

# TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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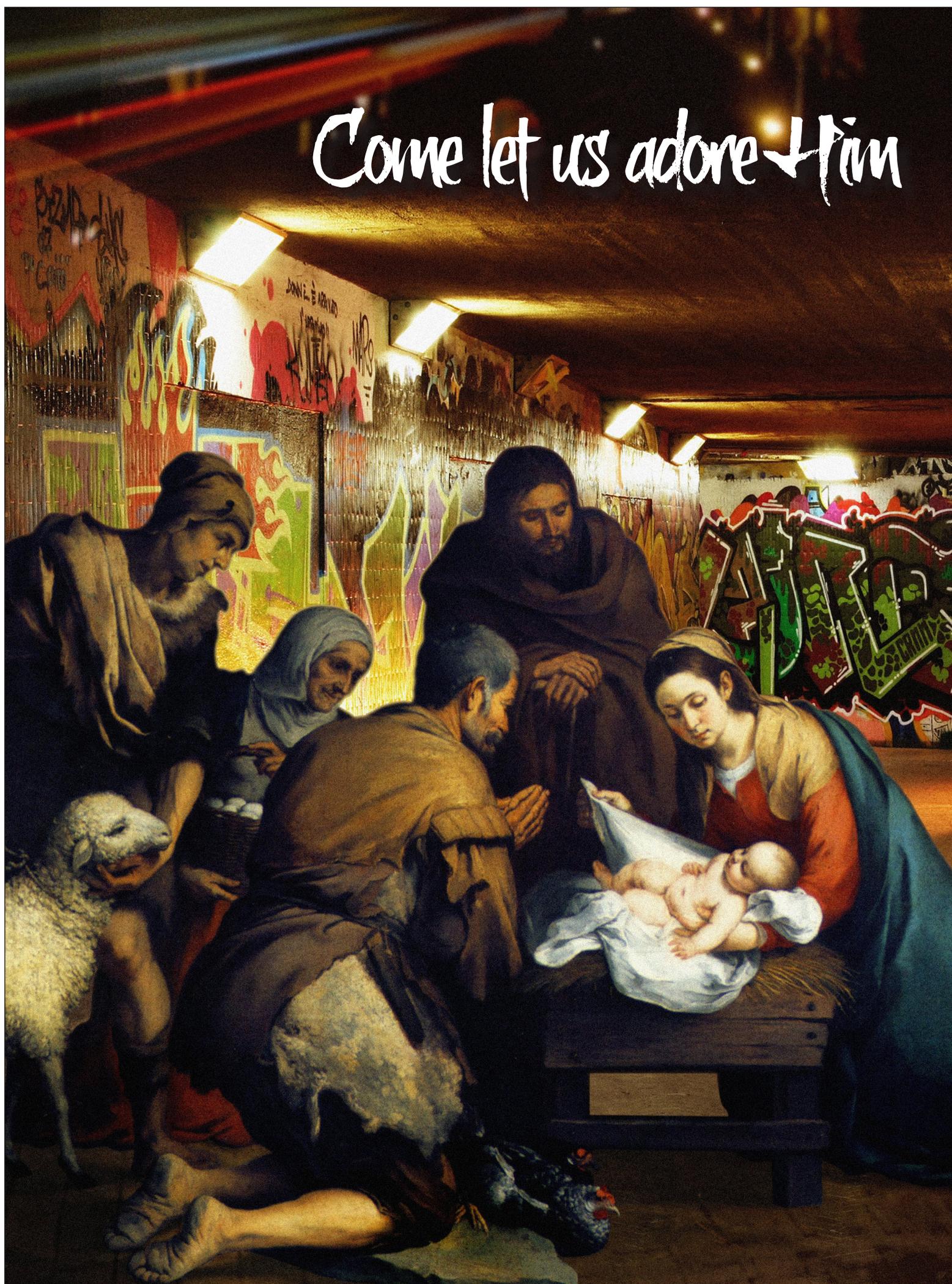
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CNS illustration/Bridgeman Images

The Holy Family at the Nativity is depicted in this provocative digital collage by Trygve Skogrand. Christmas, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated Dec. 25. During this season of Christmas, may all be welcomed and adore the newborn Savior of the world.

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# Lori: FDA decision on medical abortion puts women's lives, health at risk

WASHINGTON (CNS) — By no longer requiring the abortion drug mifepristone to be picked up in person, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is “merely succumbing to the abortion industry’s pressure to loosen safety standards,” instead of protecting the lives and health of mothers and children as it should do, said the U.S. bishops’ pro-life chairman.

“Every life is sacred: the lives of mothers and the lives of the unborn,” said Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities. “Not only does this decision further the tragic taking of unborn lives but it does little to care for the well-being of women in need.”

“Far from the accompaniment that women in crisis pregnancies deserve, this decision would leave women alone in the midst of trauma, often without any medical attention or follow-up care,” he said in a statement issued late Dec. 16.

Earlier in the day, the FDA announced it would permanently lift its requirement that a prescription for the abortion drug be picked up in person, which now allows clinics, medical offices and hospitals to prescribe the drug via telemedicine and send it directly to the patient by mail or through a mail-order pharmacy.

The agency said “the benefits of the drug outweigh the risks,” but it added a requirement that pharmacies that dispense the drug be “specially certified.”

Under the Biden administration, the FDA had temporarily lifted the in-person requirement amid the pandemic in April of this year, and said a full review of the regulation would be conducted.

The FDA voluntarily took this action when faced with a court order fought for and obtained in 2020 by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of supporters of legal abortion that would have forced the agency to lift the in-person requirement.

The brand name for the abortion drug mifepristone is Mifeprex. Also called RU-486, it is used to end a pregnancy during the first 10 weeks.

It is a two-drug regimen: A woman takes mifepristone first to block the body’s progesterone and stop the pregnancy from advancing. Then a day or two later, this is followed by a second drug, misoprostol, which causes cramping and bleeding to empty the uterus.

The protocol was first approved in 2000 with limits on its distribution. The FDA



CNS photo/courtesy Knights of Columbus

**Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori is seen in this Oct. 30, 2020, file photo. The archbishop is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.**

placed it in a special category — “risk evaluation and mitigation strategy” — which it does for drugs that may be associated with life-threatening side effects, according to the National Right to Life Committee.

“One of the essential tasks of governments is to safeguard the health and well-being of citizens,” but instead the FDA has loosened its health safety standards with its decision, Archbishop Lori said.

“I call on leaders of every level of government to stand with women in need by promoting policies that recognize the value and human dignity of both mother and child, rather than further promoting the devastating tragedy of abortion,” he said.

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said the FDA decision does not “make this abortion process safer for women. What these changes do is make the process easier for the abortion industry.”

“The FDA knows the dangers of this abortion drug combination, but in the name of political expediency, has lifted the safety measure requiring an in-person doctor’s visit,” she said in a Dec. 16 statement.

The American Medical Association and other major medical groups have said mife-

pristone has built up a strong safety record since 2000.

But according to the National Right to Life Committee, the FDA “has a record of nearly two dozen deaths and thousands of complications associated with the use of the mifepristone/misoprostol abortion-drug combination.” Agency documentation also describes “adverse events” from the use of the two drugs, including serious infections and severe hemorrhaging, the committee said.

“Making this change permanent puts women at greater risk because they may not be adequately screened to make sure they have no disqualifying conditions like allergies or ectopic pregnancy and are not so far along that the drugs will not work or are more likely to result in life-threatening complications,” said Randall K. O’Bannon, director of education and research at the National Right to Life Committee.

“Without that screening or monitoring, the likelihood of hemorrhage, infection and missed ectopic pregnancy are greatly increased,” O’Bannon added in a statement. “There is a greater possibility that a woman experiencing these adverse events may end up in the emergency room and could arrive too late for life-saving treatment.”

Georgeanne Usova, senior legislative counsel at the ACLU, said in a statement: “The FDA’s decision will come as a tremendous relief for countless abortion and miscarriage patients.”

The ACLU considered the in-person requirement “a medically unnecessary restriction and outdated.”

Like other opponents of the FDA decision, Melanie Israel, policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation’s DeVos Center for Religion and Civil Society, called it “a surrender to the abortion industry’s demands” and said it “comes at the expense of women’s health and safety.”

Israel urged Congress and state lawmakers to “counteract the FDA’s decision” and protect life and women’s health “with new policies that prohibit telemedicine abortions, strengthen informed-consent requirements and ensure stronger reporting requirements to better track complications.”

According to CNN, 19 states already have prohibitions in place “that effectively ban the use of telemedicine for medication abortion.”



CNS photo/Evelyn Hockstein, Reuters

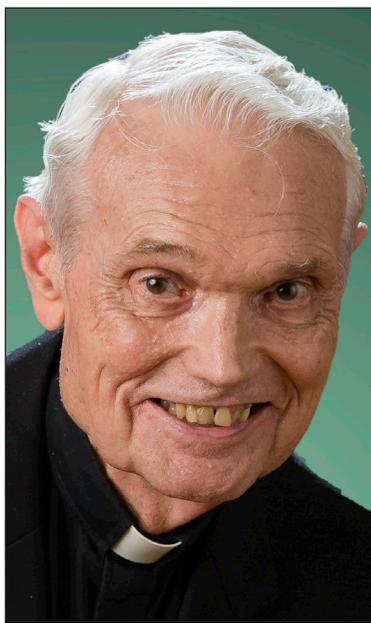
**A paper bag containing the mifepristone and misoprostol pills used for a chemical abortion, follow-up instructions and small warming packs is seen at Trust Women clinic in Oklahoma City Dec. 6.**

# Father Pfister enters eternal rest

BY JENNIFER BARTON

After more than 50 years of priesthood in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Father John F. Pfister passed away Monday, Dec. 13, at St. Anne Home in Fort Wayne. Father Pfister had retired from active ministry in 2015. He was 82 years old.

