



Today's Catholic
wishes everyone a
Merry Christmas and
blessed New Year

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Tragedy in Connecticut

Church responds

Page 3

'Festshrift'

Notre Dame presents collection
of writings to Pope Benedict

Page 4

Las Posadas

St. Adalbert relates theme
to trust in God

Page 8

Support for families, seniors

Catholic Charities
Christmas Collection
at Christmas Masses

Pages 8, 10

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'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'



KEVIN HAGGENJOS

This mural, located within the apse of the recently blessed Chapel of Saint Joseph at the new Saint Joseph High School in South Bend, is the central piece of art — a reredos with an oil painting of the Nativity, executed and donated by Ruth Stroik of South Bend. Stroik studied art at Yale and Indiana University, and also taught at the college level for several years.

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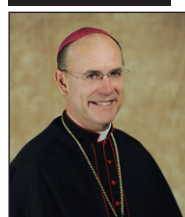
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The birth of the "Prince of Peace"



IN TRUTH AND CHARITY

BY BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given... and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God... Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6).

The words of Isaiah prophesy the coming of the Savior into the world, a great promise fulfilled when the Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. At Christmas, we celebrate the great mystery of the Incarnation. Like the shepherds and the magi, we kneel in adoration before the Child "wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12).

The promised Messiah is identified by Isaiah as the *Prince of Peace*. This title has particular meaning for us this year. Our nation has been wracked again by senseless violence with the terrible slaughter of innocent children and adults last week at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. Our hearts go out to the parents and families of these innocent victims. Let us remember them in our prayers as we celebrate the birth of Our Savior. May the Lord console them in their deep sorrow and grief!

It is tragic when we consider the scourge of violence in our culture. We see violent behavior in homes, schools, shopping malls, and on our streets. Violence is prevalent in movies, video games, and television. As a society, we must declare this unacceptable. There is a "culture of violence" that is fed by multiple sources: the entertainment media, disintegrated family life, drug abuse and trafficking, gangs, and the availability of so many weapons. There is a failure to respect life. As followers of Christ, the Prince of Peace, we must never cease to proclaim that violence goes against the truth of our faith and the truth of our humanity.

Violence is fed by anger, intolerance, and hatred. There is a terrible climate created by words and actions (all-too-common today) that attack others and lack even the basic elements of civility and respect. In this Year of Faith in which the Holy Father calls for a revitalization of faith, we also must recognize the need for a moral revolution that recovers the values of goodness and right, respect and civility, forgiveness and love.

God's commandment "thou shalt not kill" is a moral imperative for the common good. The Lord calls us to overcome this culture of violence with a culture of peace and to overcome evil with good. I believe we need a new national solidarity in confronting violence. Our faith calls us to cherish life, from conception to natural death, and to value kindness and compassion over anger and vengeance.

Two thousand years ago, the Prince of Peace was born in Bethlehem. His is the power that makes us capable, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, of peace with one another and communion with God Himself. How often Jesus spoke the words *Peace be with you* after He rose from the dead. These words are often repeated in the Church's liturgy.

The Church teaches that peace is the work



CNS PHOTO/JOSHUA LOTT, REUTERS

The Christmas Nativity is recreated outside St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown, Conn., Dec. 15. The planned parish event was carried out as the community and nation sought answers and comfort after a gunman killed 27 people, including 20 children, in a school shooting tragedy the day before.

Mass on the Feast of the Holy Innocents

Friday, Dec. 28, 2012

12:05 p.m.

Cathedral of the Immaculate
Conception, Fort Wayne

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will be offering this Mass for the victims of the killings on Dec. 14 at the elementary school in Newtown, Conn., and for their families. All are cordially invited to attend.

of justice and the effect of charity. It is a goal of Christian living, as indicated by Jesus who taught in the Sermon on the Mount: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God*. The promotion of peace is part of our Christian vocation.

On that first Christmas, after the angel of the Lord announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds, a multitude of the heavenly host praised God in these words: *Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests*. This is the peace that the world cannot give. It is the peace of Jesus: salvation. It is reconciliation with God the Father. Jesus is "our peace," Saint Paul teaches. Jesus Himself said to the disciples in His farewell discourse: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you* (John 14:27).

In the Entrance Antiphon of Christmas Midnight Mass, the Church proclaims: *Today true peace has come down to us from heaven*. It is Jesus who brings true peace to the world. We are called to welcome this gift by welcoming Christ into our lives. Each of us is called to overcome with Christ "the mystery of evil" by becoming instruments of peace.

When darkness and evil seem to prevail, as in the recent massacre of the innocents in the Connecticut school, we naturally seek an answer that will reassure us. The birth of Christ is the only answer. It is He who calms our fears and reinvigorates our hope. We believe that He has indeed vanquished the power of evil and that His love is ultimately

victorious. Our faith assures us of the triumph of love over hatred, of life over death.

Just three days after Christmas, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Innocents (December 28th). On that day, we remember that terrible massacre that obliged the Holy Family to flee to Egypt. Let us remember in a special way in our prayers on that day the sufferings of the families of the innocent victims of the massacre in Connecticut. I will be celebrating Mass for these victims and their families at 12:05 PM on Friday, December 28th, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The Catechism teaches that "the flight into Egypt and the massacre of the innocents make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light" (CCC 530). Senseless acts of violence remind us that there is still much darkness in the world. Yet, Christmas reminds us that the light of Christ shines in the darkness of sin and death. And so we must never lose hope in the message of Christmas, recognizing that peace is the heritage Christ won for us. That peace begins in our own hearts when we renounce hatred and evil and seek to overcome evil with good.

This Christmas, let us raise a great prayer to God for peace in our nation and in our world, for an end to violence, war, and terrorism. Let us pray for a culture of life and civilization of love. Let us pray that the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, may fill us with renewed hope and that His light may spread throughout the world.

I wish to close with these words of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, spoken at Midnight Mass in 2005:

When we celebrate the Eucharist we find ourselves in Bethlehem, in the 'house of bread'. Christ gives himself to us and, in doing so, gives us his peace. He gives it to us so that we can carry the light of peace within and give it to others. He gives it to us so that we can become peacemakers and builders of peace in the world. And so we pray: Lord, fulfill your promise! Where there is conflict, give birth to peace! Where there is hatred, make love spring up! Where darkness prevails, let light shine! Make us heralds of your peace! Amen.

My brothers and sisters, you are remembered in my Masses and prayers during the season of Christmas. A blessed Christmas to all!

'No words' can describe shock, sadness after shooting, says priest

NEWTOWN, Conn. (CNS) — Msgr. Robert Weiss, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown, was at Sandy Hook Elementary School almost immediately after the horrific shooting Dec. 14.

When the enormity of the tragedy began to unfold, other priests, chaplains and Catholic Charities personnel "were on the ground," Brian Wallace, diocesan director of communications, told Catholic News Service.

In the days since St. Rose of Lima has taken center stage as people gathered for a prayer vigil the night of the shootings and flocked to Sunday Masses seeking solace. They looked to Msgr. Weiss and his staff and other Catholic leaders for pastoral outreach in the aftermath of the violence, which left 20 children and seven adults dead.

Eighteen children died at the school and two others died after they had been rushed to the hospital. All of the children were first-graders. The adults included the principal and five teachers, as well as the gunman.

Police officials identified the shooter as Adam Lanza, 20, and said he killed himself as first responders arrived on the scene.

"There are no words," Msgr. Weiss told a TV reporter Dec. 15 in an interview for NBC's "Today" show after spending hours helping law enforcement officials inform parents that their child had died in the shooting. At least eight of the children belonged to the parish and will be buried from St. Rose.

Msgr. Weiss said many of the family members thanked him for his presence. "There was a lot of hugging, a lot of crying, a lot of praying, a lot of just being silent," he said, adding that at the previous evening's vigil, community members "came together to care and to support. ... People really care here and hopefully we can just keep the community together and they can console each other."

The priest, along with Lutheran, Episcopal, Jewish, Congregationalist, Methodist, Bahá'í and Muslim leaders, participated in an evening interfaith service Dec. 16 at a Newtown auditorium.

President Barack Obama addressed the gathering after meeting separately with each family who lost someone in the shooting. He expressed his condolences and the nation's support as they face their grief and bury their dead.

"I come to offer the love and prayers of a nation. I am very mindful that mere words cannot match the depths of your sorrow, nor can they heal your wounded hearts," Obama said at the service.

"I can only hope it helps for you to know that you're not alone in your grief; that our world too has been torn apart; that all across this land of ours, we have wept with you, we've pulled our children tight," he continued.

"And you must know that whatever measure of comfort we can



CNS PHOTO/LUCAS JACKSON, REUTERS

Mourners visit a memorial outside St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown, Conn., Dec. 16. Twelve girls, eight boys and six adult women were killed in a shooting massacre Dec. 14 at Newtown's Sandy Hook Elementary School. Eight of the children were to be buried from St. Rose of Lima.

provide, we will provide; whatever portion of sadness that we can share with you to ease this heavy load, we will gladly bear it. Newtown — you are not alone."

Obama pledged in the coming weeks to "use whatever power" his office holds "to engage my fellow citizens — from law enforcement to mental health professionals to parents and educators — in an effort aimed at preventing more tragedies like this.

"Because what choice do we have? We can't accept events like this as routine," he added.

Before closing his remarks, Obama named each child by name, and added: "God has called them all home. For those of us who remain, let us find the strength to carry on, and make our country worthy of their memory."

In a Dec. 16 statement, Msgr. Jerald A. Doyle, administrator of the Bridgeport diocese, said: "On this Gaudete Sunday we realize how quickly our joy can be turned to sorrow and how our faith can be challenged.

"On behalf of the clergy, religious and all the faithful of the Diocese of Bridgeport I extend my prayers and condolences to the families of the victims. ... Our concern and support go out to the whole community of Newtown as you try to assist and support one another, especially those who were directly impacted."

Msgr. Doyle pledged whatever diocesan resources are needed "to assist those affected by this tragedy," including counselors from Catholic Charities. "As we continue our journey toward the Christmas feast, may our hope for the peace and comfort of the divine Savior, be a true source of assurance of His loving presence in our lives," he added.

