

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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Hannah's House Holiday Event Sets Charity Up to Continue Helping Disadvantaged Pregnant Women Choose Life

BY MICHELLE MCDANIEL



Michelle McDaniel

Hannah's House is set up for a dinner, speakers, and an auction at their annual Holiday Happenings conference at the Gillespie Conference Center in South Bend on Dec. 9.

Hannah's House held their annual Holiday Happenings conference at the Gillespie Conference Center in South Bend on Dec. 9, raising roughly one-third of the charity's annual funding through the generosity of about 250 attendees.

Hannah's House is the only 501(C)3 organization in northern Indiana that works specifically to give disadvantaged pregnant women the option to choose life by providing housing, meals, items, and much more. In addition to meeting women's basic needs, Hannah's House also provides grief, abuse, and other types of counseling.

"First, God transforms," said Hannah's House Executive Director Susan Frucci. "Then, he uses us as His hands and feet

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Indiana Parish Uses Christmas Light Display to Share the Gospel Message

BY SEAN GALLAGHER

BRIGHT, Ind. (CNS) — As dusk turned into darkness on Nov. 25, the day after Thanksgiving, colorful Christmas lights began illuminating 19 acres on the campus of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright.

The 100,000-plus lights weren't there just to light up the night sky. The purpose of the "Bright Lights" display is to let the light of Christ shine in the souls of the people who view it.

"So many people follow secular Christmas, and Christmas lights are secular Christmas," Father Jonathan Meyer told The Criterion, the newspaper of the



CNS photo/Sean Gallagher, The Criterion

Signs and lighted figures of Mary and an angel present the Annunciation message on Nov. 25, as part of "Bright Lights," a Christmas light display at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright, Indiana.

Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

"People who don't believe in Jesus will spend thousands of dollars decorating their yards with lights. So, my whole thing was, 'Hey, I would like to somehow reach out to those people,'" he said.

Father Meyer is Pastor in solidum with Father Daniel Mahan of St. Teresa and the other three parishes in Dearborn County, All Saints and St. Lawrence in Lawrenceburg, and St. Mary in Aurora, in southeastern Indiana near Cincinnati.

In what could be described as drive-thru catechesis, signs

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Bishop Focuses on Eucharistic Devotion at Special Mass for St. Vincent de Paul Society

BY CHRISTOPHER LUSHIS

The life of an authentic Christian disciple must be centered on heartfelt prayer and poured out in selfless love. This is the example set forth by Christ and lived out by the saints.

For members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the life and witness of both St. Vincent and Society founder Blessed Frédéric Ozanam have proven to be essential inspirations for putting these commands from our Lord into practice.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, who celebrated Mass for the annual gathering of St. Vincent de Paul Society members in Fort Wayne, recognized and emphasized these important spiritual connections, especially focusing in his homily on the Eucharistic devotion of these saints.

He shared, "every Vincentian saint and blessed had a great devotion to the Eucharist. St. Vincent de Paul spent one hour before the Blessed Sacrament each morning before he celebrated Mass. He visited the Blessed Sacrament before and after his meals, and he would frequently make short visits to the chapel before going out to do his ministry again and when he returned. Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, from the time he was a teenager, attended daily Mass whenever possible. He received Holy Communion frequently, even though that was very unusual during that time. Not a day went by when Frédéric would not make a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament in one of the churches in Paris as he made his way to an appointment. Both of them discovered that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. The Eucharist increased their union with Jesus and strengthened them for their works of charity. It was the Eucharist that committed them to the poor."

Bishop Rhoades further explained the necessity of embodying these practices for those who offer service today. He stated, "our ministry can become superficial and not very fruitful without prayer. Prayer nourishes our life and ministry. At every Mass, we share in the sacrifice of Jesus, His sacrifice on the cross. We partake of His self-giving love and are equipped to live this love in our deeds. The gift of receiving our Lord in holy Communion, receiving His gift of love, is a gift to be lived and shared. We are to live the Eucharist, that is, to offer that same gift of love to our neighbors. We do so when we practice the



Christopher Lushis

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades held a special Mass on Saturday, Dec. 10, at St. Patrick Parish, Fort Wayne, for the annual St. Vincent de Paul Society gathering. Father Tim Wrozek was a concelebrant with Deacon Victor Sandoval Ceja assisting.



Provided by Darryl Dodane

Members of the St. Louis Besancon Conference enjoy breakfast after a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades for the St. Vincent de Paul Society on Saturday, Dec. 10.

spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Every time we help a poor person, we are returning the gift of love that Jesus gave us in the Eucharist. We can call this practice Eucharistic solidarity. That's what the St. Vincent de Paul Society does when you serve those in need; you are living the Eucharist."

Following Mass, Lara Schreck, Executive Director of

the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Fort Wayne, shared specific ways the local community has received the outpouring of Eucharistic-inspired support throughout the past year.

Between their eleven food pantries, Community Harvest food vouchers, and food gift cards, more than 23,000 individuals were served with meals in 2022. Local conferences of

the Society gave more than \$150,000 in rental assistance to prevent evictions and homelessness. Additional funding was provided for utility and transportation assistance. Drivers of their Care Van provided 441 trips for low-income seniors to receive transportation to medical appointments. Through their jail ministry, 618 inmates in Allen County received long underwear to keep warm.

The Carpenter's Sons ministry continues to serve many with home repairs and wheelchair ramps, having completed 542 projects for

304 households and 20 other nonprofits last year. Many from Carpenter's Sons also participated in the 2nd Annual Teen Service Week last June, giving 25 teens the opportunity to help local homeowners with painting, landscaping, and building decks and wheelchair ramps.

The Society's Woodshop, located on the downtown thrift store campus, built 236 handmade furniture items for families in need last year, including all the bunk beds for the local refugee center. Schreck shared that "these volunteers, nicknamed the "Woodshop Warriors", were all recently featured on WANE-TV for a "Positively Fort Wayne" segment and in another story that

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, page 3



Michelle McDaniel

Donors attend the Hannah's House annual Holiday Happenings conference in South Bend on Friday, Dec. 9, to raise money for the organization where disadvantaged pregnant women find the help and support they need to choose life.

HANNAH'S HOUSE, from page 1

in a program that is helpful to build women's life skills, social skills, and the other skills they need to go back into society and be successful."

The event began with socializing as a variety of hors d'oeuvres rotated around the conference center and people participated in activities such as balloon popping, with each containing gift cards valued at \$25 to \$100. Banners hung with black and white photos

of women and children, as well as encouraging signs such as "empower," "elevate," and "embrace."

Chris McLaughlin, an artist, stood near the entrance, painting a sunset over a sparkling ocean, to be auctioned off at the conclusion of the event for almost \$3,000. "It was a good opportunity for me to give back," McLaughlin said. "What they're doing for young women is amazing."

Emmy winner and emcee

for the evening Joshua Short encouraged attendees to find their assigned seats, as ceremonial champagne was popped, and local retired priest Father Barry England gave an invocation.

"Opportunities for personal growth and improvement are given to all while they are at Hannah's House," Father England said in his prayer. "The generosity of many benefactors is greatly appreciated and needed." He thanked God for the benefactors and

the women who take refuge within Hannah's House.

Short then introduced keynote speaker Michele Pillar, who spoke on the significance of the work that Hannah's House does

for women.

"Tonight, we're here to celebrate life, unexpected," Pillar said. "But here we sit because life is never unexpected for God. I love that Hannah's House takes a situation where life unexpected walks through

the door, and because of you and so many others, those situations that look like a catastrophe will slowly and surely find an answer."

Next came a live auction, with items such as hotel stays in Italy, golfing opportunities, bourbon tours, and more. In addition, auction items lined the back wall of the conference center on tables for people to bid on throughout the night, including pieces of art, signed items, Notre Dame apparel, and more.

The event concluded with a praise-and-worship song from Pillar, and the showing of a video of a woman who had been helped by Hannah's House, which allowed her the opportunity to choose life in the face of homelessness.

Holiday Happenings conferences have occurred each year since Hannah's House's inception, almost 30 years ago. It was sponsored by Gurley Leep Automotive.

"Hannah's House's mission is to help empower disadvantaged, pregnant women to begin a process of life transformation," Frucci said. "It gives a woman a chance and a choice to turn her life around and start walking in a different direction."



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Wednesday, Dec. 21: 4 p.m. – Blessing of Mayor's Office and City Hall, Mishawaka
 Thursday, Dec. 22: 11 a.m. – Mass and Employee Christmas Luncheon, Sacred Heart Church, Warsaw and Grace College, Winona Lake
 Saturday, Dec. 24: 10:30 p.m. – Christmas Eve Mass, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne



Christopher Lushis

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades took a photo with the three winners of the annual "Top Hat Award", given by the District Council of St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Wayne, "for outstanding Vincentian service by following in the footsteps of Frédéric Antoine Ozanam." Awarded this year were from left, Sue Ickles, Linda Gutoskey, and Erna Springer.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, from page 2

aired just last week on EWTN! Thank you for making sure that no child in our community has to sleep on the floor!"

Additionally, she stated that more than 2,800 individuals received free clothing, furniture, and household items at the downtown thrift store through their voucher program. Even with fulfilling a record number of vouchers, the store was more profitable than ever with more than 28,000 shoppers and a profit of \$58,000, with the majority of the profit going back to the needy conferences to help clients with food and financial assistance.

In their annual Friends of the Poor Walk, they raised a record amount of funding this year: more than \$60,000 to help the local conferences serve more neighbors in need. This walk was ranked second in fundraising out of more than 200 events across the country, largely due to the support of Bishop Rhoades and many pastors and priests who participated.

Schreck concluded with one of her favorite quotes from St. Vincent de Paul, "if God is at the center of your life, no words are necessary. Your mere presence will touch hearts." She said, "sometimes all our clients need to know is

that you are there ... that you care about them. You are praying for them. You are listening to them. You are trying to help. Please know the impact you have on the lives of others. You are giving them hope for a better future."

Afterwards, various individuals were recognized for their tremendous efforts and generosity to serve those in need, some of whom have been involved with the Society for many decades. These recognitions included honoring three members with their annual "Top Hat Award", given "for outstanding Vincentian service by following in the footsteps of Frédéric Antoine Ozanam." The nominated winners this year were Sue Ickles, Linda Gutoskey, and Erna Springer.