Father Pfister was born Oct. 17, 1939, to Francis and Florence (Schelhammer) Pfister. He attended SS. Peter and Paul School in Huntington, followed by seminary training at Our Lady of the Lake pre-seminary and Theological College in Washington, D.C. Ordained to the priesthood in 1966 by Bishop Leo A. Pursley, Father Pfister taught English and religion to the first classes at Bishop Dwenger High School while assisting at St. Charles Borromeo Parish. After this, he became pastor of St. Jude Parish, Fort Wayne, before moving to South Bend to shepherd the now-closed St. Mary of the Assumption Parish. Returning to the Fort Wayne area years later,



FATHER JOHN F. PFISTER

he pastored Queen of Angels Parish for a decade before being appointed pastor at St. Mary Parish in Huntington.

Under his leadership at St. Jude and through the dedicated work of parishioner Ed Dahm,

the old convent chapel at the parish was converted into a perpetual adoration chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament has awaited thousands of worshippers for over 35 years.

He served in many other capacities as well, being appointed vocations director for the diocese in 1969, a position he held for 11 years. As a long-time member of the Knights of Columbus, he served as chaplain for councils for 35 years and as state chaplain for 2 years.

His care and concern for the future of the Church was evident in his service both on the board of trustees for the Athenaeum of Ohio, which comprises several minor and major seminaries, and as chaplain for the Serra Club of Fort Wayne. Even his final wish reflected this, as he requested donations be sent to the Seminarian Education Fund in lieu of flowers.

Throughout his ministry, Father Pfister was known for his warm manner and his frequently used exclamation – “Garsh!” Joyce Rehtlake, member of St. Mary in Huntington, remembered



## Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Sunday, January 2: 11 a.m. Mass, Saint Matthew Cathedral, South Bend  
 Wednesday, January 5: 9 a.m. — Mass and Pastoral Visit, Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne  
 Thursday-Saturday, January 6-8: National Catholic Office for the Deaf Pastoral Week, Savannah, Georgia

Father Pfister from various ministries within the church. She described him as “a very giving person; always concerned with his obligation to his ministry.”

Msgr. Robert Schulte was in the seminary when Father Pfister was vocations director. He recalled how Father Pfister visited the seminary and arranged summer gatherings for the future priests. Working together, the two of them instituted a program in the early 1970s in which seminarians are assigned to a parish during the summer break, modeled after the one in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. This practice has now been in place for over 40 years thanks to Father Pfister, giving seminarians a taste of parish life before ordination.

“He was very influential, a good model of priesthood,” Msgr. Schulte said.

The connections between the two men continued through the years, as Msgr. Schulte took over the duties of vocations director from Father Pfister and is now pastor at St. Jude. Located just across the street from St. Anne Home, Msgr. Schulte was able to visit Father Pfister in his last years. Msgr. Schulte remarked that: “He suffered a lot, but always wanted to do what the Lord wanted, to do God’s will, even in his illness.”

A funeral Mass for Father Pfister was celebrated Friday, Dec. 17, at 11 a.m. at St. Mary in Huntington, with burial at Mount Calvary Cemetery.

# Catholic groups challenge federal mandate on gender transition procedures

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Several Catholic hospitals, a Catholic university and Mercy sisters who run health clinics filed a challenge to a federal mandate for performing gender transition procedures with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit Dec. 15.

The groups are continuing a fight they had previously won when two lower federal courts struck down what has been described as the Affordable Care Act’s “transgender mandate,” saying it was a violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The Biden administration has appealed both decisions at the 8th Circuit.

Becket, a Washington-based nonprofit religious liberty law firm that is representing some of the Catholic groups, described this case on its website as challenging a policy that threatens Catholic doctors, hospital and clinics “with multimillion-dollar penalties for sex discrimination unless they perform controversial gender-transition procedures.”

Luke Goodrich, vice president and senior counsel at Becket, said in a Dec. 15 statement that both federal courts which took up “this controversial mandate have struck it down as bad for patients, bad for doctors and bad for religious liberty.”

He also said the federal government “has no business forcing doctors to perform controversial procedures that could be deeply harmful to patients,”

and he hoped the appeals court would issue “a commonsense ruling” that is good for everyone.

In 2016, the federal government began implementing a mandate requiring doctors to perform gender transition procedures on any patient, including children, and required private insurance companies — except plans run by Medicare and Medicaid — and many employers to cover gender reassignment therapy or face severe penalties and legal action.

In August 2016, Becket, joined by eight state governments, filed a lawsuit in Texas on behalf of Franciscan Alliance, a religious hospital network sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, and the Christian Medical & Dental Associations, defending them from this government mandate.

Becket filed a parallel lawsuit in federal court in November 2016 on behalf of Catholic groups in North Dakota including the Sisters of Mercy, the University of Mary in Bismarck, and SMP Health System, sponsored by the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. The state of North Dakota also joined Becket’s legal challenge.

In 2016, the federal court in North Dakota put the rule on hold, and in 2019 the federal court in Texas struck it down. The two courts said the policy was an unlawful overreach by a federal agency and a likely violation of religious liberty.

In 2020, the Trump adminis-



CNS photo/Jonathan Ernst, Reuters

LGBT activists and transgender rights supporters block the street outside the U.S. Supreme Court Oct. 8, 2019.

tration put in place conscience protections for doctors opposed to the mandate, but the effort was blocked by the courts.

On Jan. 21, 2021, the U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota Eastern Division struck down the transgender mandate. On Aug. 9, 2021, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas granted the plaintiffs permanent relief from the mandate.

In November, the Supreme

Court turned down an appeal from a Catholic hospital in California that was sued for refusing to perform a hysterectomy on a transgender patient.

The court’s decision, issued without comment, sent the lawsuit back to state court.

When the Catholic hospital was sued in 2016, a trial court sided with it, but an appeals court reversed that decision. So the hospital appealed to the Supreme Court in 2020, saying

its case “poses a profound threat to faith-based health care institutions’ ability to advance their healing ministries consistent with the teachings of their faith.”

A brief filed by the Catholic Health Association said the appeals court decision “portends ill for all religious organizations that serve the public following the precepts of religious teaching.”

# High school clubs support CRS mission

BY JODI MARLIN

Addressing human suffering around the world begins with awareness, followed by Christian action. Catholic Relief Services, the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States, puts boots on the ground to effect change in the places experiencing pervasive poverty, hunger and strife; a critical component of their support team is Catholic high school students in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

A new relationship between CRS and Catholic high schools across the U.S. promises to harness the commitment of like-minded advocates for social justice. The new CRS Clubs initiative is part of a national network of high school and university clubs and parish chapter communities that are working together to end global poverty and migration and mitigate the changing climate, carrying out the USCCB's commitment to assist people who are poor and vulnerable around the world. That commitment is motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to cherish, preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, to foster charity and justice, and to embody Catholic social and moral teaching.

The organization's work with Catholic communities is always evolving and responding to the signs of the times, said CRS Community Engagement Manager Beth Knobbe. "As we transitioned to our new CRS Clubs, the most significant development was the integration of a stronger student leadership component."

Within the clubs, high school students are the leaders and initiators. "Each club has clearly defined leadership roles, and we



Provided by Nicole Rudolph

**Students at Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne, decorate gift bags during the school's annual in-house Sodalities Service Day. The legacy of supporting Catholic Relief Services is realized at Bishop Luers by engaging students in service-oriented activities that incorporate CRS' suggestions and focus.**

equip student to organize school-wide events that engage their peers in advocacy, prayer and community giving, said Knobbe. "Our hope is that these young leaders will work together to be change-makers today and grow their skills to be the influencers of positive change in the future. We are excited for them to be effective advocates and build their leadership skills to bring global solidarity to life in their school and beyond — and to do all of this in the context of our Catholic faith."

## Saint Joseph High School

Through the clubs, students learn about pressing humanitarian issues that contribute to global poverty, develop impor-

tant leadership skills and take meaningful action that helps their global family, said Saint Joseph High School CRS Club leader Abby Fink. Saint Joseph established its inaugural club this fall.

Fink and club co-presidents Lucia Williams and Felicity Nolan recall having heard Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades recount his experiences as a CRS board member during pastoral visits to the school. The two, and other members of the club, are now working on localizing the efforts of Catholic Relief Services in the South Bend community.

"We're trying to fundraise and spread awareness, and offer prayers — because there's only so much we can do to help from St. Joe, but we can all pray for everyone who's affected by poverty and migration around the

world," said Williams.

The club meets monthly to carry out the organization's suggested action items. These usually consist of writing emails or letters to elected officials about different issues going on in the world or planning a fundraising event like the "12 Days of CRS," which began Dec. 2 at SJHS.

"Every morning we've been having a school prayer dedicated to CRS, led by one of the club leaders, to help spread awareness. We pray for a different issue each day, like poverty, migration or humanitarian need," explained Fink.

On Dec. 10, Fink's husband spoke with the club about international development. A week later, Nolan and her father led a rosary in the school chapel for CRS efforts. That same Friday, a "Pie your teacher" fundraising

event earned \$1,758.90 for CRS from students who donated pennies to see their favorite teacher volunteer to take a pie to the face.

"It's a good way to catch their attention for CRS," said Williams.

The face of suffering in the world does grab students' attention, but they feel they can't do anything about it, Fink noted. Williams feels that "through the CRS community, we can actually help meet a need."

## Marian High School

Like SJHS, Marian High School in Mishawaka shifted from a global CRS school model to a club-type organization in the fall. Club members lead the way in increasing awareness of the CRS mission and in fundraising and other activities to support the international organization, as well as in fighting for the rights and dignity of the poor in the U.S. and closer to home.

"A piece that wasn't as big a thing under the global school, to my understanding, is the advocacy piece," said advisor and first-year theology teacher Corinne DeLucenay. This fall they wrote letters to Congresswoman Jackie Walorski and Indiana Senator David Niezgodski about the pro-life federal Helms Amendment. Beforehand, they talked about how the U.S. should give aid to the poor without, for example, supporting contraception and abortion.

"How do we support the dignity of individual?" DeLucenay asked the students to consider.

During the next year DeLucenay hopes to grow the Marian club and install a leadership team, as well as equip the members to share the why and the how of what they've learned about advocacy with their peers. Her hope is that the students will increase in conscientiousness and capability to support their brothers and sisters in Christ who are in crisis both around the world and locally.