At all of the Sunday Masses at St. Rose, a letter was read from Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, Bridgeport's bishop from 2001 until he was named to Baltimore in March.

"Along with you, and along with the rest of our nation and, indeed,

the rest of the world, I was shocked and horrified to learn of what had taken place in Newtown so suddenly and terribly on Friday morning. I was in Rome for meetings, and it was early evening there when I heard," the archbishop wrote.

"Since that moment, my heart has been heavy, and I can't stop thinking about everyone in Newtown, especially the victims, the children, and their families," he continued. "So I just wanted to say very sincerely and simply that I am close to all of you in my thoughts and prayers right now."

He added: "Our lives will never be the same. But neither will we have to face a single day without the strength and peace that only Christ can give to us. In that strength and in that peace, I am very much united with you today."

In a statement released late evening Dec. 14, New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said the shooting "wrenches the hearts of all people" and the "tragedy of innocent people dying through violence shatters the peace of all."

"We pledge especially our prayerful support to the Diocese of Bridgeport and the community of Newtown as they cope with this almost unbearable sorrow ... as they deal with the injuries they have sustained and with the deaths of their beautiful children," he said.

"Once again we speak against the culture of violence infecting our country even as we prepare to welcome the Prince of Peace at Christmas," the cardinal added. "All of us are called to work for peace in our homes, our streets and our world, now more than ever."

The Bridgeport diocese's website included several other messages of condolences, including one sent on behalf of Pope Benedict XVI by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state.

He conveyed the pope's "heartfelt grief and the assurance of his closeness in prayer to the victims and their families, and to all affected by the shocking event."



PUBLIC SCHEDULE OF BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

- Sunday, Dec. 23, 10:30 a.m. — TV Mass, University of Saint Francis Chapel, Fort Wayne
- Tuesday, Dec. 25, 12 a.m. — Christmas Midnight Mass, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
- Thursday, Dec. 28, 12:05 p.m. — Mass on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne

Pope expresses grief over Newtown shooting, calls for acts of peace

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — After 20 children and six adults were shot dead in Connecticut, Pope Benedict XVI offered his condolences and prayers, urging all to dedicate themselves to acts of peace in the face of such "senseless violence."

After reciting the Angelus Dec. 17, the pope, speaking in English, said he was "deeply saddened" by the Dec. 14 shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Conn. In addition to the students and staff killed, the gunman took his own life.

"I assure the families of the victims, especially those who lost a child, of my closeness in prayer," he said. "May the God of consolation touch their hearts and ease their pain."

Just before blessing the Nativity-scene statues of the baby Jesus that Italian children brought to the square, Pope Benedict urged people to use the rest of Advent to dedicate themselves more "to prayer and to acts of peace."

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, sent a message Dec. 14 to the Diocese of Bridgeport, which includes Newtown, saying the pope had asked the cardinal "to convey his heartfelt grief" and his prayers to the victims, their families and "all affected by the shocking event."

"In the aftermath of this senseless tragedy, he asks God our Father to console all those who mourn and to sustain the entire community with the spiritual strength which triumphs over violence by the power of forgiveness, hope and reconciling love," the cardinal wrote.

Before reciting the Angelus Dec. 17, Gaudete (rejoice) Sunday, Pope Benedict celebrated a morning Mass at the parish of

St. Patrick in Colle Prenestino, a suburb on the eastern outskirts of Rome, and met with parents of babies baptized in the past year.

In his homily at the Mass, Pope Benedict said the Prophet Zephaniah's exhortation to "shout for joy" and "be glad and exult with all your heart" is a proclamation of good news.

"The prophet wants to tell us that there is no reason for mistrust, discouragement, sadness, no matter what situation we face, because we are certain of the presence of the Lord, which alone is enough to cheer us and give joy to our hearts," the pope said.

Returning to the Vatican to recite the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter's Square and to bless the baby Jesus statues that will be the center of Nativity scenes in homes, schools and hospitals throughout Rome, Pope Benedict prayed that people would embrace the call to conversion, honesty, respect for others and love for neighbor.

As the pope spoke from his apartment window high over St. Peter's Square, two small groups of protesters held up signs. The handful of protesters inside St. Peter's Square had black and white signs in English, Italian and Spanish; one said, "Gay marriages do not harm peace. Weapons do." The group outside the square held up colored hearts with messages in Italian such as "Love your neighbor" and "Marriage for all."

The groups were protesting a section of Pope Benedict's World Day of Peace message, which affirmed Catholic teaching on marriage as the lifelong bond of a man and a woman. The message said attempts to redefine marriage "harm and help to destabilize marriage, obscuring its specific nature and its indispensable role in society."

"May the God of consolation touch their hearts and ease their pain."

POPE BENEDICT XVI

A 'festschrift' for Pope Benedict from Notre Dame

NOTRE DAME — "Festschrift," German for "festival-writing," is a word academics use to describe a collection of writings celebrating the work of a prominent scholar on some memorable occasion. It is certainly a word well understood by the Bavarian theologian Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, and he seemed pleased to receive a festschrift from the University of Notre Dame, which John Cavadini, director of the Institute for Church Life, presented him Friday, Dec. 7, in Rome.

The festschrift, "Explorations in the Theology of Benedict XVI," edited by Cavadini and just published by the University of Notre Dame Press, grew from a conference sponsored by ICL in March to mark Pope Benedict's 85th birthday. The conference brought to Notre Dame an international group of theologians and other scholars to explore and reflect upon some 60 years of Joseph Ratzinger's theological scholarship and teaching, from his writings as a professor of theology through his papal encyclical letters.

Cavadini, in Rome for the annual meeting of the International Theological Commission, a

Vatican advisory group to which Pope Benedict had appointed him three years ago, brought with him a special leather-bound edition of the book that had been signed by all its contributors, including several Notre Dame faculty members and Notre Dame's president, Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins.

"I would like to emphasize also how pleased I am that we were able to honor Pope Benedict in this way," Cavadini told *Today's Catholic*. "He has taken many courageous and leaderly stands and takes his share of the heat that courageous stands often generate, and I wanted to let him know that there are many of us who appreciate his work and are grateful for it."

"I'd gone to Rome for the ITC meeting," Cavadini said, "but I also wanted to find an opportunity to deliver our festschrift to the Holy Father, in the name of all the contributors, of the Notre Dame Press, and of the university. My mission was accomplished more splendidly and amply than I could have imagined, for I had the opportunity personally to be received by Pope Benedict twice! But the Friday audience was arranged specifically for the presentation of the festschrift."



John Cavadini, director of the Institute for Church Life, presents Pope Benedict XVI with a festschrift from the University of Notre Dame.

"He received it warmly and seemed genuinely pleased and even touched when I showed him the

leather-bound copy with the signatures of all the contributors and President John Jenkins." Cavadini said. "I also presented him with a copy of the trade version, with the beautiful icon of Our Lady of Vladimir on the dust jacket, so he could see what it looked like."

Cavadini was the editor of the collection of essays, intended to introduce people to Pope Benedict's work as a theologian and to develop his theology along the lines he has laid out in his most recent writings as pope.


The Notre Dame faculty contributors (and signatories) of the book are Cavadini; Lawrence S. Cunningham, emeritus; Father John A. O'Brien, professor of theology; Gary Anderson, Hesburgh Professor of Catholic Theology; Cyril

O'Regan, Catherine F. Huisking, professor of theology; Robert M. Gimello, professor of theology and of East Asian languages and cultures; Francesca Aran Murphy, professor of theology; and Daniel Philpott, associate professor of political science and peace studies. Other contributors include Jesuit Father Edward T. Oakes, professor of systematic theology at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake and Mundelein Seminary; Simona Beretta, professor of international economics and policy and political science at Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan; and Peter Casarella, professor of Catholic Studies and director of the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University.



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Regardless of the weather or the food served at a holiday feast, or whether you are alone or in the midst of many, Christmas is always a look at the past.

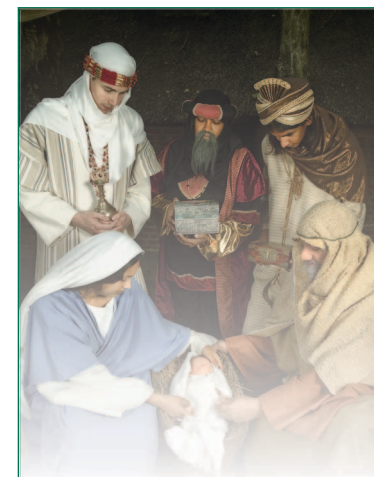
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*Season's
Greetings
from
TODAY'S CATHOLIC*

'Nutcracker' performance is special gift

BY KAY COZAD

FORT WAYNE — The "Nutcracker" ballet is a timeless holiday tradition cherished by young and old, and this year a local dance group carried on the legacy with panache as they performed for an exceptional audience. Over 60 members of the New American Youth Ballet executed a heartfelt performance for a sold out crowd of over 2,000 children and adults who live with disabilities or in disadvantaged situations on Dec. 16 at the University of Saint Francis Performing Arts Center in downtown Fort Wayne.

Adding to the already spectacular event was a visit from Santa Claus at the close of the ballet performance replete with a gift for every audience member. The gifts were purchased with funds from a generous donation made by Ciocca Cleaning and Restoration and Glenbrook Dodge.

New American Youth Ballet, a nonprofit organization established in 2004 by Beth McLeish, is an academic and ballet dance school in Fort Wayne. As dean of ballet, McLeish shares administration of the extraordinary school with her brother Mark Bly, who acts as dean of academics. Both are parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul Parish.

While preparing for this year's annual "Nutcracker" performance the company felt a need to reach out to the community in a special way.

McLeish says, "We wanted the students to bring the arts to some who don't get the chance to experience them ... to use their art to give back."

Twenty-five local social service agencies participated in the special event with clients and family members from Vincent Village, Euell Wilson Community Center, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Aging and In-home Services, the League of the Blind and many more.

Fred Tone, retired principal of Bishop Dwenger High School, and Steve Doepker, academic consultant and retired administrator, were instrumental in planning the event, coordinating the agencies and sponsors, and procuring the USF Performing Arts Center for the performance. McLeish says that the NAYB has performed on that stage for eight years, while it was known as the Scottish Rite Auditorium.