Gutoskey, a parishioner from St. Charles Borromeo, shared her gratitude for Bishop Rhoades' Eucharistic-themed homily. She stated, "we need to hear this more often! I didn't think about how the Eucharist resonates through us when we are serving the poor and it led me to say, "thank you Lord, I needed that insight and connection to realize how You are working through us." When we are not able to pray or we are helping a family who doesn't share our Catholic faith, He still works through us; it was encouraging to hear that!"

Students Prepare Their Hearts for the Christ Child

BY ERIKA BARRON

In this modern day, it seems the secular world begins preparing for Christmas as soon as Halloween ends. Televisions, newspapers, and radio stations all broadcast ad after ad of the biggest and brightest toys and gadgets of the season. Pretty Christmas trees, lights, and images of Santa Claus fill people's thoughts as everyone eagerly awaits giving their loved ones the perfect present they had been searching for since mid-September to find the best deal. As adults, it's hard enough to not get lost in the hustle and bustle and overlook the season of Advent, but imagine how difficult it is for a child.

One Fort Wayne Catholic School teacher has been working hard to prepare her students to welcome the greatest gift of all, the baby Jesus.

At St. Therese, Kathy Ehinger



Students at St. Therese School in Fort Wayne work on decorating an Advent wreath in preparation for welcoming the greatest gift — the baby Jesus.

Photos by Erika Barron



Students at St. Therese School work on creating a Nativity out of paper and cardboard on Monday, Dec. 5, as part of the Advent season.



Pieces of 'straw' are available for the students at St. Therese School to add to the manger for the baby Jesus each time they do a good deed as part of the Advent season.

is on a mission to prepare her second- and third-graders' hearts and minds for the coming of the Savior. "I am trying to show them that Christmas is more than just presents and Santa. As important as that is to them at this age, they are never too young to start learning the

true meaning of the season," Ehinger reflected.

She begins each school day with an Advent reflection and activity. Activities range from creating a Nativity out of paper and cardboard to a take-home Advent wreath decorated with foam dots. The students have

also been creating Advent lap books, complete with a weekly devotion focusing on the symbols of Advent. Another activity included taking a smooth stone and gluing a picture of baby Jesus onto it. They could then carry this stone in their pockets and be reminded of the reason for Advent every time they looked at it.

Another special way the students have been preparing for the coming of the Savior is by placing a piece of straw in the manger each time they do a good deed. "They are preparing themselves and making sure baby Jesus is comfortable," Ehinger remarked.

"When we do something good, we get to help baby Jesus!" one student shared. Another very important theme for St. Therese students was prayer. They have daily Advent prayers within their reflections, and one day were even asked to pray for seven specific people in their lives.

Several students shared that their favorite part of the Advent season is prayer. One student, Julian, elaborated on this theme by saying, "By praying and waiting for Jesus, we will be able to spend more time with family." Julian also planned on taking his foam Advent wreath home and decorating the top of the Christmas tree with it in place of a star.

The children have also been practicing Advent songs, one of which turns the popular tune "Jingle Bells" into a true Advent-themed sing-along. As Christmas approaches, St. Therese School kindergarteners through second-graders will put on an Advent play for the other students during the school day, reminding everyone that the reason for this holy season is a tiny child, born to be the Savior of all.



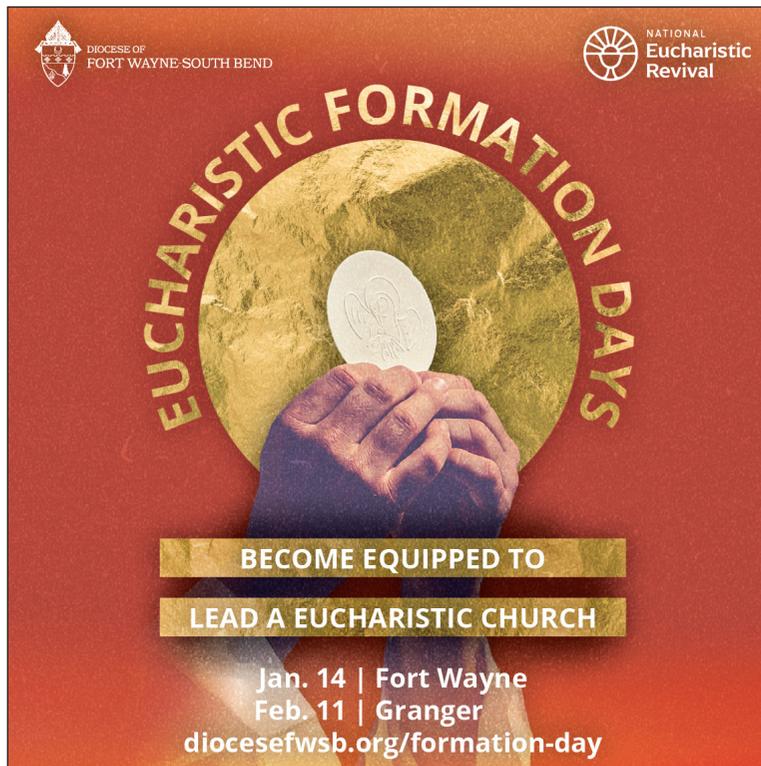
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Secular and Religious Christmas Traditions Share Purpose

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

Christmas traditions, no matter how small, impact individuals, families, and societies in major ways. Whether it is something as widely practiced as decorating a pine tree, or as specific as the particular order and placement of stockings on the mantle, these traditions play a significant role in carrying families, cultures, and the Catholic faith to future generations.

Secular Christmas traditions have the power to unite communities of different faiths and backgrounds. Some writers have argued that President Ulysses S. Grant established Christmas as a federal holiday to unite the ideologically opposed North and South in the aftermath of the American Civil War. This presidential action, perhaps, opened the door for Christmas celebrations to propagate among Americans in the generations to follow.

Still today, secular Christmas traditions connect ideologically opposed Americans to one another through common songs, celebrations, and foods. Recently, thousands in Fort Wayne gathered to watch the illumination of the giant Santa Claus display downtown. Surely, these festive residents do not share common stances on political or religious issues, but they all united to participate in their common and long-standing Christmas tradition.

Family-specific traditions, too, become especially prevalent during the Christmas season, and they can range from totally unplanned to fully intentional. For example, a recently married couple decorating their new home together may haphazardly place the gaudy nutcracker that they received as a wedding present



Joshua Schipper

The iconic Santa Claus and his reindeer light up the side of the PNC building on Main Street in downtown Fort Wayne. The lighting during Fort Wayne's Night of Lights every year on Thanksgiving Eve is a tradition for many around the area.

on an inconspicuous shelf in their living room. After a few years, they will notice that they put the nutcracker back in the same place every Christmas. Thus, the initial inadvertent placement of this decoration has become an irreplaceable and necessary Christmas tradition within their young family. Other family traditions receive more attention in their conception. Maybe the head of the household chose to cook an annual Christmas turkey — a delicious tradition that his family now looks forward to every year.

Unlike family and secular Christmas traditions, Catholic traditions extend far into the depths of recorded history, and more recent religious traditions date back even farther than many secular American traditions. The liturgical season of Advent, itself, dates back to the 5th and 6th centuries. Items like Advent wreaths, while more recent, are traditions that have been included

in the Catholic cultural canon in relatively recent centuries. Smithsonian Magazine suggests that the first "Nativity

scene" was created in the year 1223, a feat often credited to St. Francis of Assisi.

The tradition of the Jesse Tree, attending midnight Mass, and even the celebration of the Feast of St. Nicholas are ways that Catholics and Christians of other denominations continue to celebrate the coming of Jesus. In fact, the tradition of attending Christmas Mass is so strong that even Catholics who have fallen away from the faith return to celebrate annually.

Many of these traditions, whether secular, familial, or Catholic, represent something greater and invisible. The annual lighting of the Fort Wayne Santa Claus display is an outward and visible sign of an underlying start to the secular holiday season. Familial traditions, like decorating a Christmas tree in the same style or manner every year, may be an outward sign of the invisible reality of the continuity of family from year to year,

and from generation to generation.

Similarly, Catholic Christmas traditions — even sacraments — take on the role of making visible an invisible reality. Baptism is a visible and efficacious sign of the invisible reality of purification. Confirmation makes visible the invisible seal of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In order for these traditions to last, societies, families, and religious institutions must pass the tradition on to the next generation. Just as the family patriarch passes his intricate turkey basting techniques on to his children, the Church, too, hands its traditions and sacraments to new generations with the hope that these practices will continue to unite and strengthen it until the end of time.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Pope is Asking Governments to Grant Clemency to Prisoners at Christmas

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis is writing to all the heads of state around the world, asking them to consider granting some prisoners clemency at Christmas. A representative from the Vatican press office said on Dec. 12 that the pope is asking government leaders to consider freeing or reducing the sentences of men and women they believe would benefit from such a gesture of mercy “so that this time marked by tensions, injustices, and conflicts may be opened to the grace that comes from the Lord.” Vatican officials did not release a copy of the letter or explain what prompted it besides the approach of Christmas. From his days as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and continuing after his election to the papacy, Pope Francis has made a special effort to maintain regular contact with prisoners, to meet them in Rome and on his trips around the world, and to phone and write them. At the end of his Angelus address on Dec. 11, the pope gave a shout-out to “the detainees in the Due Palazzi prison of Padua: I greet you affectionately!”

Ukrainians Seek Blessing for Rehab Center; Pope Urges Action for Peace

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The mayor of Lviv, Ukraine, and a team of doctors treating those injured in the war gave Pope Francis a cross with an embedded piece of shrapnel removed from the body of a young girl. “Giving the pope the cross, we hope he will pray each day for the injured children,” Mayor Andriy Sadovy told reporters on Dec. 7 after meeting the pope at the end of his weekly general audience. Pope Francis asked everyone at his audience to pray that Mary would comfort every person living under the brutality of war, especially the people of Ukraine. The pope also noted the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of “Operation Reinhard,” the Nazi plan to kill the Jews of German-occupied Poland, a plan that succeeded in murdering some two-million Jews. “May the memory of this horrible event arouse in all of us resolutions and actions for peace,” the pope said, before adding that “history repeats itself. We see what is happening today in Ukraine. Let us pray for peace.” Dr. Oleh Samchuk, General Director of a Lviv hospital, the First Territorial Medical Association, accompanied the mayor and other officials seeking not only Pope Francis’ prayers, but also

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebrated



CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

Jesuit Father Hernan Paredes celebrates a Spanish-language Mass on the eve of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Staten Island, New York on Dec. 11, 2022. Our Lady of Mount Carmel-St. Benedicta-St. Mary of the Assumption Parish ministers to a large population of immigrants from Mexico.

his blessing for the Unbroken National Rehabilitation Center, a facility they hope will bring physical and psychiatric healing to the victims of Russia’s war on Ukraine. “We showed the pope our project, and he blessed it,” Sadovy said.

