



Catholic Charities
announces new initiatives

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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TODAYSCATHOLICNEWS.org

Bishop opens Jubilee Year of Mercy

BY TIM JOHNSON

FORT WAYNE — Celebrating Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades opened the Jubilee Year of Mercy, a year that will stretch through Nov. 20, 2016.

Pope Francis proclaimed a special year “inviting us to contemplate the mystery of divine mercy,” Bishop Rhoades said in his homily at the Dec. 7 Mass. To open the year, preceding the official opening, the diocese presented a play, “Faustina, Messenger of Divine Mercy,” that spoke of St. Faustina and the Divine Mercy message at three locations across the diocese.

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades quoted Pope Francis and asked the faithful to keep the pope’s words in mind throughout the jubilee year: “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in Him.”

Bishop Rhoades said, “Jesus is the face of the Father’s mercy. Mercy has become living and visible in Him! If we wish to see God, to know God, we must look to the Son, to Jesus, who reveals to us the face of the Father, the Father who is rich in mercy.”



Kay Cozad

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades opens the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at the 5 p.m. Mass on Dec. 7, the eve of the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

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‘Go deeper’ encourages St. Vincent de Paul Society president

BY IRENE COPENHAVER

SOUTH BEND — St. Vincent De Paul Society national president Sheila Gilbert spoke at the annual meeting of the St. Joseph County St. Vincent de Paul Society and urged members to “go deeper” spiritually and personally at the event held at St. Anthony de Padua on Dec. 1.

“God is calling, in this Year of Mercy, the society to grow in holiness by deepening our relationship with the people we serve,” Gilbert said. “No work of charity is foreign to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.”

She added, “The Holy Spirit is calling the society to deepen itself spiritually.”

“I believe that God is calling us to engage more personally with the people that we serve: to walk with them as they are journeying in poverty and as

they are walking out of poverty. We are called to walk that walk with them,” Gilbert said.

The St. Vincent Society offers food, clothing, furniture, and financial assistance to families in need. They also offer tutoring and summer camp for children.

Gilbert expressed the desire for the society to go from being a “Band-Aid” organization — one that provides immediate help and then moves on — to being an organization that walks with a family until that family is stable.

“We are being called to bring Christ’s love to a family, not just once, but as long as that family needs us,” she stated.

“Most of us are serving more families than we think we can handle. How are we going to

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Living the
Year of Mercy
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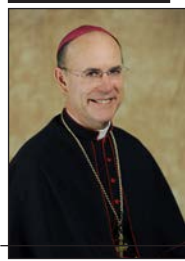
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Justice and mercy



IN TRUTH AND CHARITY

BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

In the Gospel this coming Sunday, the Church presents to us the great Advent figure of Saint John the Baptist, the Precursor of the Lord. His message of conversion and repentance prepared the people for the coming of Jesus the Messiah. John's preaching is a call to us still today, a powerful call to prepare our hearts for the Lord who comes.

In the Gospel this Sunday, the crowds seem to have been moved to repentance by John the Baptist's preaching. They responded by asking him the question: What should we do? They wanted to know what they should do to demonstrate their repentance and to be prepared to welcome the Messiah. Three times the same question was asked, by the crowds in general, by the tax collectors, and by the soldiers: What should we do?

In answering the tax collectors, John said to them: Stop collecting more than what is prescribed. In answering the soldiers, John said to them: Do not practice extortion; do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages. Basically, John is telling them to act with justice.

The tax collectors would often collect more than was due in taxes and then keep the difference for themselves. John is telling them to cease doing so and to behave honestly. He is telling them to be just. Similarly, John tells the soldiers to act with justice. Soldiers would often extort money by force and by making false charges. They would use strong arm tactics or blackmail to supplement their income. John is telling them to stop.

Both the tax collectors and the soldiers were instructed by John to show the sincerity of their repentance by being honest and acting justly. This is also an important admonition for us. We are called to act with justice in our lives.

What is justice? According to the classic formulation, it "consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor" (CCC 1807). The tax collectors and soldiers had been unjust in cheating and infringing upon the rights of other people. They were not giving them what was their due. They were unjust to their neighbors. Repentant, they asked John the Baptist what they were to do. John told them they needed to change their lives, to turn away from their corruption and to act with justice toward their neighbors.

We hear a lot about justice these days. It is an important value for society, just as it is an important moral virtue for us to practice as individuals. The Catholic Church has a rich tradition of teachings on social justice founded on respect for the human person and the rights that flow from human dignity and guarantee it. "Society ensures social justice by providing the conditions that allow associations and individuals to obtain their due" (CCC 1943). Social justice is linked to the common good.

Justice alone, however, is not sufficient.



Attributed to Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

'St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness'

Saint John Paul II wrote: "By itself, justice is not enough. Indeed, it can even betray itself, unless it is open to that deeper power which is love." One can say that justice "must find its fulfillment in love." The essence of the Gospel and of Christianity is not mere justice: it is merciful love, God's merciful love revealed in Jesus Christ.

In the Gospel of this Sunday, there is a third group that asks John the Baptist what should we do? This group is simply identified as "the crowds." I think John's answer gets to the deeper call, the call to mercy and love. He says: Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise. One could argue that this is actually "being just" to the poor, but it is something more than just giving the person his/her due. It is showing mercy to the other. It is an act of solidarity with one's neighbor. In the social doctrine of the Church, solidarity is placed alongside the value of justice. It is the way of love. Love presupposes and transcends justice, which "must find its fulfillment in charity" (Saint John Paul II).

We are celebrating the Jubilee Year of Mercy, not the Jubilee Year of Justice. By saying this, I don't mean to devalue the importance of justice or set justice in opposition to mercy. As Pope Francis says: "God goes beyond justice with His mercy and forgiveness. Yet this does not mean that justice should be devalued or rendered superfluous... God does not deny justice. He rather envelops it and surpasses it with an even greater event in which we experience love as the foundation of true justice." That event is the death and resurrection of Jesus.

As we approach Christmas in these first weeks of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, like the crowds that followed John the Baptist, we are called to repentance and conversion, made visible by acting with justice, but not with justice alone (which can be distorted), but by the deeper power of love and mercy. We are called to live in solidarity with others, committed to the good of others, especially the poor, the marginalized, and the suffering. Christmas reminds us of this call. God sent us His Son to reveal His love to us. With the fullness of mercy,

the Father gave us His Son as our Savior. We are called to respond to this incredible mercy and love by being "Merciful like the Father."

In these last weeks of Advent, let us continue to contemplate the mystery of mercy supremely revealed in the Son of God who "for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven." And let's not forget to do a work of mercy as a Christmas gift for someone in need, for Jesus Himself "in the distressing disguise of the poor" (Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta).

Holy Doors to open for the Jubilee Year of Mercy

FORT WAYNE —The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend announced that, in accordance with Pope Francis, three symbolic Holy Doors will be opened on Sunday, Dec. 13, the Third Sunday of Advent. The opening of the doors will mark the beginning of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

- Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate Mass at 5 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.
- Msgr. Michael Heintz, rector, will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m. at St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend.
- Holy Cross Father Peter Rocca, basilica rector, will celebrate Mass at the Sacred Heart Basilica at Notre Dame during the 10 a.m. Mass. All are welcome to attend.

Mass, breakfast with Fort Wayne St. Vincent de Paul Society held

BY VINCE LABARBERA

FORT WAYNE — “Like Jesus in today’s Gospel, St. Vincent de Paul, Blessed Frederick Ozanam, and members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society have been moved with pity, filled with compassion, at the sight of ‘the troubled and abandoned,’” said Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades in his homily at a Mass with the Fort Wayne District St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) Society.

The annual Mass and breakfast near the feast of the Immaculate Conception was held Dec. 5 at St. Mary, Mother of God Catholic Church. Father Tim Wrozek, pastor of St. Joseph Church and spiritual director of the SVdP Society, Fort Wayne, concelebrated the Mass.

“Jesus went about healing the sick and bringing hope to those whom the Gospel says ‘were like sheep without a shepherd,’” Bishop Rhoades continued. “Our Lord not only personally reached out to the poor and the suffering, He also sent the Twelve Apostles to do the same. He sent them to announce the kingdom, not only with words, but with their actions. He told them: ‘Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons.’ The Church has also received this mandate from Jesus, a mandate that you as Vincentians seek to obey as you serve the poor, the suffering, the marginalized and the forgotten.”

Bishop Rhoades mentioned the words of the Gospel that Jesus’ heart was “moved with pity” for the crowd. “This is an important detail for our reflection,” the bishop said. “Some biblical translations say that His heart was ‘moved with compassion.’ The Greek word in the original text is ‘splanchnizomai.’ It comes from ‘splanxna,’ which means the inward parts of the body, the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. In other words, Jesus was moved deep within at the sight of the troubled and abandoned, the poor and the suffering. He wasn’t just moved with a little pity, but deep in His soul. He had pity and compassion, mercy and love for them. ... We, who are disciples of Jesus, need to cultivate this compassion of Jesus in our hearts,” Bishop Rhoades said. “This was the compassion felt by St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, by Blessed Frederic Ozanam and Blessed Rosalie Rendu, and by all the Vincentian saints. Moved with this compassion, they acted, they went out to help the poor, to serve the people who were suffering. You know the great works of mercy of these saints,” he said.

