May the Lord give you His peace." This customary Franciscan greeting has taken on new significance for LeeAllen Fortin, who was ordained to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate Nov. 27.

Deacon Fortin, a native of South Dakota, initially came to Fort Wayne to discern a calling as a Franciscan friar. Although the community disbanded in 2020 and he is now preparing to serve Fort Wayne-South Bend as a diocesan priest, he continues to carry with him the peaceful, prayerful spirit of St. Francis.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades highlighted this change of seasons for Fortin. He exclaimed, “There is a rhythm in our life with key moments and events that mark and shape us on our earthly journey. The most momentous events are those in which the mystery of communion with God who is love is manifested and communicated to us. Today is such a key event in the life of LeeAllen as he receives the gift of the sacrament of Holy Orders. God has been preparing him for this moment for many years.”

Speaking directly to Fortin, the bishop continued. “The Lord desires that you serve Him as a deacon and eventually as a priest of His Son Jesus. Your vocation is not your personal project nor is it a simply human affair. Your spirit rejoices today not in yourself or your successful accomplishments in the seminary. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, your spirit rejoices in God and God’s grace.”

LeeAllen Fortin professes his obedience to Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and his successors at Fortin’s diaconate ordination Nov. 27 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

 Priests from around the diocese cocelebrated the ordination. Several priests also came from Cincinnati, where Fortin is completing his priestly studies at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary.
Lighting the way to salvation

BY KATIE MURRAY

A s November came to an end, loved ones and all the faithful departed were remembered as prayers rose that perpetual light would shine upon them. To celebrate the deceased, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne hosted the annual diocesan “Evening of Heavenly Lights” event Nov. 28, a gathering that not only celebrated the deceased, but welcomed the season of Advent.

Many gathered outside the cathedral in front of the main entrance, where the lights of the luminaria glowed along the walls of the plaza. The evening began with a prayer service led by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, and attendees received a special Christmas ornament as a token reminder of what the upcoming season is all about.

“What a wonderful way to begin this holy season of Advent — to gather here in front of our beautiful Cathedral in prayer. Though it’s cold out here, there is warmth in our hearts as we remember with love our faithful departed and, with the lights of the luminaria and on this evergreen tree which I will soon bless, we pray that God’s perpetual light will shine upon them. We remember the words of Jesus: ‘I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,’” Bishop Rhoades said.

After he blessed the luminaria and the evergreen tree that stands out front of the cathedral, he asked Riley Farrell and James Arnold — who portrayed Mary and Joseph — to light the tree as the cathedral choir sang, “Lo How A Rose E’er Blooming.”

The evergreen tree symbolizes that life never ends, as portrayed in the reading from the prophet Ezechiel. “This allegory refers to the kingdom of David and the coming of a new king and king-

and dad and [Victor’s] sister. This event means a lot to me because of my brother dying last year of a heart attack,” she said.

Another attendee, Cecilia Aguilar-Tussey, came to the event and was excited to do so because of not being able to attend last year.

“My father passed away last year, I thought it was perfect to be able to honor him. The month of November is when we pray for all of our departed loved ones. I think it’s just a beautiful ceremony.”

Bishop Kevin Rhoades blesses the luminaria in remembrance of deceased loved ones at the Evening of Heavenly Lights at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, praying for their souls. Luminaria were purchased in advance and the names of those honored were also placed on a tree inside the cathedral to receive continued prayers.

Published weekly, except for the last Sunday in December and every other week from the fourth Sunday in May through the last Sunday in August by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, 915 S. Clinton St., P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, IN 46802. Periodicals postpaid to Fort Wayne, IN, and additional mailing office. 

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Today’s Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN 46856-1169 or email: circulation@diocesefwsb.org

MAIN OFFICE: 915 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802. Phone: 260-456-2824. Fax: 260-744-1473.


News deadline is 10 days prior to publication date. Advertising deadline is nine days before publication date.

Today’s Catholic may be reached at:

Today’s Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN 46856-1169, or email: editor@diocesefwsb.org

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A young attendee feeds a mini-donkey on the cathedral grounds. Scheumann Farms and Petting Zoo brought the donkey and two sheep to the event.

During the event, a live tree outside the cathedral was lit by two children playing Mary and Joseph to begin the Advent season, reminding all who see it of the light of God’s love and the hope for eternity.
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you may have heard, the United States Supreme Court will begin hearing oral arguments on December 1st in the case Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. The specific question the Court will consider is whether a state may enact limits on abortion before viability; the point at which the baby is capable of living outside his or her mother’s womb. This is what the Mississippi law in question did in prohibiting abortion after 15 weeks gestation, except in cases of medical emergency or severe fetal abnormality. Mississippi’s law is consistent with what more than 90% of countries around the world already do.

In deliberating the Dobbs case, the Supreme Court will consider the correctness of its previous rulings in Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey. These rulings essentially legalized abortion on demand through all nine months of pregnancy and severely restricted the ability of states to enact legislation to protect human life in the womb and to safeguard women’s health. This has made the United States an extreme outlier in abortion policy, being one of only four countries, including China and North Korea, that allows the abortion of a child at any time during a woman’s pregnancy.

Given the significance of the Dobbs case and its potential outcome, the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities is participating in a campaign called Pray for Dobbs (www.prayfordobbs.com) which aims to unite Christians across our nation in praying and fasting for the Supreme Court justices as they deliberate this case, a decision in which is expected next June.