"When University of Saint Francis bought the building last year, it was a natural transition to go to USF to sponsor the project," she says.

Partnering with USF has benefitted so many. Franciscan Sister M. Elise Kriss, president of USF, says, "Art and learning have long been paired at the University of Saint Francis. Through the School of Creative Arts, the university has educated diversely in the arts while partnering with local organizations to make the creative disciplines and experience available to everyone. With the new USF Performing Arts Center, we have an even greater



KAY COZAD

Anticipation builds for these young ballerinas as they watch other cast members of the New American Youth Ballet perform at a dress rehearsal of the "Nutcracker" ballet.

opportunity to provide artistic expression and enjoyment to our community. Our support of the New American Youth Ballet performances of "The Nutcracker" in December underscores our commitment to expanding the understanding and appreciation of ballet by showcasing this classic work by Tchaikovsky."

The dancers' special outreach began well before the Dec. 16 performance. During the month of November, the cast of the "Nutcracker" performed sneak previews of their performance to a variety of special children including those at Vincent Village, Martin Luther King Montessori School, Turnstone and Lutheran Hospital. The dancers were overjoyed to read the story of the nutcracker to the groups of children, as well as teach some simple ballet techniques. Due to the chronic nature of some of the illnesses the children at Lutheran Hospital exhibited, the cast performed there via closed circuit TV.

Olivia Kruse, a 16-year-old student at the ballet school was excited to be cast as the sugar plum fairy and participated in the sneak previews. She says, "This is the first year our school is doing the 'Nutcracker' on stage in public. So we're very excited and happy that we get to do it."

This active St. Vincent de Paul Parish parishioner felt the Christmas outreach was a perfect way for her to serve her community. She says, "I love seeing them (the children) smile when we come out in our costumes. It's cool to share with them what we love to do."

In addition to this special outreach performance the New American Youth Ballet student dancers held a performance on Dec. 15 that was open to the public and another the evening of Dec. 16 at a discounted rate for area Fire and Police Department families as well as military families and veterans.

BISHOP RHOADES DEDICATES USF PERFORMING ARTS CENTER BUILDING



KAY COZAD

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrated a special dedication Mass with students, staff, faculty, benefactors and friends of the University of Saint Francis' new Performing Arts Center in downtown Fort Wayne on Dec. 11. The building, formerly the Scottish Rite, was purchased last year by USF to establish a downtown campus. In his homily Bishop Rhoades said, "At this first Mass in this Performing Arts Center we are reminded of the Catholic mission of the University of Saint Francis, a mission that will not only be lived at the main campus but here in this place." He invoked the Lord's blessing saying, "May the Lord bless all who study, work, and perform here, that they use their God-given gifts and talents for the glory of the Lord." Following the Mass the bishop blessed the building with a prayer of dedication. Pictured is Bishop Rhoades blessing the lobby of the Performing Arts Center with holy water. From left, USF President Sister Kriss, Nancy Money, director of facilities and events, and Brian MacMichael, director of the diocesan Office of Worship look on.

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Pope launches Twitter account, tweets to more than 1 million followers

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI launched his very own Twitter account, sending a short inaugural message to his more than 1 million followers. “Dear friends, I am pleased to get in touch with you through Twitter. Thank you for your generous response. I bless all of you from my heart,” it said. His tweet — 139 characters — went viral as the number of followers of @Pontifex and its seven other extensions grew by more than 5,000 new people an hour, a Vatican official said. Tens of thousands of followers retweeted the messages in the short minutes after they were posted. After the pope gave his catechesis and blessing to those gathered for the general audience in the Vatican’s Paul VI hall, an announcement came over the speakers saying the pope was about to make his first tweet. Officials placed a small wooden desk in front of the pope, and staff from the Pontifical Council for Social Communications placed a small tablet computer on top. The pope put on his glasses as Thaddeus Jones, a U.S. official at the council, showed him the screen that already had the message prepared and loaded. The pope, with a tap, sent the greeting, which in English was just one character shy of the site’s 140-character limit. Archbishop Claudio Celli, the council president, then showed the pope his @Pontifex accounts, which had amassed 1 million followers in the 10 days before the first tweet. The pope had difficulty in navigating the site after pressing a screen button with a determined push, which the archbishop then remedied with a more practiced tap. About 45 minutes later, after the pope left the audience hall, the first pair of tweets in a Q&A format was sent by Vatican officials. While the pope sees and approves each tweet, all tweets after his inaugural message are sent by Vatican staff.

Christmas trees remind believers of light of Christ, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The light of Christ has not dimmed over the past 2,000 years, but Christians today have an obligation to resist attempts to extinguish it, knowing that whenever societies have tried to pretend God did not exist, tragedy followed, Pope Benedict XVI said. Pope Benedict made his remarks Dec. 14 during a morning audience with civic leaders and pilgrims from the town of Pescopennataro and the province of Isneria, which donated the 78-foot silver fir tree that became the Christmas tree in St. Peter’s Square. Apparently informed that Pescopennataro has a population of about 350 people, the pope seemed a bit surprised at the crowd of 450 people who came to pay their respects and receive his thanks for the gift of the Christmas tree. “The whole town must be here,” he told them. In fact, the

POPE SENDS FIRST TWITTER MESSAGE FROM VATICAN



CNS PHOTO/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO VIA REUTERS

Pope Benedict XVI posts his first tweet on his Twitter account @Pontifex Dec. 12 in Paul VI hall at the Vatican.

mayor did manage to get everyone on buses and to the Vatican. Along with regional government officials, they met with the pope just a few hours before Bishop Giuseppe Sciacca, secretary-general of the office governing Vatican City, presided over the official tree-lighting ceremony. At the ceremony, the Pescopennataro poet, Angelomaria Di Tullio, read in the local dialect a poem he wrote about the tree, growing for decades near his hometown so that one day it proudly would represent the Pescolani people at the Vatican. At the audience earlier, Pope Benedict said the gift of the tree was a sign of the faith and religiosity of the southern Italian communities that donated the tree for St. Peter’s Square and smaller trees for the Apostolic Palace.

Religious liberty, front and center in 2012, likely to remain big issue

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Defending religious liberty was a top priority this year for the U.S. Catholic bishops, who repeatedly spoke out against threats to its existence. Much as they did the year before, the bishops in 2012 spoke out consistently against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ mandate requiring most religious employers to provide free coverage of artificial contraception, sterilization and abortion-causing

drugs in their insurance plans, even if they are morally opposed to such coverage. The mandate, put in place in August 2011, has a narrow exemption for employers who object to providing these services on religious grounds, namely if they serve or hire people primarily of their own faith. It does not include a conscience clause for employers who object to providing such coverage. The HHS issue took center stage early this year when the Obama administration announced Feb. 10 that it would leave the definition of an exempt religious entity but would shift the costs of contraceptives from the policyholders to the insurers. But the Catholic bishops and other religious leaders rejected the change, saying it failed to ensure that Catholic individuals and institutions would not have to pay for services that they consider immoral, because many dioceses and other Catholic entities are self-insured. At a congressional hearing, now-Archbishop William E. Lori, who heads the Baltimore Archdiocese and is chairman of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, said the ongoing debate over the mandate demonstrated a need for enacting conscience protection into federal law. The bishops have repeatedly said the mandate is a restriction on religious liberty because the requirement violates Church teaching. They echoed this concern throughout the year and urged lay Catholics to similarly speak out against infringements to religious freedom. Catholics around

the country responded by participating in Masses, devotions, holy hours, educational presentations and rallies during the June 21 to July 4 campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops called a “Fortnight for Freedom.”

Church agencies bring relief during year’s storms, drought, typhoon

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Amid this year’s hotter-than-average temperatures and extreme weather-related events including floods, droughts, storms, wildfires and a recent typhoon, Church agencies in the U.S. and around the world mobilized to provide short and long-term relief. The year ended with a typhoon hitting southern Philippines in December, lashing the island with 120-mph winds and torrential rains killing more than 370 people. The Philippines had already experienced flooding in August when days of torrential rains caused more than a quarter million people to evacuate their homes in the capital of Manila. The previous month, massive flooding in India left 126 people dead, and affected nearly 3 million people. Teams of Catholic Relief Services workers in both areas immediately assessed damages and provided medical aid, food and water, while churches provided temporary shelter. The United States also was

particularly hard hit with weather disasters this year prompting aid from Catholic Charities USA, local Catholic Charities agencies and parishes. Hurricane Sandy, which quickly became a super storm, wreaked havoc on the Eastern United States in late October, killing 125 people in the U.S. after causing more than 70 deaths in the Caribbean. According to a report from The Associated Press, the storm caused about \$62 billion in damage and other losses in the U.S. — primarily in New York and New Jersey — making it the second-costliest storm in U.S. history after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 which caused \$128 billion in damage. The United States also experienced the worst drought in decades in the south-central U.S. this past summer. Drought or near-drought conditions had repercussions for more than just farmers as crop shortages caused food prices to increase. In June, there were severe wildfires in Colorado, prompting evacuations and in March tornadoes ripped through parts of Indiana.

Vatican newspaper: World will end, but not because of Mayan calendar

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A papal astronomer gave his reassurances that the world will not end Dec. 21, 2012. While the universe eventually will come to a “cold and dark” demise billions of years from now, Christians know that God is always with His creation and welcomes everyone to eternal life, said Jesuit Father Jose Funes, the head of the Vatican Observatory. The Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, published the priest-astronomer’s article Dec. 12 under the headline “The end that won’t come — at least for now.” He said the claims that the end of the Mayan “Long Count” calendar Dec. 21 marks the end of the world were “irrational,” however, science offers more probable scenarios than pseudo prophecies do. Discoveries suggest the 14-billion-year-old universe is in constant expansion. If that “inflation” model is correct, and it’s based on solid findings, he said, the universe will “rip apart” billions of years from now. The mysterious dark energy driving the expansion may produce strange effects, such as “the universe even could have not one end but rather ‘multiends,’ that is, some of its parts will come to an end at different moments,” he said. Father Funes’ article was followed by a lengthier piece written by Piero Benvenuti, an Italian astronomer and the former head European scientist for the Hubble Space Telescope project. He said the sciences, not soothsayers, have “very precise data on the evolution of the cosmos, particularly until what point a planet like Earth can sustain biological and intelligent life.” The world’s end is linked to the evolution of the sun, which was formed about 5 billion years ago and will warm the Earth for another 3.5 billion years, he said.