## Bishop Dwenger High School

Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne is building its biweekly, before-school CRS Club on momentum from Students for International Topicality and Awareness, a social justice club started last year by two seniors. According to advisor Nick Miles, the now-graduated students were engaged in analyzing various world problems and trying to increase awareness of several of the same issues CRS addresses.

The CRS model will be more hands-on — involving not just research, as SITA did, but advocacy fundraising and volunteering, "to make us more aware of why we're doing what we're doing," said Miles.



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Although they've met only a few times, club members have already participated in the school's Stuff the Bus project for the Fort Wayne Homeless shelter. Miles expects that by the time students return after Christmas break, the Bishop Dwenger CRS Club will be fully up and running.

### Bishop Luers High School

The legacy of supporting CRS remains alive and well at Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne too. Instead of a club format, however, the school opted to engage students through service-oriented activities that incorporate CRS' suggestions and focus.

An in-class service project is carried out each week, and twice a year an all-school service project brings students together for a group project or to help in some way in the community. Last year the students underwent a refugee simulation offered by the organization to gain a perspective of what it is like to be a refugee; another group made sandwiches for a local homeless shelter. Others made rosaries, and yet others learned from representatives of Eagle Marsh how to conserve natural resources.

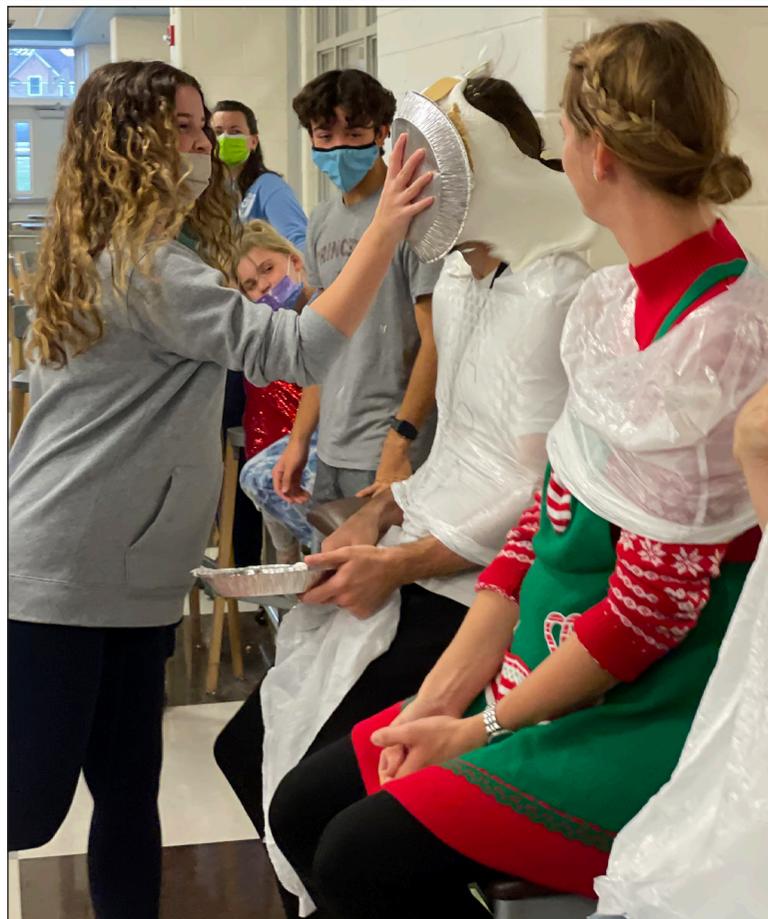
"It's working pretty seamlessly because we already had a lot of the structure in place, said advisor Nicole Rudolph. "This is helping us be able to enrich our structure and bring it to a more Catholic and global point of view."

For more information about Catholic Relief Services, visit [crs.org](http://crs.org).

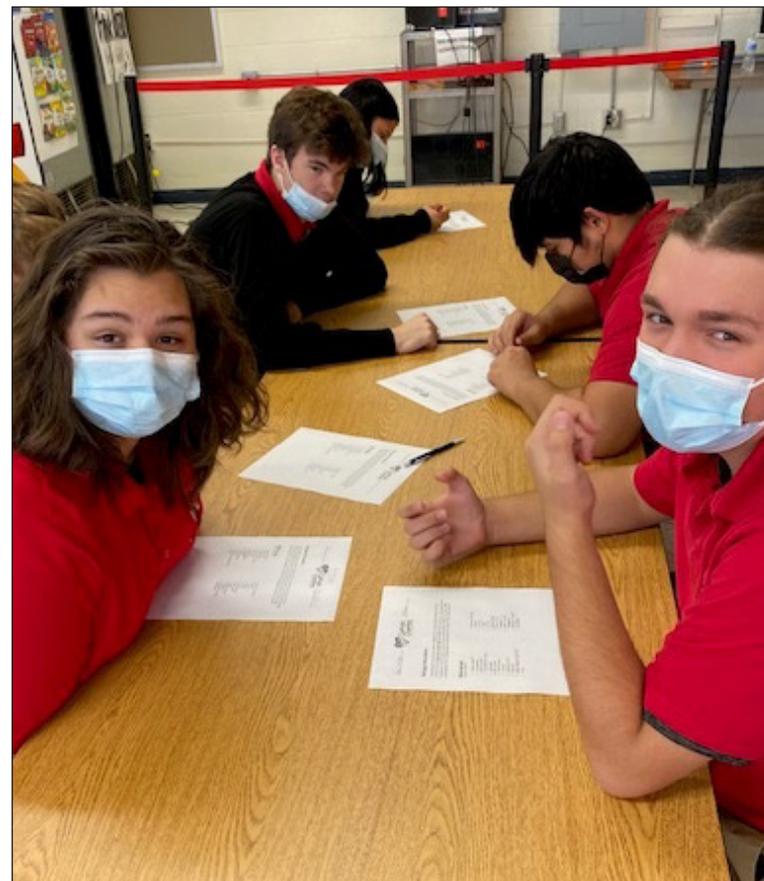


Photos provided by Abby Fink

Catholic Relief Services Club members at Saint Joseph High School, South Bend, learn about international global development from a guest speaker in December. Catholic high schools of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend continue to support the charitable work of CRS around the world and increase awareness — most through the establishment this year of CRS Clubs.



Saint Joseph High School teachers take a pie to the face after a fundraising event for Catholic Relief Services last week.



Provided by Nicole Rudolph

Bishop Luers students write letters during a Sodalities Service Day.

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## Vatican answers questions on limits regarding pre-Vatican II Mass

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Responding to 11 questions it said had been raised about Pope Francis' document restricting celebrations of the pre-Vatican II Mass, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments offered a few concessions to bishops but insisted the entire Latin-rite Catholic Church must move toward celebrating only one form of the Mass and sacraments. "It is sad to see how the deepest bond of unity, the sharing in the one bread broken which is his body offered so that all may be one, becomes a cause for division," wrote Archbishop Arthur Roche, prefect of the congregation, in a document published Dec. 18. In a formal "responsa ad dubia" — response to questions — Archbishop Roche said, "It is the duty of the bishops, cum Petro et sub Petro (with and under Peter, the pope), to safeguard communion, which, as the apostle Paul reminds us, is a necessary condition for being able to participate at the eucharistic table." Writing to the presidents of bishops' conferences, the archbishop said, "As pastors we must not lend ourselves to sterile polemics, capable only of creating division, in which the ritual itself is often exploited by ideological viewpoints."

## Pew: Catholic numbers hold steady, 'nones' rise, Protestants decrease

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The percentage of Catholics in the U.S. population in 2021 held steady at 21% in the latest Pew Research Center survey, issued Dec. 14. The percentage of Protestants, however, dropped, while the percentage of "nones" — those who profess no particular denominational attachment — continued to rise, said the report, "About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated." The survey results also indicate the proportion of Christians in the U.S. population continues to slide. A decade ago, they constituted 75%, or three out of every four Americans. In the new survey, that percentage is down to 63%, or five out of every eight Americans. "Christians now outnumber religious 'nones' by a ratio of a little more than 2-to-1," the report said. In 2007, when Pew began asking its current question about religious identity, the ratio was almost 5-to-1, or 78% vs. 16%. Since 2007, Protestantism has dwindled from 52% of all Americans to 40%, not quite twice the percentage of Catholics today. Within Protestantism, the percentage of those adults who profess evangelical or "born again" Christianity has shrunk by 6%; the number of those who are not

# NEWS BRIEFS

## Relief efforts for tornado victims show Church at its best



CNS photo/Adrees Latif, Reuters

Members of the Weatherbee family salvage their belongings from their destroyed home in Mayfield, Ky., Dec. 13 in the aftermath of a tornado that ripped through the town.

St. Jerome Church in Fancy Farm, Kentucky, became a makeshift shelter for storm survivors over the Dec. 11-12 weekend and shifted Dec. 13 to become a distribution site for relief supplies. Four tornadoes, including one that carved a 225-mile-long path through four states, struck devastating blows to western Kentucky overnight Dec. 10.

evangelical or "born again" also has shrunk by 6%.

## U.K. court rules N. Ireland must investigate treatment of '70s detainees

DUBLIN (CNS) — The U.K. Supreme Court ruled that police in Northern Ireland were wrong not to investigate allegations that 14 Catholic men were tortured while in custody in the early 1970s. The men — known as the "hooded men," because while they were being detained their heads were hooded by the security forces — were arrested and held without charge or trial with hundreds of other Catholics in a campaign the British government in the region described as internment. The men have been campaigning for the past 50 years to have a police investigation into their treatment.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland refused to investigate in 2014, prompting the court case. The judges ruled Dec. 15 that the decision by the police was "irrational." The court also said the men's treatment was "deplorable" and was a "deliberate policy" of the British government rather than the actions of rogue agents. Operation Demetrius was launched by the British Army in Northern Ireland in August 1971. It involved the mass arrest and internment of people the authorities said they suspected of being involved with paramilitary organizations.