As we begin the holy season of Advent, I would like to encourage all of the Catholic faithful in our diocese to join me in participating in this prayer and fasting campaign until a decision is handed down in this case. I recommend choosing a time of day to say a prayer for this intention, or perhaps to pray the Rosary or the Divine Mercy chaplet, and to undertake some kind of fast once a week, such as skipping a meal or limiting yourself to one full meal, or fasting from something else like television or social media for that day. Fridays have long been observed as days of sacrifice in the Catholic tradition in honor of the Lord’s sacrifice on Calvary, so you might consider making Fridays your day of fasting. This campaign would be beautiful to undertake as a family or with a group of friends, co-workers or classmates to help support each other in this effort on behalf of restoring the protection of the law to these least of our brothers and sisters before they are born.

May Our Lady, the Mirror of Justice, intercede for the justices of the Supreme Court as they deliberate this important case.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

HHS rescinds rule protecting faith-based foster care, adoption agencies

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Nov. 18 rescinded a Trump administration rule that ensured faith-based social service agencies that provide adoption and foster care would continue receiving federal funding for services that follow their religious beliefs.

Opponents of the rule modification, put in place early this year in the waning days of President Donald Trump’s term, said it allowed agencies to use religion to discriminate against potential foster parents.

But U.S. bishops praised the rule when it was implemented, saying it allowed faith-based social service providers “to continue partnering with the government to assist children in need.”

In acting on the rule, HHS specifically rescinded waivers that allowed child welfare agencies in South Carolina, Texas and Michigan to not place children with same-sex couples in accordance with their religious belief in traditional marriage between one man and one woman.

HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said the Trump-era rule was “a blanket use of religious exemptions against any person or blank checks to allow discrimination against any persons, importantly including LGBTQ+ persons in taxpayer-funded programs.”

It is not clear how his decision will square with a unanimous decision handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court in Fulton v. Philadelphia over the same issue.

The court ruled in favor of a Catholic social service agency, saying it should not have been excluded from Philadelphia’s foster care program because, in following Church teaching on marriage, the agency did not accept same-sex couples as foster parents in accord with Church teaching.

The court said the city of Philadelphia’s anti-discrimination laws had put an unfair burden on Philadelphia’s Catholic Social Services; the city barred the Catholic agency in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia from placing any child in foster care or with an adoptive couple because the agency would not consider placements with same-sex couples.

Chief Justice John Roberts, who wrote the opinion, said the service agency “seeks only an accommodation that will allow it to continue serving the children of Philadelphia in a manner consistent with its religious beliefs; it does not seek to impose those beliefs on anyone else.”

He also said the city’s actions of excluding the agency burdened its “religious exercise” by giving the agency “the choice of curtailing its mission or approving relationships inconsistent with its beliefs.”
Collection helps aging sisters, brothers, priests in religious orders

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will hold the Retirement Fund for Religious collection Dec. 11-12. The parish-based appeal is coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office in Washington, D.C. Proceeds help religious communities across the country to care for aging members.

Last year, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend donated $113,523.34 to the collection. In 2021, the Congregation of Holy Cross, U.S. Province of Priests and Brothers, received financial support made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious.

“I am continually heartened by the generosity of U.S. Catholics,” said NRRO Executive Director Sister Stephanie Still, a member of the Sisters of the Presentation of San Francisco. “Even in difficult times, they find a way to give back to those who have tirelessly served our Church and our world.”

Hundreds of U.S. religious communities face a large gap between the needs of their older members and the funds available to support them. Historically, Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests — known collectively as women and men religious — served for little to no pay. As a result, many communities now lack adequate retirement savings.

At the same time, healthcare expenses continue to rise, and an increasing number of older religious require specialized services. NRRO data shows that 26,330 women and men religious in the United States are older than age 70. The total cost for their care exceeds $1 billion annually.

To help address the deficit in retirement funding among U.S. religious orders, Catholic bishops of the United States initiated the Retirement Fund for Religious in 1988. Distributions are sent to each eligible order’s central house and provide supplemental funding for necessities, such as medications and nursing care. Donations also underwrite resources that help religious communities improve eldercare and plan for long-term retirement needs.

Religious orders typically do not receive diocesan funding but rather are financially autonomous and thus responsible for the support and care of all members. While many dioceses hold separate appeals for their retired priests’ fund, the once-yearly Retirement Fund for Religious collection is for members of U.S. religious orders and benefits both men and women religious.

The 2020 appeal raised $20.7 million, and funding was distributed to 321 U.S. religious communities.

“We are blessed by countless supporters who share our mission to ensure all religious can enjoy a safe and modest retirement,” said Sister Stephanie.

Why they ask

• In 1988, Catholic bishops of the United States launched the Retirement Fund for Religious to address the significant lack of retirement funding for Catholic sisters, brothers, and priests in religious orders.
• For most of their lives, older religious worked for little to no pay. There were no 401(k) plans or pensions.
• Religious communities are financially responsible for the support and care of all members. Income, earnings and expenses are managed separately from the parish and diocesan structures of the Catholic Church.
• Only 5% of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office are adequately funded for retirement; 40% have 25 or fewer members. Many small communities struggle to care for older members due to a lack of financial resources and personnel.
• Today, religious past age 70 outnumber religious under age 70 by nearly three to one.
• There are 26,330 religious past age 70 living in the United States. In 2020, the average annual cost for their care was more than $49,000 per person; skilled care averaged $78,000 per person.
• Since 2009, the annual cost to support senior women and men religious has exceeded $1 billion.
• In 2020, 71% of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office had a median age of 70 or higher.
• The average annual Social Security benefit for a religious is $7,160, whereas the average U.S. beneficiary receives $18,530.

How donations help

Each year, hundreds of U.S. religious communities receive financial assistance made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious. Communities can use this funding for immediate retirement expenses or invest it for future needs. Since the first collection, U.S. Catholics have donated $919 million.

