Pope welcomed by children, meets with generals in Myanmar

BY CINDY WOODEN

YANGON, Myanmar (CNS) — Greeted by two dozen children wearing traditional attire and by the nation’s bishops, Pope Francis arrived in Myanmar Nov. 27 for a four-day visit.

The arrival ceremony at the Yangon airport was brief and led by an envoy of the president, because the formal welcome was scheduled for the next day in Naypyitaw, which has been the capital since 2005.

However, Pope Francis had a “courtesy visit” with the leaders of the nation’s powerful military. The pope and Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who was accompanied by three other generals and a lieutenant colonel, met that first evening in the Yangon archbishop’s residence, where the pope is staying.

Greg Burke, director of the Vatican press office, told reporters the meeting lasted 15 minutes. After discussions about “the great responsibility authorities in the country have at this moment of transition,” the two exchanged gifts.

The pope gave the general a medal commemorating his visit to Myanmar and the general gave the pope “a harp in the shape of a boat and an ornate rice bowl,” Burke said.

Opening one’s home to others: Ruggaber family answers the call to ‘love thy neighbor’

BY MOLLY GETTINGER

2012: That’s the first year the Ruggaber family opened their home and invited someone else to stay in their spare basement room. Their resident? A friend from their undergraduate days who had discerned out of a cloistered religious community. As he prepared to move to a large city, he was seeking a place of transition that would ease him into his next season of life.

The opportunity came to them and they responded, the couple shared.

The following year, in 2013, their second resident found her way to the family. A recent college graduate looking for temporary housing before getting married — her year of AmeriCorps service having limited her housing budget, making it challenging to find a place to live. The Ruggaber’s four children under the age of five.

Since then, the South Bend family has continued to prayerfully open their home to friends in need of a temporary residence.

For the Ruggabers, living in community was nothing new. They served as hall directors at Holy Cross College for three years, living with their children in a small apartment in an apartment-style dorm. Because of that experience, Amelia shared, “we felt like we could provide the community our friends needed, while maintaining healthy boundaries for ourselves and our kids.”

Welcoming others into their home meant welcoming them to a new level of intimacy with their family life, however. “One has to be prepared for the relationship to change, because you will be seeing them in a lot of different, more intimate ways, and they will be seeing you,” she said. “No matter how great you are at boundaries, this is part of living together, and you have to embrace it.”

This altered level of intimacy applies both to the Ruggaber family and their guests. For example, resident No. 2 would make herself a bowl of quick-cooking oatmeal topped with brown sugar for breakfast nearly every morning. Anna, the Ruggabers’ then 2-year-old daughter, would promptly abandon her breakfast cereal and also want to eat oatmeal. So, nearly every morning, they ended up beginning their days over a bowl of oatmeal together.
The God-who-comes

IN TRUTH AND CHARITY

BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

The Advent season is about to begin and, with it, the beginning of a new liturgical year. The Latin word “Advent” is a translation of the Greek word “Parousia,” which means coming or arrival. So what is Advent? It is a special time to reflect on, celebrate and prepare for the coming of the Lord. In the first reading on this First Sunday of Advent, we hear Isaiah’s powerful cry to God: “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down!” This is a cry of the human heart longing for peace and justice, freedom and happiness, joy and life. Human fulfillment is not something we can attain by ourselves. We cannot save ourselves. We need to be rescued from sin, healed from misery and suffering, and saved from death. God hears our cry, the cry of Isaiah. He rends the heavens and comes down. In fact, this is His nature — He is the God-who-comes.

God is not up there in heaven, unconcerned with us and our lives and our history. He is the God-who-comes. As Pope Benedict XVI once said: “He is a Father who never stops thinking of us and, in the extreme respect of our freedom, desires to meet us and visit us; He wants to come, to dwell among us, to stay with us. His coming is motivated by the desire to free us from evil and death, from all that prevents our true happiness. God comes to save us.”

The coming of God is centered in the two great comings of Christ that we remember during Advent. The first is His Incarnation. In this coming, in what Scripture calls “the fullness of time,” Christ comes as our Redeemer. In the second coming, in what Scripture calls “the fullness of time,” Christ comes as our Redeemer. In the second coming of the Lord. In this Sunday’s Gospel, we hear these words of Jesus to His disciple: “Are you aware of the mystery of the coming of the Son of God as man in the stable at Bethlehem. The first two weeks of Advent focus on the nature — He is the God-who-comes. As Pope Benedict XVI said that God’s coming is “a continuous presence...it happened, it is happening now, and it will happen again.” This is what Advent teaches us. We should remember that God comes, not just in the past and in the future, but today, now! St. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote about what he called Christ’s “intermediate coming,” a bridge between His first and second coming. This is the coming of the Lord into the souls of believers. God who came to earth in the Incarnation and who will come at the end of time comes to us now. He is near to us always. He comes to us in His living Word. He comes to us with His grace in all the sacraments. He comes to us, as we heard in last Sunday’s Gospel of the final judgment, in the least of our brothers and sisters, in the poor, the sick, the suffering, the stranger and the outcast. And He comes to us in the most amazing way in the greatest of all the sacraments, the Most Holy Eucharist. He dwells among us in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood. During Advent, it is good to make visits to the Blessed Sacrament. May we never take for granted the coming of the Lord on the altars of our churches and His presence in our tabernacles!

Advent is a special time of prayer, though it can be difficult in our culture in which this is such a busy and commercialized season. Yet, the Church asks us to observe Advent and to not prematurely celebrate Christmas. This takes effort, but it is not impossible. Prayer makes it possible, especially by entering into the spirit of Advent through the prayers and readings of the Advent liturgies. Another way to keep the Advent season is through good works. In the prayer of the First Sunday of Advent, the Church asks God to give us the resolve “to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at His coming.” Advent is particularly suited to this since we are often busy with buying gifts for our loved ones for Christmas. But let’s remember the poor in our Christmas shopping and gift-giving! Every little bit of good we do for the poor and needy, every act of kindness, every work of mercy is great in God’s eyes. May we open our hearts to others during the Advent season, especially those who are in difficulty. By doing good to those in need, we prepare to welcome Jesus who comes, in them, to visit us. Finally, Advent is a good time to go to confession. As St. Paul wrote, “It is full time now for you to wake from sleep” (Romans 13:11). In confession, we throw off the lethargy of sin. The Lord-who-comes gives us the grace of His forgiveness. We don’t want the Lord to come suddenly and find us sleeping. We are watchful and alert when we run to meet the Lord in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the icon of Advent. She shows us what it means to welcome the Lord into our hearts and to say “yes” to the God-who-comes. Holy Mary, Mother of our Savior, help us to follow your example!
Diocesan Curia realigned

FORT WAYNE — A measure of reshuffling and reorganization has taken place among the Secretariats of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in order to better meet the needs of the diocese.

Mary Glewaski, head of the former Secretariat for Evangelization, has been appointed by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades as Special Assistant to the Bishop in Pastoral Care. She will assist with mediation of pastoral concerns while continuing to have responsibilities as victim assistance coordinator and in the ministry of advocacy for persons with disabilities and the deaf and hard of hearing.

Glewaski said she is humbled to be able to continue serving the diocese in a way that supports both the faithful and Bishop Rhoades. “I am also deeply grateful to be able to remain involved with initiatives and programs that the Secretariat for Evangelization has advanced over the last several years for victims’ assistance and for the deaf and persons with disabilities. It is a great gift, and I hope benefit for the diocese, to be able to focus more intently on these ministries, as well as the pastoral needs of our parishes.”