In his homily Bishop Rhoades emphasized, “We are on the threshold of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. This is a special time for



Photos by Vince LaBarbera

Prior to giving the Vincentians a final blessing, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades recognized Cheryl Mowan, right, for her outstanding work as district president for the past two years. Father Tim Wrozek applauds.



Current and retired Care Van drivers stand next to the new SVdP Society vehicle. Each volunteer takes a one-week turn every two to three months driving needy patients to and from medical appointments. They are, from left, Paul Braun, Ed Jarboe, Darrel Dodane, Mike Mowan, Dave Loeffler, Randy Lauer and Mel Vachon. Not available were Dana Achor, Bill Ellison, John Nowlan and Richard Beeler (both retired), Paul Moreau and Jim Andrews (coordinator). Two charter Care Van drivers, who reportedly helped start the program more than 25 years ago, died in 2015. They are Terry (Coach) Coonan and Marlo Gump.

the whole Church and a year that touches upon your life as Vincentians. Pope Francis wrote: ‘How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God!’ The Holy Father is reminding us that ‘mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life.’ Notice that mercy includes the compassion, the pity that we heard in (the) Gospel. The Holy Father says that ‘the Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love.’ He calls mercy ‘the beating heart of the Gospel.’”

Bishop Rhoades said the motto of the Jubilee Year is “Merciful like the Father.” He said, “Jesus shows us the mercy of the Father, as we see in (the) Gospel. This year we are to

reflect on this incredible mercy of Jesus and the Father, and then, moved by the Holy Spirit, go forth to be merciful. The pope says: ‘Day after day, touched by God’s compassion, we also can become compassionate toward others.’ Pope Francis is particularly asking us to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, to rediscover them. He says that this will be a way ‘to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy.’”

“I invite and encourage you as Vincentians to enter deeply into the Jubilee Year of Mercy,”

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Public Schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

- Sunday, Dec. 13, 10 a.m. — Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Fort Wayne
- Sunday, Dec. 13, 5 p.m. — Mass with Opening of Holy Door of Mercy, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne
- Wednesday, Dec. 16, 6 p.m. — Mass for Legatus Chapters of Fort Wayne and South Bend, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Warsaw
- Thursday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m. — Advent Penance Service, St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, New Carlisle
- Friday, Dec. 18, 11 a.m. — Mass for South Bend Diocesan Employees, Saint Francis Convent, Mishawaka
- Sunday, Dec. 20, 10:30 a.m. — Television Mass, Chapel of University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne

SVDP

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stretch ourselves even further to do this?” she asked.

The society must grow to serve those in need more fully Gilbert said. She would like to see the group double in size. “You double in size, you double what you produce.”

To that end, the society will launch the national “Invitation to Serve” campaign in January in local parishes.

The goal of the campaign is to discover volunteers at the parish level to serve at one of the thrift stores, host a food drive, work at the society’s center or even contribute monetarily.

“Is God asking you to come out of your comfort zone? Can you help people transform their lives? Can you bring hope that lasts beyond the food?” Gilbert asked.

“God is challenging us to go deeper, to, maybe, not work harder, but differently. Change in itself is a way to grow in holiness because we have to overcome our fears,” Gilbert said in her closing.

Anne Watson, executive director of St. Joseph County St.

Vincent DePaul Society reported that 65,071 people were helped in St. Joseph and Elkhart counties last year. Volunteers offered close to a million and a half hours of their time.

Watson told those in attendance that “the people that we serve are in such desperate need of your smile, your hopes and your prayers.” She encouraged them to share “what we do and what opportunities there are to serve those who are struggling and in most desperate need in our community.”

“Our goal is to have a robust slate of programs to help people not need us anymore,” said Watson referring to families that take advantage of the services and grow to be self-sufficient.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrated Mass for the Vincentians preceding the meeting. In his homily, he said, “throughout the Gospels, we see ... Jesus’ care for the poor and the needy through teaching and healing and caring for those in need.”

“Pope Francis is calling all of us during this Jubilee Year to rediscover the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. As Catholics are encouraged to do this, I hope and pray that many, including young adults, will join the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a society dedicated to the works of mercy,” said the bishop.



Kevin Haggenjos

St. Vincent de Paul Society members gathered Dec. 1 for a Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and then attended a dinner where they were challenged and encouraged to “go deeper” by the society’s national president, Sheila Gilbert. The event was held at St. Anthony de Padua in South Bend. In the photo, Bishop Rhoades greets Vincentians after the Mass.

Hesburgh Lecture Series focuses on 'Fighting for those in Need'

BY VINCE LABARBERA

FORT WAYNE — The Notre Dame Club of Fort Wayne and Catholic Charities, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, in conjunction with the Alumni Association of the University of Notre Dame, hosted a lecture followed by a panel discussion focusing on current research and programs aimed at helping those in need.

The event, which was free and open to the public, was held Dec. 2 at the Allen County Main Library downtown. It offered an opportunity to learn about leading research programs focused on finding solutions to the challenges and work that goes on locally to help neighbors in need. Attendees were able to interact with panel members during a question-answer session.

Panelists included William N. Evans, Ph.D., Keough-Hesburgh professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame; Gloria Whitcraft, chief executive officer for Catholic Charities; and Nyein

Chan, refugee services director at Catholic Charities.

Professor Evans initially spoke about the three-year-old Wilson Sheehan Lab for economic opportunities at Notre Dame. Known as the Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) — named after Pope Leo XIII who wrote the initial encyclical on Catholic social teaching — current research initiatives include women's and children's nutrition, homelessness prevention, job readiness, youth engagement and poverty alleviation.

Catholic Charities in Fort Wayne has programs for pregnancy services, poverty relief, food support, refugee resettlement, immigration and aging.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Evans said there are two ways social service organizations deal with poverty: charities provide for the needs, just as they have for the past 100 years, treating the symptoms of poverty. Or, by reorienting focus, spend more money to move people out of poverty instead of just dealing



Vince LaBarbera

At the seventh annual Hesburgh Lecture Series in Fort Wayne, Jacob Benedict, far left, served as moderator for a panel discussion on those in need. Panelists included, from left, Dr. Bill Evans, Gloria Whitcraft and Nyein Chan.

with the current situation they are in.

"You have to know what works and what doesn't work,"

he emphasized, "and take evaluation more seriously, collecting the necessary data."

Professor Evans said LEO's initial goal was to generate academic quality research-driven poverty solutions. "The phrase we like to use is that we innovate, evaluate, disseminate and replicate. At the local level there are a lot of good ideas on how to move people out of poverty," he continued. "To figure out which ones are worth investing in and which are not you have to evaluate. Once you evaluate and close down ineffective programs you have to invest in those that are working. And the way you do that is disseminate information... After that we want the successful programs to be replicated."

Before moving into the panel discussion, Dr. Evans gave examples of several successful programs across the county with which LEO is working.

Questions from moderator Jacob D. Benedict, director of research for AMI Investment Management, Kendallville, and the audience began with how donors should go about evaluating where to put their money.

"In this day and age, everything's on the web," Dr. Evans said. "The big problem is just

separating how much information there is." The sad aspect is if you had an interest in the homeless, special needs kids or single moms, for example, there's a lot of agencies out there. Separating who is going to provide something and be a good steward of your resources in a way that's consistent with your beliefs is difficult. The website LEO.nd.edu is publishing some results of its evaluations, he said.

Whitcraft added that Charity Navigator and Guidestar were good web resources. She also encouraged inquirers to check if an agency is accredited and its rating with the Better Business Bureau.

"These things should be listed on an agency's website," she emphasized. "And agencies should be transparent. If you want to talk with the CEO or the development person you should be able to and they should be willing to answer donor-related questions, and if not, that could be a red flag."

With regard to refugee resettlement, Chan said one challenge is the government establishes a time frame of a 90-day resettlement process, during which Catholic Charities provides "core services," — how to find a job, enter their kids in an after-school program, get good nutrition, learn how to be an American citizen and integration into society.

Responding to the question, "Do the homeless shelters try to educate their clients so that they can stop the cycle of homelessness," Whitcraft cited several local agencies with which Catholic Charities exchanges referrals and works collaboratively in an effort to serve the poor and vulnerable holistically.

Benedict concluded the question-answer by asking how each panel member would use \$50,000 if an investor gave that amount of money to each of them.

"We certainly would spend some of those funds on evaluation," said Whitcraft, "because we want to be good stewards of our dollars. And I would like to see our agency do more preventative work," she added.

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Living the Year of Mercy

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Father Leonard Collins, CSC

It takes a team of volunteers to make soup for visitors of the St. Augustine Soup Kitchen in South Bend. Those in the picture, from left, are Alfred Guillaume, Paula Johnson and Peter Smith. All are volunteers and also members of St. Augustine Parish.