• Support from the Retirement Fund for Religious helps religious communities care for senior members while continuing important ministries to the People of God.
• In addition to direct financial assistance, proceeds from the annual appeal underwrite educational programming, services and resources that enable religious communities to evaluate and prepare for long-term retirement needs.
• In 2020, 71% of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Office had a median age of 70 or higher.
• Since the collection began, more than $786 million has been distributed to support the day-to-day care of elderly sisters, broth-
Speaker: Science explains laws of nature; faith tells of author.

BY NATALIE HOEFER

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — Bradley Gregory, associate professor of biblical studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, said today “most scientists see that science can inform faith and faith can inform science.”

But many in the secular world have lagged in that understanding, he said.

He made the remarks in a talk titled “Faith, Science and the Gift of Wonder” during the Nov. 18-20 National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis.

He addressed the fallacy that faith and science are incompatible. Gregory examined the history of the relationship between faith and science in the church, and how Catholics going forward can recover the traditional Church view of the compatibility of the two topics.

Gregory began his Nov. 19 address with a reading about the creation of the world in chapter 1 of the Book of Genesis.

Of course, he said, “Scripture is not a science text book. It’s an ancient text trying to communicate things about God, not chemistry or physics.”

When Genesis was written, “many people thought that the earth was an unpredictable and unsettling place,” he said. “Genesis, chapter 1, said no to that view of the world. … For our biblical writers and early Christians, the world was a theater that unveils the goodness, the truth, the beauty of God, not in spite of its natural laws, but precisely through those natural laws.”

The growing Church continued studying the world. By the medieval era, Catholic universities included math and the sciences.

“The Church was open to science and discovering things about the natural world,” said Gregory. “They believed that the natural world in its regularity and its order told them something about the goodness of God.”

So what happened? How did we get to the place we are today that so many believe that faith and science are opposites of one another?

“A couple hundred years ago, some people started thinking of God as one more character in the theater of a play of the created world,” Gregory explained. “People would look around and would find something else that made something happen, and ruled God out.”

The problem with such thinking, he said, is that “it means every time humanity advances in knowledge, God gets smaller and smaller, until eventually people think there’s no need for God. We can explain everything or will one day be able to explain everything.”

“This left many people with the impression that God is unnecessary if we have science.”

Fortunately, he said, many theologians in the last 150 years have emphasized that science and faith are compatible.

“St. John Henry Newman said there is nothing in science that is incompatible with God,” said Gregory. “He said science tells us about the laws and how they work, and faith tells us about the author and maintainer of those laws.

“Pope Pius XII said the scientific advances of the past 200 years have shown us a lot about the bodies we have. He said what science can’t answer for us is the meaning of life and the nature of the soul.”

St. John Paul II, he added, “gave full support to the exploration of evolutionary science and the other sciences as things that would shed light on the world we live in.”

To “bring our hearts and imaginations back into alignment or strengthen their alignment with the traditional view of the Catholic Church,” Gregory suggested turning to Pope Francis’ encyclical “Laudato Si.”

“The major theme of his encyclical is that for us to be right in relation with the created world, we need to recover a sense of wonder,” he said. “We need to stop seeing the world just as something we can exploit or abuse and find amazement that it’s the way God created it.”

Gregory closed with impressions upon the youths that “faith is critical to all intellectual work. All truth is God’s truth, and when you pursue it, it’s your wonder that will lead you to find God’s handiwork.”

Margaux Fellona, 18, loves science.

“I really appreciated the talk,” she told The Criterion, Indianapolis’ archdiocesan newspaper. “It made me think about the beauty of the earth God made for us, and it shows how much he loves us.”
Pope assures migrants they are in his prayers and his heart

Migrants sit near a wood fire at a makeshift migrant camp at Loon Beach in Dunkirk, France, Nov. 25, the day after 27 migrants died when their dinghy deflated as they attempted to cross the English Channel. Pope Francis asked visitors in St. Peter’s Square Nov. 28 to join him for a moment of silent prayer for migrants, especially those who recently drowned in the English Channel and in the Mediterranean and those who are freezing on the border of Belarus and Poland. The pope’s appeal came the day after he called the Mediterranean Sea “a great cemetery” in a message to the people of Cyprus and Greece, which he will visit Dec. 2-6.

NCCV presents a positive vision of the priesthood for Catholic youths

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — “Follow me to arm-wrestle a seminarian! See if you can beat a man who receives Communion every day!” Holding her hands board to “Arm Wrestle a Seminarian” written on it, seminarian Samuel Hansen barked his invitation while walking through the halls of the Indiana Convention Center Nov. 20, the final day of the National Catholic Youth Conference. “It was incredibly fun,” said Hansen, a senior at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary and a member of St. Roch Parish, both in Indianapolis, “just walking with the sign made a lot of people laugh. I felt like a ballpark food salesman. But it energized the convention center quite a bit.” In response to Hansen’s hawking, a steady group of challengers gathered around a table promoting vocations to the diocesan priesthood. Huddled near the table, a few visitors when the seminarians mentioning it waited for NCCV participants to come to them on their own, balling board to “Arm Wrestle a Seminarian.”

St. Albert Initiative on science and faith aimed at high school students

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Science education aimed to interest Catholic high school students can be wonderfully informal. Peter Dodson, a paleontologist at the University of Pennsylvania, introduced himself at lunch at The Catholic University of America by playing down a resin replica of a dinosaur skull. “Dug up the original myself in northwest China!” he announced. Karin Öberg, a professor of astronomy at Harvard University, who was lecturing on cosmology and extraterrestrial life, found herself beset by questions about whether alien life exists on other planets. She took it in stride: “Maybe they’re just looking at us with wonder and curiosity (and asking) ‘What’s wrong with you?’” she speculated. The first St. Albert Initiative, sponsored by the Society of Catholic Scientists, drew more than 100 high school students and educators. It was co-sponsored by the Science and Religion Initiative of the McGrath Institute for Church Life and the Lumen Christi Institute, with funding from the John Templeton Foundation. It is named after St. Albert the Great, bishop, scientist, philosopher, theologian, teacher, and patron saint of natural science and scientists.