Spanish Catholic Group Seeks Help to Prevent Removal of Cross, Monastery

MADRID (CNS) — A group of Spanish Catholics sent a petition to the Madrid cardinal and Pope Francis’ ambassador, asking help to prevent the removal of a giant cross and a Benedictine monastery from a civil war cemetery and memorial outside Madrid. “These Benedictines carry out an invaluable task: They pray for the people buried there, for peace, and reconciliation between Spaniards,” said the petition, addressed to Cardinal Carlos Osoro Sierra of Madrid and Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Vatican Nuncio. The petition, by the Enraizados en Cristo y la Sociedad (Rooted in Christ and Society) association, was circulated as Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez’s coalition government prepared to enforce a new law requiring the Valley of the Fallen, known in Spanish as Valle de los Caídos,

to be redesignated a “place of democratic memory” and stripped of political elements it said exalted the dictatorship of Gen. Francisco Franco, who died in 1975. “The permanence of the Benedictine community is not negotiable or interchangeable,” said the Madrid-based association, founded in 2012 to provide “a Catholic voice in public life. We ask the Holy See’s nuncio and archbishop of Madrid to defend the monks and safeguard the cross — if we don’t act quickly, everything will go down the drain.” The remains of Franco, who ruled Spain for four decades after the 1936-1939 civil war, were reburied at Madrid’s El Pardo cemetery in October of 2019 after being exhumed from a pontifical basilica at the valley, which also contains the graves of 34,000 conflict victims and is dominated by the 460-foot stone cross.

After Vote, House Sends Respect for Marriage Act to Biden for Signature

WASHINGTON, D.C. (CNS) — By a vote of 258-169, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Respect for Marriage Act on Dec. 8 and sent it to President Joe Biden for his signature. Biden is expected to

sign the bill legalizing same-sex marriage into law. The president praised Congress for a measure the U.S. Catholic bishops and other religious leaders have said does not clearly protect the religious freedom of churches and individuals who believe in traditional marriage between one man and one woman. The House approved the measure by a wide margin in July, but had to vote on it again after the Senate passed an amended version on Nov. 29 in a 61-36 vote. Senate Democrats were joined by 12 Republicans who backed the bill after they were satisfied with an amendment that they said would protect the rights of those who oppose same-sex marriage on religious grounds. But after Senate passage, the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth said he was “gravely disappointed.” Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, said on Dec. 1 that the measure “fails to include clear, comprehensive, and affirmative conscience protections for religious organizations and individuals who uphold the sanctity of traditional marriage that are needed.” Decades of social and legal developments “have torn sexuality, childbearing, and marriage from each other in the public consciousness,” Bishop Barron said in a statement released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Church Must Take Seriously the Problems, Needs of Workers, Pope Says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — All workers should feel welcomed by the church and know that their needs and problems are taken seriously, Pope Francis said. In fact, labor and employment are experiencing “a phase of transformation that needs to be accompanied,” he told members of Italy’s Movement of Christian Workers during an audience at the Vatican on Dec. 9. “Social inequalities, forms of slavery and exploitation, family poverty due to the lack of work or poorly paid work are realities that must be listened to in our church communities. They are more or less forms of exploitation — let us call things by their real name,” he said. The movement, which was celebrating the 50th anniversary of its official establishment, promotes the church’s teachings and Christian values in society, in the world of work, and in government policies. Pope Francis asked members to make a special commitment to bringing the concerns and problems of workers to the many levels of the church community. “It is important that workers feel at home in parishes, associations, groups, and movements; that their problems are taken seriously, that their call for solidarity can be heard,” the pope told them.

Gomez: Virgin of Guadalupe ‘Leads Us to Jesus, Who Shows Way to Peace

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — Our Lady of Guadalupe “always leads us to Jesus, who will show us the way to find peace,” Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles said on Dec. 4. “Jesus will show us the way to the true happiness and love in our lives,” he told thousands of the faithful gathered for an annual outdoor Mass at East Los Angeles College’s Weingart Stadium. “True conversion is to change the way in which we live,” Archbishop Gomez said in Spanish during his bilingual homily. “Let’s ask our Mother Mary to help us discover what are those small things we need to change in our lives.” He reminded Massgoers of Our Lady of Guadalupe’s message of hope, compassion, unity, and love. “God wants us to remain united, to be close to him and close to each other, especially in our families. Let’s make of our families a model of unity and a place full of love,” the archbishop said. “Our homes should always be where Jesus should be present and a place where all can find love, compassion, and mercy.”

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Local Students Place Eighth in Vex Robotics Competition



Provided by Lois Widner

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School students competed in the Vex Robotics Competition at Madison-Grant on Dec. 3. Middle school Science Teachers Jodi Jump and Theresa Carroll work with the team during the competition. The team finished 8th out of 21 teams to make the finals and then finished 5th in the finals.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Students Participate in State We the People Competition



Provided by Lois Widner

One of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School's eighth-grade classes was selected to go to Indianapolis on Dec. 5 for the We the People Competition. This is a state-level competition that focuses on the Constitution, current government events, and legal events. The class first went through a local competition and was then asked to go on to State.

New Altar at St. Mary of the Presentation



Provided by Kathy Regedanz

Originally from a church in Wisconsin that was closed, this altar was kept in storage for years until it came to St. Mary of the Presentation, Geneva, in seven pieces. Thanks to the Subler family, the altar was refurbished, restored, and placed in the church for use at Mass the first weekend of December. Father Jonathan Agbedo, Pastor, and parishioners say they are grateful for their new altar and for getting it installed.

Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters Donate to Immigrants and Refugees



Provided by Greer Millard

The Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project received a generous gift from the Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters to strengthen the Florence Project's Integrated Social Services Program and Border Action Team. "Both organizations are totally dedicated to working with and for people on the margins, the poor, the voiceless," said Sister Mary Jo Nelson, OLVN, Past President of the Victory Noll Missionary Sisters.

Ace-ing the Mental Health Challenge – Bishop Dwenger Focuses on Student Needs

BY JENNIFER BARTON

He wanders around the legs of the desks in the classrooms, sniffing at shoes, stopping at one student or another to beg for a treat or get a pat on the head, leaning against the legs of another student – perhaps one who is having a bad day – offering a dog's version of a hug.

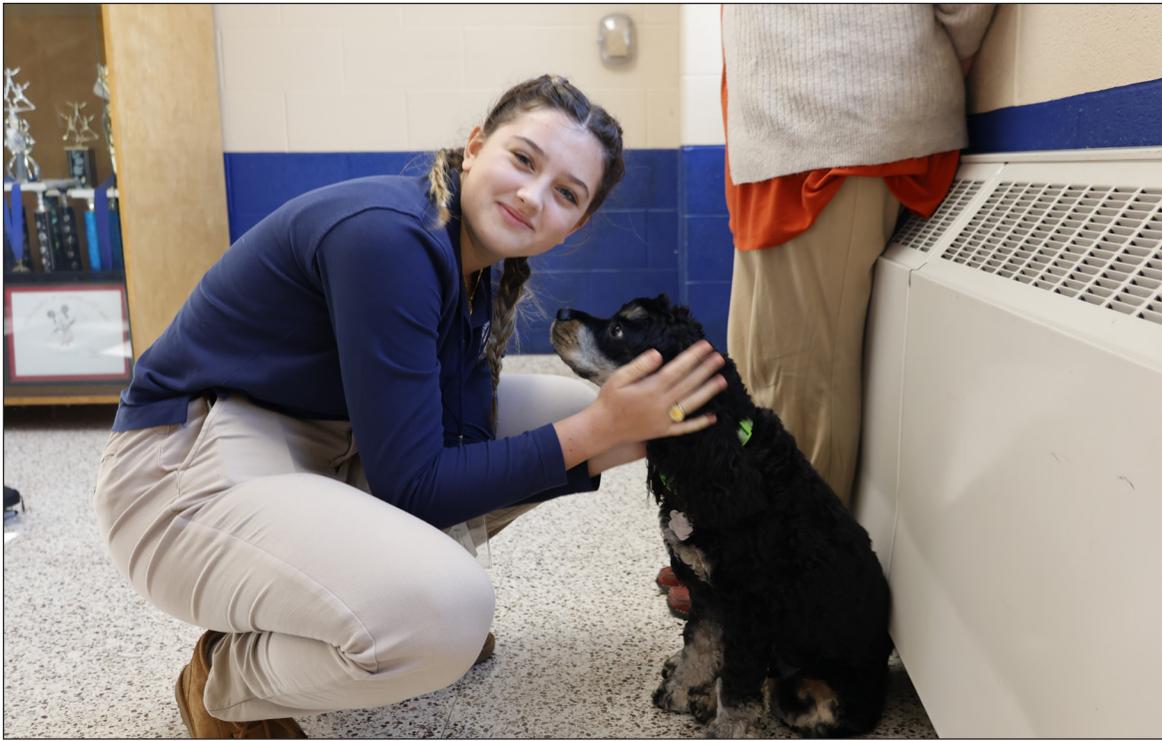
This is Ace the therapy dog, a cocker spaniel and honorary member of the teaching staff at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne. His owner, Amy Gonzagowski, is head of the English department and teaches language arts to a wide range of students, both academically and grade-wise. She understands anxiety and its effects on learning, having suffered from panic attacks herself.

During and after the pandemic, teaching, she said, “became entirely different”, including how the students' mental health took a hit. Though she sees a break in the clouds, Gonzagowski expects the negative effects will linger for years to come: “the amount of anxiety, depression, emotional problems (the students) have is just so much more significant than it ever was. I don't think people realize that isolation did so much. Then just the uncertainty of the world and things like that that really weighed on them a lot.”

That alone is Ace's purpose in the classroom. For some students, a dog can have a calming effect on them during difficult times. “When you're having a panic attack, he will just come up and place himself on you because he just picks up on that,” Gonzagowski said. She has even seen Ace stop panic attacks in the classroom.