Pat McLaughlin

The Catholic Communities of St. Joseph, Roanoke, and St. Catherine of Alexandria, Nix Settlement, collected donations for The Franciscan Center in Fort Wayne. The money was raised by the combined parishes youth groups. Youth group members collected donations after each Mass at both parishes and \$1,349.50 was raised and donated to The Franciscan Center for the annual "Turkey Tuesday" event. The turkeys are distributed to the less fortunate in the Fort Wayne area for Thanksgiving. Representing the youth group are Maggie and Mary McLaughlin. Tony Ley, representing The Franciscan Center, accepts the donation.



Debbie Stockwell

Students at Holy Cross in South Bend, along with other students of the school collected over 3,000 food items for the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Food pantries feed many



Darrel Dodane

Students from St. Vincent de Paul School on Wallen Road in Fort Wayne collected 5,400 units of food for their St. Vincent de Paul food pantry.



James Kirksey

One of the key roles Tom McLaughlin plays in serving his parish, St. Monica Church in Mishawaka, is through the parish pantry. He helps with the delivery of food, organizes the pantry so that it runs at top efficiency and provides prepackaged nutritious meals with every delivery. Truly Tom's actions speak louder than words and reflect the full spirit of the passage in Matthew 25:35, "I was hungry and you gave me food. ..."

Year of Mercy day 5

"Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy."

— Pope Francis



More photos showing works of mercy can be found at MyYearofMercy.org



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YOM

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Bishop Rhoades said it was appropriate for the jubilee year to begin on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "because Mary is the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of Mercy."

"In fact, she is the masterpiece of God's mercy in the world. No other creature manifests God's mercy as does Mary Immaculate," the bishop said.

Bishop Rhoades spoke how God put enmity, complete and radical opposition, between the devil and a woman. "He preserved a woman from any stain of sin! That woman is Mary. Her offspring is Jesus. In His mercy, God did not allow her to inherit the condition of original sin. If she would have inherited this condition, and participated in the disorder and corruption that the rest of us inherit from Adam and Eve, then she would have been at least partially under the sway of

Satan and evil."

God poured out His grace upon Mary from the first moment of her existence. This is the Immaculate Conception.

"That is why at the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel addressed Mary as 'full of grace,'" the bishop said. "She is the only human person ever addressed this way in the whole Bible. She received a special gift from God not due to any merit on her part, but on the basis of the merits of her Son. God the Father applied the graces of His Son's passion and death, which He foreknew, to Mary at the moment of her conception in her mother's womb."

"The Father, rich in mercy, sent His Son to be our Redeemer, to save us. And He saved Mary. Yes, Mary, as a daughter of Adam and Eve, needed to be saved and to be saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. In His mercy, God saved her in a unique way, applying that grace to her at the moment of her conception," he said.

Bishop Rhoades spoke how Catholics are to live the Year of Mercy.

"Based on the reflections of Pope Francis, I recommend to you

and all the people of our diocese who are able three things: the contemplation of divine mercy; the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy," he said.

He suggested Holy Scripture, particularly meditation on the psalms of mercy in the Old Testament and the parables of mercy in the New Testament, which are posted with this story.

The bishop said he was praying that many people will return to the sacrament of Reconciliation "and allow themselves to be touched by the tender love and mercy of God."

A third piece is the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. "I invite everyone, myself included, to heed Pope Francis' call to rediscover the works of mercy. There are 14 of them," Bishop Rhoades said.

Some works of mercy may be a struggle.

"You could say," Bishop Rhoades noted, "how in the world can I visit the imprisoned, one of the corporal works of mercy? Well, if you can't do it literally, you could do it in a different way, like donating a book to be given

Scripture passages for meditation during the Jubilee Year of Mercy

Ten Psalms of Mercy:
25, 41, 42, 43, 51, 57, 92, 103, 119 and 136.

Eight Parables of Mercy:
Luke 7:36-50; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 15: 1-10;
Luke 15:11-32; Luke 16:19-31; Luke 18:1-8;
Luke 18:9-14.

to a prisoner through the diocesan prison ministry or maybe praying a rosary for someone in prison."

Other corporal works one can do more directly, he said, like clothing the naked: for example, giving a warm winter coat to a poor person you meet or to the St. Vincent de Paul Society to give to the poor. Sometimes the spiritual works of mercy can also be challenging, like forgiving offenses.

"Just because it is challenging," Bishop Rhoades said, "we should not let ourselves off the hook. If we're not trying to forgive those who trespass against us, then we don't mean what we say when we pray the Our Father. I invite you to think about the works of mercy and strive to practice them, thus learning to be merciful like the Father."

SVDP-FW

Continued from Page 3

Bishop Rhoades continued. "Concretely, I suggest that you read the Holy Father's beautiful papal bull for the Year of Mercy. It is entitled 'The Face of Mercy.' I also invite you to study anew the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and spread knowledge of them in your parishes and apostolates. This Jubilee Year is an opportunity to enter more deeply into your Vincentian mission and its spirituality. I recommend reading the lives of the great Vincentian saints, saints of mercy. This year is also an opportunity to share your charisma with others, to invite others, especially young adults, to join the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Many of our people will be entering into this Jubilee Year and reflecting on our Holy Father's call to be merciful and compassionate. I hope that many will look to the St. Vincent de

Paul Society as a way to serve in the Church and to live the Gospel of mercy."

In conclusion, he said, "I wish to thank you for your witness to the Gospel of mercy in our diocese. May this Jubilee Year of Mercy be a time of grace and spiritual renewal for you and for the whole Church! May Mary, Our Mother of Mercy, intercede for you!"

At the breakfast for the Vincentians comprising 22 parish conferences in seven counties, Cheryl Mowan, district president, recognized current and retired Care Van drivers. Bishop Rhoades and Mowan also presented the 2015 SVdP Society Top Hat awards to six individuals.

"Nineteenth-century gentlemen, like Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his friends — who formed the society — all wore top hats," said Mowan. "A typical sign of courtesy and respect for another was a 'tip of the hat.' So, the awards for outstanding Vincentians show a tipped hat," she explained.

Holy Year is a reminder to put mercy before judgment, pope says

BY JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — On a cloudy, damp morning, Pope Francis' voice echoed in the atrium of St. Peter's Basilica: "Open the gates of justice." With five strong thrusts, the pope pushed open the Holy Door, a symbol of God's justice, which he said will always be exercised "in the light of His mercy."

The rite of the opening of the Holy Door was preceded by a Mass with 70,000 pilgrims packed in St. Peter's Square Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the beginning of the extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

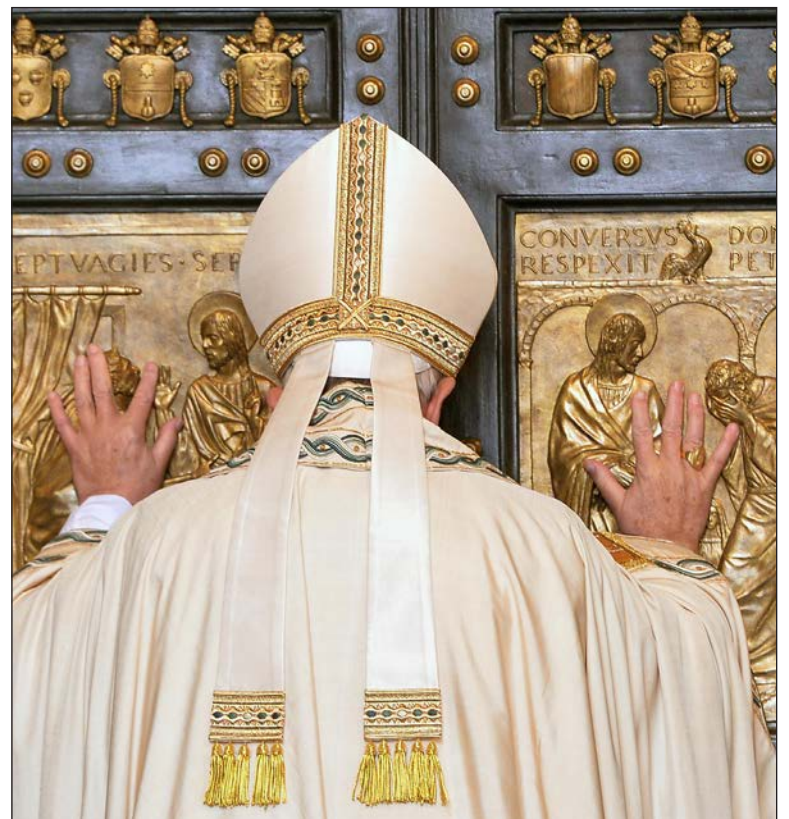
As the sun broke through the clouds, heralding the start of the jubilee year, the pope bowed his head and remained still for several minutes in silent prayer.

Amid a crowd of dignitaries and pilgrims, a familiar face was also present at the historic event: retired Pope Benedict XVI, who followed Pope Francis through the Holy Door into St. Peter's Basilica.

During his homily, Pope Francis emphasized the "simple, yet highly symbolic" act of opening the Holy Door, which "highlights the primacy of grace;" the same grace that made Mary "worthy of becoming the mother of Christ."