## Pope establishes 'Fratelli Tutti' Foundation

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis established a new Vatican foundation that will promote initiatives based on the principles

set out in his encyclical "Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship." In a decree published by the Vatican Dec. 15, the pope said he would "gladly accede" to the request of the Fabbrica di San Pietro, the Vatican office charged with the maintenance and upkeep of St. Peter's Basilica, "to establish a foundation of religion and worship intended to collaborate in spreading the principles set forth" in his encyclical. The "Fratelli Tutti" Foundation, he said, will "encourage initiatives linked to spirituality, art, education and dialogue with the world, around St. Peter's Basilica and in the embrace of its colonnade." The decree, also known as a chirograph, was signed by the pope Dec. 8. According to its statutes, the foundation, which will be headed by Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, will "support and plan" the promotion of art and faith.

## St. Joseph's quiet humility teaches value of silence, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The absence of any words attributed to St. Joseph in the Gospels speaks volumes about the importance of silence, Pope Francis said. St. Joseph's silence was "not mutism," but a quality that allowed him to listen to the word and will of the Holy Spirit, the pope said during his weekly general audience Dec. 15. "This is why we must learn from Joseph to cultivate silence — that space of interiority in our days in which we give the Spirit the opportunity to regenerate us, to console us, to correct us," he said. During his audience in the Vatican's Paul VI hall, Pope Francis continued his series of talks on St. Joseph, reflecting on his silence which is "an important personal aspect" that even Christ incorporated in his own life and ministry. "Jesus was raised in this 'school,' in the house of Nazareth, with the daily example of Mary and Joseph," the pope explained. "And it is not surprising that he himself sought spaces of silence in his days and invited his disciples to have such an experience."

## Catholic priest leads campaign against hostility toward poor in Brazil

SÃO PAULO (CNS) — Calling it a humanitarian crisis, a Catholic priest who works with the homeless in São Paulo has been on a campaign against fear of poor people. His crusade has attracted the attention of federal lawmakers, who may approve a bill prohibiting architecture hostile to homeless people in public areas across the country. In November, a lower house commission approved a bill, dubbed "Father Julio Lancellotti," that prohibits the use of hostile construction techniques and physical equipment to distance and restrict the use of public spaces by homeless people. For Father Lancellotti, the priest known as Father of the Poor for his work with the homeless, unfriendly architecture toward the homeless and campaigns against the donation of alms are spreading across the country. "This aggressiveness toward homeless people serves to hide the fact that social programs don't work," the priest said in a recent TV interview. He said he has seen sharp, architectural obstacles being placed in public areas to prevent the homeless from staying there and even sprinkler systems employed to deter people from sleeping underneath marquees. As for the campaigns against giving money to those panhandling on the streets, the priest says the majority of poor people do not have a choice, "If begging were profitable, there would be a lot of people living off it."

# Live Nativity scenes reflect the birth of Jesus

BY JENNIFER BARTON

Recreating a living Nativity of the Lord became a popular Christmas devotion because of St. Francis of Assisi, who is said to have been one of the first Catholics to begin the practice when he set up a manger and brought in animals to preach about the birth of Christ on Christmas Eve 1223.

The cast of characters and observance of living Nativities spread throughout Europe in the centuries following. And although there is no proof that the shepherds and Magi were both present at the stable at the same time, living creches reflect Renaissance religious art, which often brings them together.

Catholic and Protestant families set up personal creches at home, but viewing a live Nativity turns the thoughts of the faithful from the hustle and bustle toward reflection on the true meaning of Christmas — the birth of the Savior.



Photos by Jennifer Barton



Jennifer Barton

St. Therese Parish in Fort Wayne utilized its wooded grounds to host a live Nativity this year. Associate pastor Father Keeton Lockwood led parishioners on a lighted path to different stations in search of the Christ Child: They met shepherds, angels and Wise Men, all played by children of the parish.



Provided by Patti Webster

A Wise Man holds out his gift for the baby Jesus at the living Nativity at St. Anthony of Padua in Angola Sunday, Dec. 19.

This was the first year that Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne, above, staged a living Nativity, with students from the high school and one of its feeder schools, Queen of Angels, depicting Biblical characters. Live animals, including a camel, sheep and goats, graced the school's grounds during the event. The cost of admission to the drive-through was a donation to Women's Care Center.



Clara Burns

SS. Peter and Paul Parish continued a tradition of holding a live Nativity at St. Felix Catholic Center in Huntington. This was the third year and response has been positive. The event also featured a petting zoo for children that included goats and a llama.



Provided by Scott Warden

Year in Review —

## Meet Our Sunday Visitor's 2021 Catholics of the Year

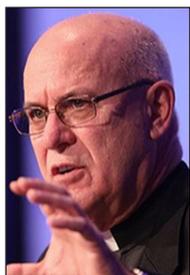
*Amid a turbulent year, Our Sunday Visitor honors those who have inspired us through their exemplary witness to the Faith.*

*A year ago, as we flipped the calendar from 2020 to 2021, we thought that the worst was behind us. With new vaccinations, we thought we would beat back the COVID-19 pandemic. But the virus killed more people in 2021 than it did in 2020. Other tragedies befell us in 2021 as well — hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, mass shootings and so much more.*

*But through it all, there were those whose stories inspired us to persevere in Faith. Each of Our Sunday Visitor's 2021 Catholics of the Year offered, in their own way, a witness to the power of following the will of God and the fruits that blossom from doing so. Our Sunday Visitor is proud to hold up this year's honorees as shining examples of those who have made indelible marks on the Church and the world throughout the past year.*

COMPILED BY OSV

### Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades



**For leading the Church and the faithful through two crucial and contentious issues**

BY SCOTT P. RICHERT

In the United States, 2021 was marked by disagreements among Catholics, from laypeople on up to bishops, that had more to do with secular politics than with concern for the teachings of the Church. In the midst of those disputes, one bishop in particular stood out as a voice of unity, charity and truth: Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana (and chairman of the board of OSV).

In his role as chairman of

the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine, Bishop Rhoades (along with Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities) issued "Moral Considerations Regarding the New COVID-19 Vaccines" in the final days of 2020. In the months following, Bishop Rhoades became the public voice of the Church's teaching that the use of such vaccines is not only morally acceptable but "an act of charity that serves the common good." His leadership undoubtedly accounts in no small part for the higher average rates of vaccination among Mass-going Catholics in the United States.

As the debate over vaccination raged on, another storm was brewing in the middle of the year: The U.S. bishops were divided on the need for, and the content of, a document affirming the Church's teaching on the Eucharist and the implications of that teaching in the lives of all Catholics. In the wake of the

election of the second Catholic U.S. president, such a document was bound to be seen in political terms, and the bishops' June meeting reflected that reality.

Between June and November, however, the Committee on Doctrine, under the guiding hand of Bishop Rhoades, produced "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church." And at the U.S. bishops' general assembly in November, something that few would have predicted in June occurred: The document passed nearly unanimously.

Too often, we speak of our bishops in political terms: This one is "conservative"; that one, "liberal." The highest compliment we can pay to a bishop, though, is that he speaks with the mind of the Church. In doing so, Bishop Kevin Rhoades truly lives up to his episcopal motto — *Veritatem in caritate* ("truth in charity") — and deserves his place among Our Sunday Visitor's Catholics of the Year.

*Scott P. Richert is publisher for OSV.*

### St. Joseph



**For being a shining example of virtue in a world in which it is so desperately needed**

BY MICHAEL R. HEINLEIN

Although, according to tradition, St. Joseph did not live to see the fullness of redemption in this life, we know assuredly that he received the fullness of life after his foster son's resurrection. Drawn into the heart of God's plan of salvation, St. Joseph was entrusted with the care and protection of God's Son — and this has endured in his patronage of Christ's own body, the Church. St. Joseph's life, example and intercession are so important to

the Church that he was declared the Church's universal patron in 1870.

To commemorate the 150th year of this declaration, just before the Year of St. Joseph pleasantly took the Church by surprise, I wrote a piece in OSV News offering a few reasons for St. Joseph's relevance and importance amid contemporary challenges: to bring life to families, strengthen us amid the pandemic and its effects, and help heal our wounded Church.

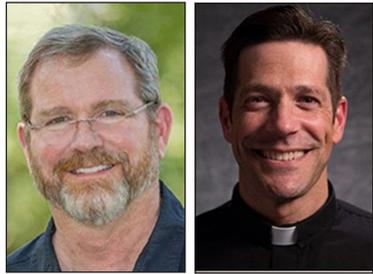
But, as the last year of ecclesial life has clearly shown, there are myriad reasons for St. Joseph's enduring relevance and popular appeal. And, underscoring this reality, numerous resources have been offered in the past year to assist the faithful in making St. Joseph a central figure in their spiritual life. Pope Francis' apostolic letter *Patris Corde* ("With a Father's Heart") impresses upon the faithful the multifaceted fatherhood of the Church's patron, and his addition of new titles to the Litany of

St. Joseph shed more light on his intercessory role. The indulgence offered by the Apostolic Major Penitentiary, particularly in completing the works assigned to the indulgence, has given the faithful the opportunity to make St. Joseph's life their own.

Although silent in the Gospels, St. Joseph's voice has resounded through the ages and speaks to us still today. He calls us to total commitment to God's will, even amid suffering, uncertainty or doubt. His eminent virtue, which particularly shines in the Gospels amid struggles and difficulties, challenges us to embrace our call to be holy. And his invitation to imitate his enduring love for Mary and Jesus encourages us to find true joy, peace and contentment by making them the center of our lives, too. Catholics have every reason to have celebrated him thoroughly in 2021, and that is why Our Sunday Visitor lifts him up as an example now.

*Michael R. Heinlein is editor of SimplyCatholic.com and author of a forthcoming biography of Cardinal Francis E. George, OMI.*

## Jeff Cavins and Father Mike Schmitz



**For helping to bring Scripture into countless homes via 'The Bible in a Year' podcast**

BY KATIE PREJEAN MCGRADY

At the beginning of 2021, within days of launching, "The Bible in a Year" podcast sat atop the download lists, beating out The New York Times' "The Daily," Joe Rogan and Oprah. Its popularity continued, in no small part because of the wisdom, insights and scholarship of Father Mike Schmitz and Jeff Cavins. Hundreds of thousands of people have tuned in daily to hear Father Mike apologize for being so excited and Jeff connect the dots of the Biblical story so many are loosely familiar with but have grown to know and love.