Cocker spaniels are known for their friendly and affectionate manner, and are sometimes called “merry marauders”, but Gonzagowski was surprised by his calm, mellow temperament after adopting the puppy from a breeder in Ohio during the coronavirus pandemic. She began asking the veterinarian questions about therapy dogs and spoke to Principal Jason Schiffli about the possibility of bringing Ace into the classroom.

All it took to get Ace certified were a few tests at the vet's office and some paperwork. Gonzagowski's daughter Megan handled his training and Ace perks up when he hears her voice coming down the language arts hallway. “He's very bright, picks things up very fast,” Gonzagowski stated. With Ace within earshot, Gonzagowski reverts to spelling out the word “school”,



Photos by Jennifer Barton

Ace the therapy dog, a cocker spaniel and honorary member of the teaching staff at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne, is seen in the classroom in these photos in December. Ace has been helping students with their mental health at the school for more than a year.

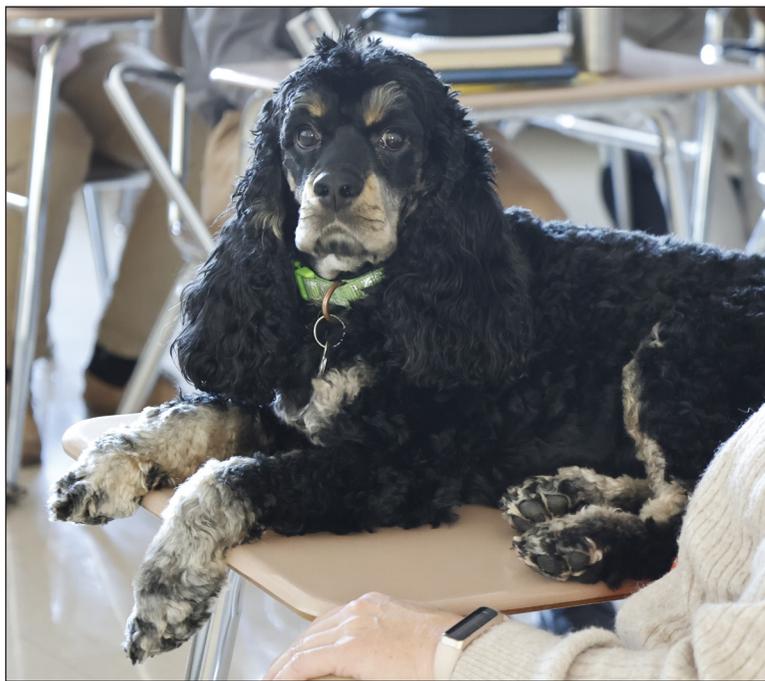
or else the spaniel thinks it's time to head to the classroom.

Now two years old, Ace has been coming into the classroom a couple times a week for more than a year. Sometimes he even ventures beyond the language arts wing to other areas of the building, visiting secretaries who keep treats on hand for him, other teachers who themselves might need a morale boost, and occasionally stopping at the St. Mother Teresa Program classroom to visit the special needs students, who adore him. He was even pictured in the staff section of the school yearbook last year.

Between classes, Ace steps out of the classroom to watch the students in the hallway, waiting for his usual favorites to stop by and see him during their busy days. Gonzagowski loves to see the students seek out Ace during passing periods, watching as he “brings them back” out of their plugged-in worlds to interact with another life-giving being.

When Gonzagowski asked her class if her canine companion was a distraction, the students answered with a resounding no. “He's really fun to have in class,” said Lucas Alderdice. “Honestly, once you get used to having a dog in the classroom normally, he's just a good part of the day, you know? He brightens it up.”

“I thought having a therapy dog in the classroom was stupid when he started coming in last year,” said student Julian Tippmann, who has now changed his mind on the importance of therapy dogs. “He knows better than you know how you're feeling. Like



at the beginning of the day, I'll come in here and I won't even realize I'm having a bad day and he'll come and sit next to me.”

Gonzagowski expounded on the link between faith and four-legged friends like Ace. “I think it's good when you can look at animals and what God made for us. These help people. ... I think God put these puppies on earth to help us out, especially during these times.”

She does admit that “It would be easier not to have him here every day, but he just brings so much joy to the kids. And me.”

Ace's presence in the classroom is not the only method the administration at Bishop Dwenger employs to address the students' mental health needs. Last fall, Schiffli sent a letter to school families concerning the “cloud of malaise, anxiety, and pessimism” that still lingered in the school's hallways. “So, I created a committee made up of faculty, support staff, and administrators to discuss how to combat this depression and negativity,” he said.

Simple changes like incorporating a seven-minute passing period instead of five – which gave students a little time for socialization – and spirit-wear Fridays, where students can shirk their uniform shirts for Bishop Dwenger-related T-shirts. “These decisions that may seem small and unimportant can be the most effective in raising morale,” he commented.

Since implementing these changes last year, Schiffli reports that there has been “more optimism in the air”, and other developments are in the works, such as painting religious murals and quotes throughout the school, “to give our students a spiritual lift.”

Schiffli added that “I want to give a huge shout-out and a ‘tip of the halo’ to BD's Team Tuffy (made up of BD staff and parents). Team Tuffy has planned many fun and theme-based days for the faculty last year and this year. There's so much good food, fellowship, and laughter these days when you walk into the teacher's lounge. Team Tuffy has something planned at least every month!”

The staff at Bishop Dwenger, Schiffli stated, give much of themselves to “to care, counsel, coach, and help our students.” Some of them, such as Gonzagowski, utilize unique methods like bringing Ace into her classroom.

USPS 'Virgin and Child' Stamp Features One of World's Most Revered Images



CNS photo/courtesy U.S. Postal Service

This is an image of the 2022 U.S. Postal Service's 'Virgin and Child' Christmas stamp, inspired by an Italian Renaissance painting.

BOSTON (CNS) — Every two years, the U.S. Postal Service issues a traditional first-class Christmas stamp showing Mary and Jesus, and this year's stamp features an oil-on-panel painting from the first half of the 16th century titled "Virgin and Child."

Attributed to a Florentine artist known since the late 16th century as the Master of the Scandicci Lamentation, the painting is in the Robert Dawson Evans Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

The stamp was designed by Greg Breeding, Co-Founder and Creative Director of the Journey Group design firm in Charlottesville, Virginia. He is one of four art directors who regularly work with the USPS.

The painting depicts Mary gazing downward at the Christ Child, with one of her arms holding Him protectively at His waist and the other tenderly touching His arm, while the Christ Child turns His head to look out of the frame to the left.

"I am honored to represent the Postal Service as we dedicate a Christmas stamp that features one of the most

revered images in the world — the Virgin Mary holding her infant child, Jesus," Jenny Utterback, USPS Organization Development Vice President, said when the stamp was unveiled on Sept. 22 at the Boston Museum.

The Postal Service has released religion-themed stamps since the 1960s.

The 2022 religious Christmas stamp is "a beautiful piece of art, with particular meaning this time of year," Utterback said.

"I choose my holiday cards with care, sign them with love or best wishes, and may write a personal note inside," she added. "Holiday cards are a special way to connect with family and friends. The stamp on the envelope holds significance as well."

"Virgin and Child" is a first-class, 60-cent stamp. It carries the "forever" designation, as do the other new releases from the USPS for the 2022 holiday season: "Holiday Elves," "Snowy Beauty," "Winter Blooms," "Hanukkah," and "Kwanzaa." The USPS said popular holiday stamps from years past also continue to be available.

Mother Shares her Story of Finding God After Tragic Sandy Hook Shooting

BY KAREN A. AVITABLE

NEWTOWN, Conn. (CNS) — Jennifer Hubbard began Dec. 14, 2012, with her routine just like any other day.

She prepared breakfast, made her children's lunches and beds, got them off to school, and then looked at the pile of dishes in the sink and the floors and the counters that needed to be cleaned.

The night before, Hubbard and her children, Freddy, 8, and Catherine, 6, were giddy when they baked a gingerbread house, an annual family holiday tradition. With Christmas less than two weeks away, Hubbard was also thinking of the top priority for the weekend ahead: taking the family Christmas photo.

"I wanted this to be the picture that would make someone visiting my family stop in their tracks and actually pick up the frame, captivated by just how beautiful my babies are," she thought.

That morning, a Friday, a friend called, telling her to "get to the school." It stopped her in her tracks. Hubbard knew something terrible had happened and remembers whispering, "Oh my God, help me. Oh my God, help me."

The unthinkable transpired, and Hubbard's world came to a screeching halt. Catherine was one of 20 first graders and six adults killed by a gunman who forced his way into Sandy Hook Elementary School.

The hours, days, weeks, and months that followed were a blur. Hubbard was panic stricken, paralyzed with grief, and surrounded by waves of loss. She even questioned God. "I called God on the carpet and said, 'Why didn't you stop it?'" It was after receiving a gift in the mail that she began to understand her own purpose, grace, and healing. She had received a Bible and began reading Scripture.

"The Bible is God's word for us. You want to know who Jesus is, read the Bible," Hubbard said. "I see the Bible as this beautiful way to live our lives. It is the road map we all pray for."

Sitting at the kitchen table overlooking her peaceful backyard, Hubbard spent time each day reading the Bible. She also began writing her own thoughts and revelations about God in a journal. Her first entry after Catherine's loss, "I dreamt of Jesus last night," was written on March 14, 2013. She now has about a dozen journals to her credit.



CNS photo/Aaron Joseph, Archdiocese of Hartford

Jennifer Hubbard is seen with her daughter, Catherine, in this undated photo. Catherine was killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut on Dec. 14, 2012. She was 6.

In 2021, Hubbard used her journal entries and the notes she had written in the margins of her Bible to publish her first book, "Finding Sanctuary: How the Wild Work of Peace Restored the Heart of a Sandy Hook Mother."

Each chapter, dedicated to one step in Hubbard's journey toward wholeness, includes reflections, questions, and Bible passages to deepen one's own faith toward finding God's peace.

Catherine's tragic death forced Hubbard to forge a new life for herself and Freddy.

While the events on and following Dec. 14 changed Hubbard's life, she said she received the "graces I needed to walk through that suffocating darkness and encounter the light of goodness on the other side."