"The fullness of grace can transform the human heart and enable it to do something so great as to change the course of human history," he said.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, he continued, serves



CNS photo/Maurizio Brambatti, EPA

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to inaugurate the Jubilee Year of Mercy at the Vatican Dec. 8.

as a reminder of the grandeur of God's love in allowing Mary to "avert the original sin present in every man and woman who comes into this world."

The Year of Mercy, the pope stressed, is a gift of grace that allows Christians to experience the joy of encountering the transforming power of grace and rediscovering God's infinite mercy toward sinners.

"We have to put mercy before

judgment, and in any event God's judgment will always be in the light of His mercy. In passing through the Holy Door, then, may we feel that we ourselves are part of this mystery of love."

Shortly after the Mass, as thousands of people waited in St. Peter's Square for a chance to walk through the Holy Door, Pope Francis led the midday Angelus prayer.



Vince LaBarbera

Top Hat award winners with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and district president Cheryl Mowan (third from right). Each winner and the respective parish conference represented are, from left, Dave Gillig, substituting for Jim Lothamer, St. Jude; Bill Nussa, substituting for Barb Budzon, Our Lady of Good Hope, Cindy Smeltzley, St. Vincent de Paul; Diane Bahr, St. Jude; Ed Weber, Sacred Heart-St. Henry; and Frank Oddou, St. Vincent de Paul.

Advent Lessons and Carols at The Center at Donaldson

DONALDSON — Advent is the season of expectant waiting where Christians prepare for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus Christ at Christmas. Join them for nine biblical lessons of Advent and traditional Christmas Carols.

Director of Liturgy and Music Andrew Jennings will conduct traditional Christmas carols that will be sung by the choir and the audience, in the Ancilla Domini Chapel. The chapel is on the grounds of The Center at Donaldson and the concert will take place at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 13.

The public is welcome to this free event to share in the anticipation of the celebration of Christmas. A reception will follow the performance.

The Ancilla Domini Chapel is located at 9601 Union Rd., Donaldson, just west of Plymouth, two miles south of U.S. 30. The concert and The Center at Donaldson are sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

For more information on the concert visit the The Center at Donaldson Facebook page.

Lilly Endowment makes grants to encourage youth to explore theology

INDIANAPOLIS — Lilly Endowment Inc. is awarding \$44.5 million in grants to help 82 private four-year colleges and universities located in 29 states and the District of Columbia to develop high school youth theology institutes.

Holy Cross College at Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College at Notre Dame, and the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne are among the colleges and universities receiving the high school youth theology grants.

The grants are part of the endowment's commitment to identify and cultivate a cadre of theologically minded youth who will become leaders in church and society. Although some schools are independent, many reflect the religious heritage of their founding Christian traditions, including Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Reformed traditions, as well as Catholic, non-denominational, Pentecostal and historic African-American Christian communities.

With guidance and support from religion and theology faculty, chaplains and local pastors, young people will study sacred Scripture and pivotal theological texts; take part in service projects and hands-on ministry experiences; examine the moral and ethical dimensions of contemporary issues; and learn about reli-

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Catholics on a Mission collect sacramentals



Provided by Dave MacDonald

Catholics on a Mission is about one month away from its 2016 mission trip (Jan. 8-19, 2016). Missionaries are actively collecting sacramentals — rosaries, holy cards, miraculous medals, scapulars — sacred vessels and vestments and religious statues to distribute in Costa Rica. Items may be dropped off or shipped to: Dave MacDonald, G A MacDonald Associates Insurance Agency, 2200 Lake Ave., Suite 120, Fort Wayne, IN 46805, 260-422-5377. In the photo, Franciscan Brother Juan Diego Maria, center, and Jacob Schmitz of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Fort Wayne, right, distribute a prayer card and medal to a man asking for prayers for his community in Costa Rica.

gious practices, including prayer, contemplation and worship. Most programs will take place during the summer and offer short-term residential experiences to groups of students as small as 24 and as large as 300.

An additional grant to the Forum for Theological Exploration will establish a program that will bring together leaders of the high school youth theology institutes to foster mutual learning and support.

Heather Smith makes commitment as a Providence Associate

SOUTH BEND — South Bend resident Heather Smith recently deepened her relationship with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as she made a commitment as a Providence Associate on Saturday, Nov. 14, joining 27 other 2015 associates with the Sisters of Providence

Director of Providence Associates Sister Diane Mason said in order to become a Providence Associate, a candidate is paired with a Sister

St. Anthony traditions open Year of Mercy

ANGOLA — The parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in Angola are planning various acts of mercy to celebrate the Holy Year of Mercy beginning Dec. 8.

The public is invited to a Live Drive-Thru Nativity at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, 700 W. Maumee St., Angola, on Sunday, Dec. 20, from 5-8 p.m. where, in the comfort of their own car, people can experience the Christmas story in four live scenes. Throughout the journey they are accompanied by pre-recorded music at each scene supplied by John Peters. While Matt and Susie Zimmer have coordinated live animals at each of the scenes, over 150 costumed children and adults of the parish assume the roles of the people of Bethlehem and surrounding countryside.

Clem and Bonnie Sniadecki who are co-chairing this year's event with Marilyn Karpinski, said, "As in years past, this event is open to the public free of charge. It is St. Anthony's Christmas gift to the community."



Provided by St. Anthony of Padua

St. Anthony of Padua, Angola, will present their annual live drive-thru Nativity on Sunday, Dec. 20, from 5-8 p.m.

In addition to the Live Drive-Thru Nativity, The Gingerbread Project is underway with members of the youth group making and delivering gingerbread houses to members of the parish who

of Providence or Providence Associate companion and goes through a year of study, prayer and reflection. Smith's companion was Providence Associate Jude Magers.

Sister Mason said the Nov. 14 commitment ceremony brought the total of Providence Associates to more than 220 in the United States and Taiwan.

In late October of this year, more than 40 women and men began their journey as Candidate-Associates. The associate relationship is open to people of faith, ages 18 and older.

To learn more visit ProvidenceAssociates.org or contact Providence Associate Debbie Dillow at 317-250-3294 or by email at ddillow@spsmw.org.

Eric Day brings message to Ancilla

DONALDSON — Ancilla College hosted a lecture by Plymouth native, Eric Day, on Nov. 30. Day discussed his "Stay Positive" wristband program and the life benefits of behaving with a positive attitude.

Day, a two-time brain cancer survivor, found a friend in Allison, a fellow patient being treated at the Indiana University Health Proton Therapy Center in Bloomington. Before leaving, Allison wrote Day a letter with the message "Stay Positive" signed at the bottom in her best handwriting. Soon after, Eric began to spread his message through his wristbands. Embossed with the phrase "Stay Positive," Day preaches that "You can't always control what happens in life, but you can control your attitude."

are homebound, and the Angel Tree Program, chaired by Judy and Neil Nusbaum, is collecting donations of food and Christmas gifts to be delivered to numerous adopted families in need.

Catholic Charities welcomes two dynamic administrators

BY KAY COZAD

FORT WAYNE — Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has added two new names to its management team roster this fall. Mike Lewandowski has been named chief operating officer and Bobbie Golani fills the clinical director's position.

Lewandowski brings a plethora of gifts and talents to the table at Catholic Charities with his unique background in counseling psychology and IT expertise. His strength, he says, lies in his organizational and analytic skills. "I'm good at making things run, making new programs, data analysis," he says, adding, "I'm the man behind the curtain."

Holding a bachelor's degree in psychology from Purdue University and a master's in counseling psychology from Ball State University, Lewandowski brings with him experience from a diverse career background ranging from clinical work in an acute psych unit and developmental center to teaching at the University of Saint Francis and private practice. He spent 16 years at SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Neglect) first as program administrator and then as operations administrator.

Lewandowski is happy to be at Catholic Charities where he can get to know the people. His



Kay Cozad

Bobbie Golani, left, and Mike Lewandowski have joined the Catholic Charities administrative team. Lewandowski was named chief operating officer and Golani is clinical director.

vision for the future of Catholic Charities' mission? "I see this as growing. There are good people here, so dedicated. We'll expand. We have room and are structured better for expansion," he says confidently.

With his military family background he adds, "We moved a lot. So I can adapt to anything. I look forward to the challenges."

Lewandowski and his wife Deb of 40 years are long-time parishioners of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne. They have two grown children, three grandchildren with their fourth on the way, and three dogs.

Bobbie Golani's new position as clinical director at Catholic Charities is a "positively great fit," she says, referring to her

rich administrative experience. She is humbled to work with the dedicated staff at Catholic Charities who serve the at-risk population in the area. Originally from the Detroit area, she and her husband Lee have been residents of Fort Wayne since 2007. They have two grown children.

Armed with a bachelor's degree in early childhood educa-

tion from Oakland University in Michigan, Golani spent several years as a teacher and administrator in the Detroit area. Hoping to serve on a more holistic level she earned a master's degree in social work from Wayne State University in Detroit and became involved in a successful pilot program for at-risk children.

With her move to Fort Wayne, Golani took the helm at Martin Luther King Montessori School as executive director and then clinical administrator at SCAN. She has also served in private practice.