'Christmas at Greccio' CD

MISHAWAKA — Joe Higginbotham, director of Liturgy and Music at St. Bavo Parish in Mishawaka and vocalist Stacie Bert have recently released a new CD titled "Christmas at Greccio," which includes 15 titles and features traditional favorites like "Joy to the World," "Carol of the Bells," "O Holy Night," and "Angels We Have Heard on High." Contemporary songs like "Mary Did You Know," "Breath of Heaven," and "Come Emmanuel," are also beautifully presented with colorful instrumental arrangements and harmonies.

"This new CD arranged by Joe Higginbotham, of St. Bavo's, is a prayerful contribution both to one's Christmas repertoire, but also to the spirit of Advent as we long for the coming of God's only Son. Joe has chosen a number of new hymns speaking so beautifully of our Mother Mary's reflections on the Infant Jesus that she held with such loving mystery in her arms. The CD has several traditional hymns, a new one composed by Joe, 'Christmas at Greccio,' as well as some worthy and very prayerful hymns that are a welcome addition to one's journey through Advent and Christmas. This CD would make a very lovely gift for that special someone for whom you would like a prayerful gift that will continue to inspire and touch hearts each Advent and Christmas for a long time," said Franciscan Sister Agnes Marie Regan.

The CD normally retails for \$15 but is now available for immediate shipment for only \$10, which includes shipping charges.

Higginbotham has also set all the beautiful prayers of St. Francis of Assisi to music. Father Bob Lengerich, pastor of St. Dominic Parish in Bremen, and Stacie Bert are the vocalists. This CD and companion 96-page songbook (with two- and four-part harmonies) titled "To You We Give All Praise" features 24 songs and is also on sale for \$10 and includes free shipment until Dec. 31. Buy the companion songbook as well and get all three for \$25.

These CDs are available at local Catholic bookstores, www.saints-francisandclarepress.com, or by calling (574) 514-0395.

Santa delivers technology upgrade grant to Queen of Angels School

FORT WAYNE — Queen of Angels School in Fort Wayne was the only U.S. recipient of a \$10,000 grant for a new technology upgrade through Skype, a free online-calling program developed by Microsoft, through its Santa in the Classroom contest. Only three grants were distributed throughout the world.

The announcement was made at a school assembly on Dec. 13 using Skype. Santa Claus made the announcement that Queen of Angels School was selected as a grant recipient.

The grant will be used to purchase laptops for mobile labs and to

AROUND THE DIOCESE

BISHOP RHOADES CELEBRATES MASS WITH RETIRED PRIESTS



JOE ROMIE

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrated Mass Dec. 10 at Saint Anne Home and Retirement Community in Fort Wayne with retired priests who live in the Fort Wayne area and residents. In the homily, Bishop Rhoades said, "My brothers and sisters, the season of Advent encourages all of us in joyous hope that God has come to bring us salvation. In Advent, we prepare anew for the coming of the Lord. We still need a Savior. The world needs a Savior. Those who are spiritually blind or deaf or mute or lame need the saving power of God." In the photo are, seated from left, Father Paul Miller and Father Lawrence Kramer; and standing, from left: Father Kenneth Sarrazine, Father Adam Schmitt, Bishop Rhoades, Father Laurence Tippmann, Father Robert Traub, Saint Anne Chaplain Father Jack Overmyer and Father Paul Bueter.

purchase some software upgrades. The technology will be purchased through the Microsoft online store. "Students will have access to technology more readily," said Terry Lehman, computer instructor at Queen of Angels School.

"A huge thanks to Skype, Santa, Kaplow Public Relations and Microsoft for making our Christmas a little more merry," reported Lehman, who was the grant applicant. The applications were judged on originality of the entry, uniqueness of need and the potential to benefit the school and the community.

In the grant application, Lehman wrote: "We are in desperate need of newer computers and software to help aid our students, especially in math and language arts. This prize would help us start to build more reliable workstations for use in all of our classes. ... Our current desktops and other hardware items were used when we got them for our one and only lab and we have had them for about eight years."

Lehman added in the application: "We have several IEP students that use the Internet to help them with their remediation needs; but our systems are so slow, they aren't always able to accomplish everything they need. Plus I have one girl who is legally blind and we could use new items to help her out so she can actually participate and keep up with the whole class, as she has a hard time seeing the screen and the keyboard. ..."

Queen of Angels School serves 240 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 8.

Correction

Taya Ashley and Brendan Price submitted the story about Bishop Rhoades' visit to Ball State University. The attribution incorrectly listed their names.

MARIAN HIGH SCHOOL HOSTS WORKSHOP AT CENTER FOR THE HOMELESS



Santa and Mrs. Claus, Ed and Mary Quiett of St. Monica Parish, visited the Center for the Homeless in South Bend on Dec. 6 with about 75 students from Marian High School and several faculty and staff members. The 15th annual Santa's Workshop was organized by the Marian Art Club under the direction of Kitty Gunty.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MARY KAY DANCE

The Marian High School Art Club sponsored the school's 15th annual Santa's Workshop at the Center for the Homeless in South Bend on Dec. 6 with about 75 students from Marian High School and several faculty and staff members. Guests were able to make Christmas gifts for their loved ones at various craft tables. Three Marian students Bridget VerVaet, Maggie Feighery and Adriana Bermudez staffed a gift-wrapping station at the event.

'Trusting in God' theme of St. Adalbert School Mass, Las Posadas celebration

BY KAREN CLIFFORD

SOUTH BEND — Trusting in God will be highlighted at St. Adalbert School's upcoming Mass and Las Posadas celebration. The Mass will be held at the parish on Dec. 20 at 6 p.m., with the Las Posadas celebration beginning at noon in the basement of the school the following day.

St. Adalbert School secretary and translator Rosalina Aguilar provides background on the Las Posadas celebration.

"Las Posadas is a religious tradition celebrated in connection with the Advent season. 'Las Posadas' translates into 'the shelters' in English. It is nine days of praying, signifying the nine months of Mary's pregnancy," says Aguilar.

Aguilar adds that Las Posadas also reenacts the journey of Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem for Roman Emperor Augustus' census. "In the Latino tradition, families gather, sing, pray and share food and fellowship on each of the nine nights leading up to Christmas," she notes.

Las Posadas is observed at St. Adalbert School with a student reenactment of Mary and Joseph's search for a place for Mary to give birth to the Blessed Savior.

School Advisory Board member Albina Robledo explains that St. Adalbert students and families have their own special traditions of the celebration. "A reception follows Las Posadas with the traditional piñatas, tamales, bunuelos and hot ponche. One of our main traditions is to sing to baby Jesus to go to sleep. If the



children kiss the baby Jesus, then they receive a bag of goodies."

Former student Jennifer Soto, currently a freshman at Saint Joseph High School and volunteer for St.

Adalbert School, recalls that the reception "brought people together as a community."

St. Adalbert School Principal Andrew Currier describes the ethnic

Annette Roman's second-grade class from St. Adalbert School rehearses the retelling of the Nativity story for the upcoming Christmas School Mass on Dec. 20.

importance of the Las Posadas celebration. "Las Posadas strengthens the St. Adalbert community because it is a project of the parents in connection with the school and it is intended to benefit the students, who are primarily (98 percent) Latino, and pass on the time honored tradition of Las Posadas here in the United States," he explains.

Currier adds, "The integration of ethnic cultural tradition with Catholic religious tradition is a true strength of the universal Church and is a priority at St. Adalbert Catholic School

ECHO program being 'heard' in diocese

BY VINCE LABARBERA

"Being a teen in today's world isn't easy. Neither is being a parent. When you put the two together, it usually means a lot less time with friends, a harder time keeping up with school requirements and a lot more responsibility," states a brochure from Catholic Charities, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. "Most pregnant and parenting teenagers need extra support," reads a subhead in the brochure.

That "support" is being provided through a Catholic Charities program called ECHO (Education Creates Hope and Opportunity). This school- and home-based program provides guidance and resources to pregnant and parenting teens, enabling them to complete their high-school education and successfully parent their children. Catholic Charities serves a total of 14 Indiana counties; however, the ECHO program currently is only available in Allen and St. Joseph counties.

"The program has been in existence in the Fort Wayne area since May 1998," said Tosha Gearhart, family services supervisor for Catholic Charities. Along with Natalie Corazzi, ECHO program case manager, the two young ladies are prepared to administer the program in about a dozen schools in Allen County. In addition, ECHO has expanded, offering support for 18- to 24-year-old parents attending college at IPFW (Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne) or who are enrolled in any Allen County continuing education or job-training program.

"This school year we've served 67 clients in four schools in Allen County," said Gearhart. "All eight students eligible to graduate from high school did graduate," she emphasized.

Since July 2011, Kwajalein Reed, ECHO program case manager, South Bend, provides services to the South Bend School Corporation, which includes approximately 25 elementary, middle and secondary schools. She also reaches out to IUSB (Indiana



VINCE LABARBERA

Natalie Corazzi, left, and Tosha Gearhart administer the ECHO program in the Fort Wayne area.



PROVIDED BY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Kwajalein Reed is the ECHO program case manager for St. Joseph County.

University, South Bend), Ivy Tech and other area colleges and continuing education programs, estimating at one time last year she was serving about 30 clients.

Reed said she has had 12 referrals since last July, including three students at IUSB, one from Ivy Tech and one from a vocational program.

"Our focus is on schooling, earning that high-school diploma,"

résumé or explore higher education," she added. "We also provide information about adoption, which works out well since Tosha works with adoptions. Sometimes we also accompany a client on their prenatal and well-baby visits," said Corazzi, who often spends several hours in a doctor's office with a student.

The program is free; strictly voluntary and parental consent is required for students under 18 years of age. This year, in fact, ECHO services were provided to two 13-year-olds in Fort Wayne.