Frederick Everett, formerly the assistant to the bishop in South Bend and co-director of the office of family life, has been named Secretary for Evangelization and Discipleship and will oversee the newly formed Secretariat of the same name. The Secretariat ministries will be integrated and will work together as a team.

Lisa Everett will be the director of marriage, family and pro-life ministry. She will be assisted by John Sikorski and Allison Sturm. Lisa will also act as deputy secretary of the Secretariat. Sikorski will be the director of the adult faith formation and catechesis ministry, assisted by Sturm and Lourdes Silva. Sean Allen will be the director of young adult and campus ministry, assisted by Jennifer Kopetzky, Ash Scarlettough and Enid Roman-DeJesus.

Finally, Frederick Everett will be the executive director of ecumenism, hospital and multicultural ministries. He will be assisted by Silva; Deacon Mel Tardy; Shawn Storer; and Roman-DeJesus, who will remain director of Hispanic ministry. Helen Auzgen will serve the Secretariat as an administrative assistant.

The Secretariat will assist the bishop in the pastoral care of adults in the diocese, while the education and catechesis of children, as well as youth ministry, will continue to be the responsibility of the Secretariat for Education.

“I am very excited to build a broader team approach to the evangelization of adults and their ongoing formation in discipleship,” said Frederick. “I look forward to meeting with pastors individuually to get their input on strengthening our efforts in the diocese. With a renewed emphasis in the Church on forming missionary disciples, and new technology to help us meet the challenges of our day with a focused strategy, I am hopeful to see the new springtime of Christianity that St. John Paul II foresaw.”

The Secretariat will assist the bishop in pastoral care of adults in the diocese, while the education and catechesis of children, as well as youth ministry, will continue to be the responsibility of the Secretariat for Education. The assistant to the bishop in South Bend position has been eliminated.

Social justice ministries, formerly under the auspices of the Secretariat for Evangelization, will transfer to the office of the bishop and acquire a new name that will emphasize education in Catholic social doctrine. This position will oversee and promote justice ministries in the diocese and lead and promote diocesan support of Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

The new structure will take effect Dec. 3.

Pope, USCCB president pray for victims of Egyptian mosque attack

BY JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis led pilgrims in prayer for the victims of a bombing at a mosque in Egypt’s northern Sinai region.

Addressing thousands of people gathered in St. Peter’s Square, Pope Francis said he received news of the attack with “great sorrow.”

“My God deliver us from these tragedies and sustain the efforts of all those who work for peace, harmony and coexistence,” the pope said after reciting the Angelus on the feast of Christ the King, Nov. 26.

The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was among other Catholic leaders who condemned the attack, calling it a “monstrous terrorist attack on innocent people at prayer.”

The Nov. 24 attack took place at the Al-Rawdah Mosque in Bir al-Abd.

More than 300 people, including 20 children, were killed when at least 40 attackers detonated a bomb, then gunned down worshippers as they fled. More than 120 others were wounded in what is being described as the deadliest modern-day attack in Egypt’s history.

The Egyptian prosecutor’s office said it believed the attack was coordinated by Islamic State militants and was targeting Muslims who practice Sufism, or Islamic mysticism.

Remembering the victims and the wounded, Pope Francis called on Christians to pray for those who were “so severely affected” by the attack that occurred during prayers at the mosque.

“Those people, in that moment, prayed. We, too, in silence, pray for them,” he said.

Following news of the bombing, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said the pope was “profoundly grieved” by the loss of life and condemned the attack as a “wanton act of brutality directed at innocent civilians gathered in prayer.”

Pope Francis, Cardinal Parolin wrote, “joins all people of good will in imploring that hearts hardened by hatred will learn to renounce the way of violence that leads to such great suffering, and embrace the way of peace.”

In Washington the day of the attack, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president, said: “Terrorist acts can never be justified in the name of God or any political ideology, and the fact this attack took place at a mosque, a place of worship, is especially offensive to God.”

“The Catholic Church in the United States mourns with the people of Egypt at this time of tragedy, and assures them of our prayerful solidarity,” Cardinal DiNardo said in a statement.

“We join with all those of goodwill in prayer that these acts of horror and mass killings, and these acts of grave evil — will end and will be replaced with genuine and mutual respect for the dignity of each and every person,” he said.

In a televised address, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said the attack was “an attempt to stop us from our efforts in the fight against terrorism, to destroy our efforts to stop the terrible criminal plan that aims to destroy what is left of our region.”

Contributing to this story was Julie Asher in Washington.
Church leaders decry plan to end TPS for Haitians

BY DENNIS SADOWSKI

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Advocates and Church leaders rallied around 58,000 Haitians living in the United States since a ferocious 2010 earthquake after the Trump administration moved to end a humanitarian program that allowed them stay in the country.

The Haitians will be forced to leave the country by July 22, 2019, or face deportation. Department of Homeland Security Acting Secretary Elaine Duke terminated the Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for Haitians Nov. 20 after determining that conditions in the poor Caribbean nation had improved significantly since the earthquake. The effective date of the termination was delayed for 18 months “to allow for an orderly transition.”

Religious leaders and advocates on a news conference call Nov. 21 described the decision affecting Haitians in dire need of stability and security as lacking compassion and kindness.

“It’s not a question of sending them home. After so many years in the United States, they are home,” said Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami.

“People have put down roots. They’ve started businesses and families and their children are American citizens. To send them back and take away their means of livelihood would not be in the best interest of the Haitians, their children or the American society in which they live,” he said.

The Center for Migration Studies estimates that Haitians with TPS have about 27,000 U.S.-born children.

Separately, Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration, called Duke’s decision “deeply troubling.”

“This decision will devastate many families with TPS members, including those with U.S. citizen children. It will tear indi-

viduals from loved ones, homes, careers and communities. It will also have direct negative consequences for many in Haiti who rely on remittances for support,” he said in a statement Nov. 21.

He said the U.S. has a responsibility to provide continued temporary protection for TPS holders until their return and reintegration at home can be safely accomplished. “Catholic social teaching recognizes a duty to not turn our backs on our neighbors in need,” he said, adding, “Our Haitian neighbors, at home and abroad, need our compassion while their country rebuilds and recovers.”

Archbishop Wenski explained in the news conference that during a fact-finding trip he led to Haiti in September, his delega-

tion learned that the country “does not have conditions adequate to receive any number of people being expelled from the United States or any other place.”

He and others on the call urged people of faith and “good will” to pressure Congress to enact a legal solution to make permanent the legal status of Haitians and people from other countries granted TPS.

Jean Atkinson, executive director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, was on the same delegation and agreed with the archbishop’s assessment. She called Duke’s decision “morally outrageous ... unfound-
ed” and called her to undertake assessment that considers the actual conditions in the country.

In a statement late Nov. 20, Homeland Security said Duke determined that “those extraordinary but temporary conditions caused by the 2010 earthquake no longer exist,” requiring that TPS for Haitians be terminated. Since the 2010 earthquake, the number of displaced people in Haiti has decreased by 97 percent. Significant steps have been taken to improve the stability and quality of life for Haitian citizens, and Haiti is able to safely receive traditional levels of returned citizens,” the depart-

ment said.