Anyone could talk about the Bible, and many have (there's no shortage of Catholic podcasts), but Father Mike Schmitz and Jeff Cavins talking about the Bible is something special, and it stands apart, because their instruction and explanation is guided first by their fatherly hearts.

Jeff Cavins is a teacher and scholar, leading thousands of people on pilgrimage and writing Bible studies that have transformed lives. I still have my Great Adventure Bible book-

mark tucked into the back of the Bible I used in college. But most importantly, Jeff is a husband, dad and grandpa, and every time I've had the honor of visiting with or interviewing him, his first question to me is "How are you? How's the family?" He's a father to all he teaches and meets.

Father Mike Schmitz is a priest who loves his people, known worldwide because of YouTube videos and fast-paced homilies tackling tough subjects, but I've known him as a friend who never fails to give comforting advice and lend a listening ear. In the summer of 2017, while pregnant with my daughter, Rose, Father Mike and I met while speaking at a Steubenville Conference, and when Braxton Hicks contractions sent me to walk the halls to manage the pain, he walked with me, making me laugh and taking my mind off the discomfort. He's a father to his friends, parishioners and even perfect strangers.

The work Father Mike and Jeff have done with "The Bible in a Year" podcast has changed lives, introducing people to sacred Scripture not as a fairytale or textbook, but as a love letter and story of salvation of which we are part, and which they love themselves. Their tender hearts and fatherly wisdom both unpack the text of Scripture and give witness to the love of the Father who gave us this Bible in the first place.

We'd all do well to give thanks to the Lord for the good dads, the humble fathers, the Scripture scholars who've guided us so well this year, my good friends and two personal heroes, Jeff Cavins and Father Mike Schmitz, the Bible dads.

For bringing the word of God into so many homes in such a loving and unique way, these two men are more than deserving of being honored as Catholics of the Year by Our Sunday Visitor.

*Katie Prejean McGrady is an award-winning author and host of "Ave Explores" podcast from Ave Maria Press and "The Katie McGrady Show" on Sirius XM.*

## Bishop Shelton J. Fabre



**For his strong faith and leadership amid a difficult year in Louisiana**

BY ANSEL AUGUSTINE

Proverbs 3:5-7 states: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart / on your own intelligence do not rely; / In all your ways be mindful of him, / and he will make straight your paths. / Do not be wise in your own eyes, / fear the Lord and turn away from evil."

This Scripture passage perfectly summarizes the life and personality of Bishop Shelton Fabre of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana. I have had the pleasure of knowing Bishop Fabre as a friend, mentor and supervisor when he became the auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans in 2007. He was also best friends with my "Dad," Father Michael Jacques, SSE, who served as our pastor at St. Peter Claver in New Orleans for almost 30 years until he died in 2013.

Since 2007, I have seen Bishop Fabre weather various personal challenges in his life, from deaths, tough diocesan decisions, chairing the anti-racism work of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and now rebuilding after Hurricane Ida. Throughout all these trials, I have witnessed a man so close to God that his faith has "moved mountains." In fact, it is this faith that inspires those around him to grow closer to God as well.

This past August, Hurricane Ida devastated our region; although New Orleans was affected, we were nowhere near as distressed as Houma-Thibodaux, which is about 40 southwest of New Orleans. Here we are, several months later, and much of that area is still being rebuilt from scratch. It is in this reality that we witness Bishop Fabre submitting to the will of God to help the people he is called to shepherd. Not only has Bishop Fabre been in meetings with FEMA and other agencies to try to get help for his people, but he has also been in the trenches with the people serving. There is a popular picture that was run throughout the country of Bishop Fabre carrying a large bag of ice to help during the rebuilding process.

Bishop Fabre is a true witness to the goodness of God. He is very worthy to be included as one of Our Sunday Visitor's Catholics of the Year. For as the Scripture states, his trust and submission to God's will continues to help make the paths straight for all those he has been called to serve.

*Dr. Ansel Augustine has served the Church in various capacities for over 20 years. He presently serves as the area director of Vagabond Missions.*

## John Garvey



**For his role in strengthening the Faith at The Catholic University of America**

BY RUSSELL SHAW

When John Garvey announced last September that he would

step down as president of The Catholic University of America after this school year, genuine regret greeted the news. In 12 years as president, he built up the school in many ways — not least, by reinforcing and strengthening its "serious Catholic intellectual culture."

In the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, the "Catholic" part of the school's name sometimes seemed questionable. But under several recent presidents — and notably under Garvey — The Catholic University of America became proudly Catholic again.

Born Sept. 28, 1948, in Sharon, Pennsylvania, Garvey studied at Notre Dame and Harvard Law School. In 1976, he began teaching at the University of Kentucky law school, an appointment he held until 1994. From 1981 to 1984, he was assistant to the U.S. solicitor general, arguing several cases before the Supreme Court. After teaching law at Notre Dame from 1994 to 1999, he became dean of the Boston College Law School. In 2010, he was named 15th president of Catholic University — the third layperson to hold the post.

Especially by hiring choices, he emphasized a Catholic approach to scholarship in every discipline and school, including the new Busch School of Business, founded to integrate business education with Catholic social teaching. He also worked to strengthen the university materially, with gifts and grants totaling more than \$500 million and university assets increasing to nearly \$1 billion.

In a letter to the university community, Garvey recalled that when he became president, he "did not foresee how much I would fall in love with" the school. Even the pandemic — "one of the most difficult crises in the university's 134-year history" — helped by showing him "close up what makes the school so special."

Garvey and his wife, Jeanne, have five children and 23 grandchildren. He is a prize-winning author who has written five books and contributed articles to numerous Catholic and secular journals. Having taught a yearly undergraduate course on the virtues while serving as president, he plans to teach at Catholic University's Rome campus after leaving that position.

For his outstanding achievements in building up the Faith at the only Catholic university founded by the bishops of the United States, Our Sunday Visitor is proud to name John Garvey as one of its Catholics of the Year.

*Russell Shaw is a contributing editor for Our Sunday Visitor.*

## Jason and Melissa Shanks



**For showing the world how to keep the faith in times of trial**

BY GRETCHEN R. CROWE

In his capacity as president of the OSV Institute for Catholic Innovation, Jason Shanks does a lot of good for the Church. But it is not for these accomplishments that he and his wife, Melissa, have been selected by Our Sunday Visitor as Catholics of the Year for 2021.

In mid-February, Jason returned home for the first time in three months after fighting a long battle with COVID-19 — a battle he almost didn't win. After being sick with COVID-19 for more than a week, Jason was admitted to the hospital in mid-November of 2020 and was immediately sedated and intubated. For the next several weeks, his condition worsened. Melissa rallied the community around him in prayer. But it wasn't until mid-December that things really became dire. Jason's body — in a race to out-survive the COVID that was still raging within him — began to shut down. On Dec. 15, a worldwide novena to St. Jude, patron saint of lost causes, began at the request of Melissa. Her intention was specific: "We need to get over COVID," she told me earlier this year. "We need a radical change in our course right now."

And that is exactly what happened. As the novena progressed, Jason's condition, which had seen so little improvement in weeks, suddenly began to change. "It was a completely different phase," Melissa said. "That novena took us from being sick and in fear of death to the path to recovery. It made a huge difference."

Jason's recovery continued to amaze his family, friends and his doctors. After time at a rehabilitation facility, he was home by mid-February, and he returned to work later that month. Now, he is fully recovered. But though the crisis has passed, he has not forgotten the lessons that he has learned.

"What I have learned from my recent trials is relationships matter," he wrote on Facebook in November, saying that his relationships with his wife and five children are the most important. "My impact with the life I have left will be in them."

Jason and Melissa's story exemplifies the beauty of faith. It shows the power of prayer. It is a witness to married love in a time

# Advent of Charity

## In times of need: St. Vincent de Paul Society

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

“I don’t know what I would have done without the help from St. Vincent de Paul,” testified Rockell Davis.

Holly Hosinski, who coordinates the Christmas gift program for St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County, said, “Rockell’s is one of my favorite Christmas stories. God put the pieces together in an amazing way.”

According to Hosinski, Davis is a good example of someone who’s trying very hard but hovering just above the poverty line. She reached out to St. Vincent several times over the past 15 years for a helping hand, rather than a handout: a clothing voucher, a box of food, or Christmas presents for her teenage daughters. She always found the help she needed.

Last November, Hosinski got a call from Davis to report an address change from an apartment to an extended-stay hotel. She learned that a fire in a neighboring unit had caused smoke damage in Davis’ unit, and the fire department had told residents to pack just an overnight bag. But during the night the fire reignited, destroying everything they owned.

Providentially, Hosinski had assigned the Rockell family’s Christmas request to Elkhart’s Indian Motorcycle Club, a group that holds fundraising events to finance their holiday generosity. When she called their representative with some of the family’s specific needs, she learned that the woman she was speaking with was an insurance agent who knew exactly what renter’s insurance would and would not

*“I’d eventually love to have a job where I can say, ‘I literally know what you’re going through.’ I’m also trying to teach my children to give back.”*

— Whitney Parkes



Screengrab

**Rockell Davis, left, and Whitney Parkes, clients of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County, record testimonies of the timely, life-changing assistance the organization was able to provide during recent crises in their lives. Serving its neighbors in hope and faith and is the mission of the charitable Catholic organization.**

cover. The club used its extra funds to provide for some of those needs. The St. Vincent de Paul Society provided furniture and clothing vouchers as well as beds for the children through their Sweet Dreams program.

Then disaster struck again. Davis works full-time in a doc-

tor’s office, where she can’t avoid contact with sick people. She takes precautions but came down with COVID-19 shortly after her family moved into their new place. Afraid she’d fall behind on her rent without those two weeks of income, she reached out to St. Vincent de

Paul again and learned that her bout with COVID-19 qualified her for Emergency Rental Assistance.