Originally from Huntington, Gearhart is observing one year with Catholic Charities this December. She earned a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, and received her master's degree in social work from IUPUI (Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis).

Corazzi is a native of Fort Wayne

and also has worked at Catholic Charities for a year after completing a one-year internship. She received a bachelor's degree in human services from IPFW.

Reed is from the Chicago area and has been employed at Catholic Charities in South Bend since July 2011. She completed requirements for a bachelor's degree in general studies at Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, and earned a master's degree in psychology from Capella University, Minn.

"Our jobs make us feel good and we enjoy the work we do," Gearhart, Corazzi and Reed all emphasized. For next year plans already are underway to add a full-time employee, one part-time worker and an intern to the Fort Wayne ECHO staff. In South Bend, an intern from Saint Mary's College currently works with Reed in the ECHO program.

Gearhart continued, "but we also offer someone to talk to as well as helping an individual find all the community resources available to her and her child." Because of the services new parents receive through participation in ECHO, most are able to stay in school, she related, building the foundation for a better future for themselves and their children. And some go on to pursue higher education.

Awareness of the program is through visits and distribution of ECHO brochures to hospitals, clinics, doctor's offices and schools, working with the school nurse and guidance counselors. However, Gearhart said, some schools will not ask or admit that a student is pregnant.

ECHO provides each client with a case manager who meets with her in school or home — sometimes with the father of the child actively participating as well — to work toward a GED, offering encouragement, emotional support, guidance and assistance in setting realistic goals.

"We want them to feel comfortable about their situation," Corazzi said. "We help them complete a job

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PHOTOS BY KAREN CLIFFORD

The St. Adalbert School choir, under the direction of teacher Jenni Crain, practices songs that will be sung at the Christmas School Mass and Las Posadas celebration on Dec. 20.

where the school was very much a project of the Polish Catholic community over 100 years ago. Now the school celebrates both Polish and Mexican Catholic traditions."

The Mass, on the evening of Dec. 20, will include student lectors, school choir members and gift bearers. In addition, Daniel Tostado, a staff member of Catholic Worker in South Bend, will direct students

in a Nativity play during the Mass. Tostado says, "We'll have a program that picks up where Las Posadas finishes: Jesus is born in the manger, and the shepherds and wise men come to visit, bearing gifts."

The Mass is open to the public, while the Las Posadas celebration will be for St. Adalbert students and their families only.

St. Adalbert pastor Holy Cross

Father Peter Pacini sums up the message of the Las Posadas celebration for students and their families. "Reenacting Joseph and Mary's search for lodging on the eve of Jesus' birth is a way for us today to connect with the very human experience of the Holy Family. This tradition is especially good for children, because it helps them to relate to Jesus and His parents as real people who struggled through life just as they and their families do."

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Your Faith & Girl Scouts

The new Girl Scouts **My Promise, My Faith** pin invites girls in grades K-12 to experience a faith journey through exploration of the Girl Scout Law and teachings from their faith. Adult volunteers partner with Catholic girls by guiding them through a personal faith journey and linking the national pin with the Catholic religious recognitions.

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Catholic Charities Christmas programs support seniors and families in need

BY LISA KOCHANOWSKI

SOUTH BEND — “An 11-year-old girl with a birthday just before Christmas had never celebrated with a party or gifts due to her family’s financial situation. Thanks to a generous sponsor, she was able to celebrate her birthday for the first time with a cake and gifts (a pair of roller skates and a doll). The sponsor also provided Christmas gifts for her,” recalled Claire Coleman, West Region Administrator of Catholic Charities about a memorable moment during the Christmas program.

Each year, Catholic Charities holds a Christmas program where they seek individuals, families, businesses and other organizations to share their good fortune with the less fortunate by serving as family or contributing sponsors.

Family sponsors provide toys and clothing for specific families based upon a list of suggestions provided by Catholic Charities. Contributing sponsors provide gift cards or monetary support, which is then pooled together to supply food and satisfy the other needs of families enrolled in the Christmas Program.

According to Coleman, Catholic Charities has two Christmas projects: one for families with children under age 12 and one for seniors.

“The goal of the Family Christmas Program is to provide holiday comfort and hope to fami-



LISA KOCHANOWSKI

Pictured are Saint Joseph High School students Anita Weber, left, and Madison Drajer, right, organizing presents for the children they “adopted” for the Catholic Charities Christmas Program.

lies in need, especially for young children who still believe in Santa Claus,” said Coleman.

The Family Program gives current agency clients of other programs who are especially in need, a chance to be recommended for the Christmas Program by staff, or families are able to add their own names to a waiting list.

Coleman said there are two ways that people in the community can help with the Family Christmas Program: 1) families can serve as a contributing sponsor by providing monetary assistance or by donating items, such as new toys or clothing, or 2) donors can elect to serve as a sponsor for a specific family in need. Sponsors purchase items on a list provided and bring the gifts to Catholic Charities.

Some sponsors also choose to provide gift certificates for food or personal care items. Some sponsors also make the kind gesture to include wrapping paper so the parent of the children can feel like they participated in the gift giving by wrapping the gifts even if they could not afford to make the purchases themselves.

“The goal of the senior Christmas Program is to let seniors who may be alone at the holidays and may not celebrate Christmas, know that they are in our thoughts and prayers and not forgotten,” said Coleman.

For the senior Christmas Program, clients of other Catholic Charities programs who are especially in need may be recommended

by a staff person or seniors may ask to have their name added to the waiting list.

Coleman said the senior Christmas Program provides a packet of food beyond the normal food pantry service and personal care items. They usually try to include special items like coffee as well as one or two small gifts.

Members of the community who would like to help with this program can make monetary donations or donate items to be included in the packages. Some of the items that are appreciated include gloves and hats, postage stamps, crossword puzzle books and slippers.

“A senior who had previously visited the food pantry was recommended for our Christmas Program and when he came to pick up his Christmas package, we learned that although he was living on a very limited income, he had given shelter to his granddaughter and her children,” recalled Coleman. “Fortunately, a contributing sponsor had brought in a few toys the day before and we were able to assist the family.”

Monetary donations can be mailed or dropped off at 1817 Miami St., South Bend, IN 46613. Contributing sponsors can drop off material donations in any quantity at the Miami Street location Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. or Friday 8 a.m. until noon. For more information or to sponsor a specific family in need contact Barbara Burlingham at (574) 234-3111.

Inclusion: Lives changed by gifts exchanged

BY DEB WAGNER

FORT WAYNE — The “Community of Christ” at St. Vincent de Paul School has been living the words of St. Francis of Assisi, “For it is in giving that we receive,” all year long for the last four-and-a-half years thanks to student Cash Reuille, who happens to have Down syndrome. Cash, a fifth grader this year, has been in an inclusion program at St. Vincent School since first grade. Many gifts such as love, patience, forgiveness and acceptance have been exchanged between him and peers of his age.

Missy Reuille, Cash’s mother, conveys, “My heart is filled with such joy that Cash has been given the gift of a Catholic education even though he has different abilities. Who would have thought 11 years ago when he was born, that he would be included in a great school and receive his first Reconciliation and first Holy Communion with his classmates? Cash beams with joy each time after going to Confession and receiving the Body of Christ!”

Reuille gives credit to the Holy Spirit for guiding them on this path from the very beginning in 2008 at St. Vincent’s.

She says, “Every time a rough patch occurred, God always sent a light to guide our way. I am so thankful for all the supportive par-

ents, teachers, administrators and of course, his peers, his friends.”

It is hard to explain how having a special needs child involved in a Catholic school setting and a member of the parish family can touch so many lives, and tear down walls. Reuille believes, “Disability is a perception and children seem to be so flexible and accepting in general, so they are constantly teaching the adults valuable life changing lessons.”

Fifth-grade friend Catie Hamrick recently said, “When I first saw him in first grade, I wasn’t sure about him. I didn’t understand why he looked different. I was a little afraid. I had never met anyone with Down syndrome before. The teacher read books and we talked about how God makes each of us unique. Then, I guess I thought of him as just another kid in the class. I was really happy when he asked us to go to the Buddy Walk. I didn’t know that there were so many kids with special needs like Cash! I am happy to know Cash and he is my friend.”

A good friend, Rachel Siela, says, “Teachers would sit Cash and me next to each other because they knew I enjoyed helping him. Cash has changed my life because I would never know how great it was to help others. I hope we will be in class together next year and that we will continue to be good friends for a long time. When I grow up, I think



PROVIDED BY MISSY REUILLE

Cash Reuille prepares for first Holy Communion.

I might want to work with children with disabilities because of my experience and love for Cash.”

Another classmate and friend, Erin Strzelecki and her family said, “Cash is so friendly and such a great example of how to be a nice person to everyone — no matter who you are! He is such a perfect example of how God wants us to love everyone all the time!”

Parents Frank and Heather Strzelecki echo the appreciation saying, “Having Cash around our kids is a blessing. Back when we were young, special needs kids were looked at as ‘different’ and ‘judged’

and it wasn’t until we got older that we did learn how special these kids are! How awesome it is to teach our kids at a young age that kids with special needs are just like you and me. And, how much they teach us along the way about how simple life is ... just love everyone without judging!”

Reuille sees Cash’s inclusion at the school as opening doors for many. She says, “Children, of many grades, and their families have been very supportive and accepting of Cash. The only disability in life is a bad attitude, because a bad attitude affects

and means everything when it comes to everyday life activities. So, the children and adults at St. Vincent that have opened their hearts and befriended Cash are helping tear down walls. They see that children with different abilities, like Cash, are more alike than different.”

Children with special needs who are included in regular education programs make so many more gains than if they were placed in a self-contained special education class with

all special needs peers. The gains are reciprocal for their peers without disabilities. The heart changing, unique lessons the peers without disabilities learn are as important as the lessons a child with special needs learns.

Catholic schools are serving more and more children with mild to moderate special needs.

As Mary Lynn Hamrick, Catie’s mother says, “More than 90 percent of babies with Down syndrome are aborted. Because of our faith’s pro-life message, many of the babies that survive are born into Catholic families. Children

with special needs are gifts from God. These children are among us for a reason and it is dependent upon us to find out what that is. If these children are absent from our schools, our children miss out on the unique opportunity to learn from these special kids about how to be more patient, more tolerant and more appreciative of their own God-given abilities.”

