Vatican

BY JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A delegation representing the National Basketball Players Association, a union representing professional athletes from the NBA, met with Pope Francis and spoke with him about their work in promoting social justice.

The players association said the group meeting the pope Nov. 23 included: Marco Belinelli, a shooting guard for the San Antonio Spurs; Sterling Brown and Kyle Korver, shooting guards for the Milwaukee Bucks; Jonathan Isaac, power forward for the Orlando Magic; and Anthony Tolliver, a 13-year power forward who is currently a free agent.

The NBPA said the meeting “provided an opportunity for the players to discuss their individual and collective efforts addressing social and economic injustice and inequality occurring in their communities.”

NBA players have been vocal on social justice issues throughout the year, especially after the shocking death of George Floyd by police officers in May sparked massive protests across the

United States.

Before resuming the basketball season following its suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the union and the NBA reached a deal to display social justice messages on their jerseys.

Michele Roberts, executive director of the NBPA, said in a statement Nov. 23 that the meeting with the pope “validates the power of our players’ voices.”

“That one of the most influential leaders in the world sought to have a conversation with them demonstrates the influence of their platforms,” said Roberts, who also was at the meeting. “I remain inspired by our players’ continued commitment to serve and support our community.”

According to ESPN, union officials said an “intermediary” for the pope reached out to the NBPA and informed them of Pope Francis’ interest in their efforts to bring attention to social justice issues and economic inequality.

Korver said in a statement that the association was “extremely honored to have had this opportunity to come to the Vatican and share our experiences with Pope Francis” and that the pope’s “openness and



CNS photo/Vatican Media

eagerness to discuss these issues was inspiring and a reminder that our work has had a global impact and must continue moving forward.”

“Today’s meeting was an incredible experience,” Tolliver said. “With the pope’s support and blessing, we are excited to head into this next season reinvigorated to keep pushing for change and bringing our communities together.”

**Jonathan Isaac of the Orlando Magic presents a jersey with his number to Pope Francis during a meeting with a delegation from the National Basketball Players Association at the Vatican Nov. 23. The group also included Marco Belinelli of the San Antonio Spurs; Sterling Brown of the Milwaukee Bucks; Kyle Korver of the Bucks; and Anthony Tolliver, a free agent who most recently played for the Memphis Grizzlies.**

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**St. Nicholas sale**

**FORT WAYNE** — The St. Nicholas sale at Good Shepherd Books and Gifts will be Dec. 5-12 and means 20% off your entire purchase of anything in the store. Some exclusions apply. Free refreshments and free parking in the attached garage of the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center, 915 S. Clinton St. Visit [www.goodshepherdbookstore.org](http://www.goodshepherdbookstore.org) for details.

**Noche de Alabanza/ Night of Praise**

**MISHAWAKA** — Join the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend's Hispanic Ministry and Santiago Fernandez on Tuesday, Dec. 15, from 7:30-8:30 p.m. for a Night of Praise in Spanish. The event is free and will be streaming live through Facebook @ministerio-hispanofwsb with songs of worship and inspirational meditations. For information, visit [diocesefwsb.org/hispanic-ministry](http://diocesefwsb.org/hispanic-ministry) and visit the Facebook page.

**Belonging: Ministry with Persons with Disabilities meeting**

**FORT WAYNE** — A Belonging meeting will be Tuesday, Dec. 15, from 7-8:15 p.m. at the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center, 915 S. Clinton St. (or via Zoom). The Office of Catechesis works to ensure meaningful participation for individuals with disabilities and their families in the life of the Church. Contact Allison Sturm at [asturm@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:asturm@diocesefwsb.org) or 260-399-1452 to get the Zoom link or for any questions. Visit [www.diocesefwsb.org/belonging](http://www.diocesefwsb.org/belonging).

**Masses interpreted for the deaf resume**

**SOUTH BEND** — Masses interpreted for the deaf are on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 11 a.m. at St. Matthew Cathedral, 1701 Miami St. An interpreter from Community Services All Deaf provides American Sign Language. A Mass interpreted

for the deaf will also be celebrated on the second Sunday of each month at the 11:30 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Fort Wayne. An interpreter from DeafLink, a service of The League for the Blind & Disabled Inc., will provide ASL. Contact Allison Sturm at [asturm@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:asturm@diocesefwsb.org) or at 260-399-1452 for information.

**Parish mission: 'Chosen for Joy, Sent in Power'**

**FORT WAYNE** — Join diocesan seminarians Vince Faurote, Brian Florin and Brian Isenbarger for a three-night parish mission at St. John the Baptist Church, 4525 Arlington Ave. Each night will feature a talk, time for adoration, confession and evening prayer. Each evening starts at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 4: Chosen – Who are you and why are you here? What is

your deepest identity? Dec. 11: For Joy – You were made for joy! Joyful praise reorders all of creation, including our own body and soul. Dec. 18: Sent in Power – Jesus tells us that the least in the kingdom are greater than even St. John the Baptist.