As clinical director Golani will be overseeing staff working in the ECHO (Education Creates Hope and Opportunity) program, Hispanic Health Advocate services, Resource and Referral Services and SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment program). "I have two amazing supervisors," says Golani, adding that she will "supervise the supervisors" for compliance with mandates and requirements for each program. Her hope for the future includes building new programs to support the diocese, parishes, parishioners and the community at large.

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to be here and do the work in the community," says Golani. "It's all about the people."

Sharing the warmth in northeastern Indiana

BY BONNIE ELBERSON

AUBURN — Many families will be sharing the warmth this winter as Catholic Charities' Auburn Community Service Center assists those in need by providing them with new or gently used winter coats. A program of more than 10 years' standing, the center's "Share the Warmth" coat giveaway attracts families who need warm outerwear to brave Indiana's chilly winter temperatures.

Director Patti Sheppard notes that the center serves four counties, DeKalb, Lagrange, Noble and Steuben, and is open to the public. Last year more than 1,200 coats were distributed and this year's numbers are expected to rise as word spreads and temperatures dip to freezing.

Sheppard is especially grateful to Eaton Corporation in Auburn for their recent donation of brand new coats with a retail value of nearly \$3,000 for the annual effort. "They've always assisted us," she says. They know there's a "pretty desperate need."

Eaton Corporation is a diversified power management company and global technology leader, and its Auburn facility designs, engineers and manufactures clutch components for the global commercial vehicle industry.

This corporation with a heart helps Catholic Charities in other ways, as well. Just recently Eaton employees donated their time to paint the center's offices and they've made many generous donations to the community center food pantry. They've also given school supplies to the "pack a backpack" effort, providing them to children whose families qualify through the schools' free and reduced lunch programs. "They've contributed for many years," Sheppard adds.

Auburn Community Service Center's food pantry serves 450 families each month. "We're quite busy with that," says Sheppard, and many of those shopping for food also take advantage of the additional programs. She tells of one Ligonier family who came to get their



Terri Hull

Two employees of Eaton Corporation arrive at Catholic Charities' offices in Auburn with coats for the center's "Share the Warmth" coat giveaway. The coats were purchased and donated by the Eaton Corporation.

children's backpacks filled with school supplies and were delighted to leave with warm winter coats for everyone. The center provides one-stop shopping for many needy families.

"We're very fortunate," says Sheppard. "This is a very

caring and giving community." People volunteer, sharing their time, their talents and their money, she adds.

And good corporate citizens like Eaton Corporation make the job of assisting the less fortunate a whole lot easier.

New mobile unit takes Catholic Charities to the peripheries

BY TIM JOHNSON

FORT WAYNE — Catholic Charities is hitting the road. Armed with a new mobile unit, Gloria Whitcraft, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said, “Our goal is to serve as many people in the diocese as possible.”

Catholic Charities has permanent operations with offices in Allen, St. Joseph and DeKalb counties, but “if we had a mobile unit, we could dispatch the mobile unit to each county at least a couple of times per month to serve the poor and vulnerable,” Whitcraft told *Today's Catholic*.

Whitcraft's goal is to make Catholic Charities a resource to the parishes throughout the diocese. Building that relationship with the parishes is a top priority for Catholic Charities, she noted.

Whitcraft said the mobile unit should assist Catholic Charities' adherence of Pope Francis' call to “go out to the peripheries.”

“Don't expect the people to come to us in our comfortable offices,” Whitcraft said. “We need to go out and serve them, find them and make sure they have access to the basic needs.”

The goals of the mobile unit include attending to the needs of Catholic Charities' target population — where they live, work and go to school. Through the mobile unit, Catholic Charities plans to conduct rolling research, learn the specific needs of their target population and develop effective strategies to address those concerns.

By being visible in each county, Catholic Charities also desires to create opportunities for local funding through county-specific foundations and investors and establish collaborative relationships with other agencies,

bringing in partners who can address needs that don't fall within the scope of Catholic Charities' mission. The mobile unit will also give Catholic Charities the opportunity to expand the organization's reach in a cost-effective way and nurture strategic partnerships with parish communities, expanding awareness of the agency's mission and increasing engagement opportunities with parish members.

“The goal of Catholic Charities is to help people live a dignified life, and we want to provide the resources to help them get there.”

GLORIA WHITCRAFT

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades blessed the mobile unit on Friday, Dec. 4, in the parking lot of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

During this Year of Mercy, the services of Catholic Charities fall under the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. This includes providing food for the hungry, whether through the food pantry such as the one operated in South Bend, or through food vouchers. They also give drink to the thirsty and clothe the naked. The Auburn office offers a coat program, and in Fort Wayne and South Bend, Catholic Charities assists with financial vouchers for clothing needs.

Catholic Charities offers

resource assistance with rent as well, and offers provisional services for those suffering both emotionally and spiritually. They also offer home-based and school-based programs for those dealing with illnesses. Catholic Charities can also provide family development needs such as budgeting issues.

Whitcraft hopes to take the mobile unit to various parishes in the rural counties where Catholic Charities does not have operations. At first, there will be needed research to see what needs are unmet in each county. Whether it is working with issues of teen pregnancy, teen parenting or getting teens to graduate from high school, the needs could vary from county to

county. “We want to find what is the greatest need in each county that is unmet, that is aligned with our mission, aligned with our target population — the poor and vulnerable — and is aligned with our core competencies,” Whitcraft said.

At this point, Whitcraft is not going to be too rigid or too fixed on the services that could be available. “It's really important to get into the community and find out what the needs are,” she said. Catholic Charities would not want to duplicate services already available through other social services agencies. And they hope to partner with other local agencies to provide a means for the poor and vulner-



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades offers a blessing at a Dec. 4 service officially kicking off Catholic Charities' Mobile Division. At right, he blesses the interior of the new mobile unit.

Photos by Francie Hogan



Tim Johnson



Gloria Whitcraft, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, speaks at the blessing ceremony on Dec. 4.

able to access services.

The artistic wrap on the mobile unit will be a visible sign Catholic Charities is taking its services out to the peripheries, being part of the New Evangelization. “If the people of the diocese see the Church — and Catholic Charities is an extension of the Church — out in their community as often as possible, serving people in need, then that has to be good for the Church,” Whitcraft noted.

The vehicle and the graphics wrap on the vehicle were generous donations. Catholic Charities' board member Father Glenn Kohrman made the connections with the donors.

Volunteers are also needed for this effort in each county. Catholic Charities would like a volunteer recruiter. Then additional volunteers would help with the scheduling of appointments for services. At present, Catholic Charities is networking with parishes and community partners to explain the purpose of the mobile unit.

Like the many services of Catholic Charities, the mobile unit is dependent upon the generosity of the faithful. Donors may contribute online or mail a check to Catholic Charities, 915 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802.

“We need people to prayerfully consider support for the mobile unit,” Whitcraft said. The goal of Catholic Charities is to help people live a dignified life, “and we want to provide the resources to help them get there,” she said.

Catholic Charities partners with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to serve the community

BY TRISH LINNER

SOUTH BEND — In 2012, Notre Dame sponsored an interfaith forum where Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades was introduced to President Rick Jones from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). This introduction led to a meeting between Bishop Rhoades, President Jones and local public affairs representatives from the LDS South Bend Stake (a stake is comparable to a Catholic diocese) to discuss ways the LDS could collaborate with Catholic Charities to serve the community.

"Bishop Rhoades was kind enough to meet with us to discuss humanitarian and religious freedom issues and concerns we hold in common with our friends in the Catholic Church," said Jones.

The meeting would lead to a collaboration that is now in its third year. "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints encourages its local leaders to direct the collaborative efforts of their congregations according to the needs and resources of their communities. This is something the LDS Church does worldwide," said Tina Slabach, public affairs director, South Bend Stake. Slabach helps organize donations from the LDS, and assists with the delivery to Catholic Charities.

"We were inspired to seek out service opportunities with Catholic Charities and we are so grateful that Bishop Rhoades and the leadership of Catholic Charities agreed to allow us to help them in their already amazing South Bend-St. Joseph County community efforts," Slabach said.

Catholic Charities has been serving the community since its inception in 1922. The West Region Center in South Bend



Provided by Catholic Charities

The Church of Latter Day Saints Stake in South Bend donated personal care kits to Catholic Charities.

typically serves about 50 families with approximately 150 children with their annual Christmas program in addition to the services provided year round.

"We are always grateful for the support Catholic Charities receives from businesses, schools, groups and individuals," said Claire Coleman, West Region director, Catholic Charities. "This partnership between Catholic Charities and the LDS gives us more opportunities to serve the community."

The LDS community is grateful to help. President Jones commented, "Catholic Charities does great work in tirelessly serving people's needs in the South Bend area. Every relief organizations needs support and the people of our congregations in and around the South Bend area have been blessed through giving of their time and resources. Doing good, feels good. We look forward to continued combined efforts to help where we can."

The South Bend Indiana LDS Stake is comprised of nine

congregations in five buildings, located in Niles, Michigan, South Bend, Plymouth, Elkhart and Warsaw.

