BALTIMORE (CNS) — The U.S. bishops approved their statement on the Eucharist with 222 “yes” votes Nov. 17, the second of two days of public sessions during their Nov. 15-18 fall general assembly.

Their OK came a day after their discussion of the document — a discussion that took a drastically different tone than their previous debate about what the document could potentially contain during their virtual assembly five months ago.

At that June gathering, a major focus highlighted whether it would address denying Communion to Catholic politicians who support abortion.

Some bishops said a strong rebuke of President Joe Biden, the nation’s second Catholic president, should be included in it because of Biden’s recent actions protecting and expanding abortion access, while others warned that this would portray the bishops as a partisan force during a time of bitter political divisions across the country.

The document the bishops discussed and approved does not specifically call out Catholic political leaders, but it does more generally point out the seriousness of the sacrament.

The discussion, just prior to the vote, focused on some of the statement’s wording. Specific amendments were approved but additional comments about wording changes that were raised on the floor did not.

One of the bishops, for example, wanted to add the word “et cetera” after a list of vulnerable people the Church was responsible for in order to show its broad inclusion, but the bishops, who had already added to the list to include the unborn, chose not to add the additional descriptor.

As points of discussion, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, outgoing chairman of the U.S. bishops’ pro-life committee, stressed the prelates must not forget the responsibility they have to “take care of the souls” of Catholic political leaders who do not publicly support Church teaching on abortion.

And Bishop Donald E. DeGrood of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, noted that there is a healthy tension for the bishops, to call out what isn’t right but to do so in love and to be united as they find...
ways to apply this new document in their dioceses.
The document on the Eucharist states: “One should not celebrate Mass or receive holy Communion in the state of mortal sin without having sought the sacrament of reconciliation and received absolution.”

It also says that if a Catholic in his or her personal life has “knowingly and obstinately” rejected the doctrines of the church or its teaching on moral issues, that person should refrain from receiving Communion because it is “likely to cause scandal for others.”

Back in June, at the end of the bishops’ discussion of the document, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the bishops’ doctrine committee, said the draft would not focus on denying Communion to people but would emphasize the importance of the sacrament. And in his Nov. 16 presentation of the 26-page statement titled “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church,” Bishop Rhoades said it “addresses the fundamental doctrine about the Eucharist that the Church needs to retrieve and revive.”

In his short presentation to U.S. bishops, followed by just a handful of comments from the floor, the bishop said the document is addressed to all Catholics in the United States and “endeavors to explain the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church.”

He also said it is intended to be a theological contribution to the bishop’s strategic plan and to the bishops’ planned eucharistic revival “by providing a doctrinal resource for parishes, catechists and the faithful.”

Discussion from the floor included a request from Bishop Robert Baldacchino of Las Cruces, New Mexico, that the document include more about the paschal mystery, or the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Bishop Richard P. Stika of Knoxville, Tennessee, wondered how the document would be understood by college students, high schoolers or children, noting that “a lot of it’s over their heads” and they would have to have some kind of theological foundation to grasp it.

“Have we these beautiful, beautiful documents that sometimes are just ignored,” he said, suggesting that it should be made “more readable and understandable.”

In response, Bishop Rhoades said the document “as it stands is really meant for adults,” but he could see it being used in high schools with a teacher who would explain it better. He also said it could be developed by publishers as a resource for catechesis for grade school students.

Bishop Timothy L. Dolan of Lafayette, Indiana, said the work should be used in schools with a teacher who would explain it better. He also said it could be developed by publishers as a resource for catechesis for grade school students.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Doctrine, speaks during a Nov. 17 session of the bishops’ fall general assembly in Baltimore. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the first in-person bishops’ meeting since 2019.

Bishop Dolan said the draft explains the importance of Communion, often calling it a gift, and uses references from Scripture, prayers of the Church and Second Vatican Council documents to back this up. It also explains, citing words of the saints, that Communion is not just a symbol but the real presence of Christ.

This transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the document says, is “one of the central mysteries of the Catholic faith” which is a “doorway through which we, like the saints and mystics before us, may enter into a deeper perception” of God’s presence.

It notes, almost halfway through, that the Vatican II document “Lumen Gentium” — “The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” — describes the Eucharist as “the source and summit of the Christian life.” It also says that as Catholics understand what the Eucharist means, they should more fully participate in Mass and also reach out to the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, urged the bishops in a letter to proceed with caution in developing a national policy “to address the situation of Catholics in public office who support legislation allowing abortion, euthanasia or other moral evils.”

Pope Francis said on a Sept. 15 flight back from Bratislava, Slovakia, that he preferred not to comment directly on the issue of denying Communion, but he urged U.S. bishops to take a pastoral approach rather than wade into the political sphere.

More recently, after the pope and Biden met at the Vatican Oct. 29, Biden was asked by reporters in Rome if abortion was one of the topics of their meeting and the president said: “We just talked about the fact he was happy that I was a good Catholic, and I should keep receiving Communion.”

The centrality of the Eucharist will be the focus of a national event in Indianapolis in 2024.
Bishops approve new socially responsible investment guidelines

BY DENNIS SADOWSKI

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Bishops approved new guidelines govern- ing financial investments of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that include strict criteria on where money would be invested and advance a policy of engagement on corporate prac- tices that impact human dignity.

With 216 votes in favor, 10 opposed and five abstentions, the guidelines that were approved Nov. 17 update the 30-year-old investment policy that was last changed in 2003.

Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on International Justice and Peace, said the new guidelines have been under development for three years among a broad consultation involving nine USCCB commit- tees under the direction of the Christian Brothers Investment Services, which acted as manager of the process.

Bishop Malloy presented the guidelines Nov. 16, standing in for Bishop Gregory L. Parkes of St. Petersburg, Florida, USCCB treasurer, who was unable to travel to Baltimore because of an illness.

The guidelines were approved with few changes offered by the body of bishops meeting in person during their fall general assembly Nov. 15-18 in Baltimore.

The new document includes ideas gleaned from a survey of bishops on what they thought should be included in a revised policy, Bishop Malloy explained.

The policy adds guidance in areas such as telecommunica- tions, media and social impact investing, and expands consider- ation of steps ranging from no investment to engaging corpora- tions on their business practices.

Bishop Robert W. McElroy of San Diego thanked his colleagues on the committee that reviewed amendments offered by bishops overnight for adding a footnote to the document that calls for promoting “responsible investments in social and environmental sectors, for example by evaluating progressive disinvestment from the fossil-fuel sector.”

“I think we’re going to have to move to an absolute prohibition on fossil fuels if we’re going to give witness to what the world needs to move,” Bishop McElroy said.

The document obtained by Catholic News Service includes numerous concerns in which the USCCB will not invest as well as others in which the conference will engage corporations through proxy votes and support of shareholder resolutions to change company practices.

Acknowledging the USCCB is responsible for growing its finan- cial assets in order to carry out the various ministries it undertakes, the document holds that the conference has a responsibility to do so in a manner “to foster the growth of the common good and to ensure the common good.”