“If I ever need help, I can go to St. Vincent de Paul...they’ve never let me down,” she testified. “Any time a friend has a need, I encourage them to call 574-234-6000. If St. Vincent doesn’t have

the resources, they’ll put you in touch with someone who does. I’m extremely grateful.”

Whitney Parkes can also testify to the impactful role of Emergency Rental Assistance administered by the St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph County. Parkes’ income evaporated when she was confined to bedrest in the seventh month of her fifth pregnancy. She filled out an on-line application for help, assuming she’d have to wait a long time for a response.

Within a few days, she received a call from Anne Hosinski Watson, executive director. Watson expressed personal concern for Parkes, asking first how she was doing and then explaining they’d be able to bring her family food and pay her rent and utilities for three months. “That gave me the cushion I needed,” said Parkes. She was so grateful that she was willing to record her experience only a day after her Caesarean section.

Parkes said Christmas can also be a big stressor because she has so many little ones. “I’m not usually one to stress, but I wanted to cry when our family was adopted to receive Christmas presents,” she said.

Wanting to give back and put her experience to good use to benefit others, Parkes is pursuing an associate degree.

“I’d eventually love to have a job where I can say, ‘I literally know what you’re going through.’ I’m also trying to teach my children to give back.”

St. Vincent de Paul in St. Joseph and Elkhart counties help over 60,000 people who call every year, always with great respect and sensitivity. To reach the organization, call 574-234-6000 or visit svdpsb.org/.

**CATHOLICS OF THE YEAR, from page 9**

of crisis. It is a story of remembering what matters most, and of cherishing and prioritizing those things: faith, family, prayer and love of one another. Jason and Melissa Shanks' battle with COVID-19 was inspiring to all of us who witnessed it, and they are well-deserving of the recognition of Catholics of the Year.

*Gretchen R. Crowe is editorial director for periodicals at OSV. Follow her on Twitter @GretchenOSV.*

**Sister Nathalie Becquart and Sister Raffaella Petrini**



**For breaking barriers at the Vatican**

BY DEBORAH CASTELLANO LUBOV

In 2021, Pope Francis made two groundbreaking appointments inside the Vatican by elevating two women religious to prominent posts inside the

Holy See. In February, he promoted French Sister Nathalie Becquart, 52, to become the first ever woman undersecretary to the Synod of Bishops, and in November, he appointed Sister Raffaella Petrini, an Italian member of the U.S.-based Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, to be secretary-general of the office governing Vatican City State.

In elevating Sister Nathalie, she becomes the first woman to be able to vote in a synod. She is often called the "sailing nun," as she is an experienced sailor who has enjoyed the sport since childhood. This Xavieran sister with a business background studied at Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry and Centre Sèvres in Paris and worked throughout North America. While often contributing to encounters of ambassadors to the Holy See on women's role in the Church, she eloquently reminds us that leadership and nominations are to be attributed to merit and faith, not gender.

Sister Raffaella Petrini is another humble powerhouse, and now the woman holding the highest post in the Vatican after being named the second in command in the Vatican government. She is now secretary general in the small sovereign state's government, whose structure is found in the middle of the Vatican City State and is responsible for the Vatican's day-to-day and financial operations. Anyone you speak to about her lauds her character, intelligence and

faith. Sister Raffaella, an expert in Catholic social doctrine, was born in Rome in 1969. She holds a doctorate from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome and a master's from the University of Hartford's Barney School of Business in organizational behavior.

For their faith, expertise in their fields and their ability to shatter glass ceilings in a world mostly dominated by male clergymen, these two sisters are well-deserving to be honored as Catholics of the Year.

Deborah Castellano Lubov writes from Rome.

**Stephanie Weinert**



**For opening up her heart amid tragedy and showing the world a mother's love**

BY ELIZABETH FOSS

On the day my friend Stephanie Weinert gave birth to her fifth child, the hours dragged on as I waited for news. Inexplicably, I was certain this was not going to be a typical birth story. The text was brief, and she was weary. A few more texts and then a pause — a day to let it all come clear, and then

not clear at all. Beckett Martin had Down syndrome, with probable heart complications. It would be a week before Stephanie shared the news on social media. When she did, she opened her heart with honesty and candor, but even Stephanie didn't know how much she would eventually lay bare on Instagram.

She wrote, "Beckett is going to have a good and happy life, we will make sure of it. He will also have lots of therapy, open-heart surgery when he's an older toddler, and many things our family will be able to offer up along the way."

Stephanie maintained a lively social media presence as she adapted to her new role as a special-needs mom. Whenever we saw her on our screens, we saw Beckett, too. Thousands of women fell in love with Stephanie's baby.

Shortly after his first birthday, concern over Beckett's health grew grave. As she endured one heartbreaking diagnosis and complication after another, Stephanie offered it up and opened up. With courage, honesty and vulnerability, she invited us to her baby's crib and allowed us to keep vigil with her there. She shared her grief, her doubts, her struggles and her astounding faith.

When Beckett died in Stephanie's arms in the spring of 2021, she shared that, too.

Determined to reveal the glory of God in the most painful place imaginable, Stephanie invited us to the funeral, where weeping, watchful people worldwide learned to celebrate the life and death of a child in the Mass of the Angels.

Beckett had a good and happy life. Stephanie and her husband, Peter, made sure of it. He also had a good and happy death. In the months following their tremendous loss, Stephanie listened to the stories of people who asked for Beckett's intercession. She began to catalog the fruits of those prayers, rejoicing even as she grieved the indescribable personal loss that brought us a good little saint. The sweet joy of her boy and the intense sorrow of her loss — she offered it all along the way, and we are all better for it. For her bravery in sharing her family's story, Our Sunday Visitor is proud to honor her among its Catholics of the Year.

*Elizabeth Foss is a Catholic author and blogger. She writes from Virginia.*

*Reprinted with permission of Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington.*

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# 'Civilize it' initiative offers lesson in listening

*Responding to editors' requests for a regular sampling of current commentary from around the Catholic press, here is an editorial titled: "Civilize it initiative offers lesson in listening," published online Nov. 7 by Central Minnesota Catholic, the magazine of the Diocese of St. Cloud, Minnesota. It was written by Joe Towalski, editor and diocesan communications director.*

In September, the U.S. bishops launched a new initiative to address the bitter polarization that continues to grip our society and make it difficult to have meaningful conversations on important issues facing our communities and nation. Called "Civilize It: A Better Kind of Politics," the effort is similar to one the bishops began at the start of the 2019-20 election season.

The current nonpartisan campaign encourages Catholics and others of good will to follow the example of the Good Samaritan, who challenges us to reach out beyond our comfort zones and "become neighbors to all," as Pope Francis wrote in his encyclical "Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship." The pope also called for "a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good."

"Civilize It," with its emphasis on creating a culture of encounter, listening and dialogue, coincides with two other initiatives announced recently by the Holy Father that call for a similar approach. The first involves the lead up to the 2023 world Synod of Bishops, which includes a six-

month process of "listening to all of the baptized" in every diocese and sharing what is learned with the rest of the Church.

This listening process kicked off in the Diocese of St. Cloud in October and will run until April. Pope Francis also chose "listen" as the theme for World Communications Day next May.

Why so much emphasis on listening? And what kind of listening is really being called for through these initiatives, especially for the Church? Listening assists leaders and all the people of God to discern what the Church truly needs and where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

Active listening involves more than simply hearing what another person has to say. It is attentive, seeks to understand and is respectful of others' dignity. It doesn't require compromising convictions or commitment to the truth. It doesn't mean we can't offer constructive criticism or that we're above receiving it ourselves. But it does require us to treat others as Christ would.

While the "Civilize It" initiative focuses on politics, we also need a good dose of it in the

Church. Over the last 20 months, I have witnessed too many conversations, email exchanges and Facebook comments that were unfair, uncharitable and unchristian on topics ranging from the Church's response to the pandemic, to how it should address the sin of racism and who should (or shouldn't) be denied Communion.

We would all do well to take the "Civilize It" pledge, share it with others and let it guide our conversations.

We Catholics can, and should, be role models for others in how to listen and dialogue in service to the truth and the common good. The "Civilize It" initiative is a good reminder about how to do this. You can find more information and resources about the campaign at <https://www.usccb.org/civilizeit> — including a prayer and examination of conscience.

*The views or positions presented in this or any guest editorial are those of the individual publication and do not necessarily represent the views of Catholic News Service or of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.*



## I Pledge

### CHARITY

— To affirm through my words and actions the dignity of every person, each made in God's image. Even those with whom I disagree are made in his image.

— To respectfully listen in order to understand experiences different from my own.

### CLARITY

— To engage in critical examination to ensure that my perspectives are rooted in truth, that my sources of information are unbiased, and that I do not open myself to manipulation by partisan interests.

— To form my conscience through prayerful reflection, study of Scripture and Church teaching, and guidance from reputable experts.

— To reflect on my own values and seek, with others, to identify shared values.

— To be open to the process of dialogue that can require change of perspective — my own and others' — in service to the inviolable dignity of all and the common good.

### CREATIVITY

— To be a bridgebuilder who participates in constructive dialogue based in shared values, a mutual exchange of gifts, and the humility to together seek the good.

— To see differences in perspective as opportunities for creative tension which can yield solutions for the common good.

# Familial love and obedience demonstrated by the Holy Family



## THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

### Feast of the Holy Family Luke 2:41-52

This weekend, the Sunday between Christmas and New Year's, the Church celebrates the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The Book of Sirach supplies the first reading. Sirach was composed in an effort to reinforce trust in, and loyalty to, the Revelation of God. When Sirach was written, Jews were beset by attacks upon their beliefs that came from a hostile and pagan culture. Allurements to abandon the old beliefs were everywhere. After all, those persons who merily lived the "good life" were pagans.

In particular, the Jewish concept of the holiness of the home and of marriage was threatened. In many pagan settings, love was absent or at best coincidental. This was the case in many homes and in most marriages.

Sirach affirms the place that parents must have in families. The ideal parent is the father or mother who places first and foremost devotion to God, because loving God and making this love evident is a parent's greatest gift in love to a child. In return, children love and care for parents and obey them.