Slabach said, "One of the things we have loved about being involved in this holiday project on an ongoing basis is that it has allowed opportunities to serve for all of our organizations. As the entire stake is asked to be involved, it can be logistically difficult. Each unit solves the logistical problems differently, and we seem to get more efficient every year. In this, our third year of partnering with Catholic Charities, the adult organizations, such as the Relief Society and Elder's Quorum,



Members of the Church of Latter Day Saints Stake in South Bend donated items to Catholic Charities. The Church of Latter Day Saints has collaborated for three years with Catholic Charities in South Bend.

made quilts, scarves, hats, mittens and kept track of requested donations. The youth organizations in all nine congregations came together one Saturday for an evening activity to sort and bundle the donations into individual hygiene kits. In addition, they hand-made fleece blankets and Christmas greeting cards. It has been a truly wonderful opportunity for everyone in the South Bend stake to emulate the love of our Savior in our community."

"We are very grateful for the donations from the LDS, especially the personal hygiene kits that they put together each year," said Coleman. "They are a real blessing to families, and a great gift for teenagers. They specialize the kits for men, women and teens so that each person

gets what they need. We donate them to families at Christmas and throughout the year to people in need. The LDS donations make a real difference for the families we serve, especially at Christmas time" Coleman said.

In addition to the Christmas program, Catholic Charities serves the community with year-round services for families in need.

Coleman noted that while it is always wonderful to have gifts to give at Christmas time, Catholic Charities serves people in need year round. "People need food, they need simple things like toilet paper and laundry soap. We welcome contributions all year."

For more information about Catholic Charities, visit www.ccf-wsb.org. To learn more about the LDS humanitarian efforts visit www.ldsphilanthropies.org.

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The 'Waze' of Providence

Just after I was named auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, Archbishop Gomez, my new boss, told me to get the Waze app for my iPhone. He explained that it was a splendid way to navigate the often-impossible LA traffic. I followed his instructions and have indeed used the app on practically a daily basis since my arrival on the West Coast. Waze not only gives you directions, but it also provides very accurate information regarding time to your destination, obstacles on the road, the presence of police, etc. Most importantly, it routes you around traffic jams, which positively abound in the City of Angels.

Especially in my first days and weeks on the new job, I basically had no idea where I was going — and my duties required that I be all over the place: LAX, Pasadena, Inglewood, Granada Hills, Ventura, Oxnard, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, etc., etc. And often I was required to journey after dark. So I would program an address into the Waze app and then listen to the mechanical female voice as she guided me to my destination. It was often the case that her instructions were counter-intuitive, which was not surprising, given the fact of my disorientation in a new environment. But I gradually learned to trust her as, again and again, she got me where I needed to be.

I'll confess that my faith in her was sorely tested a few weeks ago. I had left my home in Santa Barbara very early in order to attend a 10 a.m. meeting in Los Angeles and was making pretty good time on the 101 expressway. Suddenly, the Waze

lady instructed me to get off the highway a good 25 miles from LA. Though skeptical, I followed her advice. She subsequently sent me on a lengthy, circuitous and rather slow journey through city streets until finally guiding me back to the 101! I was so frustrated that I pounded my fist on the dashboard and expressed (aloud) my dismay. When I got to the meeting, I laid all of this out to one of my episcopal colleagues and explained that I thought there was a glitch in the system. "Oh no," he quickly responded, "there was a tanker spill this morning on the 101, not far from where she made you exit the road. She probably saved you an hour or two of frustration."

At that point I saw clearly something that had been forming itself inchoately in my mind, namely, that the Waze app is a particularly powerful spiritual metaphor. As Thomas Merton put it in the opening line of his most famous prayer: "My Lord God, I have no idea where I'm going." Spiritually speaking, most of us are as I was when I arrived in Los Angeles: lost, disoriented, off-kilter. But we have been provided a Voice and instructed to follow it. The Voice echoes in the Scriptures, of course, but also in the depth of the conscience, in the authoritative teaching of the Church, in the wise counsel of spiritual directors, and in the example of the saints. Does it often, indeed typically, seem counter-intuitive to us? Absolutely. Do we as a matter of course ignore it, presuming that we know better? Sadly, yes. Are there some



WORD ON FIRE

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

among us who, in time, learn to trust it, to guide their lives by it, even when it asks them to go by what seem circuitous routes? Happily enough, yes.

There is another feature of the Waze app worth considering in this spiritual context. When you get lost or perhaps decide that you know better than the navigator, she doesn't upbraid you or compel you to return to the route she had originally chosen. She calmly recalculates and determines the best way to get to your goal, given the choice you have made. God indeed has a plan for each of us. He has determined, in His wisdom and love, the best way for us to get to our goal, which is full union with Him. But like Israel of old, we all wander from the path, convinced that we are brighter than the Lord of the universe, or perhaps just enamored of asserting our own freedom. But God never gives up on us; rather, He re-shuffles the deck, recalculates and sets a new course for us. Watch this process, by the way, as the Scriptural narrative unfolds. And watch it happening, again and again, in your own life: what looks like a com-

BARRON, page 12

The best preparation

Advent preparation didn't start about the way I had hoped.

I thought I had done all the right things. I had cleaned our house, readying it for the correct liturgical decorations. I looked up some Scripture readings. I planned to take out some book favorites of the season for the kids. I pulled out our Advent wreath several days before the first Sunday and had purchased four brand new Advent candles a full week ahead of time. I put those candles in a safe place so I'd be ready to light them with the family on that first Sunday. But it turned out that it was too safe a place because when the first Sunday rolled around, those candles were nowhere to be found.

What's more, I had been so confident that I didn't even look for the candles until dinner was almost ready to be served. Could they be in the cabinet with the decorative, scented candles? No. On top of the fridge? Not there either. How about my room? The laundry area? The junk drawer? No, no, no, and not a good dozen other places either. My girls and I frantically searched the house, top to bottom, but to no avail. My one daughter works at a Christian bookstore but by that last minute that store was plum out of Advent candles too, with a rush on them — of course — just the day before.

Continuing the trend, I also couldn't locate a few of the choice seasonal books I had carefully set aside (and had not looked for until just before dinner) either. It seems I had misplaced them, you see, prob-



EVERYDAY CATHOLIC

TERESA A. THOMAS

ably while I was cleaning the basement in preparation for the season. I suspected that the books were in the newly cleaned toy room, probably in the wrong Tupperware container. By this point I was out of time and couldn't search container by container. Dinner was ready, no late.

Sigh.

And so, that first Sunday of Advent, having read no books about Advent with my children, my family gathered for dinner. The plain pine Advent wreath graced our table untraditionally, with nothing but a large, green, balsam-scented candle smack in the middle of the wreath, advertising my ineptitude. At least it smelled good.

By now you too may have experienced a bit of frustration and more than a frazzled moment or two this Advent season. If you haven't you're lucky. It's hard trying to focus on the spiritual dimension of Advent with your family, while trying to accomplish the practical aspect of planning a memorable and jolly Christmas celebration and still manage the day-to-day duties and possibly deal with bad weather to boot. (Pressure

EVERYDAY, page 12

Be joyful — Jesus will soon come again



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

3rd Sunday of Advent Lk 3:10-18

This weekend the Church observes the third Sunday of Advent. The Book of Zephaniah furnishes the first reading. It is a short book, only three brief chapters. Little is known about this prophet, beyond what can be assumed from the writing itself. This much, however, is known. Zephaniah was the son of Chusi and traced his ancestry to Hezekiah, presumably King Hezekiah of Judah.

It appears that the book was written between 640 B.C. and 609 B.C., or during the reign of King Josiah of Judah. Josiah was

a reformer, and his reforms were religious in intent and in impact. Such is not surprising. The kings saw themselves, if they viewed themselves properly, as representatives and agents of God. Aside from all else, their duty was to draw the people more closely to God.

Zephaniah, obviously, supported this effort.

This weekend's reading is an exuberant and bold exclamation of joy. When the people are faithful to God, they bring peace and prosperity upon themselves. So, if they draw more closely to God, if they are more attentive to the Covenant, their good fortune will be assured. Their enemies will be turned away. They will be secure.

For the second reading on this weekend the Church presents a passage from the Epistle to the Philippians. Philippi was a city, in what today is Greece, founded centuries before Christ and named to honor King Philip, the father of Alexander the Great.

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

it was major military base.

It hardly is surprising that Philippi included a Christian community. Important cities always drew people from everywhere in the Roman Empire. Visitors and newcomers brought with them their ideas and values, such as Christianity.

As was the reading from Zephaniah, this reading is filled with excitement and joy. The coming of the Lord is predicted, and this victorious coming will be soon. Such was the assumption of many of the early Christians.

When Jesus would come again, all wrongs would be righted. Evil would be defeated. It would be a glorious event and utter change.

To prepare, Christians should conform themselves as much as possible and in every respect to the Lord. The epistle proclaims that this holy transformation has occurred. It delightedly declares that the Christians of Philippi are unselfish.