The document opens with a review from more than three decades ago of the U.S. bishops’ explanation that proclaiming the Gospel in a complex economic world requires “a prudent strat- egy where decisions are made by following the moral teaching of the church.”

Such an effort requires the evaluation of investments by determining how companies and other entities “protect life, promote human dignity, enhance the common good and provide care for the environment.”

The document also reviews stewardship principles that share- holders must undertake to protect human dignity.

“The enthralled web of corpo- rate relationships that today’s economy almost makes it impos- sible to know all the effects invest- ing in a single company, specific security, or investment fund produce. Nevertheless, we must do all we can to assure that we invest in those corporations and institu- tions that promote human dignity and enhance the common good,” the document says.

It adds, “Companies, securities or investment funds that produce a significant amount of revenue from immoral activities should not be invested in.”

The document offers three corporate strategies to follow: avoid doing harm, actively work for change and promote the common good.

In carrying out the strategies, the USCCB will continue to build on current efforts and monitor how Catholic teaching and con- ference policies are advanced or undermined by corporate actions, according to the document.

The draft guidelines also call for the USCCB to work with investment advisers “to articulate clearly its goals and policies; apply common sense and pru- dence in carrying out investment strategies; and require financial advisers to report every three years on the effectiveness of the guidelines and how they are being implemented.

Investment policies in the document cover five categories: protecting human life, promoting human dignity, enhancing the common good, pursuing econom- istic justice and saving our global commons.

The policy calls for no invest- ments in any company directly involved in abortion; euthanasia; assisted suicide; in vitro fertilization; human cloning; contracep- tives or embryonic stem-cell and fetal tissue research involving the destruction of embryos and services from such research.

Other companies where invest- ments would not occur include those involved with pornography or adult entertainment in a way that “directly participate in the performance of sex reassignment surgery or in the production and sale of drugs or hormones for the pur- poses of delaying normal puberty or of changing the body of an individual to correspond to a sex different from that of their birth sex.”

Investments also would not occur in corporations that “derive any revenue from the production of weapons of mass destruction,” including a Gloria during this special votive Mass would not be offered, “commemoration in the proper prayers,” and since the General Instruction of the Roman Missal No. 55 allows for the Gloria to be sung “at particular celebrations of a more solemn charac- ter,” including a Gloria during this special votive Mass would still be possible.

Dual obligations for Christmas and Holy Family

Christmas falls on a Saturday this year, Dec. 25, and remains a holy day of obligation. The next day — Sunday, Dec. 26, the feast of the Holy Family — also has its own, distinct obligation. There are thus two separate obligations to fulfill.

Since Christmas outranks Holy Family, on the evening of Saturday, Dec. 25, the prayers and readings of the Christmas “Mass during the Day” would still be used, and Evening Prayer II of the Nativity would be prayed.

Nonetheless, attending Mass on Saturday evening — any time after 4 p.m. — can count toward either the Christmas obligation or the Holy Family Sunday obligation, but not both.

Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Obligation may be fulfilled from the evening of Friday, Dec. 24 (starting 4 p.m.) through the end of Saturday, Dec. 25.

For example, one may attend:
- Vigil Mass on Dec. 24
- Mass during the Night (celebrated at any convenient time) on Dec. 25
- Morning/afternoon/evening Mass on Dec. 25

For example, one may attend:
- Afternoon/evening Masses after 4 p.m. on Dec. 25 (even though the Mass texts will be for the Holy Family)
- Morning/evening Mass on Dec. 26

Holy Family

Obligation may be fulfilled from the evening of Saturday, Dec. 25 (starting 4 p.m.) through the end of Sunday, Dec. 26.

For example, one may attend:
- Afternoon/evening Masses after 4 p.m. on Dec. 25 (even though the Mass texts will be for the Holy Family)
- Morning/evening Mass on Dec. 26

For example, someone can actually go to a Christmas Mass in the morning on Saturday — Christmas Day — to fulfill the Christmas obligation, and then go to another Christmas Mass after 4 p.m. on Saturday to fulfill the Holy Family obligation.

No matter how it is accomplished, the key is that the two obligations must be fulfilled separately.
Plans for three-year National Eucharistic Revival approved

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The U.S. bishops’ focus on the significance of the Eucharist in the life of the Church isn’t just about the statement they approved at their fall meeting.

It also is about something bigger: a three-year eucharistic revival that will culminate with the National Eucharistic Congress 2024 in Indianapolis.

The bishops approved a motion Nov. 17 during their general assembly in Baltimore to host this congress with 201 votes in favor, 17 against and five abstentions.

Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis, who was recently named bishop of Crookston, Minnesota, gave the bishops details about this planned revival just before they voted on it.

The bishop, who is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, said the revival could be a time of healing for the entire Church as well as a movement of evangelization and a reawakening of understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist for Catholics across the country.

The revival will officially start on the feast of Corpus Christi June 16, 2022, with a diocesan focus that will include eucharistic processions and other events of adoration and prayer around the country.

In 2023, the emphasis will be on parishes and resources aimed at increasing Catholics’ understanding of what the Eucharist really means.

Part of the impetus prompting this effort was a Pew study in the fall of 2019 that showed just 30% of Catholics understand the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Bishop Cozzens noted the price tag for the National Eucharistic Congress — $28 million— is expensive, but said it is worth it and can be doable with fundraising.

He said many apostolates and ministries are donating time and resources to help make the eucharistic revival a reality.

Some bishops questioned the cost of the congress that wraps up this venture, but others spoke about the potential this will have to bring Catholics back to the Church and bring those in the Church to a deeper sense of devotion and a stronger faith.

Bishop Cozzens pointed out that such large-scale Church events can be transformative and said the National Eucharistic Congress may end up being something the Catholic Church revisits 10 years from now.

Blessed Carlo Acutis will be the patron for the first year of the revival. The Italian teen, who was beatified in October 2020, died of leukemia in 2006 at age 15. He was a programmer who used social media to unite many people and spread Christian values.

In his apostolic letter proclaiming the youth “blessed,” Pope Francis said he “cultivated a friendship with our Lord Jesus, placing the Eucharist and the witness of charity at the center of his life.”

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

Former University of Notre Dame Women’s Basketball Coach MUFFET MCGRAW will be inducted into the RING OF HONOR on December 12, 2021!

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Light the lake with a luminary as a tribute, to honor a loved one or wish a student good luck. Luminaries are $10 each at saintfrancis.givingfuel.com/lights.

260-399-8034 sf.edu/christmas
Fortin answers call to service in the diaconate

By Joshua Schipper

Dedication to the Eucharist and devotion to the Blessed Mother has helped seminarian LeeAllen Fortin realize another step toward his vocation to the priesthood. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will ordain the South Dakota native to the diaconate at 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 27, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne. It’s a much anticipated event, because his original ordination date in September of this year had to be postponed due to illness.

Fortin recalled living on a “little hobby farm,” when he was young, and having to travel 25 miles to the local parish, Immaculate Conception. “It’s actually really beautiful — I actually really beautiful — I was baptized in Immaculate Conception Parish, and I’ll be ordained in Immaculate Conception Cathedral.”