Pope: Discrimination against people with disabilities must end

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church must be a home for all, especially for people with disabilities who continue to face discrimination in the world and in the Church, Pope Francis said. In a message for the Dec. 3 celebration of the U.N.’s International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the pope said that although Church teaching is clear, too many men, women and children with disabilities lack spiritual care, which is “the worst form of discrimination.” “Discrimination continues to be all too present at various levels of society; it feeds on prejudice, ignorance and a culture that finds it hard to appreciate the inestimable value of each person,” he wrote in the message, which was published Nov. 25. Nevertheless, he said, baptism makes all men and women “full-fledged” members of the Church “so that all of us, without exclusion or discrimination, can say: ‘I am the church!’” he wrote. “The church is truly your home,” the pope told people with disabilities. “We, all of us together, are the church, because Jesus chose to be our friend.” The U.N. theme for the 2021 celebration of the international day is “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.”

Former USCCB official and leading voice for Black Catholics dies at 75

BALTIMORE (CNS) — A funeral Mass was offered Nov. 23 at St. Peter Claver Church in West Baltimore for Beverly A. Carroll, a social justice advocate who spent her life raising her voice for African American Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the United States and the world. Carroll, the founder and director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Black Catholics, died Nov. 13. She was 75. Bishop John H. Ricard, a former auxiliary bishop of Baltimore and current superior general of the Baltimore-based Josephites, celebrated the Mass for his friend. Carroll worked for many years with Bishop Ricard, who also is the retired bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee. “She was a great advocate for the community, for the church, for African Americans in the Church,” said Josephite Father Ray F. Bomberger, pastor of St. Peter Claver Church, to which Carroll belonged her whole life. “She was interested in the Church, the people of the Church, what was going on, (and) how we could do it better,” he said. Father Bomberger praised Carroll’s devotion to her Church, both in her home community and in the wider country, as well as her interest in education and social justice. Carroll was a lifelong parishioner of St. Peter Claver, where she served as a corporator and parish council member.

The locally can find an ‘ally’ in St. Joseph, pope says at audience

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph’s reassuring presence is an example for Christians who are called to care for the lonely and those who struggle in their lives, Pope Francis said. In a society where relationships are constantly in flux, St. Joseph’s life and example give “a clear indication of the importance of human bonds,” the pope said during his weekly general audience Nov. 24. “Joseph, with his life, seems to want to tell us that we are always called to feel that we are the guardians of our brothers and sisters, the custodians of those placed close to us, of those whom the Lord entrusts to us through the circumstances of life,” he said. Before the general audience, the pope went to St. Peter’s Basilica to meet with several large groups of pilgrims unable to enter the Paul VI audience hall due to their numbers, including a group led by the Vincentian Fathers who were in Rome to commemorate the feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. According to a communiqué released by the Vincentians, the meeting was the “culmination and the continuation” of a yearlong Italian pilgrimage with a statue of Mary the pope blessed last year to mark the 190th anniversary of the Marian apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré.

Wisconsin parishes pray for victims after SUV plows through parade crowd

WAUKESHA, Wis. (CNS) — Church leaders and parishioners offered prayers for those who died and dozens more who were injured, including a Catholic priest, church parishioners and Catholic school students, when an SUV plowed through spectators watching a Christmas parade. “Our prayers are with the people who have been injured and killed during the tragic incident in Waukesha,” Sandra Peterson, communication director for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, said in a statement posted on the archdiocesan website hours after the incident occurred the evening of Nov. 21. Waukesha is about 20 miles west of Milwaukee and is in the archdiocese. “Among the injured are one of our Catholic priests, as well as multiple parishioners and Waukesha Catholic school children,” Peterson said. Please join us in prayer for all those involved, their families, and those who are traumatized from witnessing the horrible scene.” A post early Nov. 22 on the Facebook page of the Catholic Community of Waukesha, a group of four parishes, said church leaders were monitoring “the impact of yesterday’s tragic event” and ministering to injured parishioners as well as those who attended the parade but were uninjured. “It is in our most difficult hours that we, as a community, turn to our Lord for refuge, strength and love,” the post said.
Holy Cross student receives Realizing the Dream scholarship

SOUTH BEND — Saint Joseph High School Class of 2020 graduate and current Holy Cross College student Julian Garcilazo has been named this year’s Realizing the Dream scholarship recipient. Garcilazo recognized Saint Joseph English teacher and Class of 2001 graduate Andrea Smolinski as the educator most influential in his decision to attend college. The Independent Colleges of Indiana recognize 30 first-generation college students from private, nonprofit colleges and universities annually for the scholarship program. Garcilazo will receive a $3,000 scholarship award acknowledging outstanding achievement during his freshman year as he advances toward completing his bachelor’s degree. In addition to Garcilazo’s award, Smolinski will receive a $1,000 grant to put toward professional development for being named an influential educator.

Smolinski was also recently named the Christ the Teacher award winner from Saint Joseph High School, given annually to an educator from each school in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for personifying Jesus Christ in the classroom and consistently going above and beyond the call of duty for their students.

Service of the Longest Night set for Dec. 18

ST. MEINRAD — Abbey Caskets, a work of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, will host a Service of the Longest Night Saturday, Dec. 18, at 6 p.m. Central Time in the St. Meinrad Archabbey Guest House Chapel in St. Meinrad.

Many people find the holidays a challenging time. Instead of celebrating, they are struggling with grief. They miss loved ones and find that the usual traditions and bright lights serve only to heighten their struggle.

Father Adrian Burke, OSB, will lead the service with prayer and Scripture that acknowledge those who mourn and struggle with grief. They miss loved ones celebrating, they are struggling and find that the usual traditions are welcome to attend.