This IS where the giving and receiving begins.

“Cash has changed my life because I would never know how great it was to help others.”

RACHEL SIELA

'I believe in the forgiveness of sins'

In the logic of the Apostles' Creed, belief in the forgiveness of sins flows from belief in God. Only God can forgive sins. The Church's formula of absolution in the Sacrament of Confession actually begins with a testimony of faith in the identity and activity of the Triune Lord:

"God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins." The forgiveness of sins comes from the Risen Christ, who commissions His Apostles to preach the Gospel of conversion and to baptize — that is, to immerse — people of every nation into the Church's new life of grace (cf. Mt 28:19).

Baptism, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins because it unites us with Christ"

(No. 977), incorporating us into His Body and equipping us with the faith, hope and charity that constitute our sharing in the communion of the saints. Only in light of this shared joy of the perfected life can we understand what freedom from sin looks like.

During the pilgrimage of our life, of course, sin remains an ever-present danger to our sharing friendship in holiness. Our own sin and that of others can easily fool us into thinking that the forgiveness of sins is either unnecessary (the danger of presumption) or impossible (the danger of despair). These twin threats to our spiritual life of grace are vividly exposed at the outset and the conclusion of the biblical narrative of salvation.

In the Book of Genesis the ancient serpent first persuades our progenitors — in the presumptuous seizing of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil — that

THE APOSTLES' CREED

FATHER DANIEL SCHEIDT

human intentionality and action are without consequence vis-à-vis God. We can, so to speak, "do whatever the hell we want." In our practical atheism, Satan falsely assures us, we can possess the autonomy of gods in this life and the sentimental delusion that whatever transcendent remainder there may be for us beyond this life is not our responsibility: "The serpent tricked me!" (cf. Genesis 3).

By the end of Sacred Scripture, in the Book of Revelation, the sly

CREED, PAGE 12

God alone is the answer



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

4th Sunday in Advent Lk 1:39-45

The Book of Micah is the source of the first reading for this fourth and last Sunday of Advent.

This book's author was a contemporary of Isaiah. Little is known about him. It is known that he came from a small community about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

As in the cases of the other prophets, Micah felt the obligation to denounce the disobedience to God that he saw all around him. Also as in the cases of the other prophets, he devoutly believed that he spoke not just on his own authority, but also more importantly as the spokesman for God.

In this weekend's reading, Micah predicts that the savior of Israel will come from Bethlehem. David, the great king of Israel who established a personal covenant with God and whose kingship had as its chief purpose the guidance of the people in the ways of God, was from Bethlehem.

This new savior will "shepherd" his people, a term reminiscent of David himself, a shepherd. This savior's majesty will shine to the ends of the earth. He will be the savior of all humankind.

For the second reading this Advent weekend, the Church presents the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Hebrews is distinctive in part because of its strong reliance upon ancient Hebrew symbols. This reading certainly is in keeping with this characteristic. Highlighted is the ritual sacrifice, the heart of the ancient Jewish religion.

The other central characteristic of this writing is its developed and eloquent Christology. Its message about the Lord, the Lamb of God, the Redeemer, is profound. This characteristic also is abundantly clear in this weekend's reading.

St. Luke's Gospel supplies the Gospel reading. It is the account of the familiar story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. As the story makes clear, Mary already is expecting the birth of Jesus. He has been conceived.

This reading identifies Christ. Elizabeth and Zachary were very special people. They were becoming parents because of God's direct intervention in their lives. They were holy people. Their unborn child would be the great forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist.

That these holy people recognized Mary as the mother of the unborn Redeemer and testified that Mary's child was the savior long promised.

The reading also reveals the great longing for God, coming to humanity in the person of Jesus. Ages had come and gone. Nothing else had satisfied this longing. God alone would satisfy the longing by sending Jesus.

Reflection

Elizabeth and Zachary, mentioned in this weekend's Gospel reading, were persons of deep faith. They were mature people. They had pondered life. They understood the greatness, and certainly the reality, of God.

Yet, as in the lives of all

human beings, a vacuum was present. In their wisdom, a wisdom derived from holiness, they realized that only a knowledge of, and union with, God could fill this vacuum.

So, Elizabeth rejoiced when she saw Mary. She rejoiced because she knew Mary was bearing the unborn Redeemer, the Lord who would bring God's presence and peace to the world.

Hebrews proclaims the majesty of this Lord. Micah predicted not only the Lord's eventual coming, but Micah identified the need for God, a need sensed by Elizabeth.

In only a few days the Church will celebrate the birth of Jesus. His birth occurred at a given time in a given place. Advent points us toward the celebration of this birth. It also reminds us that we await not an anniversary, but hopefully more importantly a renewal of God's presence with us, through Jesus. In Advent, have we recognized the vacuum of living without God? In Advent, have we sought to fill the vacuum, knowing that God alone is the answer?

Jesus the Lord, the son of Mary, is the Son of God.

READINGS

Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 Heb 10:5-10 Lk 1:39-45

Monday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29 Lk 1:67-79

Tuesday: Is 9:1-6 Ps 96c:1-3, 11-13 Ti 2:11-14 Lk 2:1-14

Wednesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Ps 31:3-4, 6-8, 17-21 Mt 10:17-22

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

Friday: 1 Jn 1:5-2² Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8 Mt 2:13-18

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

The dating of Christmas

As we approach the Solemnity of the Nativity of our Lord, periodicals both secular and religious attempt the task of explaining how it became that Christmas landed on the 25th of December.

It is always amazing how theories, which have been sufficiently debunked, continue to persist in popular myth. Such is the case with the dating of Christ's birth. The popular myth is that the date was a Christian response to a pagan Roman festival honoring Mithras, the "unconquered sun god."

In his book "The Spirit of the Liturgy," Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger argues against this myth and instead demonstrates that the decisive factor involved in dating the birth of Christ was the connection to Creation, Cross and Christ's conception.

The whole story begins not with Dec. 25, but rather with March 25. The African ecclesiastical author Tertullian (c. 150-c. 207) discussed a well-known tradition that Christ suffered death on March 25, a day that was also associated with the creation of the world. March 25 was taken as the spring equinox (which we now know to be off by a few days), and hence the date after which light definitively conquers darkness. For the same reason, March 25 was also taken as the day of the New Creation (the Incarnation or Annunciation) as well as Christ's Passion. In each of these events, there is an element of light overcoming darkness.

Therefore, the key date is March 25. It is from this historical development, and not that of the Mithras myth, that Christ's birth is dated Dec. 25. The dating of the Annunciation comes first. Christmas is subsequently placed nine months after March 25.

St. Thomas Aquinas, quoting a fifth century source, reiterates the dates of both March 25 and Dec. 25, as well as their cosmic significance. Aquinas points to Scripture's placing of the Annunciation in the sixth month of John the Baptist's conception. He understands the "sixth month" to be March, with the day being the 25th. Like Tertullian, he then places Christmas nine months later, on the 25th day of December. The former occurs on the vernal equinox, the latter on the winter solstice. On the vernal equinox, the light

GUEST COMMENTARY

JAKE TAWNEY

overtakes the darkness, a cosmic event that reflects the Incarnation. On the winter solstice, we encounter the height of darkness and the moment when light turns from a period of decrease to a period of increase. This too is fully appropriate for the birth of the one who lightens the world and all of humanity.

St. Jerome also comes out in support of these ideas: "Even creation approves of our preaching. The universe itself bears witness to the truth of our words. Up to this day (Dec. 25, the approximate date of the winter solstice) the dark days increase, but from this day the darkness decreases. . . . The light advances, while the night retreats."

Finally, Ratzinger discusses another important cosmic event: the summer solstice. "Between the two dates of March 25 and Dec. 25 comes the feast of the forerunner, St. John the Baptist, on June 24, at the time of the summer solstice. The link between the dates can now be seen as a liturgical and cosmic expression of the Baptist's words: 'He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease' (Jn 3:30). The birthday of St. John the Baptist takes place on the date when the days begin to shorten, just as the birthday of Christ takes place when they begin to lengthen."

Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, has long been trying to recover the cosmic significance of the Sacred Liturgy. The dating of Christmas is one of many profound insights in his magnificent work, "The Spirit of the Liturgy." Certainly the text would provide a valuable Christmas reflection.

Jake Tawney is a husband and father of six. He and his family are members of St. Mary in Delaware, Ohio. In his spare time, he writes for the website *Roma Locuta Est*.

Saint of the Week

Lazarus

first century
December 17, July 29



The Gospels describe Lazarus of Bethany, and his sisters Mary and Martha, as friends and disciples of Jesus. Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus, and he was at a banquet for Jesus just days before the Crucifixion. But Lazarus also figured in legends. In one, he, Martha, Mary Magdalen and others were set adrift in a boat that took them to Gaul, where he became a bishop and martyr. In another, he was cast off in a leaky boat that miraculously made it to Cyprus. In a third, he traveled to Syria. The 2005 Roman Martyrology gave him a shared July 29 memorial with Martha, but Cubans still celebrate their major festival of San Lazaro on Dec. 17.

Taboos and tattoos

On TV these days, we're seeing more and more programs about "body art" and tattoo design. Despite the apparent widespread acceptance of the practice, there are several problems with tattooing that go beyond the sanitary issues, disease transmission and unclean inking needles that can be found in second-rate tattoo parlors.

Tattoos, as some who have gotten them have recognized, have negative associations. An article in the *Dallas Morning News* a few years ago chronicled the story of a young man named Jesus Mendoza, who was "going to great lengths to remove the six tattoos that hint

at his erstwhile gang involvement. ... He feels branded. 'It's the stereotyping,' he said. 'The question is: What do you think when you see a young Hispanic male with tattoos? You're going to think gangs. And I think that, too, now.'"

Similar branding concerns were raised in a recent column by David Whitley

about San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, whose arms and back are full of tattoos. "NFL quarterback is the ultimate position of influence and responsibility," he wrote. "He is the CEO of a high-profile organization, and you don't want your CEO to look like he just got paroled."