Bishop Rhoades assigned the seminarian to St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Fort Wayne, this past summer. There, he led a Bible study on the minor prophets. He attributes his having been characterized by her inter...

LeeAllen Fortin

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will call LeeAllen Fortin to the diaconate through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit on Saturday, Nov. 27, at 11 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

Fortin graduated college seminary in Fargo, North Dakota. During his subsequent pastoral year, after a discussion with another friend, he decided to travel to Fort Wayne to visit the Poor Brothers of Saint Francis — known as the Franciscan Friars Minor order — that existed at the time.

After a second visit to Fort Wayne, Fortin joined the Franciscans. And while he thought he had found a path to holiness with the brothers, in 2020 the order disbanded.

“That grace came was so clear. I thought I was called to be a brother for the rest of my life unless God took the community away — and then He did.”

Fortin had to reevaluate his vocation. He realized God would provide opportunities for him to pursue his vocation to either radical Franciscan life or to the priesthood.

“My spiritual director said it was pretty clear: There are two things you’re drawn to, and there’s an open door to one of them and there’s not an open door to the other. So, it seems like you should go where there’s the open door. So, I continued on toward the priesthood.”

For those discerning their own vocation, the seminarian suggests devoting time to prayer — beginning with the Mass. “Give as much time to prayer as possible.” Fortin recommended. “The vocation is about how God wants you to receive and share His love for the rest of your life. And that’s what prayer is: It’s receiving and, in a sense, sharing His love.”

Some, however, may find it difficult to engage in quiet, contemplative prayer at first. Fortin suggested reading about saints who immersed themselves in lives of prayer in order to “better understand the value of it, and thus to cultivate an ardent desire for prayer and sanctity.”

“What makes us desire something is understanding how valuable it is. So, my encouragement would be to read about the saints. Read spiritual theology. Learn about the importance of silence.”

“To be inspired,” Fortin continued, “you have to encounter the prayer and sanctity in the source where it’s kept: the lives of the saints.”

Fortin had received the name “Joseph” as a brother at Our Lady of the Angels Friary, the home of the Poor Brothers. He said that name highlights his heartfelt relationship to the Blessed Mother — a devotion that Fortin believes aided in his journey to the diaconate.

“Some of the journey has been characterized by her inter-

Editor’s note: This article appeared in Today’s Catholic, Aug. 22, 2021.
St. Joseph reminds Church to pay attention to the essential, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — During this time marked by global crisis, St. Joseph can offer people support, consolation and guidance, Pope Francis said. St. Joseph is a man full of faith in God and his providence, the pope said Nov. 17 at his weekly general audience in the Vatican’s Paul VI Hall. The saint also “reminds the Church to keep her eyes on what the world deliberately ignores” and to consider as important what others discard, he said. “He is truly a master of the essential: He reminds us that what truly matters does not attract our attention, but requires patient discernment to be discovered and appreciated,” he added. The day’s audience talk was the first of a new series of talks dedicated to the foster father of Jesus and husband of Mary. Pope Francis had proclaimed a “Year of St. Joseph” from Dec. 8, 2020, to Dec. 8, 2021, to mark the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as patron of the universal Church. The saint is held up as an example of sacrificial fatherhood and purity and as an intercessor in healing and fighting the world’s evils. “Never like before, today, in this time marked by a global crisis,” the pope said, “can he offer us support, consolation and guidance.”

Bishops affirm dioceses’ sainthood causes for three U.S. laypeople

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. bishops agreed Nov. 17 that the sainthood causes for three laypeople from the United States should be advanced by their respective dioceses. Bishop Joseph J. Douglas Deshotel of Lafayette, Louisiana, presented the causes of Augustine Robert Enrico “Noonie” Peligre and Charlene Richard. Bishop Larry Silva of Honolulu presented the third cause — that of Gabriel Vance of Columbus, Ohio, seen pushing stroller, and his three children and extended family participate in the National Men’s March to End Abortion rally in Baltimore Nov. 15. Joe McClane, another participant, shared his story of participating in an abortion with an audience of hundreds of Catholic men from around the country who gathered outside a Planned Parenthood clinic in downtown Baltimore Nov. 15 to pray for an end to abortion, to repent for their role in abortion and to call on all men to defend unborn life. They then marched to the hotel where the U.S. bishops were meeting Nov. 15-18 and prayed the rosary outside.

Archbishop gives approval for new Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. bishops approved a revised English edition of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. Under a separate action, they also did the same with a revised edition in Spanish. Both actions took place Nov. 17, the second day of two days of public sessions during their Nov. 15-18 fall general meeting in Baltimore. The English version passed 215-0 with two abstentions. The Spanish version passed 214-0 with one abstention. Both needed two-thirds of the U.S. Latin-rite bishops’ approval; they still require a subsequent “confirmation” and “recognition” by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. More commonly known over the past two generations as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or RCIA, the name is being changed to Order of Christian Initiation of Adults, or OCI. However, for those adults joining the church at the Easter Vigil, there continue to be several rites they go through to mark their emergence as full members of the Catholic Church. (The Spanish edition will retain its acronym of RICA, for Ritual de la Introducción de los Catequizandos.) Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Connecticut, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, noted that the updated English edition is a “true and accurate translation.” He said the text includes “updated terminology to better reflect the current Catholic Understanding.”

Archbishop: Pandemic hasn’t stopped moms from aiding moms in need

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. bishops’ “Walking with Moms in Need” initiative may have been slowed by the coronavirus pandemic, but it has by no means stopped helping expectant mothers from any walk of life, according to Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas. This initiative “has the capacity to take what is often seen as a parochial divide and transform it into pastoral unity, bridging the divide between Catholics who describe themselves using the labels of ‘pro-life’ or ‘social justice,’” said Archbishop Naumann, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities. “The vision of WWM is that a pregnant or parenting mother in need can turn to any local Catholic parish and be connected with the life-affirming assistance and accompaniment that she needs,” Archbishop Naumann said Nov. 17 during a presentation at the bishops’ annual fall general assembly in Baltimore. The initiative was timed to launch on the 25th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s encyclical “The Gospel of Life” (“Evangelium Vitae”). The date was March 25, 2020, which fell during the second week of the pandemic. “The good news is that all of the WWMIN resources, including timelines and schedules, are fully adaptable to meet the specific needs and circumstances of your diocese and parishes,” Archbishop Naumann told his fellow bishops. The initiative’s website is WalkingWithMoms.com.