The hour-long service includes prayer, readings, beautiful music and time for silence and reflection.

As a first-year theologian, Andrew Barnes, a seminarian of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, was admitted to candidacy for the priesthood at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., Friday, Nov. 19. His Mass of Candidacy was celebrated by Bishop Stephen D. Parkes, SAV, center, and consecrated by Msgr. Andrew Baker, rector of the seminary.

Taizé prayer service scheduled for Dec. 14

FORT WAYNE — Join the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, in person or via livestream for song, quiet contemplation and inspired readings during the ecumenical Taizé prayer service from 7-8 p.m. EST, Tuesday, Dec. 14. The 2021 theme for Taizé is “The Spirit Breathes, ...”

The service will take place in the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Each month, the service takes place on the second Tuesday. Persons of all faith traditions are welcome to attend.

The hour-long service includes prayer, readings, beautiful music and time for silence and reflection.

For more information contact Jason Moon, media relations manager, at 812-535-2810 or jmoon@spsmw.org or contact Maureen Dickinson, director of Advancement Services, at 812-535-2801 or mdickinson@spsmw.org.
The diaconate welcomes you!

Your holy service to the Lord touches so many hearts and inspires so many lives.

Congratulations on your Ordination to the Diaconate.

St. John the Baptist Parish, Fort Wayne

Deacon Fortin lays prostrate at the altar of the cathedral while the congregation invokes the communion of saints in prayer.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades lays his hands on Fortin, ordaining him as a deacon.

Bishop Rhoades welcomes Deacon Fortin into his new life of service to the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.
ORDINATION, from page 1

LeeAllen, Welcome to the diaconate!

TODAY’S CATHOLIC

Deacon Fortin gathered for a reception with friends and family at St. Andrew Church, where he led a holy hour and preached about being sent to make God known, loved, and served, as well as the importance of staying with the Lord, who stays with his people in the Eucharist.

Deacon Fortin asked for prayers that he will continue to be formed to the image of Christ, to love with the heart of Mary Immaculate, and to serve with the humility of St. Joseph as he approaches his priestly ordination in June.

Parishioners and staff of St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel

Congratulations, Deacon LeeAllen

You have the Joy of the Gospel. May you be transformed by God’s grace.

Deacon Fortin’s parents, sister, brother-in-law and nephew made the trip from South Dakota to witness his ordination to the diaconate, to which Bishop Rhoades warmly welcomed them.

ORDINATION, from page 1

Jesus sent out the disciples ahead of Him to be heralds of peace. Today’s Catholic December 5, 2021

Bishop Rhoades warmly welcomed them. From South Dakota to witness his ordination to the diaconate, to which Deacon Fortin’s parents, sister, brother-in-law and nephew made the trip.

May you be transformed by God’s grace. You have the Joy of the Gospel. Congratulations Deacon LeeAllen.

St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel Parishioners and staff of St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel

Deacon Fortin has been in seminary in June. He approaches his priestly ordination in June.
A gift beyond all others

“I can’t describe what it was like for me. It was just, ‘this is it; this is where I should have been a long time ago.’”

— Patti Hagadorn

He insisted he would never join her in the Catholic faith. But one morning, Patti responded to an urging from the Holy Spirit and asked if he would come to Mass with her.

“Come in, he came the next Sunday, he came the Sunday after that. The next thing you know, my husband’s in RCIA. And the same thing happened to my daughter Amy,” Patti shared.

“Her faith and love for the Church is beyond what many appreciate in the gift of their faith,” Thomas commented. “Everybody should know Patti Hagadorn.”

And many people do know her. Patti has what she calls “a bad habit of picking up friends everywhere I go,” so much so that when she hosted her Christmas party, her house would be so full that some guests would have to leave in order for others to enter.

Christmas has always been special to her, but one year stands out. It involved her daughter Amy.

A car accident in the 1970s left Patti with seizure disorder, and throughout her second pregnancy, she suffered from so many seizures that she had to be hospitalized. Medical personnel expected her unborn child to be born with severe health conditions, and her doctor asked if she wanted to “cancel” her pregnancy.

“I remember crying, and I threw him out of the room,” she stated, telling him, “I love this baby. I love my little girl.”

Patti didn’t care about the possible health effects and carried Amy Jo to term. “She was the baby God gave us.”

Born with cerebral palsy, Amy experienced severe bullying in the third grade. She became famous when, in 1993, radio station WLDE 101.7 ran a “Letters to Santa” contest in which her Christmas request of having one day without being made fun of was picked up by news outlets throughout the country.

Amy’s letter also launched discussions in schools and communities across the country about how to treat people with disabilities with greater respect. Letters and gifts poured into the Hagadorn household from people all over the country – including many celebrities – who sympathized with Amy’s plight.

The letters meant more to the family than any of the gifts, Patti said. “When you look back on it, if I had ended that pregnancy, the world wouldn’t have known her story. She wouldn’t have had an impact like she did.”

When Amy chose to come into the Catholic Church, Thomas took the time to work with her one-on-one. Patti recalls watching the two of them sitting at the table, studying Catholic books for children to help Amy understand Church teaching. Patti was so pleased that the last act that former pastor Father Ruppert performed at St. Therese was to welcome Amy into the Church.

Though her memories may fade and her mind might fall her, nothing can take away Patti’s childlike enthusiasm for Christ, particularly in the Eucharist. She said, “Once you get into the Catholic Church, this is the way every Mass should be. So reverent to God. . . . The first time (receiving Communion), I can’t describe what it was like for me. It was just, ‘this is it; this is where I should have been a long time ago.’”