St. Luke's Gospel is the source of the last reading. In this reading, John the Baptist appears,

urging that the man with two coats to give one to the poor.

John also tells a tax collector to assess only the fixed amount. The Roman system of taxation was in effect legalized extortion. Tax collectors profited by adding to the assessed tax their own demands. The law required the taxpayers to meet these demands.

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

Tax collectors were turncoats. Not surprisingly, the people regarded them as the lowest of the low.

It was a terrible time.

John foretells the coming of Jesus, insisting that when Jesus comes, righteousness will reign.

Reflection

This weekend is called Gaudete Sunday, because of the first word of the Entrance Song, "Gaudete — be joyful!"

Joy is in order not because the penitential season is ending, but because Jesus soon will come again.

How? While the Scriptures look forward to a sudden, dramatic return of Jesus in glory, these readings this weekend also remind us that Jesus will come into our hearts, our lives and our communities if we turn to God and follow the Gospel.

Living the Gospels effectively is the purpose of Advent.

READINGS

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

Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a Ps 25:4-5b, 6, 7bc, 8-9 Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13 Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-19m 23 Mt 21:28-32

Wednesday: Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21b-25 Ps 85:9ab, 10-14 Lk 7:18b-23

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

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

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

Synod-2015, Revisited

As I write, just before Thanksgiving, it's been over a month since Synod-2015 finished its work. Yet there is still no official translation of the Synod's Final Report into the major world languages from the original Italian (a language regularly used by 8/10 of one percent of the world's population). That's a shame because, in the main, the "Relatio Finalis" is an impressive, often-moving statement of the Church's convictions about chastity, marriage and the family: biblically rich, theologically serious, pastorally sensitive and well-crafted to meet the challenge of the cultural tsunami responsible for the contemporary crisis of marriage and the family, which has left a lot of unhappiness in its wake.

It's also a shame because the unavailability of the "Final Report" in the weeks after the Synod has led to all sorts of spinning about its contents, and thus to no small amount of confusion, even consternation.

So while it's impossible to do full justice to the "Relatio Finalis" in a single column, let me address some of those confusions through eight bullet-points, based on the original Italian text and informed by my experience of the discussions throughout Synod-2015:

1. The "Final Report" reaffirms the classic teaching of the Church on the indissolubility of marriage and the conditions for worthiness to receive Holy Communion, both of which are based on divine revelation and are thus not subject to change.

2. The "Final Report" does not endorse what has become known as the Kasper Proposal, i.e., the readmission to Eucharistic Communion, after a penitential period, of divorced and civilly remarried Catholics whose prior

marriage has not been granted a decree of nullity by an ecclesial court.

3. In reaffirming these classics of Catholic faith and practice, the "Relatio Finalis" affirms that there can be no wedge driven here between "doctrine" and "pastoral practice," for the traditional discipline of the Church is based on the conviction that what is at stake is the integrity of individuals before the Lord: in other words, worthiness to receive Holy Communion is a matter of living in the truth.

4. In its now widely-controverted paragraph 85, the "Final Report" emphasizes that "pastoral accompaniment" of the divorced and civilly remarried by a priest in the "internal forum" must always be undertaken "according to the teaching of the Church." Those seven words were inserted in the "Relatio Finalis" in the last 24 hours of the Synod and provide the necessary anchor for any truly pastoral accompaniment in the case of the divorced and civilly remarried (or indeed in any other case). For in pastoral life, as in the Gospels, truth and mercy work together.

5. The "Final Report" urges the Church's pastors to provide whatever canonical/legal help they can in resolving difficult and painful situations of marital breakdown. It also underscores the importance of effective marriage-preparation programs, which are urgently needed in situations where the ambient public culture's understanding of "marriage" and the Church's understanding of "marriage" are often dramatically different. Which is to say, marriage preparation should be seen as an integral part of the New Evangelization, and an important ecclesial mission of mercy



THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

GEORGE WEIGEL

among the walking wounded who are sifting through what Pope Francis has described as the post-battlefield wreckage of contemporary culture.

6. The "Final Report," like Cardinal Péter Erd's opening address to the Synod as its Rapporteur-General, makes clear that there is no analogy at all between the Church's understanding of marriage and other living arrangements among consenting adults.

7. The "Relatio Finalis" (unlike the Synod's working document) celebrates children as a great blessing, praises large families and urges support for families with special-needs kids.

8. In all of this, the "Final Report" emphasizes that the Church reads the "signs of the times" through the lens of divine revelation (in this case, the unambiguous teaching of the Lord Jesus and St. Paul). The "signs of the times" do not judge the deposit of faith, although the most challenging of those "signs" can highlight the Church's failures in teaching and witnessing to the truth.

For more, see my article, "What Really Happened at Synod 2015," available at www.firstthings.com.

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

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for December 13, 2015

Luke 3:10-18

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

SHARE WITH SOLDIERS ANSWERED THAN I SANDAL TO CLEAR CHAFF	FOOD WAGES THEM ALL NOT WORTHY FIRE THRESHING BURN	LIKEWISE CHRIST WATER THONG WINNOWING WHEAT GOOD NEWS
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JOHN SPEAKS

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

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Finnian of Clonard

Feast Dec. 12

This Irish abbot, known as the master and teacher of saints in the period following St. Patrick, was reported to be from Leinster, where he began establishing monasteries including his great monastery at Clonard on the Boyne, which drew 3,000 disciples.

EVERYDAY

Continued from Page 11

anyone?)

Perhaps you've not made it to Confession yet. Or maybe you'd planned on Scripture reading or a special rosary recitation each night with the family, only to have the effort thwarted by a late running sports practice for one of the kids, or an unexpected travel for work, or a dreaded case of pre-Christmas flu going around (probably because you are run down trying to get everything done perfectly). You're stressed. You're worried. You feel like you're failing.

Stop!
Breathe. Focus. It's going to be okay.

There's still time to get to Confession. Is the Nativity set up? Build your thoughts around that. Focus on praying the rosary or doing the Scripture reading

just for tonight. Now is what matters. Today. This moment. Forget what you have not done and direct your efforts to what you can now. And if someone in your family has gotten sick this Advent season, simply patiently tend to him, as though it were the most important thing in the world. Because it is.

For the remainder of Advent, remember the words of Thoreau: "Simplify, simplify, simplify."

The world will not stop if you don't attend every gathering to which you are invited. Nothing bad will happen if you change your Christmas Eve menu to something easier to cook to free up your time with loved ones. Gift certificates are just fine to give as presents, especially if it means your time is now freed up to read to a little one who is looking up at you, holding a book. Your neighbors will live if you don't bring personalized holiday baskets to them, and your family will benefit from taking that time to pray the rosary

for them and others instead.

Peace. Calm. Joy. Still your heart and prepare.

So your Advent isn't perfect. Join the club. In fact, the Holy Family's time of preparation wasn't perfect either. The first Christmas was not, by man's terms, perfectly and grandly orchestrated by any means. Not only did Mary and Joseph experience discomfort and likely stress at having to travel a long way to a strange land to fulfill a duty, but they also had to 'go with the flow' in terms of their sleeping accommodations. We may not be getting enough sleep this time of year, but at least we don't have to lay our heads down on hay in a stable in a foreign land. Or have a baby in it. Or flee in the middle of the night because a hysterical, jealous king is after our child and is seeking to kill him.

So gently quiet the cacophony in your heart. Let go of the imperfections that trouble you. Take your children to Confession.

And once in the church, linger in the dark and quiet, your eyes raised humbly to the altar and say simply, "Come. Come, Lord Jesus" He will listen and answer. He is all we need. And this realization is the best preparation — really the only preparation we need.

Theresa Thomas is the wife of David and mother of nine children. Watch for her newest book "Big Hearted Families" (Scepter) and read more on her blog: <http://theresathomas.wordpress.com>.

BARRON

Continued from Page 11

plete dead-end turns into a way forward; the wrong path turns, strangely, into the right path.

No matter where you go, Waze can track you and set you on the right road, and this "all-seeing" quality has given us confidence in its direction. As we have learned to trust the mechanical voices of our GPS systems in regard to the relatively trivial matter of finding our way past traffic jams, so may we learn to trust the Voice of the one who, as the Psalmist puts it, "searches us and knows us and discerns our purpose from afar."

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

Sports

NO. 4 COUGARS DENIED IN QUEST FOR NAIA FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

For the first time in 21 NAIA Football Championship Series home games for the University of Saint Francis, the home field advantage was nullified in a 24-point Marian University second quarter that led to a 45-14 win for the Knights on Nov. 5 at Bishop D'Arcy Stadium on Kevin Donley Field in Fort Wayne. The fourth-ranked Cougars finish the season 11-1 while the Knights improve to 11-2 after avenging a 45-42 loss to USF in early October.

ICCL kicks off basketball season with classic matchups

BY JOE KOZINSKI

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY — The Inter-City Catholic League kicked off its 2015-2016 winter march with classic matchups and close contests as the 14 varsity squads dueled at Marian and Saint Joseph high schools.

Christ the King started their season off with a huge win over the Mishawaka Catholic Saints as JR Konieczny and Jack Futa scored 15 and 11 points respectively for the Kings on their way to a 56-24 margin.