"What my life would be today had I not lost Catherine is something I ponder at times," she told the Catholic Transcript, magazine of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut. "Would I have ever learned the hard lesson of choosing to trust when life becomes turbulent?"

"It is not a lesson I wanted to learn. I would give anything to have my daughter back, to see the young woman that fiercely determined and abundantly gentle little girl could have been."

"However, this is not reality," she said. "I can sit right there in that place of want and disappointment that it will never happen, or I can trust there is more. I choose the latter. And so can you."

Today, Hubbard continues to read the Bible and participates in a Bible study group, finding that her relationship with God continues to evolve. She is a speaker on the Catholic Spirit Radio Network, a retreat

leader, a writer with *Magnificat* magazine, and a presenter at Legatus, an organization for Catholic business executives.

She worships at Mid-South Catholic, a parish serving Middlebury and Southbury, Connecticut.

Because of the storms that Hubbard has lived through, she has found her own "sanctuary," she said.

In the conclusion of the book, she wrote, "Storms will gather, and when they do, I will be sheltered in the peace of my Lord God. And in that knowing, I can embrace the here and now, the joys and challenges of today, and today alone, knowing they are preparing me for whatever tomorrow may bring. And in that knowing, I am blessed. Blessed abundantly."

In honor of her daughter and her love of animals, Hubbard has channeled her own energy to establish the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary in Newtown. She is the nonprofit's president and executive director.

In her short life, Catherine spent much of her time taking care of and rescuing animals and "would get nose to nose with them. There was no hesitation between Catherine and any creature," Hubbard recalled.

The sanctuary serves as a bond between animals, human beings, and the environment. Red terra-cotta tiles representing Catherine's bright red hair adorn a pavilion with a colonnade. An education center and a community veterinarian are planned for the 34-acre sanctuary.

On Dec. 14, Hubbard honors Catherine "in a quiet way," as she has done each year since the tragedy.

This year, however, would be harder, she noted, because Freddy is away at college. While being an empty nester has been an adjustment for Hubbard, she is happy to report that Freddy is well-adjusted and is thriving.

Hubbard remembers her daughter's first day of school when she entered the first grade at Sandy Hook Elementary School. She now wonders what kind of person Catherine would have become, as a junior in high school.

"That girl was fierce and determined and loving and compassionate," Hubbard said. "I would love to know what a 16-year-old who had all that compassion and love would be. I also know she's good and I don't have to worry about her."

Information about the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary can be found online at cvhfoundation.org.

From Nigeria to Bloomington, Sharing the Joy of Jesus Drives Dominican Priest's Missions

BY MIKE KROKOS

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — There is the black-and-white photograph of the young Dominican priest floating along the Niger River in a canoe in the early 1960s, pointing into the distance, uncertain what awaited him in this vast, mission territory.

There is also the moving story the priest shares about the time he prayed the Stations of the Cross with members of a leper colony.

The photo and the story are all part of the 57 years that Dominican Father Justus Pokrzewinski spent in Nigeria, serving as a missionary bringing the Catholic faith to a people unfamiliar with Jesus.

Now, after celebrating his 90th birthday on Dec. 10, Father Justus is nearing his fourth year of ministering to college students at the St. Paul Catholic Center on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington.

Two different worlds, but one common goal for Father Justus: sharing the joy of Jesus.

He continues to strive for that goal after suffering a minor stroke in November of 2020. He assists at the parish as a priest-in-residence, celebrating Mass on every Friday and on some weekends. He also hears confessions and attends many of the parish's functions, including a Sunday evening meal hosted at St. Paul Catholic Center each week.

He knows many of the students and is especially supportive of the FOCUS (Fellowship of Christian University Students) missionaries, who minister around the campus. And the students love this priest who is known for singing hymns around the parish office and who always takes time to greet everyone who crosses his path.

"He's a very holy man who brings a lot of joy to everyone," says Maria Reecer, an IU sophomore who works part time in the parish office and is a member of the parish. "I think he's a great testament to what faith does for someone when they pursue it throughout their life."

'He's a Big Force of Prayer for the Students'

Elizabeth White, Team Director for FOCUS on the IU campus, also cites Father Justus' joy when discussing his presence at the parish. She also talks about his reverence when he celebrates Mass.

"His love for the Eucharist



Mike Krokos, The Criterion

Dominican Father Justus Pokrzewinski enjoys spending time with students on Oct. 16 during a Sunday evening meal at St. Paul Catholic Center on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington. Pictured, seated from left, are Jose Kaufmann, Father Justus, and Abigail Cerimele. Behind them, from left, are Connor Gorton, Lizzy Hart, Dane Babillis, and Elizabeth White.

and the Lord is so apparent," she notes. "And he always makes it a point to pray for us missionaries, which is an incredible gift."

Father Justus also possesses the gift of remembering everyone he meets, White says, and an unwavering commitment to praying for those people every day.

"He's a big force of prayer for the students," she says. "And just the way he remembers is very intentional about each student he interacts with, and it's something I very much admire and that has definitely rubbed off."

Father Justus' missionary work in Nigeria also inspires White and her FOCUS colleagues. He spoke to the group about his experiences, and they left the meeting eager to continue their outreach.

"I remember us leaving the class feeling very invigorated, thinking, 'If this man can go into dangerous territory and spread Jesus, then we can go onto a college campus and share about Jesus,'" White says.

In both Bloomington and Nigeria, Father Justus views missionary work from a similar perspective.

"The missionary progress depends on God's grace, on the gift Jesus gave us in the holy Eucharist, as the memorial of His Passion, death, and resurrection, on the Holy Spirit, and also on Our Lady, Queen of the Apostles," he notes. "All the glory of any success goes to God."

'Everything Flows from That'

Still, his missionary work in Nigeria was a world away from his youth in Chicago, where religious life was present in his parish and early education. He graduated from St. Stanislaus Kostka grade school, where the parish was staffed by the Resurrectionist Fathers and the school by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. His family also had strong Catholic roots that went back to Poland.

"I give thanks to almighty God for the gift of my life and my Catholic faith, and my parents' Catholic faith. Everything flows from that," Father Justus said. "All the sacraments — from Baptism, Penance, Holy Communion, Confirmation — led me to the Dominican order and the priesthood."

After being ordained on June 4, 1960, he was assigned to minister in Nigeria in October of the following year.

'This is a Great Gift, but You're Going to Suffer for It'

His Dominican order — whose charism is preaching for the salvation of souls — had been invited to minister in the west African country in 1951. They were given two apostolates: a parish in Lagos and the prefecture of Sokoto in northern Nigeria, which was to be developed into a diocese.

"Our job [in Sokoto] was to build the diocese up and to

hand it over to the diocesan priests," he says.

The Dominicans did their best to learn Hausa, which was the main language. They also tried to build bridges with the Muslims, who controlled much of the region. The Muslims told the Dominicans they could minister in the region if they built a hospital, which the order did. Dominican sisters from Kansas operated it and two other clinics.

"Lay missionaries who were nurses helped the sisters run these places," Father Justus notes. "It was a very Dominican thing, with the priests and the Dominican sisters and the lay missionary nurses. The work went well."

As missionary disciples, the Dominicans were charged with spreading the Gospel and introducing the Nigerian people to Jesus Christ. Father Justus says one breakthrough occurred with a small group who spoke Hausa but were not Muslim.

"How did we find them? ... They were different from the Muslims because they drank beer," he says with a laugh. "That was one way to meet them."

"We saw it was important to [minister to] them. Most of the Christians were coming from the south. ... So, we succeeded in that area a bit."

When he baptized children, the priest told their families, "This is a great gift, but you're going to suffer for it," referring to the strong Muslim presence in that area of Nigeria. And that suffering continues for many Christians there today.

During his nearly 20 years in the Sokoto diocese, Father Justus worked in parishes, viewing his primary mission as evangelization. The Dominicans were building parishes with mostly people from the south and trying to introduce the indigenous people in the north to the Catholic faith.

"In the north, no one had ever preached about Jesus," he says. "It's wonderful to preach to people who never heard the Good News."

'That is Jesus, the Body of Christ'

In 1980, Father Justus moved to the south and ministered in the Ibadan archdiocese. His 37 years there included mission work in Ibadan, Lagos, and Agbor-Obi.

He served in various leadership roles during that time with the Dominican order and also as a pastor. During visits to villages, he took note of how important native catechists were to introducing and passing on the faith.

"They were really our right hand. They knew the language, and they knew English, and they would often interpret for us. There are many dialects in Nigeria," he says. "There are maybe 20 languages, but each one of them had different dialects, almost up to 200 if you counted them all."

One story revealed how a catechist's work offered an example of faith in action.

"We were getting converts, and we told our people, 'The tabernacle, that is Jesus, the body of Christ. He's in there,'" Father Justus recalls. "So, they would tell their friends."

"One time, a young man — not a catechumen yet — he asked me in the Hausa language ... 'Is God in that box' [the tabernacle]?"

"I said, 'Yes, that's the tabernacle. Yes, He is.' ... That was kind of a thrill to see how they were sharing the faith, and the way he put the question."

Promoting priestly and religious vocations was also an important part of Father Justus' mission. Reflecting on trying to plant seeds for vocations, Father Justus admits, "It was slow going at first."

Years later, more men are answering the call.

"There were nine [Dominicans] ordained priests this year, and eight deacons, all native Nigerians. We're happy with that," Father Justus notes. "Nigeria is rich in vocations."

Near a parish in Agbor-Obi where Father Justus ministered for two years was a leper colony that a group of religious

sisters operated. One day, they asked the priest to celebrate a Mass and participate in the Stations of the Cross afterward.

"As we would kneel down [while praying the Stations] ... there was this leper ahead of me, and when he knelt down, there was his leg, all eaten up from leprosy. I felt sorry for him, but then it struck me, this guy was kneeling and rising faster than all of us. ... It then struck me: there is a guy, a leper, and he is just thrilled to be saying the Stations of the Cross. He just saw what Jesus did [as we reflected on the stations]. ... We don't like to suffer, and here is this guy doing this."

"Just seeing his leprosy and seeing his spirit" really moved Father Justus.

Now, Father Justus' spirit has an impact on the people he meets at IU.

'He's Just So Focused on the Lord'

Like the college students, Dominican Father Patrick Hyde, pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center, is inspired by Father Justus.