— Jennifer Barton
Seminarians strategize for seventh Cupertino Classic

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

The University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, will host the seventh annual Cupertino Classic basketball game Monday, Dec. 27. The game comes after the 2020 installment was cancelled due to COVID-19. The priests, who won the 2019 Cupertino Classic at Marian High School, Mishawaka, will attempt to hamper their seminarian competitors and start a winning streak at the matchup this Christmas season.

Seminarian Samuel Martinez said that the key to obstructing the priest’s strategy is to “thwart the brothers’ approach,” referring to Father Matthew Coonan and Father Terrence Coonan.

“There’s a lot of different strategies. With the priests winning last year, I think a lot of it comes down to not getting ‘out-intensity-ed’ by the Coonan brothers. So that’s definitely No. 1, we’ve got to watch out for those two.”

But besides that,” he continued, “I don’t know. We’ve got our kind of like ‘star-studded’ roster this year. It will be interesting to see. I think they’ll do fine on their own — a lot of these guys have good basketball experience and good where-abouts in that regard.”

To prepare for the game, the seminarians have been hard at work practicing and narrowing their roster.

“We were trying to figure out the rosters because we actually, just this past week, started our practices. But we’ve brought it down to, I think, seven guys.”

He added that, in the past, the game has brought around 1,200 fans to the stands. The seventh annual Cupertino Classic marks the first time that the University of Saint Francis has hosted the event, and Martinez said he expects around 2,000 spectators to watch the battle.

“We’re hoping to fill all the stands, have all the floor seating taken and everything too. And with, of course, having the Mass ahead of time, the holy hour, and then having all sorts of fun booths and different things like that for the vocation’s office and stuff, there’s going to be a lot going on.”

Mass will be celebrated in the university chapel at 3:45 p.m. prior to the game. Following the conclusion of Mass, eucharistic adoration will be offered in the chapel until the Hutzell Center doors open at 6 p.m.

Although the basketball game will take center stage that evening, its purpose is to call attention to vocations.

“As usual, Cupertino itself is a game we’re using to raise awareness about vocations. It’s not like it’s a big fundraiser or anything like that, it’s really just to bring the diocese together to see the seminarians and priests competing in a good, competitive event,” said Martinez.

“It’s going to be great, being able to say, ‘hey, come support your vocations but at the same time realize that we’re all here because of Christ,’ and just leading into it with that. That’s going to be cool. I’m excited about that.”

Organizers named the Cupertino Classic for St. Joseph of Cupertino, a 17th-century Franciscan monk who was known to levitate when in prayer, especially when Christmas carols were sung at Mass.

Of course, the choice of St. Joseph of Cupertino as the patron saint of this annual basketball game is particularly fitting, as many Catholics will sing Christmas carols in anticipation and celebration of the coming of the Messiah — and because the players may pray for His intercession to levitate over their opponents.

“Just keep all of us in your prayers. It’s the biggest thing,” said Martinez.

The Cupertino Classic is an event for everyone in the diocese to come together for camaraderie and fellowship, and to rejoice during the Christmas season over their shared Catholic faith.

For more information on the game, find “Cupertino Classic” on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or visit diocesefwsb.org/cupertino. Entry is free and open to all. The diocese will accept freewill offerings to support the education and formation of its seminarians during the game, or any time online at esvenlinegiving.com/224/DirectDonate/20449.
Bread, wine and a Norway spruce: the sacramental life

Before there were any buildings in Rockefeller Center, there was a Christmas tree. At the peak of the Great Depression, construction workers hungering for holiday cheer pooled their money to buy a 20-foot balsam for and placed it in the center of the construction site. They decorated the tree with whatever they could find: strings of cranberry their wives made, paper garlands, tin cans, even foil gum wrappers.

The men lined up at the tree to receive their paychecks. Their spirits were buoyed — and, unknown to them, a tradition was born. Ninety years later, it endures.

Each tree brings a story. In 1951, it drew national attention when NBC televised the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree lighting for the first time. In 1969, it was given 12 metal wire angels made by an immigrant woman. After the Sept. 11 attacks, it was blessed by veterinarians before being used. In 1979, it was given 12 metal angels made by an immigrant woman. After the Sept. 11 attacks, it was blessed by veterinarians before being used. In 1979, its trunk was milled to make warm enough for a bonfire.

In any case, when Baruch was first written, great problems beset God’s people. A most severe trial was that many of the people were living outside the Holy Land. No happy choice caused them to go elsewhere. The Letter to the Philippians furnishes the next lesson. Written to the Christians of Philippi, an important city in the ancient Roman Empire, the letter urges the Philippians loyal to the Lord to be steadfast in their faith, come what may, until the second coming of Jesus.

To emphasize the importance of what was occurring, this Gospel takes pains in setting the presence of John and the future coming of Christ at an exact point in history, namely when Tiberius was emperor of Rome, Pilate was governor in Palestine and so on.

Finally, Jesus came as God’s promised redeemer. The prophets of old had yearned for the redeemer and had predicted the coming of a savior. When this messiah would come, all would be made right. The rough ways for people would become smooth.

Let us make ready the way of the Lord.

CHRISTINA CAPECCHI

Norway Spruce was wrapped with more than 50,000 multi-colored lights on five miles of wire and then Baruch was adorned with a 900-pound Swarovski star.

But my favorite part of the story is what happens when the star is removed and the lights are unplugged. When Christmas ends, the tree’s story is just beginning. Its trunk is upcycled to be used by Habitat for Humanity to build a house. The one-time Christmas icon becomes a forever home.

This speaks to us as a Catholic surrounded by sacraments — physical objects that take on spiritual significance. They are blessed by prayer and priests and patterns. Rosary beads are handled every morning. Candles are burning at night. Medals are dangling from necks. And at the source and summit of our faith, bread and wine are consecrated.