That branding communicates a message that can make life more difficult for those who have tattoos. It should come as no surprise that employers often associate tattooed workers with "reduced productivity" and may show a preference for untattooed employees in hiring or promotions.

Even for the vast majority of tattoo recipients who have no connection with gangs or an indolent lifestyle, a psychological issue is raised by the way they seem to serve

as marks of vanity. Placing tattoos in positions where they can hardly be missed — on the neck, the forearms, or even the face — can play into a disordered desire to be flamboyant, disruptive and self-seeking with our bodily image. One young woman, tattooed with the image of a fairy having "stylized butterfly wings, in a spray of pussy willow" expressed her sentiments this way: "I am a shameless exhibitionist and truly love having unique marks on my body."

These questions about vanity lead to similar concerns about modesty. Modesty in its essential meaning involves the decision to not draw undue attention to ourselves.

Tattoos and body piercings most definitely draw attention, and often may be desired for precisely these immodest reasons. We ought to dress modestly, in part, to prevent others from being attracted to us out of a mere "focus on body parts." One aspect of dressing modestly is to make sure everything needing to

be covered is, in fact, adequately covered. Placing tattoos in unusual positions on the body may tempt us to dress immodestly so as to assure that the tattoo is visible and exposed for general viewing, in the same way that elective breast augmentation may tempt some women to lower their necklines.

Tattoos, chosen as a permanent change to one's own body, may also suggest issues with psychological self-acceptance. One young woman wanting to get a tattoo expressed her desire to look "edgier," after concluding that she was just too "squeaky-clean" looking.

The simple beauty of the human body constitutes a real good and that basic goodness ought to be reasonably safeguarded. Permanent, radical changes to the human body can indeed signal an unwillingness

remaining horizon is despair.

To believe in the forgiveness of sins is to confess with the sanction of our divine Advocate, the Holy Spirit, that "now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the Accuser of our brethren is cast out, who night and day accuses them before our God" (Rev. 12:10).

The gates of hell will never prevail against the Church, because the efficacious prayer of Jesus on the Cross ("Father, forgive them ..." [Lk 23:34]) is made present in the sacramental life of the Church until the end of time. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the keys of the Kingdom given to St. Peter are fitted to open the sinner's locked heart. In the Sacrament of the Anointing of



MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

FATHER TAD PACHOLCZYK

to accept its fundamental goodness, and in certain cases of very radical tattooing and body piercing, one can even discern a subtle form of self-rejection and self-mutilation.

There is a spiritual dimension involved as well. Russell Grigaitis, who now regrets getting several tattoos in his 20's, argues in a *National Catholic Register* interview, "God created the body. A tattoo is like putting graffiti on a work of art." He compares it with trying to improve a painting by Michelangelo.

Some argue that there can be good spiritual reasons for getting tattoos. For example, people have gotten crosses or an image of Jesus tattooed as a sign of permanent commitment to Christ, or a ring or a spouse's name tattooed as a sign of their marital commitment. Yet isn't a personal commitment to Christ or to one's spouse more effectively manifested through the realities of inner virtue and a life of outward generosity than by a tattoo?

It's unsurprising that many who got tattoos in their younger days have grown to regret it later. Pop musician Robbie Williams remarked: "I wish it was like an Etch-a-Sketch where I can wipe them all out: it would be nice to have a pure, clean body again." The American Academy of Dermatology reported in 2007 that "tattoo regret" is now quite common in the United States. Tattoo removal is a costly and difficult procedure, and can leave translucent areas on the skin that never go away. The most effective remedy, of course, is to not seek tattoos in the first place.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia.

the Sick, the Divine Physician heals sin's wounds, even to ministering the medicine of immortality. And in the Sacrifice of the Mass, we behold and receive the Eucharistic "Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world" (cf. Jn 1:36).

Through the Church's sacramental life, God gives us the virtue of hope as the antidote to both presumption and despair. Thus in hope's boundless confidence in the power of God's goodness, we can believe with the infallibility of the love of Christ in the forgiveness of sins.

Father Daniel Scheidt is the pastor of Queen of Peace Parish in Mishawaka.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for December 23, 2012

Luke 1:39-45

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle C: the first meeting of Jesus with his family. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

MARY	HILL COUNTRY	HOUSE
ZECHARIAH	GREETING	LEAPED
SPIRIT	ARE YOU	AMONG
WOMEN	FRUIT	YOUR WOMB
MOTHER	OF MY LORD	SHOULD COME
TO ME	EARS	JOY
BELIEVED	SPOKEN	LORD

MY LORD

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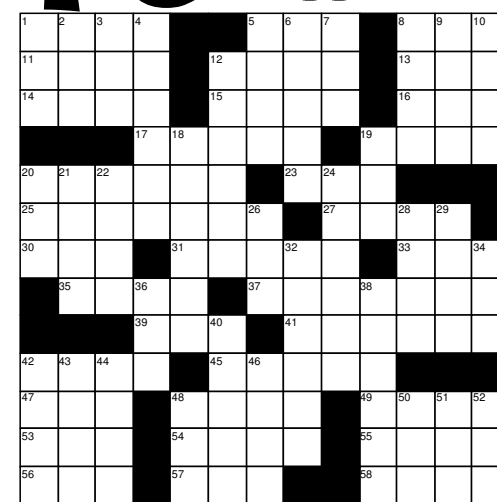
C H O M A S P O K E N Y
E D R O L H U O Y E R A
Y W A T W O E L L T G S
O O J H K U S A N M R P
J M U E L L U U B A E I
A E D R T D O R E R E R
M N J O W C H O L Y T I
O F M Y L O R D I N I T
N E L L A M M O E D N I
G P I M M E D B V F G U
N H A I R A H C E Z H R
G N U L E A P E D H O F

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The CrossWord

Dec. 23 and 30, 2012



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Based on these Scripture Readings: Mi 5:1-4a; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45 and 1 Sam 1:20-22, 24-28; 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

ACROSS

- 1 Less than usual in size, power or character
- 5 Compass point
- 8 Alphabet
- 11 Asian country
- 12 Bears false witness
- 13 Day Jesus died.
- 14 Ground
- 15 ___ Begotten Son
- 16 Lab animal
- 17 Sleep disorder
- 19 "A ___ you prepared for me"
- 20 Christmas beverage
- 23 Two

- 25 Opposite of vices
- 27 Christmas carol
- 30 Epoch
- 31 Horse does fast
- 33 Constrictor snake
- 35 David played
- 37 Will shepherd flock
- 39 Advertisements
- 41 Done when Samuel was old enough
- 42 Jesus' mother
- 45 ___ of Judah
- 47 Frost
- 48 Mary and Joseph searched with
- 49 Mary went to ___ country

- 53 Priest at Shiloh
- 54 Institution (abbr.)
- 55 Give off
- 56 Religious sister
- 57 Understand
- 58 Hurried

DOWN

- 1 Period
- 2 Flightless bird
- 3 Damage
- 4 Baby in the womb
- 5 Nazirite never drank
- 6 Slaw
- 7 Humorous
- 8 Big hairdo
- 9 Nail
- 10 Vatican ___
- 12 Having more length
- 18 Brooded
- 19 Hiss
- 20 Adam's wife
- 21 Boy's friend
- 22 Color
- 24 God is invisible
- 26 Drunk
- 28 Black
- 29 Folk story
- 32 Foil
- 34 Put together
- 36 Halo light
- 38 Scourges
- 40 Nativity ___
- 42 Regal appearance
- 43 Organization concerned with civil liberties (abbr.)
- 44 Tack
- 46 Rise on the ___ day
- 48 Jesus' cursed tree
- 50 Small demon
- 51 Tell a tall tale
- 52 Limited

Answer Key can be found on page 14

CREED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

serpent has grown into a vicious dragon; the Tempter of Genesis has become the Accuser of the Apocalypse (cf. Revelation 12). The diabolic logic that once tried to persuade us that evil is good and the good is ambiguous now argues that the good is impossible and that we are irrevocably identified with and reduced to our sins and failures. Moreover, we are forever tormented by the insatiable thirst for vengeance for the evil — real or imagined — that others have done to us. In sum, our exile from perfection and happiness is permanent, and our only

Sports

USF BASKETBALL TEAMS RISE IN NAIA RANKINGS The University of Saint Francis men's and women's basketball teams continue to climb in the NAIA rankings. The University of Saint Francis women's basketball team moved up one spot to No. 8 in this week's NAIA DII Coaches' Top 25 and is one of three 10-0 teams. This is the highest USF has been ranked since the 2011-12 Preseason Top 25 when the Lady Cougars started at No. 7. The USF men's team rises six spots to 16th from 22nd after 3-0 week — USF's highest rank since tied for 13th in 2011-12 Preseason Top 25 poll.

St. Vincent CYO boys off to outstanding start

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — The seventh grade boys from St. Vincent are off to an outstanding start this season with a 8-2 record to date. Coach Dale Curry reports that his team is averaging an impressive 45 points per game and 26.7 rebounds.

Their most recent victory came on Saturday, Dec. 15, against Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) conference foe St. Joseph, Decatur. They have also posted wins over Canterbury, Woodside, Antwerp, Queen of Angels, Imagine, St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, and Angola.

John Henry Reith leads the scoring for the Panthers averaging just over 9 points a game while Tommy Steele is tops in steals for the squad.

Looking ahead, Curry details, "It is still early in the season and

our team is playing with some inconsistency so we have plenty to work on. We are fortunate to have 12 talented players, and everyone is working hard to improve."

The eighth-grade boys from Queen of Angels had a tough conference loss to St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel over the weekend, but turned around and had a big 51-29 win in the final game of pool play over Emmanuel St. Michael Lutheran on Sunday at the St. John the Baptist, New Haven, holiday tournament.

Jacob Jacquay had a trey in each quarter of the game for 12 points to lead the scoring for the Royals.

Coaches Chris and Lisa Kinney have been with the group since fifth grade and have a goal for 2012-2013 to post their first winning season. With 11 boys on the roster, the team features two players over six feet and a strong inside game.