"His joy, his love of the priesthood, his love of preaching the Gospel, of just bringing Jesus to people, that's inspirational," Father Hyde says. "And you pair that with the fact that he was [a missionary for] 57 years in Nigeria, so he's walking the walk, and talking the talk. There's such a beautiful integrity to his life. He's just so focused on the Lord."

When discussing Father Justus and his priestly ministry, the pastor also cites a motto that St. Thomas Aquinas gave to the Dominican order: to give to others what's been contemplated.

"He just exudes that," says Father Hyde. "In his life, in his prayer, he's talking to Jesus, he's listening to Jesus, and in his ministry, he just desires to share that with people."

"He's just someone who loves Jesus and wants to share that with you and just engage in your life."

Even in his ministry at IU, Father Justus keeps the people of Nigeria close to his heart. "I received so much from the Catholics in Nigeria and from those who were accepting the Catholic faith."

But with sadness, he also cites "the serious sufferings of the Catholics and other Christians in some parts of northern Nigeria."

"Many have died, not only from Boko Haram fanatics, but many have died at the hands of some Fulani cattle herders," the priest said. "Government protection is needed for the Catholics. There is a great need to stop these persecutions. The faith of the Catholic people is strong, but they need our prayers."

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

Four Catholic churches in Fort Wayne opened their doors to the community during the sixth annual City of Churches Tour on Friday, Dec. 2.

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, as well as St. John the Baptist, St. Peter, and St. Patrick parishes were among several churches that participated in this inter-denominational night of local exploration.

Tour guides at the cathedral enlightened the public about the church's history and even led them to the crypt located beneath the building. Nearly every bishop from local diocesan history is interred in the crypt, as is the builder of the cathedral, Father Julian Benoit.

Engraved in the altar of the crypt are five crosses, each symbolic of a wound that Christ received during his crucifixion. This altar, like many found in local parishes, contains a first-class relic – part of a saint's body. However, the particular saint whose relic resides in this altar is uncertain.

The cathedral's stained-glass windows recall the life of the Blessed Mother, for whom the cathedral is named. At the bottom of the stained glass are names of people who contributed funds for the windows. Among them are many of Fort Wayne's well-known from the late-19th and early-20th Centuries. Charles L. Centlivre, founder of the Centlivre Brewery, is remembered in one window, as is William J. Hosey, a former mayor of Fort Wayne.

Founded as a German and French parish, St. Peter retains some of that heritage still today. The stations of the cross that adorn the sides of the



Joshua Schipper

Brochures and a sign of welcome at St. John the Baptist Parish greet participants of the sixth annual City of Churches Tour in Fort Wayne on Friday, Dec. 2. Four Catholic churches were featured in this year's tour.

building's interior, although translated into English, still display the original German text. The current church building was dedicated in 1894, and the total cost from construction and furnishing totaled \$75,000.

St. Patrick Parish has a similar history to St. Peter. Irish residents of Fort Wayne, many of whom arrived in the area seeking employment constructing the Wabash-Erie Canal, founded St. Patrick. The first month of planning

the church building came with unforeseen roadblocks. Bishop Joseph G. Dwenger appointed Father Thomas O'Leary as the first pastor in October of 1889. Father O'Leary immediately set out to begin construction, facilitating the land sale that same month. However, by Oct. 24, he died of acute appendicitis. Despite this, ground was broken during the following spring, and Bishop Dwenger blessed the cornerstone in May of 1890.

More photos are available at www.todayscatholic.org

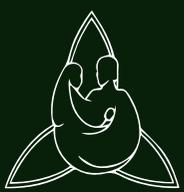


A feature of St. Patrick that makes the structure particularly

unique within diocesan Catholic churches is the sloped floor that descends toward the altar. Although today the demographics of St. Patrick Parish have changed, reminders of their founders' heritage remain. The stained-glass window at the church entrance provides the most prominent example of this heritage, depicting Irish patron saint, St. Patrick.

St. John the Baptist Parish recently renovated their church building which had been constructed in the 1950s. At the forefront of all the grand marble features in the sanctuary hangs a crucifix which was sculpted from Pietrasanta marble by an Italian artist.

The church tour is an annual opportunity for everyone in Fort Wayne to learn more about those who worship differently. As Saint Pope John Paul II said, "The entire life of Christians is marked by a concern for ecumenism; and they are called to let themselves be shaped, as it were, by that concern."



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The Blessing of Four Full Weeks of Advent

What day is Christmas? It's a delightful thing to think about. Easter, tied to the celebration of Passover, occurs each year on Sunday. But Christmas, tied to Dec. 25, is not set on a particular day of the week. This year, Christmas Day falls on a Sunday. The last time Christmas Day fell on Sunday was 2016. It won't be until 2033 that Christmas falls on a Sunday again.

When Christmas falls on a Sunday, two remarkable things happen.

First, we end up with an extra tie to the Lord's Paschal Mystery. When Christmas falls on a Sunday, it points to our weekly remembrance of Christ's suffering and death. This weekly remembrance, which we observe at Sunday Mass, is a constant reminder that Christ has paid for our sins with His blood.

At Christmas, there are many little signs that this Child was born to save His people. He is named Jesus, which we are told in the Gospel means that "He will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). He is wrapped in swaddling clothes, symbolizing the linen that will shroud His body in death. The gifts given by the Magi are spices used in preparing a body for burial. The wood of the manger points to the wood of the cross.

So, this Christmas that we are preparing to celebrate is a special remembrance that this Child was born for our salva-

tion. The Virgin Mary and Jesus knew this. They knew God's plan of love. This fact gives us extra cause for rejoicing in their assent to God's plan.

The second remarkable aspect of Christmas falling on a Sunday is that this means that we as a Christian people get to observe four full weeks of Advent. Viewed in the right light, it's as if we've been given the gift of more time, a precious few days to prepare our hearts and minds to kneel again at the Child's crib in Bethlehem.

The liturgy for this Fourth Week of Advent gives pride of place to the Virgin Mary. St. John Henry Newman tells us: "It is Mary's prerogative to be the Morning Star, which heralds in the sun. She does not shine for herself, or from herself, but she is the reflection of her and our redeemer, and she glorifies Him. When she appears in the darkness, we know that He is close at hand." The mystery of Christmas begins in the heart and mind of the Virgin Mary. She was the first to receive Christ, the first to hear His saving message.

This final week of Advent, then, is a moment for us to recall the Virgin Mary's great Advent virtues. We can imitate her trust in God when she assents to His plan. If things don't go exactly the way we want them to this Christmas season, we should trust like the Virgin Mary. We ought to follow her example of humility, adopting lowliness and simplic-



GUEST COMMENTARY

FATHER PATRICK BRISCOE, OP

ity in the midst of hectic holiday plans and schedules. And we should try to find moments for quiet contemplation, in imitation of her, who "kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (Lk 2:19).

But perhaps the greatest virtue of the Virgin Mary for us to foster in our precious Fourth Week of Advent is her wonder. Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373) writes, "Come, let us wonder at the virgin most pure, wondrous in herself, unique in creation, she gave birth, yet knew no man; her pure soul with wonder was filled, daily her mind gave praise in joy at the twofold wonder: her virginity preserved, her Child most dear. Blessed is He who shone forth from her!" Ephrem's poetry draws us into the wonder that fills the Virgin Mary's heart — wonder marked not by doubt, but by awe. This final week of Advent, may we nourish and renew that wonder which the Virgin Mary offers to us.

Father Patrick Briscoe, OP, is Editor of Our Sunday Visitor.

The Advent of Population Decline

As we await the birth of the Savior Child, it seems fitting to note that in many parts of the developed world, the lack of babies is a growing concern.

This is a surprising change for those of us raised on "The Population Bomb," a wildly inaccurate prediction that the world's population would bring the earth to a miserable collapse. The book appeared in 1968, and its author, Paul Ehrlich, with help from a largely uncritical media, for years convinced many countries that children — in the form of population growth — were the problem.

So imminent was this disaster, in Ehrlich's mind, that he predicted the starvation death of hundreds of millions of people in the 1970s.

In 1968, the world's population was 3.5 billion. This past November, planet Earth's population surpassed 8 billion.

This makes a recent population editorial in The Washington Post noteworthy for its lack of handwringing. While recognizing the impact of the population growth on environmental and man-made infrastructures as well as on Africa and Asia, it concluded that "living standards around the world have vastly, though unevenly, improved" in the years since Ehrlich's book was published.

Earth's population expanded when farmers and workers were able to produce more and support more people, the



AMID THE FRAY

GREG ERLANDSON

Nov. 19 editorial said. In fact, as living standards improve, both birth rates and death rates shrink, suggesting that when the advancements that the Northern Hemisphere enjoys spread more widely in the Southern Hemisphere, population stability will occur there as well.

Where population growth is occurring, there are implications. For one, if job creation does not keep pace with people creation, migration is likely to follow. Compounded by pressures like climate change and war, we are seeing this impact now on the flow of migrants to wealthier countries.

The Post notes that sometime in this century we are likely to see population growth plateau, and the editorial ends with a warning that Paul Ehrlich certainly did not foresee: "Instead of population growth and growing birthrates, the fast-approaching new demographic challenge is societal aging."

Indeed, populations in several European countries are now shrinking, meaning more

ERLANDSON, page 13

Focusing on Christ Dispels the World's Darkness



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Fourth Sunday of Advent Matthew 1:18-24

The Book of Isaiah is the source of this weekend's first reading.

Isaiah was between a rock and a hard place, so to speak. He realized that unwise alliances and behavior that forgot God put the Hebrews' kingdom of Judah at great risk. The prophet was convinced that if the nation did not return to God in genuine obedience and piety, then the whirlwind eventually would sweep away life as he and his contemporaries knew it.

He met dispute and outrage. It must have been frustrating, but despite the angry reaction to what he said on the part of many people around him, Isaiah unflinchingly called the people to God. It was not as if God would bring a terrible punishment upon the kingdom. Rather, the people, by their impiety, would create a nightmare for themselves.

The Epistle to James supplies the second reading. This epistle rarely appears in the liturgy. The identity of the author is unclear. The New Testament mentions four men with this name. Which, if any, wrote this epistle?

Regardless, this reading solidly establishes the author's faith that Jesus will be victorious. No power can exceed the power of the Lord. After all, the Lord is the Son of God.

While final victory undoubtedly will come, it will not necessarily come at a time when humans predict, and certainly it

will not come at their bidding. The great day nevertheless will come. God will prevail.