Bishops urged to implement framework for marriage and family ministry

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth called on his fellow bishops Nov. 17 to work “in every way possible” to implement the national pastoral framework for marriage and family ministry that they approved in June. Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco said that addressing marriage and family life is vital in a time when families are under rising threats from “sweeping ideological currents that destroy and undermine our sexual identity as man and woman and God-given vocations as father and mother, son or daughter.” Bolstering marriage and family ministry is an appropriate undertaking to start during the “Amoris Laetitia Family Year,” declared by Pope Francis, the archbishop said in remarks on the second day of public sessions during the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ fall general assembly Nov. 15-18 in Baltimore. Titled “called to the Joy of Love: A Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry,” the document can serve as a practical guidebook to serve couples and families because it offers an adaptable set of principles and strategies for pastoral care, Archbishop Cordileone explained. To help implement the framework, the Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund, seeded with $1 million, has been established, the archbishop said. Funds will be distributed on a competitive basis in amounts ranging from $10,000 to $50,000, provided a diocese or eparchy can match the amount being awarded. Applications for the first round of awards are due Dec. 10. Applications are online at CatholicMarriageInitiativesFund.org.

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The gift that keeps on coming

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Subscription gifts are all the rage lately and what child doesn’t get excited over their own personal piece of mail? There are many Catholic companies that have delved into the world of subscription gifting with t-shirts, recipes, activities and more. Here are a few such subscriptions recommended with Catholic children in mind.

Catholic Family Crate

The first product is a monthly box subscription called Catholic Family Crate. Presentation of the crate was attractive, with drawings of saints and religious symbols on the outside, something that children could be excited to find in their mailbox monthly. Similarly, the materials inside were eye-catching, with bold, kid-friendly colors on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper. The kit comes with a materials list, feast day stickers of two saints with a materials list, feast day on sturdy paper.

It does have a couple of minor weaknesses. One, the writing on the saint feast day stickers is so small that it is almost unreadable, so the saint must be relatively well-known by sight to be easily identified. The other is that, while the crate is designed to appeal to a broad spectrum of ages, some of the activities might be a little more advanced than younger children would understand. Overall, though, it is a beautiful tool to help teach the faith to youngsters.

Makers of the Catholic Family Crate have even offered a discount for Today’s Catholic readers through December 24: 20% off the first month of a subscription or 20% off anything in the store by simply using the code TODAYSCATHOLIC catholicfamilycrate.com

OSV Kids

Our Sunday Visitor puts out a monthly magazine for children called OSV Kids. Each issue features a “Happening this Month” intro, a saint’s story, tear-out bookmark and more. Children will likely love doing the cutout craft and displaying their artwork in the home. The reading is easy and the pictures engaging so that young readers could get through the magazine on their own and parents could read it to younger children. Children can even do some of the activities together. There is also a page in the back with suggestions for parents on utilizing the magazine in their family faith life. The one downside is that there is only one craft that children will probably fight over, though this problem can be solved by printing or hand-copying the design onto thick card stock.

teachingcatholickids.com/osvkids/

STANDS FOR THE FANS CAMPAIGN

Our bleachers are more than just raised, tiered rows of benches. They provide comfortable, safe support for watching our student competitions, theatre and musical performances, and Eucharist celebrations. It is in our gymnasium bleachers that parents, grandparents, friends, and faculty watch our students achieve victory, agonize over defeat, raise the curtain, and receive school recognition.

You have the opportunity to contribute to the STANDS FOR THE FANS campaign with a minimum contribution of $250. Your gift will help support the new bleachers and gymnasium sound equipment and it will be acknowledged on our Stands for the Fans recognition wall plaque to be located in the gymnasium lobby.

Contributions may be made by cash or check to Bishop Luers High School, or you may donate online by credit card on our website:
https://app.etapistry.com/onlineforms/BishopLuersHighSchool/GymRenovation.html

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to Bishop Luers Catholic High School and the next 63 years on our spryng gymnasium floor. Please contact Louise Jackson at 260-456-1261, extension 4101, or at ljackson@bishopluers.org.
included in this are St. Joseph, St. Francis and our Lady of Guadalupe. This would be a more appropriate gift for a teenager or adult, potentially a college student living away from home who would like to show off his/her faith in a comfy way. Orders can be placed at sockreligious.com and the website sells “That One Sheep” t-shirts featuring fun puns about various saints.

sockreligious.com

Wanderlust Catholic

Perhaps because traditional mail service has become less mainstream, when a child finds an envelope in the mail with their name on it, it is a special moment. Even more special is when the letter that they receive looks like a handwritten, illustrated letter from a “friend on pilgrimage,” as the website states. Wanderlust Catholic was started by Catholic wife and mother Elayne Miller. One of the best values at only $6/month, these detailed letters help children explore exotic locations and unique traditions throughout the world through Catholic eyes. Focused on saints, churches and Catholic culture, the letters are well-researched and in line with the Magisterium. Additionally, each letter contains a surprise gift, such as stickers and bookmarks.

The letters are in print, not cursive, so they are easier for younger children to read. However, with some of the different cultures featured, there will likely be some words that young children will not be able to read on their own. A special discount is being offered for 15% off a yearlong subscription with the code TODAY15, valid through the end of the year.

sockreligious.com

Wanderlust Catholic

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Wanderlust Catholic

Perhaps because traditional mail service has become less mainstream, when a child finds an envelope in the mail with their name on it, it is a special moment. Even more special is when the letter that they receive looks like a handwritten, illustrated letter from a “friend on pilgrimage,” as the website states. Wanderlust Catholic was started by Catholic wife and mother Elayne Miller. One of the best values at only $6/month, these detailed letters help children explore exotic locations and unique traditions throughout the world through Catholic eyes. Focused on saints, churches and Catholic culture, the letters are well-researched and in line with the Magisterium. Additionally, each letter contains a surprise gift, such as stickers and bookmarks.

The letters are in print, not cursive, so they are easier for younger children to read. However, with some of the different cultures featured, there will likely be some words that young children will not be able to read on their own. A special discount is being offered for 15% off a yearlong subscription with the code TODAY15, valid through the end of the year.

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By Joshua Schipper

A secular television program on miracles inspired Catholic speaker Tim Francis to learn more about his faith. After drifting away from the Church for a time, the discovery of an old VHS tape his mother had recorded led him on a journey to find out more about Catholicism.

Francis, the founder of the Catholic catechesis organization “You Shall Believe,” spoke about the miracles that led him back to the Church during a presentation on the evening of Nov. 15 at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne.

After Father Jay Homing opened with a prayer, Francis spoke about his faith journey. He recalled that he fell away from practicing his faith around the time he was in college at Ohio State University. He was challenged by the culture, he admitted, although “by the end of my Ohio State years, I never got into drugs, thankfully.”

However, around the end of his time at the university, the owner of a bar where he worked as a bouncer asked Francis to accompany him during a drug deal. “I saw cocaine for the first time in my life. The first time he asked me, I said ‘Why not?’ And that put me on a tailspin — a very dark tailspin.”

After that, he married someone with “no religious upbringing at all.” His mother persisted in pushing Francis to return to the faith. In 1999, she recorded a two-hour-long FOX program called “Signs from God,” which followed a woman who said she was receiving “profound theological teachings” from Christ. Francis’ mother gave him the tape, which he subsequently lost.

Ten years later, he received a phone call from the person who found it. “Somebody called me randomly, an old friend, and said ‘I was cleaning out my house and you left a tape there.’” His mother had since passed away. It was his mom’s VCR tape. “I knew that from the other side my mom was pushing me to find out what this ‘miracle’ meant.”