Final weekend of ICCL action does not disappoint

BY MATT SOBIERALSKI

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY — The final weekend of the ICCL regular season is officially in the books for 2012 after this past weekend's games. It did not disappoint as teams began to separate themselves from the rest. Action was played at Marian High School and Saint Joseph High School.

One of the closer games of the

day was played at Marian High School's gym and it saw the Cougars of Corpus Christi hold on, 40-37, in a grind-it-out game against the Queen of Peace Puma's. The winners were led by Alex Francouer and Marty Kennedy who each scored 10 points. The Puma's Michael Dennison led all scorers in the contest with 14 points, while Luke Kasnia also chipped in 10 points in the effort. The Cougars improved to 2-2.

Another close game at Marian's

gym saw the St. Thomas Spartans hold off the orange-and-black clad St. Matthew Blazers' squad, 40-32. Gunnar Sadawey led all scorers in the contest with an outstanding 21-points point effort. St. Thomas improved its record to 2-0, while the Blazers dropped their first game of the season.

The Holy Cross Crusaders improved their record to 2-1 after a victory over the Falcons from

ICCL, PAGE 14

Tuffy's Trivia Night



Where? **Bishop Dwenger High School**

When? Saturday, January 19

Doors open at 6:30 pm, game begins at 7:00 pm

Who? You and your friends - put a team of 10 together or we can put you on a team!

How? Just \$10.00 a person - checks payable to BDHS

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- Must be 21 years or older to participate

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Redeemer Radio, a non-profit, Catholic Radio Group is seeking a full-time Community Relations/Program Director (CRD) for its listener supported stations.

The chosen candidate will work closely with the Executive Director, staff, volunteers and various committees to reach goals for the apostolate's involvement with parishes, the Diocese, and the greater Catholic Community. The CRD will possess exceptional organizational skills and have great attention to detail. The CRD will also function as a "producer" scheduling much of the local program recordings on-air program management.

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- Practicing Catholic in full communion with the Church
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- Demonstrated volunteer experience in parish and Catholic environment with a good network of readily established contacts
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Attn: Executive Director
4618 East State Blvd. Ste 200
Fort Wayne, IN 46815

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As a religious broadcaster, Fort Wayne Catholic Radio Group has established a religious qualification for all employee positions at WLYV. In accordance with all FCC rules and EEO Program compliance measures, WLYV makes reasonable, good faith efforts to recruit and hire applicants without regard to race, color, national origin or gender, among those who are qualified for employment based on their religious belief or affiliation.

Holy Cross and St. Stanislaus Parish

Holiday Schedule

Christmas Eve - December 24

4:00 pm - Holy Cross Church (Family Mass)

4:30 pm - St. Stanislaus Church

Midnight Mass 12:00 am - Holy Cross Church

(Prelude music to precede Midnight Mass)

Christmas Day - December 25

8:30 am - St. Stanislaus 10:30 am - Holy Cross

Mary, Mother of God - January 1, 2013

Vigil: 5:30 pm, December 31

St. Stanislaus

9:00 am Holy Cross



St. Monica Parish

222 West Mishawaka Avenue - Mishawaka
Christmas Mass Schedule

Monday, December 24

4:30 pm and 10:00 pm

(Choir will be caroling beginning at 9:30 pm)

Tuesday, December 25

10:00 am



Solemnity of Mary

Monday, December 31- 4:30 pm

Tuesday, January 1 - 10:00 am

Celebrate Christmas at your parish

BUTKUS MAKES BIG HIT AT LUERS



PHOTO BY JOE ROMIE

Rose Bowl champion and Chicago Bears legendary line-backer Dick Butkus brought excitement and a unique sports award to Bishop Luers High School on Saturday, Dec. 15. From 300,000 high school athletes, Luers senior Jaylon Smith was selected to receive the 2012 Butkus Award, which encourages teens to train hard, eat well and play with attitude, instead of resorting to performance-enhancing drugs. Bishop John M. D'Arcy, bishop emeritus, Luers Principal Mary Keefer, Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry, Coach Steve Keefer and many Luers and Chicago Bears fans were among those present for the presentation. In the photo, from left, are Dick Butkus, Jaylon Smith and Matt Butkus, the son of Dick Butkus. — *Mark Weber*

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ICCL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

St. Jude, 36-22. Elliott Zyniewicz led the Crusaders' charge with 12-points.

At Saint Joseph High School, close games would stay the theme of the day as the Saints from Mishawaka Catholic would improve to 2-1 after they knocked off the St. Joseph, South Bend, Eagles, 39-35. Alex Horvath led the Saints with 18-points, while the Eagles were led by Andrew Burgess' 17-points and Sorin Horvath's 10 points.


The maroon-and-gold clad Panthers of St. Anthony held off a feisty Our Lady of Hungary Bulldogs squad, 43-38. Davante Newbill threw in 15-points for the Bulldogs, while the winners were led by Tyler Bickel's 16-points.

The St. Pius X Lions roared past the mighty Kings from Christ the King, 58-30. The Kings balanced scoring attack was not enough to knock off the Lions. The Lions were led by Tony Carmola's 18-points, while Walter Ellis chipped in 11 points.

For more information on holiday tournament brackets and schedules visit www.ICCLsports.org.

The CrossWord
December 23 and 30, 2012

D	E	M	I	W	S	A	B	C			
O	M	A	N	L	I	A	R	F	R	I	
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E	G	N	O	G	D	U	O				
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E	L	I	I	N	S	T	E	M	I	T	
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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WHAT'S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send in your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. Mail to: Today's Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne 46856; or email: fhogan@diocesefwsb.org. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at (260) 456-2824 to purchase space.

Trivia night
South Bend — A trivia night will be held Saturday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m. at St. Therese, Little Flower Parish. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and cost is \$80 per team of eight. Prize for best movie theme table. Cash bar will be available. Call Tammy at (269) 684-3334 or ttg2@sbcglobal.net for information or to reserve a table.

Little Flower Holy Hour
Fort Wayne — Father David Voors will celebrate the Little Flower Holy Hour at St. Mother

Theodore Guérin Chapel on Tuesday, Jan. 8, at 7 p.m. to pray for priests and vocations.

Knights plan fish fry
Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus Council 451, 601 Reed Rd., will have a fish fry on Friday, Jan. 4, from 5-7 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for children 12 and under.

Square Dances
New Haven — St. Louis Besancon, 15535 Lincoln Hwy E., will have square dances Saturday, Jan. 12,

Feb. 9 and March 9 in the hall. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., music by Breakaway until 11 p.m. Tickets are \$10 per person and include one drink and snacks. Proceeds benefit St. Louis Academy.

Overnight retreat for young adults
South Bend — Young adults in their 20s and 30s, single and married are invited to a retreat Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 12-13, at the Sacred Heart Parish Center. The theme is "You are my Beloved." Activities include talks given by young adults, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Reconciliation, praise and worship music, coffee house social with live music and Mass on both days. Register online by Jan. 7. Visit www.diocesefwsb.org.

REST IN PEACE

Bristol
Paula S. Seegers, 72, St. Mary of the Annunciation

Decatur
Georgianna C. Converset-Bowers, 95, St. Mary of the Assumption

Elkhart
Chester L. Skwarcan, 86, St. Vincent de Paul

Fort Wayne
Donald R. Huth, 72, St. Charles Borromeo

Linda Sue Bailey, 62, Most Precious Blood

Robert G. Kimes, 88, St. Patrick

Huntington
Suzanne J. Schenkel, 85, Ss. Peter and Paul

Mishawaka
Helen Esarey, 80, St. Bavo

Harold Lloyd Meeks, 84, Queen of Peace

Roman S. Sims, 79, St. Monica

Ruth Irene Kopetski, 94, St. Bavo

Monroeville
Harold R. Blauvelt, 88, St. Rose

Notre Dame
Father Matthew M. Miceli, CSC, 89, Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Joseph Leo Harlow, 90, Basilica of the Sacred Heart

Roanoke
Veronica Ocken Hoover, 45, St. Joseph

South Bend
Bernice M. Edwards, 87, St. Patrick

Alma Simonetti Keith, 85, Christ the King

Delores R. Neary, 80, Christ the King

Beulah I. Patnaude, 87, Holy Family

BE STILL ... The Contemplative in the Active World.
Notre Dame — The Institute for Church Life will offer four evenings of reflection at the Sacred Heart Parish Center Jan. 8, 17, 23 and 30 at 6 p.m. Presenters will be Holy Cross Sister Judith

Anne Beatty, Holy Cross Father Nicolas Ayo, Jesuit Father Brian Dunkle and Professor Keith Egan, PhD. Registration required. For more information contact Patricia Bellm (574) 631-1379, pbellm@nd.edu or visit icl.nd.edu/events.

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Tuesday, February 12, 2013

USF Performing Arts Center
431 W. Berry Street, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Hear Dr. Michael Naughton,

director of the John A. Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn. discuss the spiritual aspect of Christian business leadership.

SCHEDULE

Blessing and opening prayer, 7 a.m.
Mardi Gras breakfast buffet, 7:10 a.m.
Speaker, Q&A, 7:45-8:45 a.m.

Tickets \$10 in advance at servusomnium.eventbrite.com or \$15 at the door.
Tables of eight reserved for \$80.

Parking across Berry Street.

For information, contact Dr. Lance Richey, lrichey@sf.edu or 260-399-8112.



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Two Christmas Stories 112 Years Apart

Dr. Anthony F. Laviano



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



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

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

*Et Verbum Caro Factum
Est,
et habitavit in nobis.*

*Deo gratias!
Merry Christmas
and a
Joyous New Year*

*Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft; eisam wacht
Nur das traute heilige Paar.
Holder Knab im lockigten Haar,
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!*



Venerable Solanus Casey, OFM, Cap
Christmas at the Manger

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



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

**A Ferverino for the Beatification of Solanus Casey
Mary, our mother, we ask you to intercede for us before your son,
as you did at the wedding at Cana, that the beatification
of the Venerable Solanus Casey may be brought about.
We pray that through your intercession the Holy Spirit will bring
his beatification about at this time so that we may be strengthened
in our faith and filled with gratitude to God. Hail Mary...Glory be...**

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Dr. Anthony F. Laviano, Chairman and Founder, NANOWorld®

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