So, the epistle urges strong faith, but also forbearance.

The third reading, from St. Matthew's Gospel, centers on John the Baptist, whose denunciations of sin in high places led to his arrest. (In time, they led to his death.)

Despising the Roman occupation of the land, pious Jews at this time yearned for a Messiah who would rid the Holy Land of the pagan intruders, for whom Herod was a stooge.

John gave another description of the Redeemer. He saw the Savior not as a warrior, commanding armies to slaughter the enemies of the One God of Israel, but the compassionate, truly holy leader of the pious.

Jesus met this description: healing the sick, giving hope, and restoring life, lovingly coming to earth as Son of God.

In the last verses, Jesus

affirms that John is a prophet. In response, John insists Jesus is the greatest prophet.

Reflection

Advent is approaching its close. Since Christmas is near, the Church looks ahead to the wonder of the Lord's birth. This is "Gaudete Sunday", using a title taken from the first word of the Introit in Latin, "Gaudete!", or "Rejoice!"

Priests may wear rose vestments this weekend instead of violet, as if the rays of dawn are already brightening Advent's somberness.

The readings make several points. Isaiah warned us as he warned his contemporaries that by sin we bring heartache upon ourselves. By sinning, we weave the cloth of our own misery. God never brings death. He brings life, just as Jesus brought life.

Advent penance and prayer hopefully lead us to follow

Christ. The liturgy presumes that we are using Advent to our advantage. If we center our lives on Christ, then our love for God and for others will brighten the darkness and terror of our times. It is that simple — and inevitable.

Advent is the opportunity to fortify and focus Christian resolve.

READINGS

Sunday: Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-6 Rom 1:1-7 Mt 1:18-24

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

Tuesday: Is 7:10-14 Pa 24:1-6 Lk 1:26-38

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

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

Friday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 25:4bc-5ab, 8-10, 14 Lk 1:57-66

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

David and Goliath

Certainly, in the biblical framework, an important dimension of leadership is skill and courage in battle, and David's possession of these qualities is presented as unambiguously as possible in his first appearance on the national scene. We hear that the armies of Israel and the Philistines are arrayed on facing hilltops. Coming forth from the Philistine ranks is one Goliath of Gath, described as standing at a height of "six cubits and a span," which would put him at more than eight feet tall. This giant offered to take on a champion from the Israelite army, the winner of this single combat determining the outcome of the war: "If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us" (1 Sam. 17:9). As if the giant's stature was not intimidating enough, we are told how impressively Goliath is accoutered for war, a description that can only be characterized as "Homeric" in its specificity: "He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. He had greaves of bronze on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron" (1 Sam. 17:5-7). And if we are not yet sufficiently impressed by his martial might, we hear that a servant carries Goliath's great shield before him.

Probably more than any other figure in the Scriptures, Goliath, armed and defended by the most sophisticated military technology of the time, symbolizes the power that worldly rulers can muster. He is an anticipation of, and avatar for, Alexander, Caesar, and Stalin. I cannot help but see a connection between this extraordinary array of coverings on the body of Goliath and that first covering of leaves that Adam and Eve used to hide their nakedness, for the former is, in a way, but the full flowering of the latter. Once we step into the world of sin, we must adopt an attitude of suspicion vis-à-vis our fellows, defending ourselves and remaining constantly prepared for battle.

God's love is more powerful than all of the negativity of the sinful world.

All of Saul's army shrank from the challenge, and Goliath humiliated Israel with further taunts. At this juncture, young David, who had been carrying provisions from his father to his brothers at the front, became cognizant of the situation and eagerly inquired, "What shall be done for the man who kills this

Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Sam. 17:26). Significantly, these are the first words spoken by David in the Bible, and as is often the case in these scriptural narratives, the opening speech of a hero gives a strong indication of his character. Judging from his first lines, young David is ambitious, fearless, ready to act, and devoted to the Lord. This basic disposition will indeed remain more or less intact for the entire arc of David's life.

Indignant at the effrontery of the giant, David volunteers to take him on, and the young man is brought to the king. At first, Saul is incredulous: "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth." But David protests that, as a shepherd, he successfully fought off lions and bears, and adds, with considerable bravado, "this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them" (1 Sam. 17:33-36). Persuaded, Saul endeavors to outfit the young man with the king's own armor, but David is unable to move under such weight and so encumbered. This is a key indication that this battle will be between worldly power and the higher power of God. Gathering a few stones from the dry creek bed, David goes out, simple sling in hand, to meet the armored titan. Shocked at David's youth and small stature, and certainly more than a little insulted that Israel would have chosen such a pathetic champion to confront him, Goliath cries, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks? . . . Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field." But David reveals the source of his power: "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (1 Sam. 17:43-45). And in short order, David slings a stone that embeds itself in the giant's forehead, and the prodigious warrior falls unconscious to the ground, at which point David decapitates Goliath with the Philistine's own sword. The clear implication of this memorable narrative is that the power of God is greater than even the most impressive military force mustered by human beings.

This motif, of course, is a commonplace in the Bible. Though the Scriptures certainly present a good deal of military conflict, and though Israel at times is fairly bloodthirsty, it is remarkable how often the incapacity of Israel is emphasized and the power of God



WORD ON FIRE

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

working through its armies is brought to the fore. One thinks, for example, of the paltry band of 300 soldiers that manages, under Gideon, to win the day; or of the battle described in the tenth chapter of Joshua, during which the stones hurled by God killed more than were killed by the sword; and perhaps most famously, of the conquest of Jericho which, as we saw, was accomplished not by arms but by a kind of liturgical enactment. Thus, apart from the active presence of God, the victory of an adolescent boy, armed only with a sling-shot, over an armored giant, is unthinkable.

And all of this points toward the battle that is the culminating event in the history of salvation, the contest that took place on a cross erected on a squalid hill near a quarry outside the walls of Jerusalem. Arrayed against Jesus was the full might of both the Jewish and Roman establishment. The deeply unjust decisions of both the Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate were backed up by the Roman soldiers stationed in the Antonia Fortress adjacent to the temple, and a coterie of armored Romans conducted Jesus to the instrument of torture that symbolized Rome's intimidation of its enemies. The condemned man was stripped naked and then nailed to the cross, a naked David going out against fully accoutered Goliath. But the power wielded by the crucified Jesus was apparent in His words, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). For the divine forgiveness is greater than anything that is in the world; cruelty, hatred, violence, injustice, and plain stupidity are swallowed up in the mercy of the God of Israel. What the first Christians understood in the wake of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead is that David had definitively defeated Goliath, that God's love is more powerful than all of the negativity of the sinful world.

Bishop Robert Barron is the Bishop of Rochester, Minnesota, and the Founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for December 18, 2022

Matthew 1:18-24

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle A: Joseph and the Angel. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

BIRTH	MOTHER	TOGETHER
FOUND	CHILD	HOLY SPIRIT
HER HUSBAND	SHAME	DIVORCE
THE ANGEL	APPEARED	A DREAM
SON OF DAVID	BEAR A SON	SAVE
PEOPLE	SINS	FULFILL
VIRGIN	EMMANUEL	AWOKE

JOSEPH'S ENTRY

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

ERLANDSON, from page 12

and more people older than 65 and fewer younger than 18. Even the U.S. is not immune, although its immigration rate can mask its decline in births. This foretells what demographers call a "demographic winter."

Exhibit A would be Japan, where some say the country is irreversibly withering. Notoriously hostile to immigration, Japan has no ready means to increase its population, which will put the economy and social services under grave stress as its population ages. Diapers for the elderly now outsell diapers for babies there.

Italy also has had a below average birth rate for generations. There are almost twice as many deaths as births in Italy, and a birth rate of 1.24 births per woman is lower than Japan's. Maternity wards are being shut down.

Pope Francis has taken notice, and he has been sounding the alarm about the declining number of births. In a speech to Italian family associations this December, the pope warned Italy about "a serious demographic winter" that he called "awful" and "horrible."

For the pope, the first priority, he told the Italian Forum of Family Associations, is to bear witness to "the joy of being a family." He also called for more family-friendly services and government policies. U.S.

church leaders are calling for similar action in the United States, where maternity, child-care, and family leave policies are woefully behind most developed countries.

As we await the Christ Child this Christmas season, let's pray for parents and would-be parents and a greater recognition of "the joy of being a family."

Greg Erlandson is Director and Editor-in-Chief of Catholic News Service.

Dobbs Decision Dominates Supreme Court's Year

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

WASHINGTON, D.C. (CNS) — The Supreme Court's Dobbs decision — overturning Roe v. Wade — is no doubt one for the history books.

The 5-4 decision in June in Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization had been anticipated for months. The decision was leaked a month early and became a hot topic of conversation for months afterward.

Heated reactions to the still-being-investigated leak prompted fences to be placed around the Supreme Court from May to August at the site of gatherings of both protest and support of the court's action.

In June, after a man had been found near the home of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, angered by the Dobbs leak and saying he planned to kill the justice, Congress passed a measure for around-the-clock security protection for families of Supreme Court justices.

The court's ruling said there is no constitutional right to abortion in the United States, immediately bringing all abortion policy decisions to the state level and prompting state ballot measures on abortion in the November election.

U.S. bishops were disappointed in the state votes allowing abortion, in stark contrast to their response to the Dobbs decision, which they called an "historic day in the life of our country, one that stirs our thoughts, emotions, and prayers."

Although they were pleased with the Dobbs outcome,

Catholic leaders acknowledged then and months later that the decision didn't lessen the urgency for the Church in its pro-life advocacy efforts.

In other abortion decisions this year, the Supreme Court in January rejected a request from Texas abortion providers to immediately send their challenge of the state's abortion law back to a federal District Court, where a judge had previously blocked the law, which meant that the state law at the time banning most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy would remain in effect.

In March, the court ruled that Kentucky's Republican attorney general could continue to defend an abortion restriction measure struck down by lower courts.

Abortion was also discussed in the confirmation process for Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, who was officially sworn in on June 30, succeeding Justice Stephen Breyer who retired at the end of the court's term that month.

During Senate confirmation hearings in late March, Jackson was asked a few times about her abortion views. Sen. John Kennedy, R-Louisiana, asked her if she had a personal belief on when life begins, which she said she did.

"I have a religious belief that I set aside when I am ruling on cases," she told the committee.