Francis spoke extensively about the woman depicted on the recording, Catalina Rivas, and miracles that took place in Cochabamba, Bolivia. He explained that Mike Willesee, an Australian journalist, began researching Rivas and her story.

According to Francis and the video clips he presented, Rivas, who was uneducated, had been writing messages from God in Greek despite never having learned the language. She had also received the stigmata — the physical wounds that Christ suffered during his crucifixion — and told Willessee the exact time and date that she would again experience the wounds.

The skeptic Willessee and his team filmed the seemingly spontaneous formation of the wounds of Christ on Rivas’ body. The journalist soon returned to see that the extensive wounds he had watched appear had almost completely healed.

Francis explained that Willessee had fallen away from the Catholic faith but reverted before his death in 2019. In addition to this miracle, Francis also talked about the more well-known Miracle of Lanciano, a eucharistic miracle that occurred during an Italian Mass in the 700s.

At the time, a monk celebrating Mass had doubts about the Catholic doctrine of transsubstantiation, in which the unleavened bread and wine physically transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

When the monk said the words of consecration, the bread and wine physically transformed into living flesh and five globules of blood.

“Each clot is a different size,” pointed out Francis. “But one clot weighs exactly the same as the sum total of all the clots together. The bishop said the reason is because Jesus was showing us what the Church teaches, which is one drop of consecrated blood, one little speck of consecrated host, is the entire Christ.”

Christy Hoeve, an attendee at the Monday presentation, commented that Francis’ presentation was motivating. She said she had not heard of the miracle of Catalina Rivas’s stigmata until that evening.

In addition to discussing miracles, Francis stressed other important moral aspects of the Catholic faith, including the criterion that contrast venial sins and mortal sins.

To learn more about Francis’ organization or about the miracles he discussed at his presentation, visit www.youshallbelieve.com.
As we enter the 2021 Christmas season, I want to share a donor story related to last year’s ministry-wide Christmas Gift Catalog featuring the various ministries of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. The donor, who gives anonymously, is a grandmother of 12 children: eight boys and eight girls ranging in age from 5 to 19 years old.

Last year, COVID-19 restrictions made it even harder for her to shop for gifts, on top of some mobility issues that she has endured for the past three years. At the family Thanksgiving celebration, this generous grandmother showed the gift catalog to her 12 grandchildren and asked them to choose an initiative of the Poor Handmaids they wanted to support. They also had a wonderful discussion about the importance of giving back. A couple weeks before Christmas, this lovely grandma made a $1,200 gift to honor her 12 grandchildren and the eight different ministries they collectively chose to support. The grandmother then wrote the Poor Handmaids a thank you note for giving her the opportunity to give the gift of generosity.

If you are struggling to find the perfect gift for someone, we hope you will consider a gift of “Love, Hope & Light,” the theme of this year’s catalog. With outreach from Indiana to other parts of the world, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ engage in a process of attentive listening and courageous response. Their foundress, St. Katharina Kasper, inspired the sisters to minister to God’s people by listening prayerfully, living simply and serving joyfully. Throughout her life, St. Katharina told her sisters to care for the poor, the sick and the children. That inspiration remains as alive today as it was in 1851 when she founded the congregation in Germany. With central offices in Donaldson, Indiana, the sisters of the American Province have provided more than 150 years of ministry in the United States. You can be a part of the various ministries by supporting the work of the sisters with a generous gift this Christmas season.

— Amanda Maynard, Director of Development Services, The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ

The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ collected materials and made thousands of masks to give away to the Plymouth community last year.

Give joyously to help others this Christmas

Life is looking up for Ellen Dodge, a resident of the Maria Center on the campus of the Center at Donaldson, now that she’s using her Upwalker. The walker was made possible for Dodge through the generosity of donors to the Greatest Needs Fund from the 2020 PHJC Gift Catalog.

LOVE HOPE & LIGHT

A Ministry-wide Christmas Gift Catalog for The Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ

You can view all 21 gifts by visiting www.poorhandmaids.org/donate

SCAN HERE
To Donate or Learn More
Bishop’s Advice for a Holy Advent: ‘Pray and Love’

With Advent, we begin a new liturgical year. The Latin word “Adventus” means “coming.” The meaning of Advent can be summed up in two words: “God comes.” God comes to dwell among us and to stay with us. He comes to free us from sin and death. He comes to save us. God’s coming to us in the present is linked to His coming in the past, His Incarnation, and also His coming in the future, His glorious return at the end of time. The Advent season focuses on these three comings: His coming in the flesh in the fullness of time (which we celebrate at Christmas), His coming now in the present (in our souls), and His final coming at the end of time (to judge the living and the dead). Our God is the God-who-comes.

Why does God come to us? It is because of who He is: “God is love,” St. John teaches us (1 John 4:16). Our Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, explained:

“The one true God, ‘the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is not a God who is there in Heaven, unconcerned with us and our history, but he is the God-who-comes. 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 season of Advent is a time to remember and to celebrate God’s coming, but also a time to prepare for His coming. to prepare to welcome Him at Christmas, to prepare for His second coming, and to welcome Him now into our souls by receiving His grace.

In the liturgies of Advent, the prayers and Scripture readings urge us to be ready for Christ’s coming. Jesus Himself urges to be watchful, vigilant and alert, to stay awake. So does St. Paul. We are called to throw off the lethargy of sin and to receive the energy and vigor of grace, by welcoming and opening our hearts to God our Savior.

How can we have a fruitful Advent? The best advice I can think of is “Pray and love.” To be watchful, alert and ready for the Lord’s coming, we need the vigilance of prayer. Pope Francis has warned us often about the dangers of letting drowsiness overtake us in our Christian lives and about a dangerous kind of sleep, what he calls “the slumber of mediocrity.” The Holy Father gives us the remedy to rouse ourselves from this slumber: the vigilance of Pope Francis preached the following:

“May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with power and glory.”

St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

“Let us therefore make every effort to live a life worthy of the calling we have received, to be holy and pleasing to God.”

In the Collect, we ask God for “the might of God’s power, that we may love one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness”

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with power and glory. Amen.
The Church emphasizes Advent as a season of hope. Christian hope is founded in our faith in God and His love, a love so great that He gave us His only-begotten Son so that we might have eternal life. Ours is not some vague hope. It is hope that is anchored in Christ, the Word made flesh, who came and who comes, to save us. In this season of hope, we prayerfully watch and wait for Jesus’ coming by the commitment to love one another as He has loved us. In this sense, the Advent season of hope is also a season of love.

We are all called to holiness. St. Paul prayed that the Thessalonians would be “blameless in holiness” at the coming of Jesus. How? “Through love for one another and for all.” This is the path to holiness. “Charity is superior to all the virtues.” (CCC 1826) “If I… have not charity,” St. Paul says, “I am nothing.”