**Friday Night Praise**

**NEW HAVEN** — Friday Night Praise will be every Friday. The Orchid, 11508 Lincoln Highway East, will offer a select menu and drinks — including beer and wine — available for purchase beginning at 5:30 p.m. Praise and worship, with full participation for those attending, is from 6:30-8 p.m. The Orchid rests on a beautiful piece of land in order to utilize the fire pits, pond, yard games and the swingset. For more information contact Tracia Gregory at [traciagregory@gmail.com](mailto:traciagregory@gmail.com).

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December 6 and 13, 2020



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**Goshen**

Pedro Lozano Zamora, 63, St. John the Evangelist

Jona A. Rico Garcia, 20, St. John the Evangelist

Judith A. Rietgraf, 79, St. John the Evangelist

Julia A. Unger, 55, St. John the Evangelist

**Granger**

Patricia Cox, 77, St. Pius X

**Huntington**

Sister Alodia Carney, OLVM, 92, Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel

**Sister Monica**

Haines, OLVM, 90, Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel

Jeremy L. Vargo, 43, SS. Peter and Paul

**Mishawaka**

Helen Collins, 88, St. Joseph

Gladys M. Fozo, 95, St. Monica

Don Heirman, 80, St. Joseph

Mary A. Williams, 87, St. Monica

**Monroeville**

Diana L. Galligher, 78, St. Rose of Lima

Jean R. Renier, 97, St. Rose of Lima

**New Haven**

Dennis J. Tippmann, 74, St. John the Baptist

**South Bend**

Thomas Barcome, 62, St. Matthew Cathedral

John W. Byorni, 73, St. Anthony de Padua

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# Bishops say Advent during pandemic can draw us closer to Jesus

BY DENNIS SADOWSKI

CLEVELAND (CNS) — The global pandemic and new limits on daily activities present a special time for a renewal of faith and the opportunity to deepen appreciation for Jesus in daily life, bishops across the country said in messages for the Advent season.

This year as families are separated, several bishops said, Advent also can be a much-needed quiet time to recognize how the birth of an infant, Jesus, changed the world and his followers are invited to follow his example to help bring peace in a tumultuous era.

Likewise, bishops encouraged prayers for essential workers including those in health care, education and often overlooked service sectors as well as for those who died or became ill because of COVID-19 and the family members and friends caring for them.

In a bit of a twist, Bishop W. Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, Missouri, wondered if God was using the effects of the pandemic to achieve good.

"What if we were able to take advantage of this shuttering of our busy lives to observe Advent as our Church has always encouraged us to do: a time of reflection, a time of quieting, a time of stillness, to make room for Christ in our daily lives?" he asked in a message posted on the diocesan website.



CNS photo/Tom McCarthy Jr., Catholic Review

A woman and girl put the finishing touches on an Advent wreath in this 2013 file photo.

He invited families to celebrate traditions such as lighting the candles of an Advent wreath at daily dinner, blessing the Christmas tree with prayer, and gathering to reflect in front of a Nativity scene to nurture their faith "as we look forward to the great feast of the Incarnation, the Son of God becoming one of us."

Advent is a time to "experience the loving presence of God in a fresh and profound way,"

Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix said in a recorded message on "The Bishop's Hour" radio program that aired Nov. 21 on Relevant Radio.

The four-week period leading to Christmas Day can be a time during which God prepares "our heart to receive the beloved Son again," Bishop Olmsted said. "He may do so in little ways that we may hardly notice at the time."

Bishop John E. Stowe of Lexington, Kentucky, echoed

that message in a column in the December issue of Cross Roads, the diocesan magazine, saying that "while Christmas celebrations this year will be different, the event we celebrate remains the same."

"Perhaps it is more meaningful than ever to remember, Emmanuel, God is with us — he never has and never will abandon us," Bishop Stowe said.

Each Advent is an invitation to "ponder what it is that we still

await," he explained. Jesus, he said, "has come and shown us the way."

Despite Jesus' example of unity, the bishop said, "We have not always followed the ways indicated by the Messiah, especially as he demonstrates that we are one family with one Father in heaven."

Bishop Stowe expressed regret that as the "terrible year" of 2020 ends, the times have been "made worse by ever-growing division over so many matters, even as a pandemic should have brought us in to the greater unity needed to survive."

Pope Francis' recent encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship," offers inspiration to overcome divisiveness and "provides a particularly appropriate meditation for this time of watching and waiting," he said.

"The pope knows that this darkness is passing and, as Christ's representative, he is and must be a messenger of hope. Despite the bleakness around, God continues to sow seeds of goodness," he said, crediting the work of those responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

The bishop also invited the faithful to practice charity during Advent which can open hearts to "greater awareness of the great worth of each human being" on the way to helping light the darkness.

## Near-win for Bishop Luers at state



Provided by John Felts

Bishop Luers High School varsity football team members await the signal to take the field at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis Nov. 27. The Fort Wayne school proved to be a tenacious foe for Western Boone, which won the Class 2A state championship 36-35 because of a field goal in the last 11 seconds of the game that pulled it ahead of Bishop Luers.

## Praying for the nation



Jodi Marlin

Sue Miller elicits honks from cars at the corner of Trier and Reed roads in Fort Wayne Nov. 28. Miller and about a dozen St. Charles Borromeo parishioners, including pastor Father Thomas Shoemaker, have gathered at the corner to pray the rosary for the country each Saturday morning since prior to the election.