The Supreme Court also tackled four religious liberty issues, siding with religion each time. Two of the cases involved prayer and all of them looked at the exclusion of religion.

The cases involved chap-

lains praying with death row prisoners during executions; a Christian flag flying at Boston's City Hall; Maine tuition funds going to schools that teach religion; and a public-school football coach praying on the field after a game.

This group of religious rights decisions does not mean the court majority is pro-religion but instead that the justices are intent on clarifying past opinions that some have found confusing, court watchers said.

"The court is engaged in a long cleanup enterprise of decades of religious liberty law that went far astray," said Mark Rienzi, President of Becket, a religious liberty law firm, and Law Professor at The Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law.

Richard Garnett, a University of Notre Dame Professor of Law and Director of the Notre Dame Program on Church, State, and Society, similarly agreed that the court this term, and in previous terms, has been involved in "doctrinal cleanup."

One religious liberty case also involved the death penalty. This year, as in years past, it did not respond to last-minute appeals for stays of execution ... thus allowing death penalty sentences to continue.

The death penalty religious liberty case involved a Texas prisoner who wanted his pastor to pray aloud over him and place his hands on him in the execution chamber, to which the court agreed, overturning a lower court's ruling. The court ultimately ruled that it was a

burden to the prisoner's religion not to allow such a form of prayer.

This year, the court also gave the Biden administration the green light to end the Trump-era "Remain in Mexico" immigration policy requiring asylum-seekers at the southwest U.S. border to wait in Mexico for their asylum hearings.

Immigration supporters, including many Catholic organizations, had spoken against the policy. A joint statement issued by leaders of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, or CLINIC, and Catholic Charities USA, said the asylum policy "obstructed due process and subjected people to the very dangers that forced them to seek refuge in the United States in the first place."

With its new term that began on Oct. 3, the court jumped into affirmative action, voting, immigration, the environment, and freedom of speech. It also once again opened its doors for oral arguments to the public for the first time since the start of the pandemic in 2020.

In a case examining the scope of free speech protected by the First Amendment, the Supreme Court on Dec. 5 ultimately seemed to favor a broad view of free speech for a Colorado web designer who has said she should not be required to create wedding websites for same-sex couples based on her Christian beliefs about marriage.

The designer, Lorie Smith, said her First Amendment right to free speech exempts

her from Colorado state law forbidding businesses from discriminating based on sexual orientation.

Smith's case is similar to a 2018 case involving a Colorado baker who refused to make a custom wedding cake for a same-sex couple based on his religious beliefs.

The court ruled that the baker did not violate Colorado's anti-discrimination law, but the justices did not specifically deal with First Amendment protections, which some religious groups, including the USCCB, said the court must clarify.

Another significant topic before the court this year challenges how higher education institutions use race as a factor in the admission process.

A group of Catholic colleges urged the court to uphold affirmative action in admissions saying the right to consider racial diversity in admissions is essential to their academic and religious missions and is "inextricably intertwined" with their religious foundations.

The court's very busy year began with a close look at the employer vaccine-or-test rule. It blocked a rule by the Biden administration that would have required employees at large businesses to show proof of a COVID-19 vaccination or wear masks and get tested each week for the coronavirus. It also said the vaccine mandate for most health care workers could go into effect.

The court ended its year with a pandemic-related case rejecting a challenge to New York's vaccine mandate for health care workers with no religious exemption.

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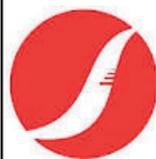


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WHAT'S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at www.todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449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

Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast with Special Guest

FORT WAYNE — The Knights of Columbus will have a Pancake Breakfast following Sunday morning Mass at 8 and 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 18 in the Most Precious Blood Gymnasium, 1529 Barthold St. The Rosary Society will be having a Cookie Walk on Saturday and Sunday, where you can purchase a variety of cookies for just \$5 a pound. Visit preciousblood.org for information.

Handel's Messiah Concert

ANGOLA — The Steuben County Festival Choir and Orchestra will present George Friderick Handel's Messiah on Sunday, Dec. 18, at 7 p.m. at T. Furth Center for the Performing Arts in Angola, 500 W Maumee. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at trineutickets.universiticket.com.

Cupertino Classic

SOUTH BEND — The annual Cupertino Classic priests vs seminarians basketball game will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 27, at Saint Joseph High School, 453 N. Notre Dame Ave. The game starts at 6:30

p.m. Join us for this great night of Catholic fellowship to encounter vocations and enjoy the game! All are invited to this free family-friendly event. Please pray for continued vocations to the priesthood. For more information, visit diocesefwsb.org/cupertino.

Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate

GRANGER — Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will ordain 18 men to the permanent diaconate on Saturday, Jan. 7, at 11 a.m. The event is invite-only due to seating limitations, but all are invited to watch the live stream provided by St. Pius X Parish at twitch.tv/spxgrangerlive.



7 p.m. | First Tuesday of the Month

St. Mother Theodore Guérin Chapel
1139 S. Calhoun St., Fort Wayne

**The January 3 Holy Hour will be led by
Father Daniel Koehl.**

REST IN PEACE

Arcola

Catherine Kuhmichel,
71, St. Patrick

Gerald Lee Staub, 80
St. Joseph Hessen
Cassel

New Haven

John Waite, 81,
St. John the Baptist

Annette M. Lamle, 61,
St. Patrick

Jacilin Ehinger, 88,
St. Jude

South Bend

Anthony Mersits II, 59,
Holy Cross

Bristol

Harold A. Meyer,
92, St. Mary of the
Annunciation

Granger

Pearl Koczwara, 88,
St. Pius X

Rosemary Belakovich,
89, St. Jude

Elkhart

Michelle Strati, 58,
St. Vincent de Paul

Robert Lux, 81, St.
Pius X

Mishawaka

Juanita Freeman, 97,
St. Bavo

Fort Wayne

Elaine Wetzel,
75, Cathedral
of Immaculate
Conception

William Ipe, 90,
St. Bavo

Andrew Dinners planned

FORT WAYNE — The Vocation Office is hosting two Andrew Dinners for young men age 16-30 to come learn more about seminary and the priesthood. If you or someone you know is interested in attending, talk to your pastor for more

information. RSVP for the Fort Wayne dinner, Tuesday, Jan. 3, or the Mishawaka dinner, Friday, Jan. 6, by Dec. 21 with Christine: cbonahoom-nix@diocesefwsb.org. Visit diocesefwsb.org/discern for information.

SUBMIT EVENTS at
TodaysCatholic.org/event

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish seeks a Full-Time Facilities Manager

(Beginning in May of 2023)

The Facilities Manager at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish/school in Fort Wayne is responsible for maintaining the parish/school and school buildings and grounds. The Facilities Manager performs and supervises tasks related to HVAC, electrical, plumbing, security, environmental, safety, custodial, and event coordination. This position requires a team player attitude, excellent interpersonal and communication skills, attention to details, and project coordination.

The candidate:

Must have good interpersonal skills and familiarity with the Church as an organization.

Must have knowledge of the Catholic Faith and be a participating Catholic in good standing with the Church.

Must have a GED or High School Diploma and a minimum 3-5 years of experience working in the facilities management field and supervising others.

For more information and to apply, visit:

<https://theapplicantmanager.com/jobs?pos=D1280>

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AROUND THE DIOCESE

Parishes Celebrate Candlelit Rorate Masses



Megan Quigley

St. John the Baptist Parish, Fort Wayne, offered a Rorate Mass on Saturday, Dec. 10. Father Paolo Degasperi celebrated the Mass at their Marian side altar.



Joe Romie

St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Fort Wayne, offered a candlelit-only Rorate Mass in the early morning of Saturday, Dec. 10, celebrated by Father Daniel Koehl.



Christopher de la Viesca

St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr, South Bend, offered a Rorate Caeli Mass on Dec. 10.

Bishop Welcomed at St. Mary Church in Huntington



Provided by Deb Spencer

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrated Mass at St. Mary Catholic Church in Huntington on Sunday, Dec. 11. Parishioners and volunteers from the parish held a potluck lunch in the gym next to the parish afterward. The bishop even received his own personal welcoming cake as part of the festivities.

DISPLAY, from page 1

next to the various features of the display explain how ordinary holiday images are rooted in the Catholic faith.

Lighted images of an angel and Mary have a sign that explains the Annunciation. Signs by large lighted plastic candles tell visitors these are a reminder that the Christ Child is the light of the world.

Next to several Nativity scenes are signs with short prayers.

"If we can just help people say those words, I don't know what God will unlock in their hearts," Father Meyer said.

In addition to the signs, people driving through the campus can tune to two low-power

FM radio stations to hear Christmas music and explanations of the display.

The culmination of the light show is a large, synchronized display at the back of the campus, with tens of thousands of lights blinking in time with music that viewers hear through their car radio.

Volunteers staff the free display when it's open to the public from 6 to 10 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays through Jan. 6.

They meet people as they drive onto the campus and give them flyers that provide more information about the display and the parish.

One of the first people to visit the light show was Merita Glaub, a member of

St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris, Indiana, who said the display's Catholic themes "made me feel at home."

A Baptist friend who came with Glaub said the display's Christian aspects were welcoming.

"I was very impressed with it," said Sharon Norman, a member of Dearborn Baptist Church in Manchester, Indiana. "The amount of work and time to do this was phenomenal. I love the way everything was done. Christ was brought in."

Most of the features in the display were donated by Dearborn County Catholics. The only major costs were purchasing the synchronized light display from a previous owner and buying and installing wir-

ing on the campus for the light show.

Funds for the purchases came from the Indianapolis archdiocesan Growth and Expansion Grant Fund offered through the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation.

Father Meyer noted that Bright Lights was the last of four events held around Thanksgiving by the four parishes to reach out to the broader community.

Two running and walking events raised funds for community food pantries. In addition, members of St. Lawrence Parish served 300 hot meals on Thanksgiving to people in need.

As he looked at the acres

of lights at St. Teresa, Father Meyer said that Bright Lights and the other events in Dearborn County around Thanksgiving were a way for the parishes to share the Gospel with the surrounding community.

"This is a way to reach out," Father Meyer said. "It's a way to be with people. I like to refer to it as non-threatening evangelization. We're trying to just allow things to speak, allow beauty to speak, allow truth to speak."

Gallagher is a Reporter at The Criterion, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.