I invite you to make a resolution to practice a work or works of mercy and charity during Advent. As you buy Christmas gifts for loved ones, think about a gift for the poor, perhaps a donation to our Catholic Charities, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Christ Child Society, or another charitable organization. Remember especially relatives, friends, or neighbors who may be having a hard time and reach out to them through a visit, phone call, or card. Reach out to those in your life who are sick, lonely, or suffering during this season and keep them in your prayers.

Throughout Advent, let us keep in mind the prayer from the First Sunday of Advent – for “the resolve to run forth to meet Christ with righteous deeds at his coming.” May righteous deeds, works of mercy, acts of charity, be part of our observance of Advent and preparation for Christmas!

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the icon of Advent. She who lovingly bore the Son of God in her immaculate womb is Our Lady of Advent. In this season of grace, we will celebrate her Immaculate Conception and her appearance as Our Lady of Guadalupe. She is our greatest human model of prayer and love. May she help us to live this Advent more authentically and fruitfully through prayer and love! May Our Lady inspire us in the true spirit of Advent!
Collaboration brings Afghan refugees to Fort Wayne

BY JENNIFER BARTON

The mission of Catholic Charities is to provide aid to all those in need “as Christ would have us do,” stated Dan Florin, interim CEO of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in a news conference at the University of Saint Francis Historic Women’s Club in Fort Wayne. The conference addressed the Afghan Refugee Resettlement program currently taking place in the country and the city. Present also at the conference were Fort Wayne mayor Tom Henry; Nicole Kurt of Catholic Charities; Aaron Batt, Homeland Security Federal Coordinating Officer for Operation Allies Welcome at Camp Atterbury; along with other community representatives including police and school district members.

“At this time, Catholic Charities is committed to resettling 75 individuals, though we are consistently measuring the need and reassessing the humanitarian aid we are able to provide,” Florin continued. To date, we have already resettled 60 individuals, and we will continue our work with the Afghan Placement and Assistance Program to support the national effort.”

Catholic Charities began operating in northeast Indiana in 1922 and have been aiding refugees since 1975. During that time, they have been able to assist roughly 4,000 people from 20 countries in beginning new lives in the U.S. Catholic Charities proudly reports that 86% of the resettled adult refugees found employment within four-six months and most families are able to financially support themselves within three-six months of arrival.

Mayor Henry also spoke at the news conference. In his statement, he said: “The city of Fort Wayne appreciates and values the leadership of Catholic Charities and other partner organizations from across our community and the state of Indiana as we work together to welcome Afghan refugees.

“We truly want to be a welcoming community. The welcome mat is open for all those who want to call Fort Wayne their home. We want you to be a part of our community.”

Mayor Henry praised Catholic Charities for their “detailed and organized” processes in resettling refugees and thanked them for their commitment to aiding refugees. He concluded by saying: “I’m looking forward to positive outcomes as we invest in the lives of individuals and families.

We want to be in a position to have a lasting and meaningful impact on others.”

When Afghanistan fell to Taliban forces, thousands of the nation’s citizens were placed in jeopardy due to a number of reasons, including members of the former government, journalists and police officers. Several military installations have served as temporary camps for these refugees, including Camp Atterbury. Around 40% of the refugees awaiting resettlement at the base directly supported the U.S. military by working as interpreters, in the embassy and other ways, as well as their immediate family members, according to Batt. The other 60% of refugees are known as “Afghans at risk;” those whom the Taliban would likely target for their previous jobs and potentially even for their faith.

“All have horrifying stories to tell,” Batt said. Many of them were not allowed to bring luggage with them, so they arrived with very few items they had in their possession. Fifty percent of Camp Atterbury’s refugees are minors, with the average family size of seven.

Batt stated that these children are “learning English quickly, developing relationships with the military members.”

But Hoosiers have helped fill their immediate material needs. During their temporary stay at the Indiana Army National Guard base, they have been provided with food, shelter and as much information as possible before getting to their new locations. Activities such as soccer games and art therapy help ease the transition to life in American, too.

“All have left some family behind,” Batt said, and the greatest challenge they face may be in wondering how they will ever reunite with those family members.

All refugees have been given medical screenings and medical care, including COVID screenings and vaccinations typically received by children in America. And the USCCB has been active on site since mid-September. Even Archbishop Charles C. Thompson from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has visited the base.

When asked if individuals or families could provide housing for Afghan refugees, Batt pointed to the program called Sponsor Circles. According to the website, Sponsor Circles “allows everyday Americans to take on the responsibility of welcoming an Afghan newcomer to their communities.” The process is very involved, though support will be provided to anyone interested.

Sarah Zubair was resettled
in the U.S. from Afghanistan in 2001 using the same processes and resources that are still in use today. He is now a successful businessman and works with Catholic Charities to aid others like himself. He gave a testimony at the conference, saying, “Being 13 years old, I remember when the Taliban first took over, and it was just chaos everywhere. We decided we were going to leave the country... so we came to the United States, and came to Fort Wayne.” Although he spoke very little English when he first arrived, the programs that were in place “even 20 years ago” helped him to achieve his education and career goals, becoming a district manager of a food chain. He still maintains contact with some of those early ESL teachers.

As a refugee himself, he sees the importance of helping others “in the same situation we went through.” He is “humbled” to be part of the process and grateful to the city of Fort Wayne for opening its doors to the Afghan people. Zubair has spoken with some of the recent refugees, sharing his story and witnessing their happiness and gratitude for their safety.

Jennifer Barton
TESTIMONIAL

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Saint Anne Communities has hired Miranda Haupert as their Fund Development and Marketing Specialist. Miranda is a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish. In the past, she sang at the Life Teen Mass as a worship leader and is also involved in Kingdom Builders, especially in leading Adoration with her vocals.

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Don’t miss out on Advent this year

A nyone who has ever had, or spent any time with children knows that the act of waiting isn’t a strong suit for that demographic. From the road trip cliché “Are we there yet?” to the many manifestations of parental impatience, waiting for something to happen can lead to downright despair for our little ones. It’s not just children who struggle with waiting, of course. Our instant-gratification culture, compounded by the supercomputers ever at our fingertips, has turned the concept of waiting into something foreign and unpalatable for most adults, too.

Yet here we are again at Advent, a season that is defined by marking time, by counting the days until the Church celebrates the coming of Our Lord. It mirrors, in miniature, the waiting that each of us is doing for the return of Jesus Christ at the end of time — a waiting to which we often don’t pay nearly enough heed. This annual emphasis on waiting is a great gift of the Church when we remember to actively take advantage of it.

It may be helpful to consider what can get in the way of this “active waiting.” A good place to start is by examining the things we gravitate toward when we start is by examining the things we gravitate toward when we remember to do our Church when we remember to do something.

Let’s not miss out on Advent this year. It doesn’t take much effort to reclaim these weeks as a season of anticipation. It simply takes a little planning and a lot of intentionality. Christmas is worth the wait.