Love is the essential adhesive that binds children to parents, spouses to each other, and families together. God gives children to parents, but also God give parents to children.

For its second reading, the Church presents the Letter to the Colossians. Colossians arose within its own cultural context, the prevailing, powerful culture of the Roman Empire.

To assume from this reading that early Christianity belittled women or tolerated conditions that suppressed or even hurt

women, is quite wrong. The exact opposite is the case. This reading makes this fact crystal clear, coming from a time in which women were little higher than livestock.

Marriage was a reality in the Roman society, but women did not themselves choose their husbands. Men often bought their wives.

Almost glorified slaves, wives were relegated to the roles of providing offspring, of furnishing outlets for their husband's natural desires, and of making husbands comfortable.

More than setting mere standards of behavior, however, the letter elevated women. Women were individual humans with God-given dignity.

St. Luke's Gospel provides the last reading. It is a story unique to Luke. As has been heard or read so often, Jesus is a boy of 12 years of age, at the doorstep of adulthood. With Mary and Joseph, Jesus was in Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover.

He was not with Mary and Joseph, however, as they were returning home. Missing Jesus,

understandably anxious, they returned to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. He was found in the temple discoursing with the scholars, who were amazed at the depth of the knowledge of Jesus.

He alluded to the messianic mission when questioned by Mary. She "kept these things in her heart" long after the event.

## Reflection

On this feast, the Church speaks in terms profoundly human and understandable.

Often a motive behind ancient Hebrew writings was the wish to convey to children, for their benefit; children are one of the treasures of knowing God. It reminds us that this still is an opportunity, and indeed a demand, for parents, but it gleams with parental love.

The New Testament was revolutionary in that it utterly rejected the Roman culture's view of marriage, of women and for that matter, of children.

A spouse is God's gift to the other. Of course, this fact creates responsibilities and is fulfilled

only by mutual love. Children are gifts from God.

Finally, the story of Jesus lost in Jerusalem, and the worry of Mary and Joseph, presents a very human situation. Simply put, they loved the young Lord. He loved them.

He loved God.

This feast delivers a powerful lesson as we await the new year, a lesson of love, human love and of God's love.

## READINGS

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

**Monday:** Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-4b, 5-6 Lk 1:26-38

**Tuesday:** Sg 2:8-14 Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 Lk 1:39-45

**Wednesday:** 1 Sm 1:24-28 (Ps) 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8d Lk 1:46-56

**Thursday:** Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Pa 25:4-5b, 8-10, 14 Lk 1:57-66

**Friday:** 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29 Lk 1:67-79

**Saturday:** Is 52:7-10 Ps 98:1-6 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18

# Government by executive

Perhaps the most pernicious side effect of the recent pandemic has been the substitution of executive action for democratic processes of government.

We might have expected a certain amount of this when COVID-19 first arrived and the situation seemed to call for immediate action. But it has been almost two years.

During the Trump administration, the federal government left most decisions, apart from the development of vaccines, in the hands of state and local officials. Mayors in New York, San Francisco and elsewhere issued quarantine orders, closed businesses, ordered people to wear masks, imposed rules about social distancing, and in time imposed vaccine mandates.

Governors were equally active. The New York state legislature gave then-Gov. Andrew Cuomo emergency authority to issue any directive necessary to deal with the pandemic.

Cuomo used this authority to decide everything from the size of weddings to the type of air filters installed in shopping malls. He ordered nursing homes to accept COVID-19 patients from hospitals, and thousands of them died.

This fall, President Joe Biden got into the act. He announced in September that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration would make a rule for employers of 100 or more. Their employees would have to be vaccinated or submit to weekly testing.

By executive order he made similar rules for federal employees and federal contractors.

Together the directives cover two-thirds of the country's workforce.

Some people (not many) have objected to the president's actions because they still think the vaccines are unsafe. There isn't much evidence to support that concern, now that we've administered hundreds of millions of shots.

The Senate voted this month to repeal the OSHA mandate not because it opposes vaccinations, but because it thinks they should be voluntary.

Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) put it succinctly: "I'm pro-vaccine, but I'm anti-mandate." This approach shows a decent respect for people whose health concerns or religious scruples lie outside the mainstream.

The courts have had a different reservation. The 5th Circuit stayed enforcement of the OSHA rule in November, and a federal district court recently enjoined the executive order for federal contractors, because Congress had not by law authorized the executive branch to take those actions. The principle at stake here is the separation of powers.

Democracy is first and foremost a process for making rules, not a plan for what the rules should be.

Article 1 of the federal Constitution begins with the words, "All legislative (i.e., law-making) powers herein granted shall be vested in ... Congress." It then goes on to specify how the lawmaking process shall work — the House, the Senate, elections, sessions, quorum, bills and resolutions.

The president can't make laws. He executes the laws that Congress makes. The division of



## INTELLECT AND VIRTUE

JOHN GARVEY

authority between them is related to the structure and processes that define the two branches.

The members of the houses of Congress represent hundreds of different demographic and political constituencies. Getting them to agree on a law is hard, and it's supposed to be.

When a bill has successfully run this gauntlet, the chances are good that it will show a decent respect for people whose concerns lie outside the mainstream.

A first-term president has no constraint other than the desire to be reelected in four years. Once he's in office, the power to make laws would make him not very different from the king the framers revolted against.

Our current political divisions make it hard to come to agreement on plans to serve the common good. That increases the temptation for presidents (of both parties) and governors and mayors to play Caesar.

It would be good if our legislatures, whatever other disagreements divide them, could at least agree on protecting the essential role they are assigned to play in a democracy.

John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

# SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for December 26, 2021

Luke 2: 41-52

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Cycle C. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

YEAR	FEAST	PASSOVER
TWELVE YEARS	ACCORDING	RETURNING
THE BOY	JESUS	BEHIND
JOURNEY	FOUND	TEMPLE
ASKING THEM	HEARD HIM	ANSWERS
FATHER	KNOW	UNDERSTAND
HEART	WISDOM	FAVOR

## REUNION

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

# HOLY INNOCENTS

FEAST: DECEMBER 28

FIRST CENTURY



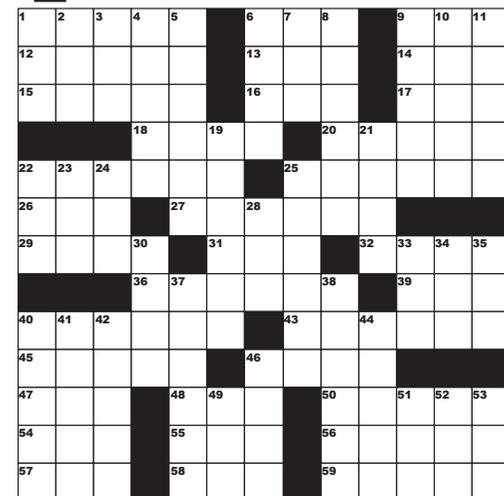
The Holy Innocents are the boys of Bethlehem put to death by King Herod the Great after the Magi from the East visited the baby Jesus, then left for home without stopping in Jerusalem to give Herod news about "the newborn king of the Jews." This slaughter is related in the second chapter of Matthew's Gospel, but is not mentioned by other sources, including the Jewish historian Josephus. Estimates of the number killed range from 10 or 12, based on the likely population of Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth, to 64,000, a fantastic figure cited in the Syrian liturgy. This feast has been celebrated in the West since the fifth century; the Holy Innocents are the patrons of foundlings.

# The CrossWord

December 19 and 26, 2021

58 Digit  
59 "\_\_\_ and bright"

### DOWN



- 1 Skirt edge
- 2 Hoopla
- 3 Wheel track
- 4 Rebuke
- 5 Epic
- 6 Church interior dome
- 7 Executive director
- 8 Forbidden acts
- 9 Athlete wins
- 10 Hawaiian 'hello'
- 11 A Minor Prophets
- 19 "\_\_\_ I come to do your will"
- 21 Winged night insect
- 22 Central nervous system
- 23 Some
- 24 Cozy room
- 25 Bathroom wall fixture
- 28 Regret
- 30 Santa gives
- 33 Peter's mother-in-law
- 34 Downwind
- 35 Abraham's nephew
- 37 \_\_\_ leaped in the womb
- 38 Kisses loudly
- 40 Association (abbr.)
- 41 The Spirit is the \_\_\_ Person in Trinity
- 42 \_\_\_ and spices
- 44 Measure of flour
- 46 A Nazarite would never drink this
- 49 Card game like Euchre
- 51 Kimono sash
- 52 Play on words
- 53 Like a fox

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

### ACROSS

- 1 Scratchy
- 6 Enact
- 9 British "Mom"
- 12 Infer
- 13 Pod vegetable
- 14 Priest at Shiloh
- 15 Engine
- 16 Bawl
- 17 Physician
- 18 Earring need
- 20 Nebraska's big city
- 22 Golf assistant
- 25 Slang for money
- 26 North northeast
- 27 "When \_\_\_ came into the world"
- 29 In \_\_\_ (together)
- 31 "\_\_\_ Father"
- 32 Mary went to the \_\_\_ country
- 36 Oil tankers
- 39 Popular papal name
- 40 Nigh (2 wds.)
- 43 Breakfast egg
- 45 Book holder
- 46 Cover present
- 47 Mr.
- 48 "Champion" in Arabic
- 50 Pork \_\_\_
- 54 Royal globe
- 55 Not (prefix)
- 56 Afghanistan capital
- 57 Discs

# New book helps Catholics 'achieve living portrait' of Christ

BY MARK ZIMMERMANN

SILVER SPRING, Md. (CNS) — The idea for veteran Catholic author Russell Shaw's latest book actually originated about 30 years ago.

A highly educated man who was a lifelong Catholic was leading a group discussion on the Gospel of St. Matthew, and told the couples in the group that he had read St. Matthew's Gospel straight through from beginning to end.

He confessed that he had never read any of the Gospels that way before. "And you know what?" he told the group. "It's telling a story!"

Shaw wrote his 24th book, "The Life of Jesus Christ: Understanding the Story of the Gospels," published by Our Sunday Visitor in 2021, to help people experience and follow Christ by reading the Gospels.