The Trojans of Holy Family followed suit as they dispatched the Falcons of St. Jude, 44-20.

The Cougars of Corpus Christi and Derek Derda's 23 were too much for the upstart bulldogs of Our Lady of Hungary as they were triumphant, 42-26.

In the battle of the north-west, St. Pius X squeaked by

St. Thomas, 37-32, despite the 17-point effort by Thomas Ewing. The Lions had two in double figures: Adam O'Dell and Reegan Jackowiak.

The Blazers of St. Matthew handed St. Michael a loss as Luke Krizman and the orange-and-black-clad squad outgunned the Crusaders, 41-20.

The big scorer in the contest was St. Michael's

Cameron Weider who dropped in 17 of his team's 20.

Holy Cross had three players scoring in double digits; Jaden Ivey, Chase Tzuzuowski and Miguel Zyniewicz on their way to a 44-25 victory over Queen of Peace.

The Panthers of St. Anthony outlasted St. Joseph, 43-32, as Phillip Robles netted 11 for the winners and T. Garnett had 16 in the loss.

A full schedule is planned for this weekend and it can be found at www.icclsports.org.



CYO basketball season off to good start

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — The 2015-2016 Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) season kicked off last weekend in several different gyms. In boys' action, Coach Zach Palmer's St. Therese Crusaders got off to a good start getting by St. Joseph, Decatur, 38-34. They were led by John Peterson with 16 points and Sam Alfaro who contributed six big points off the bench. Palmer explained, "As a team we had the lowest amount of turnovers in a game so far this season which made a big difference."

For the girls, St. Rose-St.

Louis downed St. Charles 8 at St. Elizabeth by a score of 36-26. Eighth-grader Abby Sheehan had 10 points and Audrey Renninger added 8. Molly Ream from St. Charles led all scorers with 12 points and Allie Trimbur scored 11.

Coach Clancy Shank reported his St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, team beat St. Therese. "It was a great team effort on the defensive end," Shank reported. Dori Javins was the top scorer for the Eagles with 15 points. She also had five steals. Audrey Vassel and Taylor Bransfield added eight each and Libby Bierbaum chipped in seven points and four steals.



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CLOSE TO HOME!

Growing kids, shrinking screens: how they could stay safe online

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Teaching children to stay safe in what for adults can seem to be an ever-daunting online world is a tall order.

Adrienne Renner, who teaches at Presentation High School in San Jose, California, has been on the school's technology team ever since she was hired 23 years ago. But it's only been in the past couple of years that her freshman-required course on computer apps included a unit on digital safety and ethics.

It wasn't enough that new students knew how to master Google Docs and the other Google apps, or how to use an iPad, basic keyboarding skills, or any of the other tech tasks needed to get classwork and homework taken care of in a timely manner.

"We had a director of technology at Presentation introduce me to commonsense.org," Renner told Catholic News Service. "It was when we were making changes in the curriculum. We felt it was important to have the students learn about digital citizenship: privacy, copyright information, how to do research and that kind of thing."

Common Sense, a non-profit with offices in New York, Washington, Los Angeles and San Francisco, aims to improve the lives of children, families and educators through its educational materials and information resources. It developed the digital citizenship curriculum that Renner incorporated as one of the six units of her course.

Generally, learning is not supposed to be fun. But there's always the "aha" moment when scales fall from the eyes.

"This creates so much discussion it's unbelievable," Renner

said of the digital citizenship unit. "The conversation about cyberbullying, the way students take selfies and the kind of things that they post online. Those are conversations that we have for sure."

She added, "Some of the topics are about privacy, keeping things private and making sure students aren't changing their privacy settings. What kind of relationships they have online, what to do if someone you don't know contacts you" are also ripe subjects for conversation, Renner noted, in addition to "the digital footprints that you leave behind (that) is very important, and what you do during high school could follow you into college, it could affect you from getting into college. And carries you into your career. If someone does a Google search on you. ... It's a lot of topics, and they're all very relevant."

There was no pushback from parents at the Catholic high school, sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "No. No, no, no, no. Not at all," Renner told CNS in a Nov. 24 telephone interview. "We are right smack in the middle of Silicon Valley where all these social media companies are. Our parents and administrators are all aware of what our kids are using. They want them to be safe and using things appropriately."

Michael Robb, Common Sense's director of research, said, "One of the great things that schools can do is teach digital citizenship, how to be responsible and safe online, how to think about social media in a larger context, that what you do online is part of who you are offline."

He added Common Sense's digital citizenship curriculum,

tailored to different age groups, is used in thousands of schools across the nation, and is free.

Robb, in a Nov. 20 telephone interview with CNS, said that, in essence, kids take to new tech like a duck to water.

"I think there's something generational going on. A lot of these things were already there. It doesn't seem like new technology to them," he said. "It doesn't have that fancy sheen to it. They're not afraid of it. They're engaged from a lower age. That's not to say that they're all expert users."

Robb said the Common Sense Census, which polled children ages 8-18 online about their media usage habits, talked little about homework issues, but how they used media while doing their homework. Over 70 percent of them are listening to media while doing their homework, he noted; 50 percent are watching TV or are engaged in social media simultaneously while doing their homework.

There was little as well about how frequently students used technology to complete homework assignments either at home or school. Robb said there are a number of directions a future survey could take, this being one of them.

Mark Pattison is media editor for Catholic News Service.

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Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols

Granger — Lessons and Carols with the choirs of St. Pius X will be offered at all Christmas Masses. The children's choir and adult ensemble will sing at 4:30 p.m. The Sunday evening choir will sing at 7 p.m. The Sunday morning choir will sing at 11:15 p.m. Instrumentalists will join all choirs. The parish adult and youth handbell choirs will play prelude music 15 minutes before Mass on Christmas day at 9 and 11 a.m.

Christmas cookie and candy sale

Monroeville — The St. Rose Altar and Rosary Society will have a Christmas cookie and candy sale sold by the pound on Saturday, Dec. 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Monroeville Fire Station, 205 W. South St.

Holy Hour planned for New Year's Eve

Fort Wayne — Father George Gabet, FSSP, will lead a Holy Hour on New Year's Eve at Sacred Heart Parish, 4643 Gaywood Dr., from 11:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as well as the rosary.

Cookie and wreath sale

Mishawaka — The St. Monica Rosary Society will have a cookie and wreath sale Saturday, Dec. 12, in the church basement, 222 W. Mishawaka Ave. A variety of cookies will be sold for \$5 per pound. Seasonal wreaths will also be sold.

Pancake and sausage breakfast with Santa

Fort Wayne — The St. Charles Athletic Association, will have a pancake and sausage breakfast Sunday, Dec. 13, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the church, 4910 Trier Rd. All the pancakes you can eat and a visit with Santa. Enter at door No. 9. Cost is \$4 for adults, \$3 per child 12 and under or \$15 per family.

Knights host Sunday breakfast at Most Precious Blood

Fort Wayne — The Knights will be serving a breakfast Sunday, Dec. 13, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the gymnasium at Most Precious Blood, 1515 Barthold Street. \$8 for adults, \$4 for children 6-12 and \$20 per family. Carryout will be available. All proceeds will benefit the Bill Roth Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Mass Mob gathering announced

South Bend — A Mass Mob style group bringing solidarity and support to great churches in the area will gather at St. Anthony dePadua, 2114 E Jefferson Blvd., for the 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday, Dec. 19.

Lessons and Carols

Elkhart — St. Vincent de Paul Parish and School, 1108 S. Main St., will present an Advent festival of Lessons and Carols on Monday, Dec. 14, at 6 p.m. Reception to follow in Vincent Hall. No charge for admission.

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Dear Friends,

The season of Advent is always a special time for us as Catholics, a time of expectant waiting as we look forward to celebrating Jesus' Nativity. This year, we have even more reason to rejoice, since we are entering a Holy Year of Mercy as decreed by our Holy Father, Pope Francis. During this extraordinary Jubilee, Pope Francis has encouraged us to meet people's real needs, offering concrete assistance to those who are suffering in our community.

I can't think of a better way to describe our mission here at Catholic Charities, and I am thrilled to report that we will be able to bring that concrete assistance to even more people in our diocese in the coming year through our new mobile unit. Thanks to the generous support of anonymous donors, this mobile unit will allow us to take our programs and services on the road as we visit each of the 11 counties where we don't have a physical office.

While we are thrilled to receive the donated vehicle, we still need support in the form of operational dollars in order to bring services to each of these counties. Your contributions will help us staff our mobile unit, so that we can partner with people seeking assistance, helping them to enhance their capacity to build a better life for themselves and their families. Up until now, access to the services and resources they need has been a real challenge in rural areas of the diocese. Through the mobile unit, we can address those needs, relieving poverty and strengthening communities in the process.

Please consider how you might partner with us as we extend the love of Jesus to thousands of people in need of services. With your help, we can fulfill our mission — serving those in need as Christ would have us do — during this special Year of Mercy.

God Bless,

Gloria

Gloria Whitcraft, *Chief Executive Officer*



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