Prepared for the day when all will be fulfilled

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL


W ith this first Sunday of Advent, the Church begins a new liturgical year. As such, the readings for the year to come will be from the “C” cycle of the Lectionary, the collection of biblical texts used by the Church for lessons at Masses. The first reading for this weekend is from the book of Jeremiah, written when times were hard for God’s people. The dynasty formed by King David had disappeared, taken down by intrigue. Its collapse had deep religious implications.

God had a covenant with David and with David’s successors. Their task was not just to govern, but also to keep the nation of Israel faithful to God. With the end of the unified monarchy under David and his heirs, no other figure or authority had God’s commission to exercise the role of strengthening the national bond with the Almighty.

More ominously, it seemed as if the instrument selected by God for this purpose, namely the kings of the Davidic dynasty, yielded to pressures and temptations. Too often, the monarchs forgot their obligation to preserve the people’s relationship with God. Despite these circumstances, Jeremiah promised that indeed God will endure. His justice will prevail. The people must not lose faith. They must not lose hope.

In the first reading, the Church presents a passage from the First Letter to the Thessalonians. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, written in the AD 50s, was one of the first attempts to explain to the new converts why God’s promised return was taking so long.

First Letter to the Thessalonians

Jesus walks

A ny Christian who goes to Jerusalem will come away inspired by the experience of visiting a city where Jesus walked.

Of course, as with all tourist sites, there is a certain amount of invention. Much of what you see is old, to be sure, but the connection to the Gospels and the Nazareth we are visiting is not to put too fine a point on it, attenuated.

Take the cenacle where the Apostles were gathered at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on them and the Church was born. Tourists can sit in an upper room of a two-story building south of the Zion Gate.

It is certainly old, and it doesn’t require much imagination to picture Peter and the other disciples crowding there.

But it has Gothic arches, an architectural detail we don’t see before the 12th century in other prayer spaces.

There is one spot, though, that I hold sacred in my memory. The excavations along the southern wall have exposed the steps that common people would have ascended, the ritual baths where they would have purified themselves, and the doors that Jesus, Mary and Joseph would have entered.

I have a picture of my wife and me standing in one of those doorways. It is excavated down to bedrock.

We know that Jesus walked over the very stones we are standing on. It’s probably worn down a bit from what it was 2,000 years ago, but when the picture was taken, I found myself wanting to get on my knees and kiss the stone that may have felt the imprint of our Savior’s feet.

It required no imagination at all to picture Jesus walking through that door. He actually did. And with a little effort, I could see myself standing there as he walked by. He might even have looked my way. He would certainly have known my thoughts.

We sometimes forget that this is exactly what happens in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Jesus is actually there, not in Jerusalem but in St. Vincent Chapel or St. Agnes Cathedral or Little Flower Church. The Mass is not an exercise in imaginary reconstruction. We receive Him, body and blood, soul and divinity.

I found myself thinking about this recently when the Barna Group released a report saying that church attendance was down 30% to 50% from 2019. When COVID-19 arrived, bishops everywhere locked down their Sunday obligation. People went online instead, and often found better preaching there.

Now that the Barna Group is vaunted, many still opt to attend Mass on their computers or have gotten
A meditation on the dramatic battle in which we live

A grave deficiency of modern times is the loss of the sense that our lives are caught up in a tremendous spiritual battle. Yet here we are living in the midst of a great drama — in the greatest story ever told. Behind the scenes is a deadly enemy, one of whom many rarely speak: Satan. Yet, he is active and involved, manipulating both the world and flesh — our sinful nature. We are on the front lines of a fierce spiritual war, a war that is to blame for most of the casualties you see around you. Yes, fellow Christians, there is a dragon, a roaring lion — Satan — who seeks to devour our souls.

But there is also a Son, a Savior, who is born to us and whom we call Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. (Is 9:6) He shall reign forever. His hand is outstretched, first on the cross, but now outstretched to you and me, and to draw you up out of the raging waters, to deliver you from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

Will you take hold of His hand, or not? This decision — your decision — is the great drama of your life, and of every life; it is your chapter in the greatest story ever told.

Yes, the battle rages all around us, and we can swept up in it. It’s happening in our world, our culture, our families and in our hearts. The sequence hymn from Easter says dramatically of it, “Mors et vita duello; Confligere Mirando;” “Death and life at battle in a stupendous conflict.

Text after text in the Bible describes the awesome drama and the great decision we must make, a decision on which hinges our very destiny. Here are just a few:

We have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the Lord, your God, obeying His voice, and holding fast to Him. For that will mean life for you.” (Deut 30:19-20)

“Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own heart also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.’” (Lk 2:34-36)

“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.” (Matt 26:41)

We are a nation of scared people. Maybe that’s a bit high. The apostles who lived with Him had their doubts too. But it would be way up there, even at daily Mass.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops had its annual meeting last week, and one of the items on its agenda was a renewal of our belief in the sacrament of the Eucharist. I can’t think of a more pressing concern. If we don’t have that, our faith isn’t as good as a trip to Jerusalem. It’s been much better than a YouTube video.

John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.
FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT  Nov. 28-Dec. 4

An Evening of Heavenly Lights will take place Sunday, Nov. 28, at 6:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception plaza, Fort Wayne. A live Nativity will be on site while hundreds of tribute lights shine brightly as the diocese remembers the lives of lost loved ones. A donation of $10 is requested for a luminaria, which will be lit and blessed at the prayer service. All proceeds benefit Catholic Charities. For information visit www.diosesefsw.org/heavenlylights or call 260-399-1438.

The Diocesan Museum is presenting a special display of diocesan parish altars decorated for Christmas. December through January, all are invited to come see these beautiful photos. Museum hours are Tuesday — Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The museum is located next door to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne. Free parking is available in any cathedral lot. A handicap entrance is at the side door.

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT  Dec. 5-11

Begin the Advent season with nationally known Catholic composer and singer John Angotti and his band for their Go Tell it on the Mountain Tour from Advent to Christmas! The tour, beginning Wednesday, Dec. 1, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1502 E. Wallen Rd., Fort Wayne. The free performance will be livestreamed, but listeners are encouraged to attend in person.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Fort Wayne will hold a Christmas craft fair Saturday, Dec. 4, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. More than 50 talented vendors have handcrafted merchandise available for sale just in time for Christmas. It is the main fundraising event for the MOMs Group that sponsors a number of family events for the community. The University of St. Francis will celebrate the beauty and joy of the Christmas season with a variety of events including a University Choir Christmas Concert Wednesday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. in the St. Francis Chapel, Fort Wayne. The free Christmas concert will feature traditional holiday favorites.

A Bishop Dwenger High School Drive-Thru Live Nativity will take place Saturday, Dec. 4 from 3-5 p.m. and again from 6-9 p.m. at the Fort Wayne school. There is no fee, but a free will donation to Women’s Care Center will be collected. As you navigate through the campus, the story of the Nativity will come to life. There will be live animals, including a camel, and during the event, visitors can enjoy the seasonal sounds of students singing Christmas music.