"I've been reading the New Testament every day for the

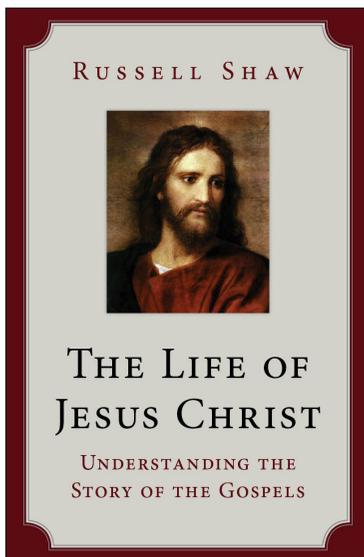
last 40 years," said Shaw, who spends about five to 10 minutes daily reading one of the Gospels, starting at the beginning. "You learn something new every time," he said.

Shaw is 86 and lives in a retirement community in the Washington suburb of Silver Spring with his wife of 63 years, Carmen. They have five children, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A native Washingtonian, he grew up attending the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, where he went to grade school before graduating from Gonzaga College High School and Georgetown University.

His first job was as a summer intern with the Catholic Standard newspaper of Archdiocese of Washington.

Shaw later served as a reporter with Catholic News Service, and over the years he also worked as director of publications and information for the National Catholic Educational Association,



CNS photo/Our Sunday Visitor, courtesy Catholic Standard

This is the book cover of "The Life of Jesus Christ" by Russell Shaw.

as the secretary for public affairs of what was then the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/ U.S. Catholic Conference, and as director of information for the Knights of Columbus.

Remembering that fellow Catholic's encounter with the Gospels, Shaw said he thought about "writing a simple, popular life of Christ." He wrote a series of related articles for Our Sunday Visitor, a national Catholic newspaper, where he is a contributing editor, that formed the framework for his new book.

Shaw's book, written in the readable style that has marked his books and articles, includes chapters that weave together the accounts of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John on Jesus' Nativity and hidden years; his baptism and tempta-

tion; the beginning of his ministry and his ministry in Galilee; the Sermon on the Mount; the Apostles and opponents of Christ; his parables, the Last Supper, and his trial and crucifixion; and Christ's resurrection and ascension.

The author said he hopes the book will help people integrate "the wonderful story told in the New Testament" and inspire them to "make reading and praying about the Gospels part of their daily routine."

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the veteran author and journalist, whose books include "American Church" (2013) and "Catholics in America" (2016) is now writing his 25th book, which he said is about what Catholic laypeople can do to help the church through this challenging time.

The back cover of Shaw's "The Life of Jesus Christ" describes the book as "the scriptural companion you've been searching for."

"Together, the four Gospels reveal Jesus Christ, God incarnate, as a man of complexity and depth -- compassionate but stern, who knew how to laugh and how to cry, a charismatic leader uninterested in worldly power, a subtle thinker who drew sublime messages from ordinary life," it says. "With Shaw guiding you, you will truly get to know the Son of God in a new way."

Zimmermann is editor of the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington.

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

**WHAT'S HAPPENING** carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at [www.todayscatholic.org/event](http://www.todayscatholic.org/event). For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

**Little Flower Holy Hour**

**FORT WAYNE** — Little Flower Holy Hour for Vocations will be Tuesday, Jan. 4, from 7-8 p.m. at the St. Mother Theodore Guerin Chapel, 1102 S. Clinton St. The January holy hour will be led by Father Daniel Koehl. Contact Christine Nix at 260-422-4611 for information.

**Candlelight adoration and Mass**

**FORT WAYNE** — Our Lady of Good Hope will have exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament beginning at 11 p.m. Dec. 31. During this time, the rosary will be prayed and there there will be time for silent adoration. Benediction will close the holy

hour as we bring in the new year of 2022. This will be immediately followed by Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. This will all occur under candlelight.

**My school options**

**FORT WAYNE** — St. John the Baptist School, 4500 Fairfield Ave., and the Institute for Quality Education will lead a short seminar Jan. 6 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. to help navigate Indiana's education system, find the school that is the best fit for their family and apply for funding for private school. Reservations can be made by messaging [ely.page@myschooloptions.org](mailto:ely.page@myschooloptions.org). Contact

Ely Page at 765-513-7947 or [ely.page@myschooloptions.org](mailto:ely.page@myschooloptions.org).

## The CrossWord

December 19 and 26, 2020

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

## REST IN PEACE

**Auburn**  
Robert Maloney, 61, Immaculate Conception

Doris Wessel, 88, Immaculate Conception

George Wessel, 91, Immaculate Conception

**Bristol**  
Barbara J. Kopidowski, 71, St. Mary of the Annunciation

Doris J. O'Brien, 98, St. Mary of the Annunciation

**Fort Wayne**  
D. Fred Boyle, 85, St. Jude

Mary Fyfe, 64, St. Jude

Theresa Granahan, 89, St. Jude  
Lewis Natkiel, 86, St. Jude

Edward Roethele, 82, St. Vincent de Paul

Richard Solaro, 86, St. Vincent de Paul

**Goshen**  
Hernán Cortes Colon, 79, St. John the Evangelist

Jerri Reed-Rider, 78, St. John the Evangelist

Adelaide K. Trenshaw, 84, St. John the Evangelist

**South Bend**  
Lillian Luckey, 102, Christ the King

Kent Perry, 85, Cathedral of Saint Matthew

John Silvey, 42, Christ the King

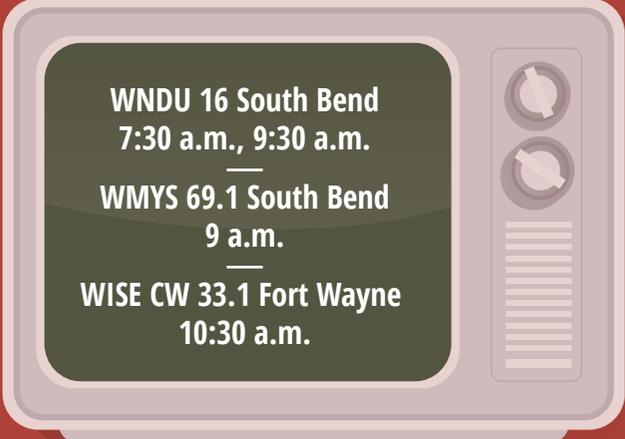
Dolores Tepe, 84, Cathedral of Saint Matthew

Erna Woltman, 91, St. John the Baptist

**Warsaw**  
Barbara A. Kotas, 77, Sacred Heart

**Deaths elsewhere**  
Sister Ann Stephen Stouffer, 82, St. Mary-of-the-Woods Chapel. Sister Ann is a Pierceton native.

### CHRISTMAS DAY TELEVISED MASS TIMES



WNDU 16 South Bend  
7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m.

WMYS 69.1 South Bend  
9 a.m.

WISE CW 33.1 Fort Wayne  
10:30 a.m.

### Q: DO I HAVE TO GO TO MASS ON CHRISTMAS AND SUNDAY?

**A: YES!** Catholics are obligated to attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day (including Christmas). This year, even though the Christmas obligation and Sunday obligation fall back-to-back, each has their own, distinct obligation.

<b>CHRISTMAS MASS</b> Friday, Dec. 24	<b>SUNDAY MASS</b> Saturday, Dec. 25
Option 1: any Mass after 4 p.m.	Option 1: any Mass after 4 p.m.*
<b>Saturday, Dec. 25</b>	<b>Sunday, Dec. 26</b>
Option 2: Any Mass on this calendar day	Option 2: Any Mass on this calendar day

\*Many parishes will not offer evening Mass on Dec. 25. Check in advance.

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# At Christmas, share joy, not complaints, pope says

BY JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- With the celebration of Christmas just around the corner, Christians should look for ways to share the joy of Jesus' birth rather than draw up a laundry list of complaints, Pope Francis said.

Speaking to pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square for his Sunday Angelus address Dec. 19, the pope said that the temptation to complain can "ruin so many lives, because one starts complaining and complaining, and life drains away."

"Complaining always leads you to look for someone to blame," he said. "If we proceed with the tired step of grumbling and talking, we will not bring God to anyone, we will only bring bitterness and dark things."

The pope's reflections began with the Sunday Gospel reading from St. Luke which recounted Mary's visit to her cousin

Elizabeth, even after receiving the announcement from the angel that she was to give birth to the son of God.

Mary, the pope said, did "not stay at home, thinking over what has happened and considering the problems and pitfalls, which were certainly not lacking because, poor girl, she did not know what to do with this news given the culture of that age."

Instead of thinking of herself, she "thinks about someone in need, she thinks about Elizabeth, her relative, who was of advanced years and with child, something strange and miraculous," he said.

"She went out to help. How?" the pope asked. "By sharing her joy. Mary gives Elizabeth the joy of Jesus, the joy she carried in her heart and in her womb."

Recalling that Mary "arose and went," Pope Francis encouraged Christians to be guided by those two verbs during the last days of Advent.

Mary, he explained, got up



CNS photo/Paul Haring

The Christmas tree is seen as Pope Francis leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Dec. 19.

and went to see her cousin despite the difficulty that her "unexpected pregnancy exposed her to," including misunderstandings, punishment and even

death.

"She did not look down at her problems, but up to God. And she did not think about whom to ask for help, but to whom to

bring help. She always thinks about others: that is Mary, always thinking of the needs of others," the pope said.

Christians, he added, must do the same "and look for someone to whom we can be of help," such as the elderly, the lonely or someone in need of service. In doing so, "we help ourselves to rise up from difficulties."

Mary's action of going in haste to see her cousin is a reminder that Christians should not live their lives "with agitation, in a hurried manner" but instead proceed "with a joyful step, looking ahead with confidence, without dragging our feet, as slaves to complaint," he said.

Instead, Pope Francis said, Christians should "cultivate a healthy sense of humor," and "the first act of charity we can do for our neighbor is to offer him or her a serene and smiling face."

In doing so, Christians "bring them the joy of Jesus, as Mary did with Elizabeth," the pope said.



*Wishing you a Blessed and Merry Christmas from the Knights of Columbus.*

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