Sacraments are hopeful. They see not just what is but what can be. They reflect Jesus’ promise: “Behold, I make all things new.” They assure us that, like the Christmas tree hauled out of Rockefeller Center, we can make of ourselves something beautiful, something lasting. Our weary bones can become a home. Sacraments offer a special kind of comfort in hard times, and we are marking the end of another hard year. A year of darkness and division; a year of resignation and aimlessness; a year of uncertainty. We can relate to those construction workers back in 1931 who fashioned a dreary construction site into a Christmas scene.

Yesterday I chatted with a Catholic dad who heads to the same Christmas tree farm my family visits each December. He joked about how long the tree remains perched in their house — weeks after Christmas, until his wife finally declares, “Enough!”

Then he sticks the tree in a snowbank in his yard till it’s warm enough for a bonfire. “It’s quite fun to put a dry pine tree on fire because it crackles and explodes,” he said. “I think about the sacramental reality, the resurrection of this tree: There’s this thing that has a new purpose.”

Maybe you’re feeling used up and dried out, like an old Christmas tree stuck in the snow. Maybe God is preparing your next chapter. Maybe 2022 will be your year, when people watch you and say, “There’s someone who has a new purpose.”

Christina Capechi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

SCAPITUI SEARCH®

Gospel for December 5, 2021

Luke 3:1-6

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Advent, Cycle C: The preparation for the coming of the Lord. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

YEAR

PIRATE

BROTHER

PRIESTHOOD

SON

OF

JORDAN

CRYING

TIBERIUS

GOVERNOR

LYSANIAS

ANNAS

ZECCHARIAH

BOOK

PREPARE

CAESAR

JUDEA

ABILENE

CAIAPHAS

BAPTISM

ISAIAH

SMOOTH

THE WORD CAME

L A D O O H T S E I R P K Y E R A P E R V I I

C L S G N I Y R C S B L

A Y N A D R O J A R R A

E E N A N L K I C H O T

S A H P A I A C H O T E

A R Z E C H A R I A H N

R E G H T P O S K F E E

E L L O J U D E A O R L

F G O V E R N O R N O I

R M S I T P A B J O N B

S U I R E B I T G S E A

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THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Second Sunday of Advent

Luke 3:1-6

The Book of Baruch provides the first reading for this Second Sunday of Advent. Baruch, not one of the major prophets, is relatively brief, certainly when the longer books of Ezekiel, Isaiah and Jeremiah are considered. It also is among the books that almost all Protestant scholars called the Apocrypha. Baruch does not appear in the King James Version of the Bible. Certain issues led to its omission from this renowned Protestant translation. At one time Baruch was presumed to have been written originally in Greek. The thinking was that no authentic Scripture could have been composed in any language other than Hebrew. Scholars now believe that Baruch was written in Hebrew, but that only Greek translations survive.

For Catholics, historically and now, most important is the fact that Christians from early times revered Baruch as part of the Bible. The Church officially long has recognized it as such. In any case, when Baruch was written, great problems beset God’s people. A most severe trial was that many of the people were living outside the Holy Land. No happy choice caused this displacement. Political oppression or poverty forced the people to go elsewhere.

This book encouraged those suffering, exiled people, reassuring them that God would not forsake them and that God’s justice and mercy would prevail over all. The Letter to the Philippians furnishes the next lesson. Written to the Christians of Philippi, an important city in the ancient Roman Empire, the letter urges the Philippians loyal to the Lord to be steadfast in their faith, come what may, until the second coming of Jesus.

As so often found elsewhere in the New Testament, this reading strongly states that one day, at a time unknown, Jesus will come again in triumph and judgment.

St. Luke’s Gospel is the source of the last reading. This reading centers upon Jesus, although John the Baptist is quite evident in the reading. Carefully constructed, the Gospel presents the coming of Jesus as extraordinarily, indeed uniquely, important people in the unfolding of human affairs. John the Baptist is a prepared way for people to receive themselves to receive the Lord. Essential in this preparation was the personal rejection of sin.

John was a prophet and a holy man, someone to be listened to, holy, more than anything, gave persons special wisdom. John could be trusted. He spoke the truth.

Reflection

When Baruch was written, times were very bad for the Jews. When Philippians and the Gospel of Luke were written, times were hard for Christians. Circumstances differed, but the condition of misery and hopelessness was the same.

On this Second Sunday of Advent, times are hard for many. COVID-19 still takes its tolls. Many suffer the effects of hurricanes or fires. Bitterness and doubt stalk the land. The results of sin still torment everyone.

All will be right if we admit Jesus into our lives. We must invite the Lord into our lives sincerely, by renouncing our sins, and by giving ourselves, bodies and souls, to God. John the Baptist calls us, as he called people in his generation, to be honest and to face facts.
Our Lady of Guadalupe to be celebrated across diocese

MISHAWAKA — The feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, will be observed in several parishes in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend between now and Dec. 12. All are invited to participate in the liturgies, Mañanitas (traditional song) and activities at the parishes listed below.

St. Robert Bellarmine, North Manchester
Sunday, Dec. 12
Mañanitas 5 a.m., Mass 11:30 a.m., gathering at 12:30 p.m.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Warsaw
Saturday, Dec. 11
Mass at 11 p.m. followed by Mañanitas at 12,
then a small gathering for those who would like
Sunday, Dec. 12
Mass at noon and at 6 p.m.

St. Dominic, Bremen
Dec. 4-12
Novena at 6 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 11
Reenactment at 11 a.m., procession at noon, Mass at 12:30 p.m.