A breakfast with St. Nicholas is offered Saturday, Dec. 4, 10 a.m. to noon at the USF Robert Goldstine Performing Arts Center Ballroom in Fort Wayne. Parents are invited to bring their children. Cost is $10 for adults and $6 for children ages 2-12. Tickets are available at usfstnicholas2021.eventbrite.com.

A Nikolaj, or St. Nicholas Day, party is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 10, 6:30 p.m. at St. Casimir Parish, South Bend. Enjoy an evening of Polish food, including pierogi, beef, noodles and coffee cake and sing along to “koloardy,” or Christmas carols. Visit with Sw. Mikolaj (St. Nicholas). Tickets available for $10 per adult and $4 per child ages 5-12 from the parish office.

A Lighting of the Lake and Living Nativity event will take place Sunday, Dec. 5, at 6 p.m. on Mirror Lake, on the patio outside St. Francis Chapel at the University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne. The Lighting of the Lake features the blessing of luminaries dedicated to people who are special to those at USF. The evening starts with a petting zoo at 5:30 p.m., then the Lighting of the Lake and Living Nativity. Cookies and cocoa will be served afterward at Achatz Hall of Science and John and Toni Murray Research Center. For more information, contact 260-399-8034 or visit sf.edu/christmas.

A free performance will be at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 104 East Albion St., Avilla, Wednesday, Dec. 1, at 7:15 p.m. This special prayer service, sponsored by the Folk Choir, Liturgical Choir, Magnificat Choir and Basilica Schola. Free and open to the public. University guidelines for indoor gatherings will be followed and distanced seating will be available. All are welcome.

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Docent-led tours of Brookside Mansion at the University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, will take place Friday, Dec. 10, from 4 to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 11, from noon to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 12, from noon to 5 p.m. The tours will guide visitors as they enjoy the featured creches for Christmas. Tours require reservations and USF requests a freewill offering. To reserve a spot, visit go.sf.edu/creches.

Our Lady of Hungary Parish, 829 W. Calvert St., South Bend, will host a service of Advent Solemn Vespers complete with candlelight and music. Join in at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 15, at the parish.

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT  Dec. 19-25

An Advent penance service will be Sunday, Dec. 19, at 3 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Church, Auburn. Four priests will be available.

A children’s Mass of Christmas Eve, where children present the Gospel, will begin at 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 24, at St. Bavo Church, 511 W. 7th St., Mishawaka, will offer its 16th annual “Festival of Lessons and Carols” Sunday, Dec. 12, at 4 p.m. Nine Scripture readings, outlining a brief journey through salvation history, will be followed by choral anthems, solos and carols with congregational participation. There is no admission charge and everyone is welcome.

وقسم التفاصيل الأخرى...
St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Angola.

A Festival of Carols begins at 9:30 p.m. Christmas Eve at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Angola. The carols will feature soloists and the St. Anthony Choir. Christmas Eve Mass will follow at 10 p.m.

The Mass of Christmas Eve will be celebrated at St. Paul Chapel, Clear Lake, at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 24, with the choir starting at 7:30 p.m. All are invited to attend.

Mass of Christmas Day will be celebrated at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Angola. Come and experience the joy of Christmas.

Sensory-friendly Mass celebrated each week at St. Vincent de Paul

FORT WAYNE — A sensory-friendly Mass is celebrated every Sunday at 1:30 p.m., at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1502 E. Wallen Rd. A sensory-friendly Mass provides a safe, comfortable and stigma-free setting for children and adults with sensory challenges, mental illness or any kind of disability to feel engaged and experience Mass in a meaningful way. Parishioners and nonparishioners are welcome. Questions about offering a sensory-friendly Mass at your parish? Contact Allison Sturm at asturm@diocesefwsb.org or 260-399-1452.

Upper Room

CHURUBUSCO — An open house-style of renewal in Christ will be Wednesdays, Dec. 1, 8 and 15, at St. John Bosco Parish, 220 N. Main St. from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Experience the joyful and refreshing love of Jesus and the Holy Spirit like the original Upper Room. Enjoy adoration, praise music, healing prayer, confession and short messages from Kyle Heiman, Cindy Black and Michelle Alles. Free coffee, desserts and hot dogs. Contact Father Drew Curry at 260-693-9578 or Frandrewcurry@yahoo.com for information.

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

CATHOLIC PARISH

Administrative Assistant for Youth Ministry

St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne, is seeking an Administrative Assistant for their Youth Ministry program. Youth Ministry is a large ministry at St. Vincent de Paul and directly involved with teens in grades 7-12 along with their families. This position has the potential of being full-time.

To view more details about the position and to apply, go to www.diocesefwsb.org/careers.

Most Precious Blood Parish seeks Director of Music and Liturgy

The primary role of the Director of Music and Liturgy is to provide and coordinate music for three weekend Masses and special liturgies as needed.

Qualifications and Requirements:
- A faithful individual committed to growth personally and professionally, with love for the Catholic Liturgy
- Experience working with and developing a choir and leading congregational singing
- Excellent professional, verbal, and written communication skills
- Knowledge of Catholic musical selections including Catholic modern and traditional hymns and praise and worship hymns
- Ability to work with volunteers – musicians and cantors
- Dependable, organized and has attention to detail
- Proficient at piano/organ and singing

This is a part-time position with some flexibility outside of the Mass schedule. Salary is commensurate with experience and agreed upon schedule. Apply at https://diocesefwsb.org/careers

Merry Christmas

“TODAY IN THE TOWN OF DAVID A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU; HE IS THE MESSIAH, THE LORD.”
— LUKE 2:11

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bookbags were covered in the wooden clips.

During downtime and while walking to the various breakout sessions, it seemed as though the young people were keeping an eye out for opportunities to trade small items like stickers and hats with students from other groups, cities and states — another tradition at young adult pilgrimages like NYCy and World Youth Day.

The NYCy “village” gave them the opportunity to buy a number of Catholic-themed trinkets, including socks with saints on them. The village also connected the visiting high schools with different Catholic ministries and colleges, including Marian University and Holy Cross College.

For Josephine Cavacini, a senior at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne, the 2021 conference was her first and last experience with NYCy.

“I’m sad that I can’t go again because this is my last year, as a senior, and so I won’t get to experience another one.”

For anyone who has not attended an NYCy conference, she strongly recommends it.

“This weekend has definitely strengthened my faith. The talks really connected with me and the Holy Spirit was definitely sending down His spirits and pouring out His graces upon us, and the Lord was giving us such fruitful experiences.”

Cavacini also mentioned that she enjoyed one of the breakout sessions titled “Heaven, Hell, and Hot Topics” in which one speaker performed optical illusions and discussed the potential differences between perception and reality. The session’s live band performed a mix of secular music and praise and worship.

Hunter Wallace, another teen who attended NYCy, said that this was his second time participating in the conference.

“I really liked it the first time because it was just a really cool thing to be a part of. I wanted to come back again.”

Wallace added that adoration stood out to him during the 2021 conference, because the whole stadium was “super quiet” and the priest told stories.

NYCy is an event hosted by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and the Catholic Youth Ministry and www.todayscatholic.org/subscribe

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