Atkinson and others disagreed with the assessment. They said the return of up to 88,000 people to the Western Hemisphere’s poorest nation would destabilize a country where adequate hous-

ing is unavailable and a large portion of the population faces food shortages. 

Lys Isma, a young Haitian TPS holder living in South Florida, said she came to the U.S. as an infant with her par-

ents and was a teenager when the earthquake struck. She said the Homeland Security decision “filled me with a lot of emo-

tions.”

“When Haitians were designated for TPS, I was 15 years old. I was able to work, to drive and live without fear. Working meant I could afford tuition and send money to relatives in Haiti,” Isma during the press call.

“My community is going to be most devastated because of the end of the TPS designation,” she said. “People are being given 18 months to sell businesses, sell their homes, decide where to leave their children. The decision made me sad, not just for me, but for my community.”
To experience one of the holiest Christian sites, go to Washington

BY RHINA GUIDOS

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In the nation’s capital, a $15 museum ticket and pair of 3-D glasses is the passport Christian pilgrims and others need to experience what may be the holiest site in Christianity.

Employing state-of-the-art technology, the National Geographic Museum in Washington Nov. 15 opened an exhibit that virtually transports visitors to Jerusalem and through the doors of a small church that protects what is believed to be the site of Christ’s burial and, to Christians, the site of his resurrection.

“We put you in the Old City. We talk to you a little about the walls of the city, how they move over time and where the Gospels say that the Crucifixion took place, and try to give you the context,” said Kathryn Keane, vice president of exhibitions for National Geographic during a Nov. 9 interview with Catholic News Service.

After an introductory video explaining some of the tumultuous history surrounding the tomb of Christ, the exhibit led visitors through a timeline of what it means for visitors to experience Jerusalem and through the doors of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

“The exhibit is an exhibit,” said National Geographic archaeologist Fred Hiebert.

“We’re not only taking you in the church the way it looks today but we also go up above the church and we take you back through time,” said Keane. “It’s a bit of a time machine and we show you all the evolutions of the building, from the time that it was, under (Roman emperor) Hadrian, a pagan temple.”

“This is not what I would consider a traditional exhibit. It’s more an experience than it is an exhibit,” said National Geographic archaeologist Fred Hiebert, whose unique expertise inside the church led to “Tomb of Christ: The Church of Holy Sepulchre Experience,” which runs at the Washington museum until August 2018.

Last year, Hiebert witnessed various stages of a nine-month, $3 million restoration of the small shrine within the Holy Sepulcher that protects the tomb of Christ. The shrine often is referred to as the Edicule, Latin for “little house.” During the process, the three religious groups with jurisdiction over the structure, and who had agreed on its restoration — the Armenians, the Franciscans and the Greek Orthodox — agreed to allow restorers to put a moisture barrier around the tomb itself.

The tomb likely had not been opened in centuries and, at some point, marble slabs were placed on top, perhaps to keep pilgrims from taking home parts of it.

It has been venerated since the time of Constantine, the first Christian Roman Emperor who, in the fourth century, sent a team in search of the holy burial site. Soon after, they identified a quarry as that place and Constantine’s mother, Helena, had a shrine built around it.

The exhibit explains how the effects of weather, earthquakes and also great numbers of pilgrims, many of whom light candles that contribute to a buildup of soot, had brought the structure to the brink of collapse. It also explains the dilemma religious leaders faced when they learned that by injecting liquid mortar into the shrine to reinforce it, it presented the possibility that it would seep into the tomb itself — defeating the purpose of protecting the most important part. They had to swiftly decide to shut down the shrine to allow the team to protect the tomb — and that meant briefly opening it.

“They said, ‘Do it, but don’t take more than 60 hours to do it,’” said Hiebert.

When restorers temporarily shut down the site, Hiebert and other members of the National Geographic team were present to witness the opening of the tomb, which exposed the original limestone bed and the walls of the cave, which Christians believe witnessed Christ’s burial and his resurrection.

“To think that we, we were some of the few people who were locked in that church, got to see what people for hundreds and hundreds of years of Christianity hope to see, and we had a chance to see that ... if there’s anything that drove me to do life,” said Hiebert.

“We have to tell the world about this,” said Hiebert.

The National Geographic team scanned the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the smaller structure inside, the Edicule, in such detail, that visitors who stop by the exhibit can don a VR, or virtual reality, headset and go through the tiny shrine, navigate the small passage way that leads to the tomb, a space that accommodates no more than three or four people, and see an exact visual representation of the tomb, without the real-life inconveniences.

“As tourist, you get maybe 15 seconds in the tomb and then they move you out,” explained National Geographic engineer Corey Jaskolski at the opening night event. “Part of capturing this and being able to share it with the world through the National Geographic Museum is that we can let people spend as long as they want in the tomb. You can go in there and have your own personal experience and be able to see it in all its glory without the interruptions and bustle of the crowd around.”

The exhibit displays the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the doors, but also of flying over them ready for the experience of, “We bring the world to you,” said National Geographic engineer Corey Jaskolski.

The National Geographic exhibition “Tomb of Christ: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre Experience” opened Nov. 15 at the National Geographic Museum in Washington and is on display through the fall of 2018. The historic renovation project will be featured as part of National Geographic magazine’s cover story in the December 2017 issue. Additionally, it will be featured in an upcoming episode of “Explorer,” airing globally Dec. 3 on the National Geographic Channel.

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Pope leads prayer service for peace in South Sudan, Congo

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Although it was not possible to visit South Sudan as he had hoped, Pope Francis said that “prayer is more important, because it is more powerful. Prayer works by the power of God for whom nothing is impossible." With hundreds of women and men from dozens of religious orders, with migrants from Africa and representatives from a number of Christian churches and a variety of religions, the pope presided Nov. 25 over an evening prayer service for peace in South Sudan and Congo. As the service began in St. Peter’s Basilica, religious carried in procession large photographs of women and children from the two war-torn countries. The images were placed on easels at the foot of the sanctuary steps. Flanking the photos were paintings of St. Josephine Bakhita from Sudan and Blessed Anuarite Nengapeta from Congo. On the cross, Pope Francis said, Jesus “took upon himself all the evil of the world, including the sins that spawn and fuel wars: pride, greed, lust for power, lies.”

Pope raises profile of Vatican office coordinating work of nuncios

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis has established a new section in the Vatican Secretariat of State to oversee the training, assigning and ministry of Vatican nuncios and diplomats around the world. The Section for Diplomatic Personnel will be concerned “exclusively with questions pertaining to the people who work in the diplomatic service of the Holy See or who are preparing to do so,” said a statement Nov. 21 from the Secretariat of State. The section will oversee “the selection, initial and ongoing formation, the living and serving conditions, promotions” and other matters, the statement said. The head of the section, Polish Archbishop Jan Pawlowski, also will “convene and preside over ad hoc meetings to prepare the nominations of pontifical representatives,” who formally are nominated by the pope and usually are made ambassadors with their first posting as a nuncio or apostolic delegate. The diplomatic staff at the Vatican embassies around the globe and most of the ambassadors who serve as nuncios are alumni of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy. There the future diplomats receive specialized training as they complete advanced degrees — usually in Canon Law — at a pontifical university in Rome. They also must study languages.

MYANMAR, from page 1

Pope Francis had been scheduled to meet the general Nov. 30, his last morning in Myanmar. Although the country is transitioning from military rule to democracy, the general has the power to name a portion of the legislators and to nominate some government ministers. Although described by Burke as a “courtesy visit” and not an official welcome, the visit seemed to go against the usual protocol, which would dictate that the pope’s first meetings with authorities would be with the head of state and head of government.

Burke did not say whether Pope Francis had mentioned in any way the plight of the Rohingya, a Muslim minority from Myanmar’s Rakhine state, who are treated as foreigners in the country. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing has been criticized by human rights groups for what has been described as disproportionately harsh measures against the entire Rohingya community following attacks on security posts by small groups of Rohingya militants.

According to the general’s Facebook page, he told Pope Francis there is no religious discrimination in Myanmar.

The pope arrived in Myanmar after a more than 10-hour, overnight flight from Rome. The children in costumes, representing only a portion of Myanmar’s ethnic groups, were joined by another 100 schoolchildren wearing white slacks and white T-shirts with the logo of the papal visit. Banners and billboards along the road from the airport into the city proclaimed: “A heartiest welcome to the Holy Father, Pope Francis.”

Because the flight took off late at night, Pope Francis spent less time with reporters than he usually does. He made no comment about his hopes for the trip, only mentioning that he was told it was very warm in Yangon and he hoped the reporters would not suffer too much.

As is customary, the pope sent telegrams to the heads of state of all 13 nations he flew over on the way, including Italy. In his message to Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Pope Francis said he was making the trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh Nov. 27-Dec. 2 as a “pilgrim of peace, to encourage the small but fervent Catholic communities and to meet believers of different religions.”

The majority of people in Myanmar are Buddhist, while the majority of Bangladeshis are Muslim. Pope Francis had meetings with religious leaders scheduled in both countries.

Build peace by welcoming immigrants, pope says

Exploiting a fear of migrants and refugees for political gain increases the possibility of violence and discrimination and does nothing to build a culture of peace, Pope Francis said in his message for World Peace Day 2018. The pope chose “Migrants and refugees: Men and women in search of peace” as the theme for the celebration that will take place Jan. 1, 2018. The message is delivered by Vatican nuncios to heads of state and government around the world, and the full text will appear in the Dec. 24 issue of Today’s Catholic. Above, an internally displaced Syrian woman bashes her child at Qana refugee camp in Al-Hasakah, Syria.

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Crèches from Mexico featured in bilingual exhibit and pilgrimage

NOTRE DAME — Christmas Nativity scenes crafted by artists in Mexico are on display in six University of Notre Dame campus buildings through Jan. 28. The fourth annual International Crèche Exhibit and Pilgrimage features 32 crèches on loan from the Marian Library at the University of Notre Dame. The exhibit is sponsored by the McGrath Institute for Church Life.

A prayerful pilgrimage to view the crèches will be held Sunday, Dec. 3. Prayer, Scripture readings and song will be led in English and Spanish. The event begins at 2 p.m. with a brief presentation by David Lantigua, assistant professor of theology, Notre Dame, and an activity for children at the Eck Visitors Center.

The pilgrimage will move from the Eck Visitors Center through campus to the other displays and end at the Main Building. Pilgrims are invited to bring the baby Jesus from their home crèche for a blessing. All are welcome.

“Images of Jesus’ nativity remind us that God has made our world His home,” said John Carver, McGrath Institute director of the McGrath Institute for Church Life. “The unique beauty of each crèche in this year’s exhibit reminds us of the spiritual richness in Mexico and calls us to imagine how we welcome the Christ Child in our cultures and communities.”

The theme of the exhibit is “En Camino a Belén: Journeying to Bethlehem.” The crèches selected for this year’s display feature vibrant colors, natural materials and images of indigenous cultures.

The crèches will be on display in the Eck Visitors Center, Morris Inn, Coleman-Morse Center, Main Building, Geddes Hall and Hesburgh Library. Visitors are encouraged to make self-guided tours of the crèches using booklets available at all exhibit sites.

For more information, visit icl.nd.edu/creche2017.

High school ministry makes blankets for Thanksgiving

The Saint Joseph High School Prayer Blanket Ministry made 325 blankets on the Joy of Saint Joe Day of Service, giving one to each family who received a Thanksgiving food basket from the South Bend school’s annual food drive. Established during the 2009 school year, the ministry consists of students who are committed to making the blankets and to praying for all who receive one. Blessed by a priest, the blankets are an expression of care and concern for those challenged by a serious illness or tragedy. They are decorated with a cross representing the love of Christ, and a heart representing the love and concern of the Saint Joseph High School family. Tucked inside are a written prayer and an explanation.

Dr. Abela to present 2018 USF Servus Omnium Lecture

FORT WAYNE — The University of Saint Francis welcomes Dr. Andrew Abela, provost, Catholic University of America, as the keynote speaker at the 2018 Servus Omnium on Tuesday, Feb. 13, at the USF Robert Goldstine Performing Arts Center, 431 W. Berry St.

The event will begin at 7 a.m. with an opening blessing from Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Then a Mardi Gras breakfast will be served before Dr. Abela’s presentation, titled “Faith and Business.”

Prior to his academic career, Dr. Abela spent several years in industry as a brand manager at Procter & Gamble, a management consultant with McKinsey & Company, and managing director of the Marketing Leadership Council of the Corporate Executive Board. His research on marketing ethics, Catholic social doctrine and internal communication, has been published in several academic journals. With Dr. Joseph Capizzi, Dr. Abela co-authored “A Catechism for Business” which is now in its second edition. He is the recipient of the 2009 Novak Award, given by the Acton Institute for “significant contributions to the study of the relationship between religion and economic liberty.”

Dr. Abela holds a B.Sc. from the University of South Alabama, an MBA from the Institute for Management Development in Switzerland and a Ph.D. in marketing ethics from the Darden Business School at the University of Virginia.

Tickets are $10 in advance and $15 at the door. Tables can be purchased in advance for $80 and corporate sponsorships are available.

For more information about the 2018 Servus Omnium event, visit sf.edu/servus-omnium or contact Dr. Lance Richey, dean of the USF School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, at 260-399-8112 or trichey@sf.edu.

Student receives first-generation scholarship

DONALDS0N — "Realizing the Dream" is a program sponsored by the Independent Colleges of Indiana that acknowledges first-generation college students for outstanding achievement in their freshman year by awarding the Realizing the Dream Scholarship to chosen students. It has been funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc. since 1989. This year’s recipient from Ancilla College is Casey Hotaling.

Each honored student receives a $2,500 check to help with college costs, and each student’s selected “most influential” teacher or mentor receives a $1,000 professional development grant.

Though many scholarship recipients choose “most influential” teachers who inspired them from an earlier time in their education, Head chose Ancilla College professor Joel Thomas. He was honored by the nomination. “It has been great to see Casey grow and develop over the course of the semester,” he said. “I am so proud to attend the ceremony with Head at the Sheraton Hotel in Indianapolis.”

Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund awards tuition assistance

FORT WAYNE — Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend are being awarded tuition assistance of $500 per student, for a total of 28 students, for the school year 2017-18, from the Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund. Seven recipients are from Fort Wayne-area elementary schools and seven are from South Bend-area schools.

The Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund is a restricted endowment fund within the Catholic Community Foundation of Northern Indiana. Bishop John M. D’Arcy established the fund in 2007 with gifts from the 50th anniversary of his priesthood, from memorials of his late sister, Mary Caprio, and from other special donations. The purpose of the fund is to grant tuition assistance to Catholic students in Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Schools that have one or more students receiving an award for school year 2017-18 are as follows:

• Fort Wayne area: Our Lady of Good Hope, Fort Wayne; St. Aloysius, Yoder; St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Fort Wayne; St. John the Baptist, New Haven; Queen of Angels, Fort Wayne; and St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel, Fort Wayne.

• South Bend area: St. Vincent de Paul, Elkhart; St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend; St. Anthony de Padua, South Bend; St. Jude, South Bend; St. John the Baptist, South Bend; Mishawaka Catholic, Mishawaka; and Holy Cross, South Bend.

The fund makes distributions each year based on an annual payout of 6 percent of the value of the fund on June 30. Recipients are awarded financial assistance based on need by a committee that consists of Deacon James Fitzpatrick, Chief Financial Officer Joseph Ryan and Superintendent of Catholic Schools Marsha Jordan.

Bishop D’Arcy celebrated 50 years as a priest on Feb. 2, 2007. He contributed gifts that he received from the golden jubilee of his priesthood to create the Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund. In addition, when his sister died in September 2007, Bishop D’Arcy requested that memorials be given to this fund. Moreover, a special gift from a family foundation was contributed to the Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund in May 2008. The total value of the fund was approximately $271,479 as of August 2017.

The committee sent letters and tuition assistance application forms to principals and pastors of all Catholic elementary schools in the diocese, inviting them to recommend a student from the school who qualified for tuition assistance based on financial need. Also, the committee readied a written essay of not more than 100 words from each student who applied, titled “Why Catholic Education is Important to Me.”

For each student who is granted an award, it is for one time and is renewable.

The Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund advocates that students who would like to make a current gift of cash or stock or a planned gift such as a will bequest to the Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund, may contact Ryan at 260-422-4610 or jryan@diocesefws.org.

December 3, 2017
A simple plan for the best Advent ever

BY THERESA THOMAS

Advent is just around the corner, and many people feel like it sneaks up on them—perhaps catching them by surprise. In the business of this life, what can a person do to prepare well without overwhelming? It’s not too late. Here are some ideas to get you started on having the best Advent ever.

Kick off Advent with confession
Start with a good examination of conscience. One can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website. Google it: It’s gold. It’s great for pondering one’s faults and for encouraging a person to make the effort to receive this sacrament (yes, this week), so that the channel of graces can pour in, and a person is then ready for the next Advent step.

Make a trip to the Catholic bookstore
Get a good Bible that you won’t be afraid to mark up. Then read. Underline, circle, asterisk. Use tabs. Mark in some way the passages most meaningful. Consider starting with the New Testament and committing to reading one of the Gospels. One of St. Paul’s Letters, or hit the Old Testament by going to Proverbs, Sirach or the Psalms. Set aside 10 minutes a day to privately immerse yourself in God’s word. God speaks to His children through His word, if you set aside time for Him.

While at the bookstore, pick up some Advent candles and a wreath. It will probably have an Advent devotion book as well. If not, no worries. Dedicate each of the four weeks of Advent to a different cardinal virtue.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Four virtues play a pivotal role and accordingly are called ‘cardinal’; all the others are grouped around them. They are: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.” (1805)

Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it: “the prudent man looks where he is going.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1806). Where we are going in Advent is toward Christmas and preparing our hearts for Christ. The best gift we can give Christ is the cultivation of goodness and the purity of our souls.


After the father does a reading, he can lead the family in discussion of the ways each person practiced (or was challenged) by prudence that day. What were the circumstances? How difficult was it? Did he fail and need to try again or was he successful in overcoming temptation? Dad might start by sharing an instance himself. For example, “I was driving to work today and a person in a car cut in front of me rudely. I was tempted to gesture angrily but I took a deep breath and said a quiet prayer for the person instead.” Or, “I took a phone call from an angry customer who swore at me. I was tempted to return harsh words but instead I kept silent until I could say what I needed to in the right manner.” He may explain how silence really can be golden, and that a prudent man thinks before speaking.

For the family groups that want to do something together, consider a discussion of the ways each of these saints demonstrated particular fortitude, for example: St. Paul, St. Sebastian, St. Joseph, St. Francis of Assisi, St. George, St. Thomas A. Becket, St. Thomas More, St. Joan of Arc, St. Clare and St. Monica. Discussion each night this week during the lighting of the Advent candle can be about how each of these saints demonstrated the virtue of fortitude, and how the family can, too, in daily life.

Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor. Justice toward God is called the “virtue of religion.” Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good. The just man, often mentioned in the sacred Scriptures, is distinguished by habitual right thinking and the uprightness of his conduct toward his neighbor.” (CCC1807)

Bible quotes related to justice to be read and discussed each night include: Proverbs 21:15, Psalm 37:27-29, Isaiah 61:8-9, Luke 18:1-8, Isaiah 1:17, Isaiah 5:1-5, Deuteronomy 16:20. Things to discuss: What is the connection between justice and charity? What is meant by, “character is demonstrated by how a person acts when no one is looking”?

Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. (CCC 1808)

This week, the Advent readings each night are not from the Bible, but about the saints. Each night a different short saint story will be read. Google summaries of these stories, or refer to a saint book that may be in the home. Choose saints in whom you are interested. Perhaps letting each member of the family select saints who demonstrated particular virtue for that week. For example, St. Nicholas (Dec. 6), the feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), and the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12).

What a person doesn’t do is as important as what he does to this Advent. We should not select activities that stress us out. We should not over plan beyond realistic schedules and abilities. We should aim for quality of preparation, not quantity. We should guard against excess recreation, time on social media, procrastinating daily duties?

Temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will’s mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable.

What are the pleasures we must moderate daily? Eating and drinking obviously come to mind, but also what about excess recreation, time on social media, procrastinating daily duties?

Bible quotes related to temperance to read each night this week can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website. Google it: It’s gold. It’s great for pondering one’s faults and for encouraging a person to make the effort to receive this sacrament (yes, this week), so that the channel of graces can pour in, and a person is then ready for the next Advent step.

Integrate the Advent feast days into family life
Prominent ones include the feast of St. Nicholas (Dec. 6), feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), and the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12).

What a person doesn’t do is as important as what he does to this Advent. We should not select activities that stress us out. We should not over plan beyond realistic schedules and abilities. We should aim for quality of preparation, not accomplishing every suggestion we’ve read. We should focus on becoming rather than doing. We train ourselves in virtue and model that to those around us.

Following this simple plan, families can grow in holiness in preparation for Christmas Day. They will then be ready on Dec. 25 to celebrate the Savior’s birth with the best gift that anyone can give—themselves, their sincere and best selves to God and others.
The hope of Advent

During the first week of Advent, Christians reflect on the tension of that which is preordained but has not yet happened. We take the opportunity this week to demonstrate hope that the promises of our Lord will be fulfilled.

Artwork that depicts the hope experienced during the Advent season has been created by the students of Catholic Homeschoolers of Michiana.

Maria Vesprini, Age 9
Oil pastel drawing

Benjamin Adamson, Age 10
Tissue paper collage

William Adamson, Age 8
Tissue paper collage

Anna Ruggaber, Age 6
Finger paint
St. Patrick Parish, Walkerton, is excited about growth

BY DENISE FEDOROW

St. Patrick Parish in Walkerton has the distinction of being in a town that sits in four counties and two different time zones — but that’s not the only thing that makes it special. According to pastor Father Eric Zimmer, the involvement of parishioners and their willingness to help wherever needed has been inspiring.

St. Patrick Parish was founded in 1856 as St. Henry Parish, in the same year that Walkerton became a town. The first Mass was celebrated in the log cabin home of parishioners, by a Holy Cross priest from Notre Dame. The name was changed sometime before the end of the 19th century, as more Irish Catholics came into the area.

The present church was built in 1870 and will soon celebrate its 150th anniversary. Father Zimmer said the parish had a school that started in 1956, but it was closed nine years ago when there were no longer enough students enrolled to support it.

Bishop John D’Arcy made the decision to close the school in 2005, but at the urging of parishioners, kept it open until 2008. When it closed, many of the students went to St. Michael School in Plymouth.

Father Anthony Letko served the parish for 42 years beginning in the early 1940s. It was under his leadership that the school was built, and a convent was remodeled from four rooms to 11 so that the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis from South Bend could come to teach the students. Father Letko served the parish until 1988.

Father Zimmer said Father Letko’s predecessors also served the parish for many years — one for 20 years, and another for 25 years.

St. Patrick today

Father Zimmer was assigned to the parish Jan. 1, 2016. Prior to his arrival the parish was without a pastor for a while, and several priests pitched in to help serve the parishioners.

St. Patrick is a small parish of about 160 families.

“At one time there were 450 families,” Father Zimmer said. “But we are growing. We’ve had 30 families join since I arrived.”

Father Zimmer said he’s integrated programs that he feels are getting more people involved in the parish. He gave the example of a program held on Wednesdays during Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday. There is a simple supper at 6 p.m., followed by Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m. and Exposition and Benediction. He said attendance at Stations of the Cross has gone from five parishioners to about 30.

Parishioners at St. Patrick are very committed to the Annual Bishop’s Appeal. Father Zimmer said in recent years the parish has been among the top five parishes in the diocese for percentage of parishioners donating, and in the top 5 percent of those that are over goal.

“I’m very happy to say that last year 60 percent of the parish gave to the Annual Bishop’s Appeal and we surpassed 203 percent of our goal,” Father Zimmer said.

Although they don’t have
Community, service and prayer: the foundations of St. Jude Parish

BY MEGAN GETTINGER

St. Jude Parish is lovingly referred to by parishioners as “one of the best kept secrets on the south side of South Bend.” Although the parish has faced challenges and undergone changes throughout its history, it has nevertheless remained a community united by service and prayer. Originally founded in 1948 to accommodate the growing population of Catholics on the south side after World War II, St. Jude Parish has continuously strived to grow and improve in order to best serve the residents of the area. The latest improvements, renovation of the church and additions to the school building, completed in 2013, exemplify the genuine desire of the members of the parish to give glory to God, and to “proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed,” as the St. Jude mission statement reads.

Because of the relatively small size of the parish and the dedicated involvement of the parishioners, there is a “wonderful, family-oriented feeling about the parish” and “a great closeness and unity,” Father John Delaney commented. Daily Mass is regularly attended by a group 50-strong, and it is common for parishioners to stay after all Masses to visit with one another and extend a warm welcome to any visitors. For 23 years St. Jude was known in the area for its annual summer festival, which was always anticipated with excitement by both the parish and the local community. After a brief hiatus, the new and improved St. Jude Festival is being resurrected and will take place in late July of 2018.

The school and the parish are closely connected, and parishioners support the school and the students in various ways: The athletic schedule is posted in the bulletin for anyone who wants to cheer on the Falcons; parishioners attend school productions, such as the annual spring musical; and there is an active program in which parishioners commit to mentoring a student for the year. The students, following this example, take pride in their school and support one another, even after graduation. Mary Krisch, business manager at St. Jude Parish, illustrated this, saying, “Many of our students go on to Marian for high school, and when they see each other in the hall they put their hands together and ‘Fly the Falcon.’ That reminds you that you are a St. Jude student. I think it’s pretty unique that they still want to keep their identity as St. Jude Falcons.”

Despite being part of a close-knit community, St. Jude parishioners do not hesitate to look beyond the walls of their church and school to see the needs of the greater South Bend community. St. Jude is home to a dynamic and active St. Vincent de Paul conference; in fact, of the 18 St. Vincent de Paul conferences in St. Joseph County, St. Jude’s made 10 percent of the home deliveries in the county last year. The school puts on monthly food drives in which the classes compete to collect the most food, and it is not unusual for parishioners to go out of their way to pick up bags of food to donate outside of the church and school.

Recent renovations give the interior of St. Jude Church, South Bend, a welcoming, chapel-like feel. 

St. Joseph County
this year’s figures yet. Father Zimmer said the trend has continued. The number of people donating has increased, as is the amount of money being donated. Because of surpassing its goal last year, an overage was returned to the parish that is being used to restore the stained glass windows in the church. The windows are original and date back to 1895-96, according to Father Zimmer. That restoration is expected this spring and a donation will cover the amount not met by the appeal.

This year’s overage is earmarked to reopen the parish hall, which flooded in March. Aside from repairing any damage by the flood, plans call for it to be renovated and updated. Father Zimmer said he’d like to triple the usage of the parish hall once it is reopened. Currently, it’s used for parish events like a monthly family movie night, monthly pancake breakfast, the annual St. Patrick’s dinner and a fall dinner for couples.

Ministries

St. Patrick has a Knights of Columbus Council, No. 5769, that has very been active since the 1960s. Parishioners enjoy singing in the liturgy, which Father Zimmer said has helped to rebuild their choir. He added that, in the last two years, the number of altar servers has increased by seven, and the number of lectors and eucharistic ministers by that same number.

The youth group has been restarted at St. Patrick, and will include high school and college-aged students. Father Zimmer said when students go away to college they are often not seen at church, so it is hoped that by including that age group it will keep them involved. Religious education attendance has increased 35 percent the last two years.

The parish office has increased its hours and is now open 20 hours a week. St. Patrick doesn’t have any full-time staff. Most people who work in the parish are volunteers, and there are a couple of part-time staff members. Parishioners are pitching in to help with a lot of deferred maintenance — new lights, redoing landscaping — and they’ve just installed a new sound system that’s on an audio loop, facilitating the celebration of the Mass for those who are hearing impaired.

There’s a women’s group at St. Patrick, Women in Spiritual Harmony, which includes women from St. Dominick Mission in Koontz Lake of the Diocese of Gary.

Father Zimmer said the church is open 24 hours, seven days a week, and 365 days a year for those who want to come and spend quiet time in prayer. When Mass is not being celebrated, there is some type of inspirational background music, including Gregorian chants, playing in the background.

Looking ahead

Among Father Zimmer’s hopes for the future are to have a full-time staff person at the parish. He would also like to engage in more outreach to youth, and it would be nice to have a certain Mass geared toward the youth and to have the parish hall accessible for them to come and watch a movie or something, he said. The parish’s strong point, according to its pastor, is the willingness of the parishioners to help.

“We have a core of people who are very happy to volunteer their time and talent towards various things, whether it’s updating the facilities, cooking or cleaning up. Their willingness to do that is very helpful. They are very proud of their parish,” he said.

Father Zimmer wants to continue the growth he’s seen since being assigned to St. Patrick. “It’s important for our parish to continue to grow; we need to continue outreach to the groups alienated from the Church who are still within our area,” he said. “We have to provide programs and outreach that refreshes people.”
Christ's human face in glory

It is a doctrine of the faith that, at the Incarnation, the Eternal Son of God, without the loss of His divinity, took upon Himself a complete human nature. That human nature, we can be sure, came from none other than His mother, Mary. I think it fair to assume that Jesus’s physical features—his facial appearance, eye color, hair color and texture—are likely to have resembled closely His own mother’s. I like to imagine that at some point in His childhood or young adulthood, someone commented to Him that He looked a lot like His mother.

As the body of our Lord was taken down from the cross, it was entrusted to His mother. Artists have variously depicted this scene, whether called the “deposition from the cross” or (more famously) the Pietà: the sorrowful mother holding in her arms the body of the Son she bore, nursed, cared for, and loved more than her own life. It strikes me that the face of Jesus, in the throes of agony on the cross, and the face of His mother, like any mother heartbroken at her Son’s suffering and utterly powerless to assuage it, must at that awful moment in human history, have looked stunningly alike. As the Franciscan Jacopone da Todi (1236-1306) wrote so beautifully in the hymn we all have likely heard during the Stations of the Cross, the “Subat Mater,” “through her heart, her sorrow sharing, now at length the sword has passed.” The “sword” being, of course, a reference to the prophecy of Simeon (Lk 2:25-35).

As they bore (at least in my meditative imagination) such a striking resemblance to one another, I often envision their faces looking nearly identical in that moment of pain and grief: the mother who shares so much in her Son’s own suffering that she experiences His agonizing death, but as another, more contemporary hymn reminds us, “If the song had ended then, our eyes would fill with tears. But the song had just begun to echo down the years.” God’s identification with humanity in the person of Jesus, the eternal Son made flesh, is “mirrored” in the face of His mother, from whose own flesh and blood He was Himself nourished. Christ’s human face reflected that of His own mother. But the “song” had not yet ended. We know that Jesus “trampled down death” by His death (as an ancient Easter Christian hymn celebrates).

The prophet called for faith in God, not only because He is almighty, but because He is unrelentingly true to the covenant, to the divine pledge that He would protect the chosen people. The prophet appealed to God, in the name of the people, for relief, but without saying that the people were being treated unfairly—at least in terms of God’s care for them. The prophet made clear that sin led the people away from God. This disengagement has produced their woes.

Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the next reading. Counseling the Christians of Corinth was a challenge for Paul. Not only did temptation and vice surround them at every side, but they argued among themselves. Paul had to call them to faithfulness, and he had to try to influence them to put their differences with each other aside.

He saw disciples as having enormous religious potential, despite all odds produced by their surroundings and the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more to God and to infuse the human inclination to sin; able, by themselves, to draw more...
A museum for which to be thankful

On Sept. 29, 1952, publication of the complete Revised Standard Version of the Bible was celebrated at the National Guard Armory in Washington, D.C., and the principal speaker was U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson. The son of the Episcopal bishop of Connecticut, Acheson movingly described the ways in which the King James Bible, which the new RSV was to supplant, had once shaped American culture and our national life.

“In the earliest days in the Northeast, the Book was All. The settlers came here to live their own lives. We would know the Bible. We would be born into it, brought up in it. It was our spiritual guide, the moral and legal code, the political system, the sustenance of life, whether that meant endurance of hardship, the endless struggle against nature, battle with enemies, or the inevitable processes of life and death. And it meant to those who cast the mold of this country something very specific and very clear. It meant that the purpose of man’s journey through life was to learn and identify his life and death. And it meant to those who were not too timid to call our- selves the realm of conscience; that government was limited in its will of God …”

That biblical vision helped form the bedrock convictions of the American idea: that government stood under the judgment of divine and natural law; that government was limited in its reach into human affairs, especially the realm of conscience; that national greatness was measured by fidelity to the moral truths taught by revelation and inscribed in the world by a demanding yet merciful God; that only a virtuous people could be truly free.

“But this … did not exhaust the teachings of this Bible,” Secretary Acheson continued. “For it taught also that the fear of God was the love of God and that the love of God was the love of man and the service of man.”

At this perilous moment in our national history, when contempt and hatred seem far more characteristic of our civic life than charity and solidarity, it’s worth pondering how far we have come, and why. To claim that “the Book is All” today would be risible. On the contrary: As Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, remarked at a pre-opening celebration of the splendid new Museum of the Bible in the nation’s capital, the Bible has been systematically “bleached out” of our national life over the past several decades. And that bleaching has produced a more tolerant people, but a far more intolerant civic life, of which the recent awfulness in Charlottesville, Virginia, may stand as a vile symbol.

At Thanksgiving 2017, too many voices in America seem to suggest that some of us must hate others of us if America is to flourish, even survive. But the great Dean Acheson had an answer for that essentially totalitarian claim, too: “In order to love our country we do not have to hate anyone. There is enough to inspire love here … Out of many, [America] one. [Ours] is a unity [amidst a] great and vigorous diversity based on respect for man, the individual … And this, indeed, is the source of our strength, and of the lasting power of our society. For the solidarity which is built, not upon servility, but upon the common loyalty of free men, is resilient and enduring.”

We may, and should hope, that Secretary Acheson’s confidence in the resilience of America has not been falsified by the secularist “bleaching” of which Cardinal Wuerl spoke. That hope has been strengthened by the opening of the Museum of the Bible on Nov. 17. Three blocks from the U.S. Capitol, we now have a striking witness, in architecture, art, and artifact, to the enduring power of the Word of God. The museum is thoroughly ecumenical and interreligious; all of the people of the Book, be they Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, or Jewish, will find much to learn there, in a series of both classic and interactive displays that nourish the mind and soul. Anyone who cares about the Bible owes the donors who made this striking facility possible, and the men and women who designed it with evident care, an enormous vote of thanks.

As if it succeeds in its mission, the Museum of the Bible will help reverse the bleaching out from our culture of what is arguably its deepest, noblest, and most important wellspring: the Word of God, molding the lives of the readers of the Book.

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.
WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send announcements at least two weeks prior to the event. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call the Today’s Catholic advertising sales staff at 260-599-1449 to purchase space.

Bishop Luers High School to host Lessons and Carols
FORT WAYNE — Bishop Luers High School will host a Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, Dec. 17, at 4 p.m. in the Chapel of Saint Francis of Assisi. Bishop Luers liturgical choirs, directed by Kristopher Andorf, will lead the music. The Bishop Luers Middle School Art Fair will be featured throughout the lobby from 2-4 p.m.

Day of Reflection
MISHAWAKA — A day of reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent Wednesday, Dec. 6, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is “Advent Unfolds.” Bring a Bible. The cost of the day is $20 and includes lunch. Register with Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at 574-259-5427.

St. Nick Pancake Breakfast
FORT WAYNE — St. John the Baptist will have a St. Nick Pancake Breakfast Sunday, Dec. 3, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the school gym, 4500 Fairfield Ave. Crafts and story time for kids and pictures with St. Nick. Auction and raffles. Tickets are $25 for a family, $5 for adults and $3 for children (3-11) and seniors.

St. Thomas the Apostle School open house
ELKHART — St. Thomas the Apostle School open house on Sunday, Dec. 3, from 9-11 a.m., to learn about opportunities available to students in preschool through eighth grade. Discover how students are achieving academic excellence and spiritual growth through incorporation of technology, hands-on inquiry-based learning, teacher/parent partnerships and faith integration in each classroom.

Messiah sing-along
FORT WAYNE — The Fort Wayne Bach Collegium will host a “Messiah” sing-along Sunday, Dec. 3, from 2-4 p.m. at Queen of Angels Church, 1500 W State Blvd., where the audience is the choir. Music will be provided for those who need it and cookies will be served at the intermission. This is a great opportunity to experience this music from the perspective of a performer. Cost is $8.

Notre Dame Advent Lessons and Carols
NOTRE DAME — An Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols will be Sunday, Dec. 3, from 7:15-9 p.m. and feature all of the Notre Dame basilica choirs. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will preside.

Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols
ELKHART — St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1108 S Main St., will present an Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols on Monday, Dec. 4, at 7 p.m. Three choirs from the parish and two from the grade school will present choral music for the Advent season, accompanied by Scripture readings, pastoral reflections, and congregational hymns. A reception will follow in the school gym. The event is free and open to all.

Advent Lessons and Carols: A journey to Christmas via music and Scripture
FORT WAYNE — St. Vincent de Paul Church will offer Advent Lessons and Carols featuring John Angotti on Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 12:30 and 6:30 p.m. in the church, 1502 E Wallen Rd.

Festival of Lessons and Carols
MISHAWAKA — St. Bavo Church, 511 W. 7th St., will host a Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, Dec. 10, at 4 p.m. The St. Bavo Parish Choir will be joined by the Marian High School Liturgical Choir and the Antioch Youth Group. There is no admission charge and everyone is welcome.

Novena to stop abortion clinic
SOUTH BEND — A perpetual adoration novena asking the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn, for the application for a new abortion clinic in South Bend to be denied, will be prayed night and day Dec. 4-12 at The Life Center Chapel, 2018 Ironwood Circle. For more information, visit www.divinemercyforlife.com.

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MISHAWAKA — A day of reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent Wednesday, Dec. 6, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is “Advent Unfolds.” Bring a Bible. The cost of the day is $20 and includes lunch. Register with Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at 574-259-5427.

St. Nick Pancake Breakfast
FORT WAYNE — St. John the Baptist will have a St. Nick Pancake Breakfast Sunday, Dec. 3, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the school gym, 4500 Fairfield Ave. Crafts and story time for kids and pictures with St. Nick. Auction and raffles. Tickets are $25 for a family, $5 for adults and $3 for children (3-11) and seniors.

St. Thomas the Apostle School open house
ELKHART — St. Thomas the Apostle School, 1331 N. Main St., will have an open house Sunday, Dec. 3, from 9:45-10:45 a.m., to learn about opportunities available to students in preschool through eighth grade. Discover how students are achieving academic excellence and spiritual growth through incorporation of technology, hands-on inquiry-based learning, teacher/parent partnerships and faith integration in each classroom.

Messiah sing-along
FORT WAYNE — The Fort Wayne Bach Collegium will host a “Messiah” sing-along Sunday, Dec. 3, from 2-4 p.m. at Queen of Angels Church, 1500 W State Blvd., where the audience is the choir. Music will be provided for those who need it and cookies will be served at the intermission. This is a great opportunity to experience this music from the perspective of a performer. Cost is $8.

Notre Dame Advent Lessons and Carols
NOTRE DAME — An Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols will be Sunday, Dec. 3, from 7:15-9 p.m. and feature all of the Notre Dame basilica choirs. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will preside.

Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols
ELKHART — St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1108 S Main St., will present an Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols on Monday, Dec. 4, at 7 p.m. Three choirs from the parish and two from the grade school will present choral music for the Advent season, accompanied by Scripture readings, pastoral reflections, and congregational hymns. A reception will follow in the school gym. The event is free and open to all.

Advent Lessons and Carols: A journey to Christmas via music and Scripture
FORT WAYNE — St. Vincent de Paul Church will offer Advent Lessons and Carols featuring John Angotti on Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 12:30 and 6:30 p.m. in the church, 1502 E Wallen Rd.

Festival of Lessons and Carols
MISHAWAKA — St. Bavo Church, 511 W. 7th St., will host a Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, Dec. 10, at 4 p.m. The St. Bavo Parish Choir will be joined by the Marian High School Liturgical Choir and the Antioch Youth Group. There is no admission charge and everyone is welcome.

Novena to stop abortion clinic
SOUTH BEND — A perpetual adoration novena asking the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn, for the application for a new abortion clinic in South Bend to be denied, will be prayed night and day Dec. 4-12 at The Life Center Chapel, 2018 Ironwood Circle. For more information, visit www.divinemercyforlife.com.
The Vincentian society in Elkhart is making an effort to bring awareness to the food pantry at St. Vincent de Paul Church in that city. The pantry — a collaboration between the two Elkhart parishes, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Thomas the Apostle — is in the St. Vincent de Paul Pastoral Center, behind St. Vincent de Paul School at 1108 S. Main St.

Erin Cataldo, project coordinator for St. Vincent de Paul School and self-proclaimed “passionate Vincentian,” said this year they have been focusing on an outreach for donors, as there are people in both parishes who don’t know about the food pantry or how they can contribute to it.

“We’re making a more conscious effort to let the parishioners know we’re here and that they can support us with either funds or food,” Cataldo said.

Don Locke has been president of the society for the past seven years and is a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. He said the society builds unity between the two parishes; and while the food pantry does assist members of both parishes, he said, “The majority of our clients come from the community.”

A new brochure has been created to spread the word, and the pantry has partnered with other organizations like WIC (Women, Infants and Children) and The Women’s Care Center — like the concentrated effort has, overall, positively impacted the Ruggabers.

The Ruggabers are very intentional about being entirely open and honest before they invite someone into their home. One of the first questions they ask any potential roommate is what experience and expectations they have with kids. The second question is about how good they are at dealing with loud noises, toys and scruffy spaces.

“Sometimes the couple are surprised with how things work out, such as when a college sophomore without much experience with kids or community wanted to stay with them. He stayed during his summer internship,” Amelia said. “They are happy that we can share this living situation with them — that there are people in the world who are very happy to have a group of children pepper them with questions as soon as they come home, and that this actually makes them happy. This makes us happy too, when we can love our neighbor just in who we are at that moment. Right now, we are in the stage of eclectic family life, but we can still be of service and of love in that.”

RUGGABER, from page 1

The Young Vincentians at St. Vincent de Paul School have been collecting personal care items for food pantry clients. Collection boxes were placed in each classroom during October, and the items collected included deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, soap, small packages of tissues and hand sanitizers.

Cataldo said the Young Vincentians club recently restarted at the school, and the group fits well with the renewed mission and message Principal Tara Lundy is focusing on, which is service. Students are being taught different aspects of Catholic social teaching based on their grade level.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is an international Catholic organization of lay persons founded in 1835 by Frederic Ozanam and his companions. Placed under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul, its members are inspired by St. Vincent de Paul and his thinking and work. In a spirit of justice and mercy, they seek to help those who are suffering.

In 2016, the St. Vincent de Paul-St. Thomas the Apostle conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul served 5,481 people.

Provided by Amelia Ruggaber