St. Vincent de Paul, Elkhart
Friday, Dec. 10
11 p.m. Mass
Saturday, Dec. 11, 4-6 a.m.
Rosary, reenactment and Mañanitas
Saturday, Dec. 11, 11 a.m.
Procession from St. Thomas the Apostle Parish to St. Vincent de Paul Parish at 11 a.m. followed by Mass at noon

St. Patrick, Ligonier
Saturday, Dec. 11
Serenade at 9 p.m. followed by Mass at 10 p.m., then Mañanitas at 12 a.m.
Sunday, Dec. 12
Reenactment at noon followed by folkloric dancers, Mass and gathering

St. Joseph, Fort Wayne
Sunday, Dec. 12
Mass at 11:30 a.m.

St. John the Evangelist, Goshen
Saturday, Dec. 11
Reenactment at 4 p.m., Mass at 6 p.m., folkloric dancers at 7 p.m. and mariachi performance at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 12
Normal Mass schedule followed by 4 p.m. gathering

Our Lady of Hungary, South Bend
Friday, Dec. 10
Rosary at 6 p.m., reenactment at 7 p.m., folkloric dancers at 8 p.m. followed by Mass and Mañanitas
Saturday, Dec. 11
Mass at 1 p.m.

St. Adalbert, South Bend
Dec. 2-10
Novena, 6 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 10
Rosary 11:15 p.m., Mañanitas 11:45 p.m., midnight Mass
Saturday, Dec. 11
Bilingual Mass, 8 a.m., folkloric dancers 11 a.m., Mañanitas 11:45 a.m., noon Mass, lunch at 1:30 p.m.

St. Michael, Plymouth
Dec. 3-11
Novena, 6 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 11
Mass, 11 p.m., followed by Mañanitas at midnight
Sunday, Dec. 12
Procession begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by noon Mass and a gathering with folkloric dancers at 1 p.m.

St. Joseph, LaGrange
Friday, Dec. 10
Mass at 6 p.m., followed by reenactment and a mariachi performance.
NOW HIRING: CONTROLLER

The Congregation of Holy Cross, US Province, seeks a key individual to join its team. Office located in Notre Dame, IN. For more information and to apply, submit your resume to kclauss@holycrossusa.org.
WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

Christmas altars on display at Diocesan Museum
FORT WAYNE — The Diocesan Museum will have a special photo display December through January of diocesan parish altars decorated for Christmas. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The museum is located next door to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Free parking is available in any cathedral lot. A handicap entrance is at the side door.

Journey to Bethlehem
FORT WAYNE — A drive-thru live Nativity will take place Saturday, Dec. 4 from 3-5 p.m. and again from 6-9 p.m. at Bishop Dwenger High School, 1502 E. Wallet Rd. There is no fee, but a free will donation to Women’s Care Center in Fort Wayne will be taken.

Solemnity free spaghetti dinner
FORT WAYNE — Celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception with a free spaghetti dinner at St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne. Mass will take place in the church at 5:45 p.m. followed by dinner in the gym, 4500 Fairfield Ave. (wheelchair accessible). Gluten-free options will be available. Sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council No. 16396.

St. Vincent Knights of Columbus parish breakfast
FORT WAYNE — St. Vincent Knights of Columbus are hosting a breakfast buffet on Sunday, Dec. 12 from 8-11 a.m. in the parish hall, 1502 E. Wallet Rd. A free will offering with all proceeds from the breakfast supporting A Women's Care Center in Fort Wayne will be taken.

First Saturday Devotions are Alive in Rome City!

Apply at https://diocesefwsb.org/careers

To apply, visit: www.ccfwsb.org/careers
Advent in six words: What will this season bring us?

BY SAMANTHA ROHLOFF

The celebration of Advent can sometimes fade away if the true reason behind this season is forgotten or if people speed their way through it, looking forward to other events and not slowing to notice what’s around them. But Catholics are speaking up and telling the world of the true meaning and message behind this great season.

Ernest Hemingway is credited with writing an entire story in just six words. His famous narrative reads: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.” While this is an incredibly sad story, it also presents a potential challenge. In preparation for the Advent season, is it possible for someone to create a story in just six words that expresses the meaning of the liturgical season and what the Advent season will bring for them?

Diocesan parishioners were asked: “As Advent brings the start of something new and something holy into our lives, what will this Advent season bring for you?”

“Jesus is coming. Open your heart.” – Debi Schoedel, 64, Our Lady of Good Hope

“A Savior, I need him, Joy!” – Mary Esslinger, 69, Our Lady of Good Hope

“We Wait, We Watch, He Comes.” – Marianne Dunne, 78, Our Lady of Good Hope

“November: The time Advent Season begins.” – Jordan Tieszen, 10, Our Lady of Good Hope


“Waiting for presents? No, His presence.” – Brian Dunne, 54, St. Therese

“Celebrate Mary’s Yes, Pray the Rosary.” – Ann Lushis, 66, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“I refuse to become a nugget.” – Natalie Reeder, 41, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Light in darkness, love came down.” – Eric Sheibley, 43, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Candles light, family table, joy awaits.” – Mindy Sheibley, 40, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Candles light, carolers sing come Emmanuel.” – Gianna Sheibley, 10, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Candles light, singing prayers all together.” – James Sheibley, 6, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Simplicity of Life, Gives you Peace.” – Carole Jaroch, 76, Sacred Heart, Warsaw

“Return to God, family. Love, Mom.” – Pam Leach, 47, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Preparing for more than just Christmas.” – Karen Eckrich, 25, St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne

“Watching waiting, preparing praying, King’s coming.” – Joan Kraska, 75, Christ the King

“Candles announce Satan’s demise: Rorate Coeli.” – Christopher Lushis, 33, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Expectant hope awaits silent, holy night.” – Lindsay Lushis, 35, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Emmanuel, I will follow Your path.” – Kris, 44, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Advent means Love, Joy, and Christ.” – Clare, 11, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“I feel Jesus in my heart.” – Luke, 9, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne

“Sinless Savior in messy stable; me.” – Monica Aquila, 35, St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne