

# TODAY'S CATHOLIC

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TODAYSCATHOLIC.org



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# Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI 1927-2022

CNS photo/Paul Haring

Pope Benedict XVI leads his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on April 20, 2011. Pope Benedict died on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican.

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# Bishop Shares Eucharistic Nature of the Nativity with Cathedral Parishioners

BY ERIKA BARRON

On Saturday, Dec. 24, at 10:30 p.m., Most Reverend Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades gathered with the faithful despite the icy road conditions and frigid cold at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne to celebrate the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ. At the Cathedral, beautifully decorated with poinsettias in honor or memory of loved ones of parishioners, and with the smell of incense filling the air, Mass was concelebrated by Father Jacob Runyon, Rector of the Cathedral. Also assisting Bishop Rhoades were deacons David Langford and Ryan Timossi. The Holy Mass began with Bishop Rhoades kneeling in adoration at the Creche of the Christ Child.

Bishop Rhoades began his homily by reminding those gathered, "Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord. For 20 centuries, this joyful proclamation has resounded from the heart of the Church. On this holy night, the angel repeats to us, the people of the 21st century: 'Be not afraid; for behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ the Lord.'" Bishop Rhoades continued by saying, "Every Christmas, we re-live the mystery of the Nativity of our Lord. The Son of God, eternally begotten of the father, became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and assumed our human nature. God entered history. He was born in time." "Adoration: that is why we



Photos by John Martin

**Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades kneels in adoration at the Nativity with the manger of the Christ Child just before celebrating Christmas Eve Mass at 10:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Saturday, Dec. 24.**

are here tonight, making our own the faith of Mary and Joseph and the shepherd," he called to mind. "Our prayer tonight is primarily prayer of adoration — we creatures praising our Creator who became our Redeemer, exalting the 'child born to us ... the Son given to us' who was prophesied by Isaiah, the one upon whose shoulder dominion rests, the one named 'Wonder-

Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.' We kneel in wonder before and adoration before the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation."

Bishop Rhoades went on to say, "The Fathers of the Church saw the intimate connection between the Eucharist and the Nativity. In early Christian art, the manger was often depicted as a kind of altar. Saint Augustine and other Church

Fathers, pointing out that the manger was the place animals found their food, noted that Jesus called Himself the true bread come down from heaven. It was not just a coincidence that He was born in a manger, a feeding trough."

He added, "It is important to also note that the name of the little town, the city of David, where Jesus was born is Bethlehem, which literally means 'House of Bread.' In the midst of our Eucharistic Revival, it is good to appreciate the Eucharistic meaning within the details of the Nativity: the connection between the mystery of Christmas and the Mystery of the Eucharist."

More photos are available at [www.todayscatholic.org](http://www.todayscatholic.org)



Bishop Rhoades concluded his homily by reminding parishioners that the great

joy of Christmas is something that "embraces all time ... past, present, and future."

"On this holy night, eternity entered history and remains with us forever. Let us place at the feet of the child Jesus our joys and our hopes, our fears and our tears. He alone is our peace. He alone has the words of everlasting life."

After Mass, with joyful hearts and the Eucharistic nature of the nativity on their minds, families gathered at the front of the church to kneel in adoration at the manger of the Christ Child, where they said a prayer of thanksgiving. God has become man in the form of a helpless baby, born to be the Bread of Life.





Photos by Eric Peat

Twin brothers Johnathon and Michael Hickey, both seminarians, helped to answer questions and provide information to those discerning priesthood at the annual Cupertino Classic basketball game on Tuesday, Dec. 27, at Saint Joseph High School.

# Seminarians Outlast Priests in Eighth Cupertino Classic

BY ERIC PEAT

As the final seconds ticked off the clock and both sides embraced at mid-court, two things were abundantly clear: we are blessed beyond measure to have our parish priests, and the future of religious vocations in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is bright.

The eighth installment of the Cupertino Classic, which pits our diocesan priests versus seminarians on the basketball court, was held on Dec. 27 at Saint Joseph High School in South Bend. Named after a 17th century friar who was known for levitating during prayer, the game has become an annual tradition and a favorite among both clergy and laity. It's also a night that puts the spotlight on vocations to the priesthood and religious life, while bringing people together from across the diocese to support those who have said yes to God's call.

"The Church in the diocese is the people of God, and this game draws us together," remarked Father Drew Curry after the game. "We get together for a lot of Masses, a lot of school activities, but this is a great way to see the priests just kind of hanging loose and being with each other and trying to show some of their remaining basketball skills."

The evening began with Mass in the school chapel, followed by adoration up until the 6:30 p.m. tipoff. Family, friends, and parishioners alike began filing into the stands to cheer on their favorite priests and seminarians. Father



Father Matthew Coonan attempts to defend against seminarian Eric Plude as the priests try to gain a lead over the seminarians at the Cupertino Classic in South Bend on Tuesday, Dec. 27.

Andrew Budzinski, Vocations Director for the diocese, led those gathered in an opening prayer. Then Father Brian Isenbarger and Sister Zelig Marie Warrell of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, who would both provide comedic commentary over the PA throughout the game, announced the starting lineups for the opening tip.

With both youth and hard-court experience on their side, the Seminarians established an early edge in the contest and led 10-6 after the first quarter. However, both teams began finding their groove in the second quarter, and the Seminarian lead was just 23-17

at the halftime break, as the priests looked primed to challenge their consecrated comrades down the stretch.

"We knew it was going to be a tough game," said seminarian Greenan Sullivan. "The Cupertino's always a tough game — physical, everybody knows each other, everybody knows each other's moves. So, props to the priests, but I've got to give my guys a shout out; they came out ready to play. We had a short game plan assembled together before the game, and we executed fairly well."

CUPERTINO, page 24



## Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Friday, Jan. 13: 9:30 a.m. – Mass and Pastoral Visit, Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne  
 Saturday, Jan. 14: 11:30 a.m. – Mass and Eucharistic Formation Day, St. Charles Borromeo Church, Fort Wayne  
 Sunday, Jan. 15: 10 a.m. – Mass, St. Patrick Church, Arcola



DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

## On the Death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend joins Pope Francis and everyone around the world in mourning the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI following the news of his passing. Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, states, "I believe Joseph Ratzinger was one of the greatest theologians of modern times whose writings reveal not only an amazing intellect, but the heart of a disciple who has deeply contemplated his Lord. The Church has been incredibly blessed by this holy bishop and pope. I will always remember his humility and gentleness, truly a shepherd after the heart of Christ. I ask all the faithful of the diocese to remember Pope Benedict XVI in their prayers, that the Lord may grant him eternal joy and peace in the company of the saints in heaven."



## Priest announcements

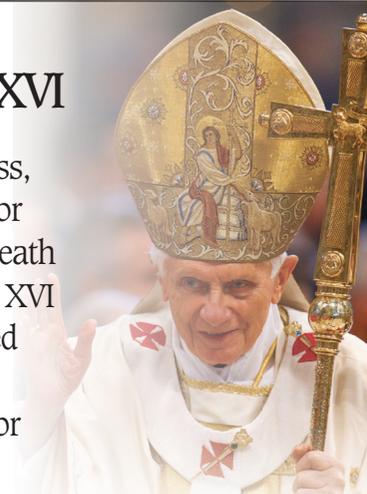
Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, has made the following announcements:

**Reverend Emmanuel Abuh**, to Administrator, Immaculate Conception, Ege, effective January 10, 2023.

**Reverend Eustace Okorie** to Parochial Vicar, Queen of Peace, Mishawaka, effective January 10, 2023.

## Honoring Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

In this time of great sadness, anyone wishing to honor or offer condolences on the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in Today's Catholic is asked to contact Erika Barron at [ebarron@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:ebarron@diocesefwsb.org) or 260-399-1449.



# A Look Back as We Look to the Future

## Just Some of the Stories That Made an Impact in 2022

In response to the Feb. 24 Russian invasion of Ukraine, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades joined other bishops in consecrating both countries to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the request of Pope Francis on March 25. In mid-March, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis would consecrate the two countries on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, a little more than one month after the Russian military invaded neighboring Ukraine. Many drew connections from the ongoing invasion and subsequent consecration to the July 13, 1917 Fatima apparition where Our Lady asked for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. Bishop Rhoades has been vocal about supporting Ukraine and condemning the unjust invasion by Russia. He suggests members of the diocese who wish to help should do so through support of Catholic Relief Services.

<https://todayscatholic.org/bishop-joins-pope-in-consecration-of-russia-ukraine-to-immaculate-heart-of-mary/>

Pope Francis apologized for the Catholic Church's role in the abuse of indigenous children in Canadian residential schools in a July visit to the country. The pontiff called the trip a "penitential pilgrimage," which included him returning two children's moccasins.



CNS photo/Vatican Media

**Delegates representing Canada's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are pictured in the Vatican's Clementine Hall during a meeting with Pope Francis on April 1, 2022.**

An acknowledgment of the Church's failures makes "our desire for reconciliation" even stronger, he said. "Our presence here is a testimony to our commitment for one another and to each other." Pope Francis gave each delegation a bronze olive branch as a sign of peace and reconciliation, according to the Canadian bishops' conference.

<https://todayscatholic.org/pope-apologizes-for-treatment-of-indigenous-in-canada-promises-to-visit/>

The diocese kicked off the three-year Eucharistic revival in the U.S. with a grand Eucharistic Procession in Warsaw on the Feast of Corpus

Christi on June 19. Thousands of Catholics, as well as those from other faith traditions, joined in public witness of our faith. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades led the procession, carrying the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance the entire 2.8 miles with one stop at Central Park. Various hymns floated in the air as priests raised their voices in age-old hymns at the head of the procession, while members of St. Augustine Parish sang African spirituals and Gospel songs farther down the line. Others prayed the rosary as they walked along or carried pictures of the Blessed Mother, icons, or crucifixes. Nearly every parish in the diocese, if not all parishes, seemed to be

represented at the procession, sporting matching t-shirts or following their parish banner. Multicolored umbrellas bobbed above the heads of many in the vast crowd, not to protect people from rain, but to provide shade from the brilliant sunlight overhead. Age was no barrier to attendance either. Youths pushed the aged in wheelchairs, families with teenagers and infants processed in company, couples both young and elderly joined the throng. Aside from the priests and seminarians leading the procession, other clergy and religious men and women attended, including several Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Holy



Molly Gettinger

**Thousands of Catholics in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend celebrate the kickoff to the three-year Eucharistic Revival at the Eucharistic Procession and Festival on June 19, with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades carrying the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of Warsaw.**



Molly Gettinger

**The culmination point of the Eucharistic Procession was Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Warsaw.**



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Cross priests and brothers, and more. Chris Langford, one of the main organizers of the event, professed his gratitude for those who attended and those who helped make the day possible. "We are especially grateful to the City of Warsaw for their outstanding support in hosting us. And we are tremendously thankful for the hundreds of volunteers who made the event so successful."

<https://todayscatholic.org/eucharistic-procession-unites-catholics-throughout-diocese/>

Father Jacob Meyer became a lieutenant in the Navy Chaplain Corps on March 1. His "call within a call" will see him minister to those in the Navy for at least five years. Originally from South Bend, Father Meyer was ordained in 2012 and served as Parochial Vicar of St. Charles Borromeo and Chaplain to Bishop Dwenger High School, Fort Wayne, until being assigned as Pastor of St. Monica, Mishawaka, in 2016. In that time, St. Monica's has surmounted significant financial debt, nearly tripled parishioner enrollment, completed various capital improvements, and welcomed more than 100 individuals into the family of the Catholic Church. Around the time of his ordination, his brother Ryan, a Naval officer who served on the USS Makin Island, expressed his sadness that there were not enough priest chaplains in the military. At the time, Father Meyer's own health prevented him from being able to seriously think about serving, but he remained aware of the reality that many in the military are unable to access the sacraments — sometimes for months or even a year — due to limited or no access to priests. After undergoing several surgeries which brought about a physical transformation, Father Meyer shared, "in prayer, I asked the Lord what His desire was for me in this new condition. Shortly afterwards, a desire to be a Navy chaplain was placed on my heart. But I spent a year ignoring that call before finally meeting with Bishop Rhoades



Joe Romie

Demolition takes place at the site of the old St. Joseph Hospital on Main and Broadway in Fort Wayne. The new hospital sits directly across Van Buren Street.

to discuss the possibility. We spoke about it in October 2020, and he gave me permission to apply."

<https://todayscatholic.org/father-meyer-prepares-for-call-within-a-call/>

The Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, returning the legislative process of abortion to the states for the first time in five decades. Writing for the majority, Justice Samuel Alito described *Roe* as "egregiously wrong from the start." The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops called the decision a "historic day in the life of our country, one that stirs our thoughts, emotions, and prayers." What the court did not do in *Dobbs* is end abortion. Abortion will remain legal in many, if not most,

states — in some, right up to the moment of birth; in others, only in the earliest weeks of pregnancy. The court has made it possible once again for public discourse to focus on what really happens in an

abortion, and why women seek to end the lives of their unborn children.

<https://todayscatholic.org/dobbs-decision-dominates-supreme-courts-year/>

Crews demolished the historic St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Wayne with the final section crumbling in November. Bishop John H. Luers had turned the building, which had previously been the Rockhill Hotel, into a hospital in the mid-19th Century. Bishop Luers contacted Sister Catherine Kasper, who had recently founded the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, to inquire if the congregation would be willing to staff the hospital. New wings and facilities were added through the decades that followed, and the final remnants of the nearly century-old hotel where the hospital was built were destroyed by expansion in 1929. The new 194,000-square-foot Lutheran Downtown Hospital opened across the street from St. Joseph in November of 2021 and includes 60 beds with room for future expansion. While the building disappeared, the legacy of the hospital will live on. The statue of St. Joseph holding carpenter's tools that watched over patients who entered St. Joseph Hospital through the years was obtained by Divine Mercy Funeral Home on Lake Avenue, and plans are in the works to repurpose the statue, according to executive director Casey Miller.

<https://todayscatholic.org/historic-catholic-hospital-lives-on-in-memory-relics/>



CNS photo/Michael A. McCoy, Reuters

Pro-life demonstrators celebrate outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. on June 24, 2022, as the court ruled in the *Dobbs v. Women's Health Organization* abortion case, overturning the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision.

# Good Shepherd

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# NEWS BRIEFS

## Eucharistic Revival's Upcoming Parish Year Aims for Catholics to Experience a Life-Changing 'Personal Encounter' with Christ

(OSV News) — The three-year Eucharistic Revival is currently in its first year, the Year of Diocesan Revival. The second year, the Year of Parish Revival, begins on June 11. While diocesan year efforts have focused on forming priests, diocesan staff, and other church leaders, efforts in the parish year will turn to Catholics in the pews. Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, who is leading the revival, hopes the Year of Parish Revival particularly reaches Catholics who say they understand the Church's teaching, yet "haven't encountered Jesus as a real, living person in the Eucharist."

## Foretaste of Heaven: SEEK23 Conference to Draw Thousands

(OSV News) — The annual SEEK conference, hosted by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, draws thousands of Catholics together to adore the Blessed Sacrament, listen to speakers, and celebrate their faith. This year's SEEK23 conference in St. Louis, Missouri, held Jan. 2-6, aimed to form all those interested in deepening their faith and spreading the Gospel, whether on college campuses or in their home parishes. Martha Griswold, 34, a FOCUS missionary at the Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Parish in Windsor, Colorado, told OSV News the talks are about "re-presenting the Gospel to parishioners and then sending them out on mission." She said the Eucharistic adoration night, with thousands of Catholics worshipping Jesus in the Eucharist was "one of the closest foretastes of heaven." Javier Lugo, 26, a FOCUS missionary at the University of Miami, agreed, saying SEEK was "like a 'retiro' times a thousand," where the experience of Eucharistic adoration made him feel truly "loved and wanted" by God.

## On New Year's Day, Pope Calls for Taking the Risk of Changing the World

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The best way to usher in a truly "new" year is to stop waiting for things to get better on their own, and instead recognize what is essential and reach out now to help others, Pope Francis said. "Today, at the beginning of the year, rather

## Mass Destruction Caused by Russian Missile Strike in Ukraine



CNS photo/Vladyslav Musienko, Reuters

A house destroyed by a Russian missile strike is seen in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Dec. 29, 2022.

than standing around thinking and hoping that things will change, we should instead ask ourselves, "This year, where do I want to go? Who is it that I can help?" he said. "So many people, in the church and in society, are waiting for the good that you and you alone can do; they are waiting for your help," he said at Mass on Jan. 1, the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day. While Pope Francis presided over the liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica and gave the homily, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, was the main celebrant at the altar. In his homily, the pope reflected on how Catholics begin a new year by contemplating the motherhood of Mary, who "blesses us and brings us the tender love of God made flesh." "Mary gives us hope," he said, and "at the beginning of this year, we need hope, just as the earth needs rain." Pope Francis also asked people to pray to Mary to accompany the late Pope Benedict XVI on his jour-

ney "from this world to God." And, before leading the recitation of the Angelus prayer after the Mass, the pope asked that people "all join together, with one heart and one soul, in thanking God for the gift of this faithful servant of the Gospel and of the Church," who died on Dec. 31.

## 'Help Us': Asylum-Seekers Cling to Hope as Title 42 Limbo Continues

(OSV News) — After traveling thousands of miles to flee violence, "Betty" found shelter with the Kino Border Initiative, a Catholic organization that works with migrants in the border town of Nogales, Mexico. She is now waiting. "So many of us were forced to leave our homes, our loved ones," she said. Like many asylum-seekers, Betty — who asked that

her real name not be published out of concerns for her safety — had hoped for the end of Title 42, a federal public health rule implemented by the prior Trump administration in 2020 that permits immigration officials at the border to bar migrants seeking asylum from entry on the basis of public health concerns enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Just days before the policy was set to expire, the U.S. Supreme Court issued Dec. 27 a 5-4 ruling that Title 42 would remain in place while legal challenges to the policy play out. The high court plans to hear arguments in late February or early March.

## Across U.S., Parishes Shift Pro-life Ministries to Focus on Personal Accompaniment

(OSV News) — Grassroots, parish-based efforts that aim to

accompany pregnant or parenting mothers in a holistic way represent the kind of creative initiatives many pro-life leaders, including U.S. bishops, have called for in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision in June overturning Roe v. Wade, which in 1973 legalized abortion in all states. Among such parish ministries are those tied to Walking with Moms in Need, an initiative the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops launched in March of 2020 to encourage parishes to strengthen their outreach to pregnant and parenting mothers in their communities through personal accompaniment. "It shows that there's good in the world," said Katie Talerico, 30, a mother of triplets. She said the women helping her through Walking with Moms in Need were her "angel squad," and their witness led to a revival of her Catholic faith.

## Continue Contemplating the Mystery of Christmas, Pope Urges

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The birth of Jesus in a stable "shows us God's 'style,' which is closeness, compassion, and tenderness," Pope Francis told visitors and pilgrims at his weekly general audience. On the Church's calendar, Christmas was not over when the pope held his audience on Dec. 28, and he insisted it is important for Christians to use the season to contemplate the meaning of Jesus becoming human and being born into the poverty and simplicity of the manger. "With this style of His, God draws us to Himself," the pope said. "He does not take us by force, He does not impose His truth and justice on us. He wants to draw us with love, with tenderness." Basing his Christmas reflections on the teachings of St. Francis de Sales, a bishop and doctor of the church, Pope Francis announced at the audience that he was publishing an apostolic letter that day marking the 400th anniversary of the death of the French saint and theologian. The letter, titled "Totum Amoris Est" ("Everything Pertains to Love"), would be published later the same day. But rather than quoting from his apostolic letter, Pope Francis quoted from St. Francis de Sales' meditations on Christmas and, especially, his focus on the love of God and on the poverty of Jesus' birth. "Who is Jesus? Looking at the manger, looking at the cross, looking at His life, His simplicity, we can know who Jesus is," the pope said. "Jesus is the son of God who saves us by becoming man, stripping Himself of His glory and humbling Himself."

# POPE BENEDICT: Eight Years as Pope Capped Long Ministry as Teacher of Faith

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Retired Pope Benedict XVI, who had an impressive record as a teacher and defender of the basics of Catholic faith, is likely to go down in history books as the first pope in almost 600 years to resign.

He died on Dec. 31 at the age of 95, nearly 10 years after leaving the papacy to retire to what he said would be a life of prayer and study.

Pope Francis was scheduled to celebrate his predecessor's funeral on Jan. 5 in St. Peter's Square. Matteo Bruni, Director of the Vatican Press Office, said the funeral rites would be simple in keeping with the wishes of the late pope.

As the retired pope neared death, he was given the anointing of the sick on Dec. 28 in his residence, Bruni said.

His body was to lie in St. Peter's Basilica beginning on Jan. 2 so that people could pay their respects and offer their prayers, he said.

Immediately after the pope died at 9:34 a.m., Bruni said, his personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, phoned Pope Francis, who went immediately to the late pope's bedside to pray and to offer condolences to those who had cared for him in the last years of his life.

Archbishop Ganswein told Vatican News on Jan. 1 that Pope Benedict's last words were, "Lord, I love you."

It was about 3 a.m. the day he died, the archbishop said. "In a faint voice, but in a clearly discernable way, he said in Italian, 'Lord, I love you!' I was not there at the time, but the nurse told me shortly afterward. These were his last comprehensible words, because afterward he was no longer able to express himself."

A close collaborator of St. John Paul II and the theological expert behind many of his major teachings and gestures, Pope Benedict came to the papacy after 24 years heading the doctrinal congregation's work of safeguarding Catholic teaching on faith and morals, correcting the work of some Catholic theologians, and ensuring the theological solidity of the documents issued by other Vatican offices.

As pope, he continued writing as a theologian, but also made historically important gestures to Catholics who had difficulty accepting all of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, particularly about the liturgy. In 2007, he widened permission to use the "extraordinary" or pre-Vatican II form of the Mass and, a short time later, extended a hand to the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X. Besides lifting the excommunications of four of the society's bishops who were ordained illicitly in 1988, he launched a long and intense dialogue with the group. In the end, though, the talks broke down.

His papacy, which began when he was 78, was extremely busy for a man who already had a pacemaker and who had wanted to retire to study, write, and pray when he turned 75. He used virtually every medium at his disposal — books and Twitter, sermons and encyclicals — to catechize the faithful on the foundational beliefs and practices of Christianity, ranging from the sermons of St. Augustine to the sign of the cross.

Pope Benedict was the first pope to meet with victims of clerical sexual abuse. He clarified church laws to expedite cases and mandated that bishops' conferences put in place stringent norms against abuse.

Although he did not expect to travel much, he ended up making 24 trips to six continents and three times presided over World Youth Day mega-gatherings: in Germany in 2005, Australia in 2008, and Spain in 2011.

On a historic visit to the United States in 2008, the pope brought his own identity into clearer focus for



**OBIT, from page 7**

Americans. He set forth a moral challenge on issues ranging from economic justice to abortion. He also took church recognition of the priestly sex-abuse scandal to a new level, expressing his personal shame at what happened and personally praying with victims.

While still in his 30s, he served as an influential adviser during the Second Vatican Council, 1962-65, and as pope, he made it a priority to correct what he saw as overly expansive interpretations of Vatican II in favor of readings that stressed the council's continuity with the church's millennial traditions.

Under his oversight, the Vatican continued to highlight the church's moral boundaries on issues such as end-of-life medical care, marriage, and homosexuality. But the pope's message to society at large focused less on single issues and more on the risk of losing the basic relationship between the human being and the Creator.

Surprising those who had expected a by-the-book pontificate from a man who had spent so many years as the Vatican's chief doctrinal official, Pope Benedict emphasized that Christianity was a religion of love and not a religion of rules.

The German-born pontiff did not try to match the popularity of St. John Paul, but the millions of people who came to see him in Rome and abroad came to appreciate his smile, his frequent ad-libs, and his ability to speak from the heart.

Some of Pope Benedict's most memorable statements came when he applied simple Gospel values to social issues such as the protection of human life, the environment, and economics. When the global financial crisis worsened in 2008, for example, the pope insisted that financial institutions must put people before profits. He also reminded people that money and worldly success are passing realities, saying: "Whoever builds his life on these things — on material things, on success, on appearances — is building on sand."

He consistently warned the West that unless its secularized society rediscovered religious values, it could not hope to engage in real dialogue with Muslims and members of other religious traditions.

In his encyclicals and in his books on "Jesus of Nazareth," the pope honed that message, asking readers to discover the essential connections between sacrificial love, works of charity, a dedication to the truth, and the Gospel of Christ.

The retired pope looked in-depth at his papacy and resignation, his relationships with St. John Paul and Pope Francis,



**Newly elected Pope John Paul II greets Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Munich and Freising in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Oct. 22, 1978.**

CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano/KNA

and a host of other issues in "Last Testament," a book-length interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016.

In the book, Pope Benedict insisted once again that he was not pressured by anyone or any event to resign and he did not feel he was running away from any problem. However, he acknowledged "practical governance was not my forte, and this certainly was a weakness."

Insisting "my hour had passed, and I had given all I could," Pope Benedict said he never regretted resigning, but he did regret hurting friends and faithful who were "really distressed and felt forsaken" by his stepping down.

Less than a month after resigning, he already looked frailer and walked with noticeably more difficulty than he did when he left office. The video images released by the Vatican on March 23, 2013, when his successor, Pope Francis, visited him at Castel Gandolfo underscored the "diminishing energy" Pope Benedict had said led to his resignation.

Pope Benedict moved to the papal summer villa at Castel Gandolfo on Feb. 28, 2013, the day his resignation took effect. He remained at the villa south of Rome for two months — a period that included the conclave that elected Pope Francis as his successor and the first month of the new pope's pontificate. The retired pope moved back to the Vatican on May 2,

Francis spoke with admiration of the retired pope's humility, intelligence, and prayerfulness. The unusual situation of having a pope and a retired pope both living at the Vatican was working out very well, Pope Francis said. Having the retired pope nearby to consult with, or ask questions of, Pope Francis said, was "like having a grandfather at home — a very wise grandfather."

By the time Pope Benedict had been retired for a year, his daily routine was set. Archbishop Georg Ganswein, his personal secretary, said his days began with Mass, morning prayer, and breakfast. Although mostly hidden from public view, he was not cloistered, but continued welcoming old friends and colleagues, engaging in dialogue or offering spiritual counsel. He spent hours reading and dealing with correspondence before a 4 p.m. stroll in the garden and recitation of the rosary.

In the early days of his retirement, to the delight and surprise of pilgrims and cardinals, Pope Benedict appeared at major events with Pope Francis, including the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on Dec. 8, 2015.

At a June 2016 celebration in the Apostolic Palace, where Pope Benedict once lived and worked, Pope Francis, top officials of the Roman Curia, and a few friends gathered with him to mark the 65th anniversary of the retired pontiff's priestly ordination.

Pope Francis told Pope Benedict that with him in residence, the monastery in the Vatican Gardens "emanates tranquility, peace, strength, faithfulness, maturity, faith, dedication, and loyalty, which does so much good for me and gives strength to me and to the

whole church."

Pope Benedict replied to Pope Francis, "More than the beauty found in the Vatican Gardens, your goodness is the place where I live; I feel protected."

He prayed that Pope Francis would continue to "lead us all on this path of divine mercy that shows the path of Jesus, to Jesus, and to God."

Mercy was a prominent topic in an interview Pope Benedict gave in 2015. The Catholic focus on mercy really began with St. John Paul, the retired pope told Belgian Jesuit Father Jacques Servais in the written interview, which was not released until March of 2016.

From his experience as a youth during World War II and his ministry under communism in Poland, St. John Paul "affirmed that mercy is the only true and ultimately effective reaction against the power of evil. Only where there is mercy does cruelty end, only there do evil and violence stop," said Pope Benedict, who worked closely with the Polish pope for decades.

"Pope Francis," he said, "is in complete agreement with this line. His pastoral practice is expressed precisely in the fact that he speaks continuously of God's mercy."

Pope Benedict had said he planned to live a "hidden life" in retirement — and to a large extent he did. But when he did make contributions to public discussions, they became headline news. In April of 2019, for instance, what he described as "notes" on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January of 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the



**Pope Benedict XVI appears on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica after his election on April 19, 2005. Pope Benedict died Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican.**

CNS photo/Nancy Wiehock



CNS photo/Paul Haring

A man holds a copy of the Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano* newspaper announcing the death of Pope Benedict XVI, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31, 2022.

Sacraments.

In the text on abuse, which the retired pope said was motivated by the February 2019 Vatican summit on the crisis, Pope Benedict traced the abuse crisis to a loss of certainty about faith and morals, especially beginning in the late 1960s. To address the crisis, he wrote, "what is required first and foremost is the renewal of the faith in the reality of Jesus Christ given to us in the Blessed Sacrament."

The 2020 text on celibacy became the center of a media storm, not only because of its content, but also because Catholics were awaiting Pope Francis' official response to the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon and suggestions made there that in remote areas the church could consider ordaining some married men to take the sacraments to Catholics who usually go months without.

Since marriage and priesthood both demand the total devotion and self-giving of a man to his vocation, "it does not seem possible to realize both vocations simultaneously," Pope Benedict wrote in his essay.

The retired pope's contribution to the discussion became even more controversial when Archbishop Ganswein informed media and the original publisher that while Pope Benedict contributed an essay to Cardinal Sarah's book, he did not want to be listed as co-author of the volume.

As inevitable as his election seemed after St. John Paul died in 2005, Pope Benedict's path to the papacy was long and indirect.

Joseph Ratzinger was born on April 16, 1927, in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn, the third and youngest child of a police officer, Joseph

Sr., and his wife, Maria. Young Joseph joined his brother, Georg, at a minor seminary in 1939.

Like other young students in Germany at the time, he was automatically enrolled in the Hitler Youth program, but soon stopped going to meetings. During World War II, he was conscripted into the army, and in the spring of 1945, he deserted his unit and returned home, spending a few months in an Allied prisoner-of-war camp. He returned to the seminary late in 1945 and was ordained six years later, along with his brother.

In a meeting with young people in 2006, the pope said witnessing the brutality of the Nazi regime helped persuade him to become a priest. But he also had to overcome some doubts, he said. For one thing, he asked himself whether he "could faithfully live celibacy" his entire life. He also recognized that his real leanings were toward theology and wondered whether he had the qualities of a good pastor and the ability "to be simple with the simple people."

After a short stint as a parish priest, the future pope began a teaching career and built a reputation as one of the church's foremost theologians. At Vatican II, he made important contributions as a theological expert and embraced the council's early work. But he began to have misgivings about an emerging anti-Roman bias, the idea of a "church from below" run on a parliamentary model, and the direction of theological research in the church — criticism that would become even sharper in later years.

In a 2005 speech that served as a kind of manifesto for his young papacy, Pope Benedict rejected what he called a "her-

meneutic of discontinuity and rupture" in interpreting Vatican II as a radical break with the past. The pope called instead for reading the council through a "hermeneutic of reform" in continuity with Catholic tradition.

In 1977, St. Paul VI named him Archbishop of Munich and

Freising and, four years later, Pope John Paul called him to head the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, where he wielded great influence on issues such as liberation theology, dissent from church teachings, and pressure for women's ordination. Serving in this role for nearly a quarter century, then-Cardinal Ratzinger earned a reputation in some quarters as a sort of grand inquisitor, seeking to stamp out independent thinking, an image belied by his passion for debate with thinkers inside and outside the church.

As the newly elected pope in 2005, he explained that he took the name Benedict to evoke the memory of Pope Benedict XV, a "courageous prophet of peace" during World War I, and said he wanted to place his ministry at the service of reconciliation and harmony among peoples.

Like his namesake and his predecessors, he was untiring in his appeals for an end to violence in world trouble spots and for dialogue as the only true and lasting solution to conflict. Another key to building a better world, he said repeatedly, is to respect the right of each person to seek and to worship God.

A direct appeal to China's communist government to respect the religious freedom of its people was a central part

of Pope Benedict's 2007 Letter to Chinese Catholics. The letter also pleaded with the faithful on the mainland to work toward reconciliation between communities that had accepted some government control in order to minister openly and those that continued to practice their faith more clandestinely.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States and amid reports of rising religious-inspired violence in various parts of the world, Pope Benedict also repeatedly and clearly condemned all violence committed in the name of God.

One of the biggest tests of his papacy came after a lecture at Germany's University of Regensburg, in 2006, when he quoted a Christian medieval emperor who said the prophet Muhammad had brought "things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

Protests in the Muslim world followed, and Pope Benedict apologized that his words had offended Muslims, distancing himself from the text he had quoted. Soon after, he accepted the invitation of an international group of Muslim scholars and leaders to launch a new dialogue initiative, "The Common Word," looking at teachings that Christians and Muslims share.



CNS photo/Michaela Rehle, Reuters

Pope Benedict XVI and his brother, Msgr. Georg Ratzinger, take a walk through the garden of a house the pope owns in Pentling, near Regensburg, Germany, on Sept. 13, 2006.

# The global Impact of a German Pope

BY PAULINA GUZIK

(OSV News) — Very few figures within the contemporary Church have influenced it as deeply and for as long as Pope Benedict XVI, who died on Dec. 31 at the age of 95. The lasting legacy of Joseph Ratzinger — whom author George Weigel told OSV News was “one of the most consequential Christian figures of modern times” — will be a part of the universal Church for generations to come. Here is an analysis of six pivotal points of the global legacy of the late pope emeritus.

## Vatican Council Influencer

Joseph Ratzinger will go down in history linked to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), of which he was first one of its protagonists in the shadows and later one of its most consequential interpreters.

When the council opened in 1962, Father Ratzinger, only 35 years old, was one of the stars of the new German theology. Cardinal Joseph Frings, then head of the German bishops' conference, took Ratzinger to the council as an expert, and in that position, he played a fundamental role in the development of the conciliar documents on the Church, revelation, and sacred Scripture.

“The council’s purpose was to give a new, fresh, compelling articulation to the ancient truths of the Catholic faith,” Weigel told OSV News. “And during the four years of Vatican II, Joseph Ratzinger was one of the three most influential theologians helping to shape both the bishops’ reflections on these ancient truths and in formulating that fresh presentation of those truths.”

After five years as archbishop of Munich, then-Cardinal Ratzinger was called to Rome by Pope John Paul II, with whom he had crossed paths at the council — when John Paul was still known as Karol Wojtyła. As the Polish pope set forth to implement Vatican II, Ratzinger became his closest collaborator on those same subjects on which he had previously influenced the council as an expert.

The council opened new paths for the Church, especially in three areas: the relationship of faith with science; the relationship of the Church with the liberal state; and finally, the links of the Catholic Church with

other religions. On these three issues, the differences between the teachings of the previous councils and that of Vatican II were so striking that it seemed to many that the Church had taken a leap into the void.

Faced with interpretations from all sides that Vatican II was a “rupture” with tradition, Ratzinger, first as a theologian, then as John Paul II’s adviser, and finally as Pope Benedict XVI, defended an interpretation of continuity. He explained this a few months after he was elected pope, in a speech delivered on Dec. 22, 2005.

The truths taught by Vatican II, he argued, were already present in the doctrine transmitted by the Church. Vatican II only took care to make them explicit, thus maintaining a continuous evolution of Catholic doctrine. In keeping with the council, Ratzinger wanted Christ to be at the center.

“Ratzinger at Vatican II was convinced that the Church’s address to the world, the Church’s proposal to the world, had to be less ecclesiocentric and more Christocentric,” said Weigel, Pope John Paul II’s biographer and author of “God’s Choice: Pope Benedict XVI and the Future of the Catholic Church.”

“The Church had to offer a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, not simply a meeting with the institution of the Church,” Weigel said. “I think this will be something the Church continues to learn from in the decades and centuries ahead.”

## The Ratzinger Way of Handling the Abuse Crisis

Pope Benedict XVI also leaves behind a lasting legacy in the reforms made necessary by the clergy sexual abuse scandal that has plagued the Church in recent decades.

Ratzinger’s life was changed forever when John Paul II asked him to lead the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) in 1981. As Greg Erlandson and Matthew Bunson describe in their book “Pope Benedict XVI and the Sexual Abuse Crisis: Working for Reform and Renewal” (OSV, 2010), Cardinal Ratzinger dedicated Fridays to working on cases regarding abusive priests — a task that became his personal Way of the Cross. He knew, well before anyone else in the Vatican, what kind of wounds

sexual abuse leaves and the lasting impact it has on the lives of the victims.

“He was quite fierce in his determination to get at these problems,” Weigel told OSV News.

When it was clear the bishops were not handling the cases well in their dioceses, the remedy came directly from the CDF in the form of the *motu proprio* “Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela,” published in 2001. Signed by John Paul II, the document officially asked, among other things, that all cases involving the abuse of minors be sent to Ratzinger’s desk.

“Cardinal Ratzinger moved the responsibility for dealing with it into his own hands. And then while he was pope, he continued to cleanse the Church of this ‘filth,’” Weigel said. “So, I think he gets full marks for the way he handled this abuse crisis as prefect of CDF and as pope.”

In 2010, Benedict XVI further tightened Church legislation regarding abuse by updating John Paul II’s “Norms Concerning the Most Serious Crimes.” The pontiff expressly indicated that the Church should hear and treat victims with respect, fully cooperate with civil authorities, and work quickly to expedite such cases according to canon law.

That same year, the pope sent a letter to Catholics in Ireland to help them prepare guidelines for the treatment of cases of sexual abuse of children by clerics, which proved itself a historic moment. As Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi affirmed in a Holy See Press Office news release from 2016, this pastoral letter is “the necessary reference document for the conversion and renewal of the ecclesial community from the dramatic experience of abuse.”

The pope also cared greatly for the victim-survivors of clergy abuse, taking time to officially meet with survivors in April of 2008 during his pastoral visit to the United States — the first pope ever to do so. From then on, when Benedict XVI traveled to a particularly affected country, be it the U.S., Australia, Malta, the United Kingdom, or Germany, he made a point of meeting with victims to ask for forgiveness, in private and in public, in the name of the Church and to console them.

While in Australia for World Youth Day in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass for the victims of clerical abuse. “That was a beautiful Mass,” Australian Cardinal George Pell told OSV News.

“He greeted each one of them. And I know that the victims who were there were deeply moved and deeply grateful. He was a man of genuine compassion.”

In 2013, following Benedict’s resignation, Pope Francis continued on the path begun by the German pope, with new documents and measures that affirmed Benedict’s decisions. When a January 2022 German report on the Archdiocese of Munich stated that, when he was archbishop, Joseph Ratzinger allegedly failed to act over four cases, the Vatican released a letter in which the former pontiff asked forgiveness for any “grievous fault.”

## The Catechism: A Gift to All Catholics

Pope Benedict XVI’s contribution, first as a cardinal and later as pope, to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, widely is viewed as one of the most important magisterial acts since the 1962-1965 Second Vatican Council. Arranged in four main parts, the catechism sought to clarify and re-propose the Church’s doctrine in accord with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

As CDF prefect, Cardinal Ratzinger chaired the drafting commission, which spent six years compiling the catechism at Pope John Paul II’s request. He later described its publication in October of 1992, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II, as “a miracle.”

As pontiff, Benedict XVI went on to approve a new Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in June of 2005 (published in English a year later), which condensed the catechism’s contents in a more concise and accessible form around key questions. It was followed by a youth edition, known as YouCat, in 2011.

The aim, Benedict explained at the time, was to provide a deeper understanding of the church and a “new impulse for evangelization.” He desired an “authoritative, reliable, and complete text on the essential aspects of the Church’s faith,” which also contained “only the essential, fundamental elements of Catholic faith and morals, simply expressed.”

“The Catechism itself should be seen as the final act of Vatican II reforms,” Father Roberto Regoli, Professor of Church History at Rome’s Pontifical Gregorian University, told OSV News. “And the role of Benedict XVI was central to this, in coordinating and defin-

ing the Catholic Church’s faith and pastoral doctrine for new times.”

## Benedict XVI and a ‘Church for All’

In an effort to revitalize the Catholic Church, particularly in Europe, Pope Benedict XVI issued guidelines in July of 2007 allowing a wider use of the 1962 Roman Missal. His apostolic letter “*Summorum Pontificum*” was widely seen as a bid to heal wounds with traditionalist Catholics who often weren’t allowed to practice this form of worship in their local Churches. As a result, some turned to the Priestly Society of St. Pius X, a traditionalist religious order in irregular communion with Rome after its founder, the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, ordained four of his priests as bishops without permission resulting in his excommunication.

The pope said his initiative drew from earlier work by John Paul II, who had allowed diocesan bishops the ability to permit the celebration of the older form of the Latin Mass, and which was intended as a gesture to those “attached with such love and affection to earlier liturgical forms which deeply shaped their culture and spirit.”

The *motu proprio*, however, was opposed by some Catholics who described it as a rollback of Vatican II reforms.

In November of 2009, Benedict also made pastoral provisions for Anglicans who had requested to join the Catholic Church but who desired to keep their Anglican heritage. His apostolic constitution, “*Anglicanorum Coetibus*,” offended some Anglican leaders. However, it also came at a time when many Anglicans, including those requesting full communion with the Catholic Church, saw Anglicanism permit unilateral ordination of women and increasingly adopt positions at odds with traditional Christian morality, making ecumenical relations more difficult.

Today, the Catholic Church has three ordinariates for these Catholics of the Anglican tradition — one for the United Kingdom, one for North America, and a third for Australia and Pacific Rim countries.

Benedict XVI also had a special affection for African Catholics. In the fast-growing African Church, which had tripled in recent decades to around 146 million members, Benedict took steps to address



CNS photo/Paul Haring

**Pope Benedict XVI, who had an impressive record as a teacher and defender of the basics of Catholic faith, is likely to go down in history books as the first pope in almost 600 years to resign. He is seen among pilgrims during a general audience at the Vatican on Nov. 21, 2007. Pope Benedict died on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican.**

crises stemming from worsening poverty, AIDS, religious fundamentalism, as well as from what he described in an October 2009 message as the “toxic spiritual garbage” of Western materialism.

In November of 2011, in the apostolic exhortation “Africae Munus,” Benedict reflected on themes and issues discussed during a Synod of Bishops two years before. He offered African Catholics “guidelines for mission” in becoming “apostles of reconciliation, justice, and peace.” The exhortation was issued during a papal visit to Benin, Benedict’s second to Africa after a pilgrimage to Cameroon and Angola in 2009.

## Relationship with the Muslim World

Benedict XVI continued his predecessor’s groundbreaking outreach to other faiths, including Islam. However, his efforts backfired in his second year as pope when, in a September 2006 address on faith and reason at his former university in Regensburg, Germany, the pontiff appeared to link Islam with violence by quoting a one-time Byzantine Emperor’s criticisms of the Prophet Muhammad’s teachings.

The incident came amid tension following the previous year’s publication of anti-Muslim cartoons in Western

Europe, which the new pope had condemned as disrespectful and hurtful. This event, only five years after 9/11, triggered Muslim protests and riots from Gaza to India, as well as a death threat from al-Qaida.

Benedict later apologized for his comments at Regensburg through his Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, saying he regretted that “some passages” from his speech could have “sounded offensive to the sensibilities of Muslim believers.” On a historic visit to Turkey that November, Benedict appealed for Christian-Muslim reconciliation and called on all religious leaders to “refuse support for any form of violence in the name of faith.”

Meanwhile, in an open letter to the pope and other Christian leaders in October of 2007, more than 130 Muslim personalities also urged “peace and a better understanding” — a message taken up by Benedict himself when he addressed the first-ever Catholic-Muslim Forum at the Vatican in November of 2008.

“Catholics and Muslims have the duty to provide a sound education in human, civic, religious, and moral values for their respective members, and to promote accurate information about each other’s religions,” the joint declaration duly noted. “They are called to be instruments of love and harmony among

believers, and for humanity as a whole, renouncing any oppression, aggressive violence, and terrorism, especially that committed in the name of religion, and upholding the principle of justice for all.”

In numerous messages, the pontiff urged Christians to be open to Muslim refugees and migrants, and he warned of growing distrust and disdain for Western secularism and materialism among Muslim societies in Africa and Asia.

“Although his original Regensburg speech marked an initial weak point in (Benedict’s) pontificate, it’s clear retrospectively that the conflict which flowed from it also provided an opportunity for new Catholic-Islamic approaches,” Father Regoli, the Gregorian University professor, told OSV News.

“It also started a top-level dialogue and new forms of cooperation, without which the interfaith work by his successor, Pope Francis, would have been impossible,” he added. “Pope Benedict showed how religious and cultural diplomacy could be put to use in service of a new vision of world harmony.”

## The Pope Who Showed the World How to Step Down with Dignity

There have not been many popes in history who have

stepped down from office — indeed Benedict XVI decided on something that seemed unthinkable in the modern papacy. Pope Gregory XII, who stepped down in 1415 to resolve the Great Western Schism after serving as pope for nearly nine years, was the last one to step down before Benedict XVI.

“I think (Pope Benedict’s resignation) was an honest decision by an honest man who really believed that he had reached the end of his physical and perhaps intellectual capacity to give the Church the leadership it needed,” Weigel told OSV News. “I think it was also an act of quite striking humility.”

The decision was shocking both outside and inside the Vatican.

“I remember not understanding the decision completely,” Polish Cardinal Konrad Krajewski told OSV News. “It was for us almost like the world has just crumbled.” Cardinal Krajewski is Pope Francis’ top charity man at the Vatican, where he has served for almost three decades. Hearing that the German pontiff had resigned was painful for him.

“Back then we didn’t see why he made this decision which we now know was very much thought through,” the Polish cardinal said. “But when he became a prayer ‘backup’ for Pope Francis — when he supported the reigning pope with his silent

strength — only then I started to admire his decision and determination, which were driven from his spirituality, responsibility for the Church, and love for the Church.”

Today, almost a decade after Benedict’s resignation, abdication from the papacy is seen as something the Church can expect. Pope Francis himself admitted in a recent interview for Spanish ABC magazine that he had prepared a resignation letter in the event of health problems. It was Benedict XVI who showed the way of this “first” in the modern history of the papacy, offering a lesson in humility and giving an example of what it means to be a pope emeritus.

The resignation of Pope Benedict XVI also brings us back to where we started in this discussion of the pontiff’s global legacy — his Second Vatican Council heritage. Before the council, it was not the norm for bishops to retire. After the council, it became common — though not with the papacy. With his resignation as Bishop of Rome, Benedict built upon Vatican II’s understanding that episcopal leaders could, and perhaps should, relinquish their role in governance — setting a precedent for how future pontificates can approach their time in office. Now, upon his death, many are already calling Benedict XVI “the great.”



CNS photo/Vatican Media

Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, Archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, kisses the hand of Pope Benedict XVI during a Rite of Reception after the transfer of the late pope's body into St. Peter's Basilica in the early morning at the Vatican on Jan. 2, 2023.

## Pope Benedict's Body Solemnly, Lovingly Carried to St. Peter's Basilica

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The consecrated women who cared for Pope Benedict XVI in his retirement gently stroked his hands before his body was carried on a red-covered stretcher to a van for its last journey to St. Peter's Basilica.

The women, members of Memores Domini, along with Archbishop Georg Gänswein, the late pope's personal secretary, and Dr. Patrizio Polisca, Pope Benedict's physician, gathered around the body to pray the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary in the chapel of the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery on Jan. 2 before walking down the hill to the basilica behind the van.

The group set off from the monastery in the Vatican Gardens at 7 a.m. while it was still dark.

At the Door of Prayer on the south side of the basilica, 10 papal gentlemen dressed in tails carried the body of the retired pope, who died on Dec. 31, into the basilica.

They passed under Gian Lorenzo Bernini's monument to Pope Alexander VII, a sculpture that features a skeleton holding an hourglass — a classic "memento mori" or reminder of the inevitability of death.

Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, Archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, welcomed the body into the church with a rite of reception that was more elaborate than that used for ordinary

*"Dear brothers and sisters, we raise fervent prayers to God the father that he would welcome the departed pope emeritus into his eternal dwelling and increase our faith in the resurrection of the dead."*

— Cardinal Mauro Gambetti



CNS photo/Kai Pfaffenbach, Reuters

A woman cries as she pays her respects at the body of Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

prayers to God, ending with the plea, "Have mercy on him."

When the pallbearers had set the late pope's body down, Cardinal Gambetti blessed it with holy water and with incense.

One of the women read, in Italian, from Jesus' prayer to God in the Gospel of John that his disciples would be with him and see his glory "because you loved me before the foundation of the world."

"I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them," the passage concluded.

Cardinal Gambetti told those gathered for the early morning rite, "Dear brothers and sisters, we raise fervent prayers to God the father that he would welcome the departed pope emeritus into his eternal dwelling and increase our faith in the resurrection of the dead."

The rite included prayers for Pope Francis "and all pastors of the church of East and West," for the deceased pope, for the world and for the mourners.

After the singing of the Lord's Prayer and the recitation of the concluding prayer, Cardinal Gambetti went to the body and kissed Pope Benedict's hands.

While the ceremony ended quietly, workers began setting up barriers almost immediately since the basilica opened to the public 90 minutes later so that anyone who wanted to pay their respects could.

faithful but simpler than the rite used when St. John Paul II died in 2005.

Rather than being accompanied by all the cardinals present in Rome, as for the transfer of St. John Paul's body, the small congregation in St. Peter's on Jan. 2 included Pope Benedict's "family" — Archbishop Gänswein and the Memores Domini — the priests who serve as canons of the basilica and the Conventual Franciscans who hear confessions in the church.

The ceremony was not broadcast live, although Vatican Media released photographs and video of the service a few hours later. The Vatican press office used the term "translation" of the body to describe the process of moving it from the monastery where the retired pope had lived.

As Pope Benedict's body was carried to a platform in front of the basilica's main altar, the men of the Sistine Chapel choir led the chanting of the litany of saints in Latin, including the line, "All Roman pontiffs, pray for him."

They also chanted a litany of



CNS photo/Ciro De Luca, Reuters

People queue to enter St. Peter's Basilica to pay their respects to Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican on Jan. 2, 2023.

## Thousands Pay Last Respects to Pope Benedict in St. Peter's Basilica

BY CAROL GLATZ

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A quiet hush covered the vast expanse of St. Peter's Square even though it was filled with thousands of people slowly winding their way around the colonnade into St. Peter's Basilica to pay their last respects to the late Pope Benedict XVI.

Outdoor souvenir sellers were well-stocked with rosaries on Jan. 2, but they seemed to have been caught off guard with a plethora of touristy tchotchkes and few to no images or mementos of the late pope.

A damp chill hung in the air at 9 in the morning when the doors of the basilica opened to the public on the first of three days to view the pope's body.

Special accommodations, however, were made for officials of the Roman Curia, Vatican staff, and dignitaries who were allowed access from the back of the basilica and offered a place to sit or kneel on either side of the pope's body, which was laid out in red vestments on a damask-covered platform.

Before the doors opened to the general public, Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, Archpriest of the Basilica and Papal Vicar for Vatican City State, accompanied Italian President Sergio Mattarella and his entourage and Italian Prime Minister

*"I've been privileged to accompany him through his pontificate: I was here in the square when he was elected, I was here in the square when he resigned, and now here when he's lying in state."*

— Father Justin Kizewski

Giorgia Meloni and other government ministers to pay homage to the late pope.

The first in line outside the basilica was a group of religious sisters from the Philippines, who said they got there at 5:30 a.m.

People kept slowly arriving before sunrise, including a group from Duluth, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin, led by Father Richard Kunst of Duluth. The priest told Catholic News Service that he was leading a tour of Rome the day Pope Benedict died.

Being able to see and pay homage to the late pope made the group part of "a really incredible piece of history," he said.

Father Kunst said he was "a big fan" of Pope Benedict and "not sad at his passing" since the 95-year-old pope had lived a long life and "this is what he lived for — to be able to be with God."

Father Felipe de Jesús Sánchez, who is from Mexico and is studying in Rome, told CNS that he saw Pope Benedict as "a simple man, humble,

a model, who didn't have as much fame as John Paul II, but he was the mind behind him."

"For me, in my personal opinion, he was an authentic testimony of what it means to be Christian and a disciple of Jesus," he said.

Father Matthew Schmitz was with a group of 90 young people from ECYD, an international Catholic youth organization affiliated with Regnum Christi.

"We were praying while we were waiting, we prayed the rosary" and went inside the basilica in silence, he told CNS.

He said he was in Rome for his studies when Pope Benedict was elected in 2005, and "I met him once after an Easter Mass," which means "I'm still kind of processing" the fact that he found himself back in Rome when the pope died.

Ana Sofia de Luna, who is with ECYD and from Mexico, said, "It's very sad that Pope Benedict died, but being here and seeing his body was a great blessing, to be able to ask for grace and seeing his body there was very impactful."

Daniela Romero, a member

of the group from Guatemala, said, "to be able to come here and see that we are representing and supporting the church is a blessing."

Father Justin Kizewski happened to be traveling with a group of 45 seminarians and nine priests on pilgrimage from Madison, Wisconsin.

He said, "I've been privileged to accompany him through his pontificate: I was here in the square when he was elected, I was here in the square when he resigned, and now here when he's lying in state."

"When we read his writings, or heard him preach, or saw him celebrate the Mass, we really saw a man who cares for his sheep and gives us an example of how to care for ours," he said.

Hannah O'Connor from Rhode Island credits Pope Benedict as being instrumental in her conversion during college, where "we read a lot of Ratzinger."

His writings and pontificate were "an important part of my journey," she said, and "I hope

that people keep encountering his works and are brought to the one Church through beauty, that's what really drew me in."

Sugey Viramontes from Mexico told CNS that, "without a doubt, his example of simplicity, and above all how he spent his last few years, always in prayer, is a great example for us young people."

Inside the basilica, staff and security kept visitors moving smoothly and quickly, letting people stop before the pope's remains long enough to make the sign of the cross and take a picture or two before being asked quietly to "Please, move along."

However, many took advantage of the large nooks and niches in the basilica to press up against a wall or barricade and linger just a little while longer.

Pope Benedict's mortal remains were to lie in repose in the basilica for three days until the late evening of Jan. 4; Pope Francis was scheduled to preside over the funeral Mass on Jan. 5.

Rome authorities estimated there would be 30,000 to 35,000 people a day visiting the basilica and an estimated 60,000 people attending the funeral in St. Peter's Square. But Vatican police said that 40,000 people had already entered the basilica to pray by 2 p.m. on Jan. 2.



OSV News/Gregory A. Shemitz

**New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan pauses in front of a portrait of Pope Benedict XVI while celebrating Mass for the repose of the late pontiff's soul at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City on Jan. 1, 2023. Before the liturgy, the bells of the cathedral tolled 95 times to mark each year of the late pontiff's life.**

## Cardinal Says Church is Grateful for Retired Pope's Holiness, Ministry

BY JULIE ASHER

NEW YORK (OSV News) — The death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has brought “a sense of sadness” to the faithful but “also a sense of gratitude ... as we thank almighty God for the good shepherd he was,” Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York said in his homily at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Jan. 1, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God.

The Church is grateful for this “sterling successor of St. Peter who radiated a sense of holiness, theological erudition, and gentle pastoral solicitude, so we miss him,” the cardinal said. “There's sadness but, boy, do we ever rejoice that we had him and thank God for that.”

At age 95, Pope Benedict “had been with us for quite a while,” Cardinal Dolan said. “We came to know and love and respect him, and we miss him, and we mourn him.”

Before the Mass began, the cathedral bells tolled 95 times in Benedict's honor. Cardinal Dolan asked all archdiocesan parishes to designate one of their weekend Masses to be celebrated in memory of Pope Benedict.

A portrait of the pontiff, who headed the Catholic Church from 2005 until he retired in 2013, graced the cathedral altar. The congregation that packed the church included many tourists who had been in New York City to watch the traditional Times Square ball drop ushering in the new year.

Cardinal Dolan began his homily by noting that New Year's is traditionally a time when everyone reviews the past year.

“Our hearts, I trust, are filled with gratitude for the grace and mercy of the Lord that got us through 2022,” he said. “We

acknowledge that there was a share of sadness and sorrow and challenges and trauma in the world, in our country, the city, indeed within our own hearts, and our families and friends.”

“But we also gratefully acknowledge there was a lot of good, and a lot of life, and a lot of joy,” he said.

In 2023, the cardinal said, there will be “shares of joy and sorrow ... but we're confident just as God sure got us through the old year, He's going to be there for the new (year).”

He called it a beautiful tradition for the Church to honor Mary under the aspect of her motherhood of Jesus to begin the new year.

“She is a great example of a faithful follower of Jesus, a disciple, not only His mother,” Cardinal Dolan said. “But she had her shares of joys and sorrows. She was there at the happiest occasion in human history when the Messiah, Our Savior, was born at Bethlehem.

“But fast forward 33 years, she was also there at the gloomiest day in human history, that Friday strangely called ‘good’ when the sun hid itself in shame and earth tremored with grief as the Savior of the world died in agony on the cross.”

“At both the wood of the crib and the wood of the cross was Mary,” the cardinal said.

“Like the year that just passed, the year ahead is probably going to have its Bethlehem moments and its Calvary moments,” he noted.

But Cardinal Dolan said Mary's example offers good advice to the faithful about how to weather what's ahead, as if to say, “Stay close to Jesus as I did at Bethlehem and Calvary.”

If we do that, “he's going to get us through,” the cardinal said.

## A Very Innovative Thinker

# Vicar General Father Mark Gurtner on Pope Benedict XVI

BY JODI MARLIN

Destination: the Vatican.

In 2006, a group of 21 local teenagers, their chaperones, and Father Mark Gurtner, then Pastor of Our Lady of Good Hope Church in Fort Wayne (now Vicar General of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and Pastor of Our Lady of Good Hope Church), arrived at St. Peter's Square. Members of the pilgrimage were excited to hold tickets to a Wednesday general audience with Pope Benedict XVI.

Most of those tickets were for the general admission area of the square. But thanks to the graciousness of Bishop John M. D'Arcy, four were for an elevated area located up the stairs of St. Peter's Basilica, near the front of the barricades and where the pope sits during the audience. A chaperone, Father Gurtner, and two of the teenagers made their way up front.

“It was a glorious day,” without a cloud in the sky, remembered Father Gurtner shortly afterward.

In those days, when the pope finished his general audience, he would go down one side and greet people individually, said Father Gurtner. “Then he'd get in the popemobile and go down the other side. We happened to be pretty much up front on the second side, so when the pope came by, I was able to take his hand and kiss the ring.”

For several centuries, kissing the pope's Fisherman's Ring, a symbol of the authority of a pontiff, has been the customary way of demonstrating respect for him and expressing devotion and obedience.

Sixteen years later, Father Gurtner remembers Pope Benedict's visage during the brief encounter.

“When I looked up at him, there was like this glow coming off of him. It was so amazing.” He said to the pontiff, “God bless you, Holy Father. You are Peter.” The pope responded, but noise from the crowd made his words unintelligible.

Father Gurtner still considers the meeting to have been a great blessing in his life. Long ago, he thanked the Blessed Mother for it: He believes she arranged the encounter for him.

## The Greatest Pope Theologian

Pope Benedict's solidity in teaching the faith “in a way that's not stifled” continues to inform and shape various aspects of Father Gurtner's ministry. “He's a very innovative thinker, so if you read a lot of



FATHER MARK GURTNER

his writings, he thinks about things of the faith that are very grounded in the faith, but that are not stale,” he said. “They're very alive ideas about the faith.”

Father

Gurtner was also among the priests at World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, who celebrated the closing Mass with Pope Benedict in 2008. What was nice about Sydney compared to other World Youth Days, he said, was that there were comparatively far fewer people present — around 400,000. During adoration, “everyone was kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in the park, and it was dead silent. Four hundred thousand people, and it was dead silent when the pope came out with the monstrance. It was very moving.”

In recent years, he has read several biographies of the late pope. In 2021, Father Gurtner said it was astounding to him that before Father Joseph Ratzinger became the Archbishop of Munich-Freising in 1977, he was already a widely respected theologian and one of the experts of the Second Vatican Council.

“He really was the one that formed and drove the council. Back then, he was sort of considered a liberal in theological circles. He didn't go off the path, though, like a lot of ‘true liberals.’

Some theologians of the age effectively jettisoned the faith, but Ratzinger upheld it. “He's certainly the greatest pope theologian in centuries.”

## A Life Directed by Divine Providence

Ratzinger came from a very simple family, Father Gurtner pointed out. “It's kind of astounding that from a simple family in a very tiny place, out in Bavaria in the wilderness, that there's this man who became pope.” Most of the popes who came before him were from well-connected, well-known families in Rome.

A person cannot help but see the hand of divine providence in his becoming pope and a great theologian, he said. “I find his life, and the drama of his story, just fascinating.”

Also interesting, he added, is that the young Joseph Ratzinger was conscripted into the German army during World War II and saw action. When the war was over, he spent time in deplorable

conditions at an American prisoner of war camp.

In hindsight and given the physical condition in which the last years of his life found Pope Benedict XVI, his resignation seems to have been a wise move, Father Gurtner felt. “There was just no way he could have governed the Church; he was so frail.”

There was reluctance on Cardinal Ratzinger's part to be in Rome and head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Father Gurtner pointed out, and a well-documented reticence to become pope. “All he ever wanted was to be a normal professor in the academic world. He did not want to be a cardinal, or in the limelight.”

He asked Pope John Paul II several times to relieve him of the duty of being head of the CDF. The pope refused.

“So, he was certainly not one who looked for glory, or for the limelight.”

During his days as a professor in Germany, his lectures were packed to the gills, Father Gurtner said. His theology was so fresh, so new at that time, that students crammed into the lecture halls to hear him. His theology informs the world in a way most people don't realize.

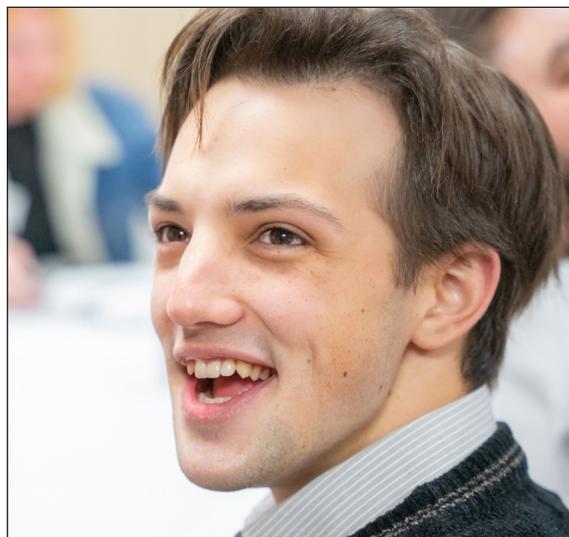
Before the Second Vatican Council came out, theology was very tied to propositions, as in “‘These are the things we believe.’ The freshness of Pope Benedict, even as a young theologian, it wasn't just about this proposition and this one, it was about the person of Jesus Christ. We don't realize that that's not what they were preaching and teaching before the Second Vatican Council. It was very much you have to believe this, this, and this, and you have to do these Catholic practices. It was very stilted and ossified.

“He brought a perspective that nobody was bringing. You can see how that would be the fuel for what came from the Second Vatican Council, because it was very much about relationship with Christ, that Jesus is the Word. In fact, one of the arguments he had at the council was with this old guard school that wanted to keep things the way they were and didn't want this sort of new way to think about things to take hold. They maintained an emphasis on the traditional theological expression of how revelation came to us, through Scripture and Tradition. Pope Benedict said, yes, those are the funnels, but there is only one Word of God, and that is Jesus.

“I know that sounds subtle, but it was really revolutionary thinking of that time. And we, now, take it completely for granted because of that.”

# AROUND THE DIOCESE

## Young Adults Enjoy Brunch with Seminarians at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Fort Wayne



Joshua Schipper

On Wednesday, Dec. 21, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Young Adult Ministry hosted Brunch with the Seminarians at the St. Charles Borromeo Youth Center. Seminarians Samuel Martinez, Noah Isch, and Deacon Jacob Schneider, all from St. Charles Borromeo, joined about 30 young adults for food and fellowship.

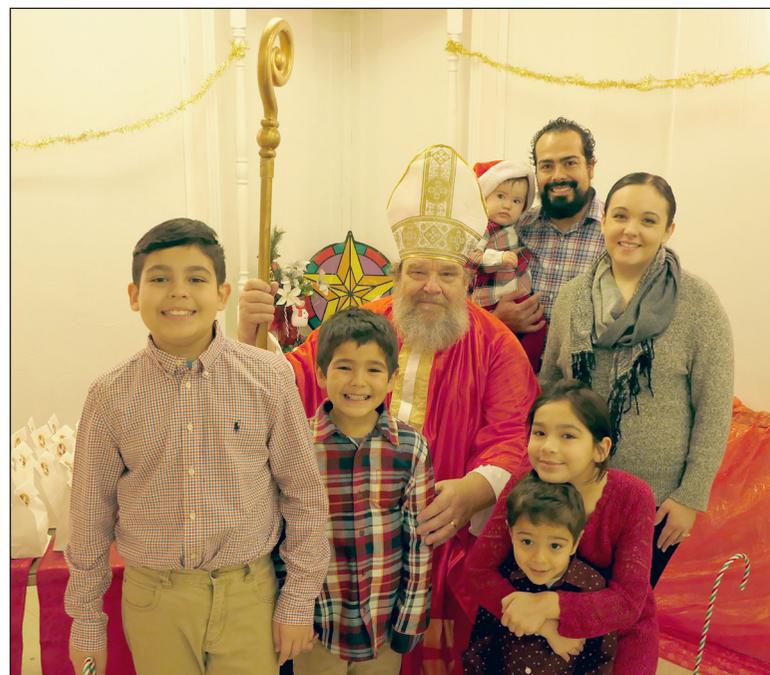
## Knights of Columbus Celebrate Christmas at St. John Church



Provided by Julie Gremaux

On Wednesday, Dec. 14, the Knights of Columbus celebrated Christmas at the Community Center at St. John Church in New Haven. The event included dinner, awards, and a gift exchange. Father Nathan Maskall took part in the festivities and is seen here with District Deputy of the Knights of Columbus Tom Ryan and Grand Knight Chris Shortgen as Ryan presents the 2021-2022 Knights of Columbus Finance Award to Shortgen.

## Breakfast with St. Nicholas is Held at St. Patrick Church



Provided by Phil Niswonger

On Sunday, Dec. 11, nearly 125 people attended Breakfast with St. Nick at St. Patrick Catholic Church in South Bend. Each of the 35 children who took part in the festivities received two gifts from St. Nicholas. Members of the Richi and Constance Sanchez family are all smiles as they get their photo taken.

# Windows at Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene

BY BETHANY BEEBE AND  
FATHER DANIEL SCHEIDT

**A**ncient wisdom says the eyes are a window to the soul. In the case of the Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene, located on the campus of Fort Wayne's St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, the windows are giving light to the soul — and telling stories to help souls find the light.

The windows were designed by St. Vincent's Pastor, Father Daniel Scheidt, and executed by Mayer Studios of Munich. The German group has been in the business of stained-glass creation since 1847. Father Scheidt said it took a little more than a year for the windows to be fabricated and installed. Their shape evokes the windows of the 1904 church which once stood near the site of the Oratory, in the parish graveyard.

The Oratory of St. Mary Magdalene is the fruit of Father Scheidt's prayer and the generosity of many people to ensure that the Eucharistic Lord is worshipped 24 hours a day, seven days a week in perpetual adoration. The Oratory is open for anyone to visit for silent conversation with Christ.

The layout of stained-glass window content is organized in the format of a *sacra conversazione* ("sacred conversation") among the holy people pictured above those who make a visit to the Oratory for prayer. Like at the table of a dinner party, each saint depicted has a direct connection to his or her window mate. Each also has a connection to another saint directly across the nave. Similarly, those on the furthest north and south have connection to those on the opposite side at the other end of the structure.

Father Scheidt believes our social connections can draw us into closer relationship with the Risen Savior. "Nobody becomes a saint alone. We become saints through friendship. Jesus has friends, and He wants His friends to be friends," he said. Christ Himself reveals how the faith is shared through friendship, even as He teaches us how to pray through friendship.

The detailed information about the windows described here was provided by Father Scheidt to better understand the structure, giving current, past, and future Christians a place to share in unison a love of God. Each pairing of saints in the six main glassworks of the Oratory embodies one of the Beatitudes, as do the saints in the paintings at the back of the Oratory.

## West Wall



Window and Painting Photos  
by Bethany Beebe

**North Window** — The Beatitude theme of this window makes reference to the peacemakers of Matthew 5:9.

St. Gianna Beretta Molla holds a baby in this image to embody those who serve the health of others, especially when it is a dire situation. This saint is the patron of motherhood, life of the married, and physicians.

St. André Bessette joins her, holding an oratory he built in Canada, inspired by St. Joseph. Patron of those who welcome outsiders, but find themselves on the margins, he supports those in need of God's healing touch in spirit, mind, or body. A religious brother in the Congregation of Holy Cross, he mirrors the activity of the circuit-riding priests who aided 19th Century parishioners of St. Vincent's.



**South Window** — The Beatitude theme for this window recalls those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, as articulated in Matthew 5:10.

Blessed Maria Theresia Bonzel holds the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration and is included because of her status as patron of Eucharistic Adoration and consecrated reli-

gious life in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Blessed Stanley Rother, her window mate, is included because of his status as a priest and martyr. He studied at Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, and is the patron of seminarians, priests, and those who are called to thrive in homes new to them.



**Center Window** — The Beatitude theme of this window makes reference to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, as articulated in Matthew 5:6.

St. Louis Martin was the father of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and is the patron of fathers, husbands, widowers, and those who suffer from mental illness. Members of his family are buried in the cemetery of the Oratory at St. Vincent.

St. Zélie Martin was the mother of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and is the patron saint of mothers, wives, and those who face an early death.



**St. Joseph of Arimathea** — While a painting, the likeness of the saint who cared for the Body of the Lord after Crucifixion (Mark 15:43) appears in the shape and dimension of the windows of the Oratory.

## East Wall



**North Window** — The pure of heart, as described in Matthew 5:8 are represented in this window.

St. Clare of Assisi looks down on the contemplative while holding the church building that holds the Crucifix that spoke to St. Francis. She is patroness of love that is hidden and focused entirely on only God. All who are overlooked are remembered through this saint, who was overlooked, herself.

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati exemplifies those who fully engage their Baptism and Confirmation, without being of the world. This patron of missionaries and young people of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese was also a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.



**St. Joseph Spouse of Mary** — Also a painting in the shape, form, and dimension of actual windows, this saint cared for Jesus as an Infant (Luke 2).



**Center Window** — Matthew 5:7's reminder that those who show mercy to others will be shown mercy themselves is presented.

St. Vincent de Paul and a Boy Scout in front of him embody directly serving the poor, forming life-long consecrations, and growing spiritually.

St. Louise de Marillac and a child with special needs call to mind those who are forced to find a second life vocation, radical service to those in need of a spiritual sister or mother, and widows.

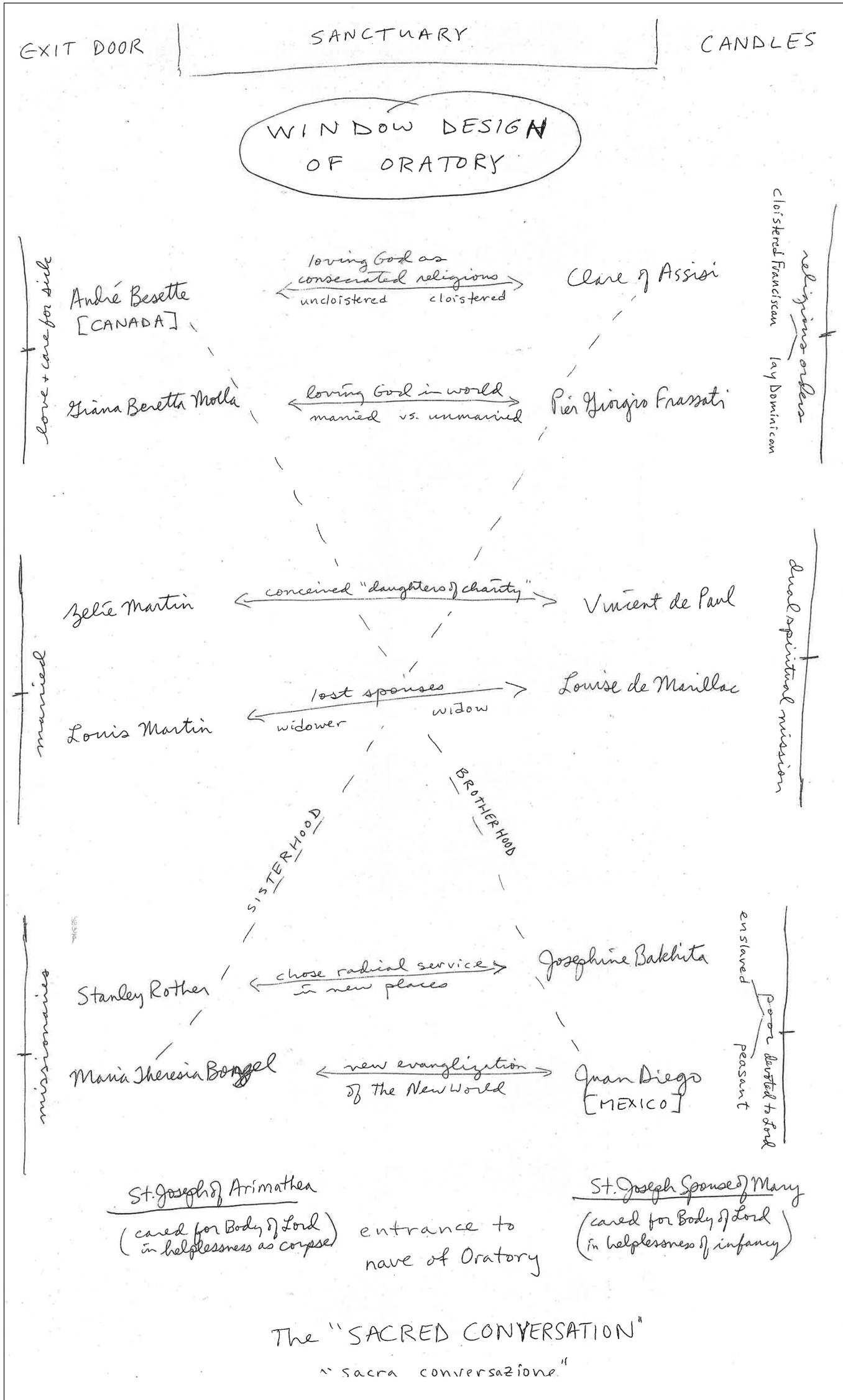


**South Window** — Matthew 5:5's meek and their inheritance of the earth are visually represented here.

St. Josephine Bakhita was selected as a memorial to all those enslaved who have won their freedom and find faith in a world seemingly without God. Interceding for veterans, she is especially noteworthy for the Civil War soldiers buried in the cemetery of the Oratory she overlooks.

St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin is pictured holding the oratory Our Lady of Guadalupe requested him to build in Mexico. He brings to mind the first indigenous people to receive Catholicism in the Americas.

# Designed and Set to Spark Sacred Conversation



Provided by Father Daniel Scheidt

Provided by Father Daniel Scheidt



Photos provided by Jill Boughton

This is the inside of the model church that Joe Kromkoski built for students in the kindergarten class his daughter teaches at St. Pius X Catholic School in Granger to use with peg dolls to “play church” and learn about the saints.

# Churches and Saints Go Together

BY JILL BOUGHTON

*“It’s so much fun! I love watching them play with it at the activity center.”*

— Rachel Bacewic

In the three kindergarten classes at St. Pius X school in Granger, there is a “letter of the week” with a corresponding “saint of the week” whose name starts with that letter. Each week, students get to color a picture of that saint. At the end of the school year, these are compiled into a book they can take home. They learn more about the saints during visits by Aspirant Mason Bailey, Monsignor William Scholer, and Father Augustine Onuoha.

When Rachel Bacewic began teaching kindergarten at St. Pius three years ago, she was happy to find a basket full of peg dolls representing these saints, but she wished her 23 students could do something besides look at the dolls and color the pictures. In the classroom of co-worker Kelly Lohr, who has taught kindergarten since St. Pius X opened its school, there was a church model her husband Brian had built. That enabled her students to “play church” with the saints as parishioners.

Bacewic knew just whom to ask to equip her class with a similar learning tool: her dad. Although Joe Kromkowski currently serves as plant manager for Elkhart’s Hurricane Boats, he had worked in the industrial furniture area for 20 years, so he was happy to take on the project.

Kromkowski worked off and on for two weeks and

came up with a detailed church model, complete with a fancy entry door and stained-glass windows. Materials included thin walnut plywood, leather seat cushions, and a brass bell. The finished model includes an altar, kneeler, lectern, and bell tower. Wife Marty was an important cheerleader and consultant, especially with the curtains and upholstery.

“A project like this takes time, patience, and imagination,” Kromkowski explains.

The church model has a footprint about 12” by 24” and is about 16” tall. It’s painted white and the pews are stained walnut. Children can even turn on lights underneath the model. They have thoroughly enjoyed standing the peg doll saints on the pews.

Students were thrilled when Bacewic brought the church model to school the week of All Saints’ Day. “I want one to take home!” one student exclaimed. “The kids love it,” says their teacher. “It’s so much fun! I love watching them play with it at the activity center.” The students have also built “heaven” for the peg doll saints, but out of soft materials so they don’t damage the dolls.

Although there are no Kromkowski grandchildren in the kindergarten class that is currently enjoying the church model, they do have four students at St. Pius X who are proud of the church their grandfather built. Joe and Marty Kromkowski have been parishioners of St. Pius X for 30 years.



Kindergarten teacher Rachel Bacewic and her father, Joe Kromkowski, pose with a group of students around the model church that Kromkowski built for the students to “play church” with as they learn about the saints at St. Pius X Catholic School in Granger.

# Habitat-Evansville Dedicates Home Sponsored by the Late Father Joe Ziliak

BY MEGAN ERBACHER

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Steve Titzer admitted he wasn't sure what his late cousin, Father Joseph Ziliak, would say at the dedication of the Habitat for Humanity of Evansville home he sponsored, but he said Father Joe wouldn't need notes.

"He always spoke freely from his heart," Titzer said. "He was a very genuine and engaging person. I think he would be thankful that he received the opportunity to make this donation and sponsor this home. He's not with us physically, but I believe he is here in spirit."

On Dec. 7, new Habitat homeowner Amelia B. and her granddaughter, Nevaeh, both smiled with excitement as their new home, sponsored by the late Father Joe, was blessed and dedicated in the 1200 block of Harriet Street. It's the 568th home built by Habitat-Evansville in Vanderburgh and Posey counties.

Father Joe, Senior Priest of the Diocese of Evansville who served as Founding Editor of *The Message*, died on Feb. 8 at age 85. Father Joe was known and loved across the diocese and the region because of his media and pastoral ministries, and his work as leader of pilgrimages and tours across the world.

"If Father Joe was here, he would say, you're all my family," Titzer said. "That's just the way he thought about things."

Father Bernie Lutz, Senior Priest of the Diocese of Evansville and cousin of the late Father Joe, led the opening and closing prayers for the ceremony. During his blessing, Father Bernie said Father Joe's siblings are all thrilled about the home sponsorship, and he believes Father Joe's parents would be proud of their son. Father Bernie prayed that the Lord continue to pour out his love upon Amelia and her family.

Amelia thanked everyone who made her new home possible. She has two grandchildren, which she has adopted. Shy, her grandson, is 16 years old, and her granddaughter Nevaeh is 9.

Amelia said it was a long journey and more of a struggle than she thought it would be, but she kept pushing even when things got difficult. It was a great learning experience, she said, and now everyone will have their own bedroom.

"I would like to thank everyone for their support," she said. "This has been a long journey, but I'm really happy that my grandkids and I have a nice, new home to enjoy together."



Photos by Tim Lilley

On Wednesday, Dec. 7, as her granddaughter Nevaeh looks on, new Habitat-Evansville homeowner Amelia, left, accepts the keys to her home from Steve Titzer, cousin of the late Father Joe Ziliak, who sponsored the build.



"I thank you all for coming here," Nevaeh added. "I thank you all for helping us out so much. And have a great time."

Beth Folz, Executive Director of Habitat Evansville, has a tradition of choosing a word to describe new homeowners. Folz said Amelia is "adaptable. Whatever life throws at you, whatever it may be, you adapt, you go for it, you move on, and you achieve what you have to; and you certainly have done that through the Habitat program."

Folz said Father Joe made provisions to sponsor a home while he was in good health.

"What a genuinely good man he was," she said. "He was entertaining, engaging, a great conversationalist, just a wonderful man."

Habitat board members Teri Hollander and Sheila Huff presented gifts to Amelia.

Hollander, a cousin of Father Joe's, said the Habitat home is a "great example of his compassion and generosity. We hope, from the Holy Lord, that you feel it as a place of peace, a place of faith, and a place of joy."

Huff told Amelia that she believes the most important thing in your home is the holy Bible.

"If you read it, keep it close to you, and believe in it even during the tough times, you'll make it through," Huff said. "There's nobody better to depend on."

Lynda Provence, who attended the dedication with her husband and daughter, worked with Father Joe for more than 20 years. "He may have left this earth, but he hasn't left any of our hearts."

Megan Erbacher is *The Message* Assistant Editor.

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## A New Year's Habit

As one does at this time of year, I opened a new 2023 calendar and started flipping through the months to mark a few upcoming events. In the process, I found myself thinking about both joy and hope. Each wedding, vacation, birthday, or anniversary that I noted on the calendar is a statement of hope that I will be there to take part in the occasion, and a promise of joy to be shared. I do not know what the future holds, but as a believer in Christ Jesus, I know that God has plans for me, and I trust that He will bring them to completion.

As we wound down the days of 2022 and switched to a new year's calendar, we crossed a threshold, and not only on paper. The month of January is named after the ancient Roman god Janus, who was the mythical overseer of transitions. He was often depicted as having two faces, one looking backward and one facing forward. In our day, we too look at January as a time of transition, a time to thank the true God of heaven for the blessings of the previous year and to ask for an abundance of grace to be shared with us in the new one.

We Catholics celebrated the beginning of the new liturgical year several weeks ago on the 1st Sunday of Advent, but as pilgrims who are also called to bless the secular world in which we live our lives, we also marked the change from one civil calendar year to the next by joining together in prayer. For centuries, the faithful have gathered in our churches on New Year's Eve to

pray the *Te Deum*, an ancient hymn of praise. In this joyful song, we join with "the glorious company of apostles" and "the noble fellowship of prophets" to offer praise and thanksgiving to the Triune God for their many blessings, and to ask that they "come and bless your people, bought with the price of your own blood, and bring us, with your saints, to glory everlasting."

Our praise continues on New Year's Day as we gather to honor Mary in her title as Mother of God. This joyful celebration, on the 8th day after Christmas, recognizes that Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, is indeed our God made flesh, come to redeem us. This is also the day when the Church invites us to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the new year by singing together the ancient chant *Veni Creator Spiritus*, which invites the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us His "sevenfold gifts," the same gifts that were given to us in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Many of us make New Year's resolutions, whether to exercise more, or give up snacking, or to watch less TV and read more books, and so on. These resolutions are often aimed at improving ourselves in some way by developing new habits, and we usually truly intend to follow through. But I have found over the years that most of mine have been forgotten or abandoned after just a few weeks, echoing the definition that one jokester gave of a New Year's resolution as being something that "goes in one year and out the other."



### HUMOR IN THE MIX

KEN HALLENIUS

A habit is an action or decision that has become so comfortable through repetition that we automatically do it the same way each time. Each time we do something in the exact same way, we are following (or "giving in to") the habit. Even more, each repetition of the action also reinforces that habit, making it stronger and more natural to us. If this habitual action is aimed toward the good, then it is called a "virtue," and if it turns us or takes us away from the good, it is a "vice."

In an interesting double meaning, the word "habit" also refers to the distinctive clothing worn by monks or nuns. This second meaning reinforces a truth for those of us who endeavor to follow through with our New Year's resolutions: just as a nun wakes every morning and dresses in her religious habit, such that she looks the same as she did the day before, we who want to develop new habits must also repeat the same actions over and over again. In the same way that a religious habit clothes a natural body and displays a holier version

HALLENIUS, page 21

## A Season of Change, A Time of Hope

There are a lot of joys about being a grandparent, but for starters, it lets us relive those first months and years of being a parent.

We've got a lot of mileage on our odometer now, but at one time, all of us grandparents held a precious new life for the first time in our arms when our own children were born. We wondered what he or she would become, what tales they'd tell, what adventures they'd have.

A grandchild lets us relive the same experience. It evokes the same dreams, yet now we know that whatever way forward, it is not without risk. This makes that grandchild in our arms even more precious, and our desire to protect even stronger, no matter how far away we are or how frequently we are able to visit.

This mix of feelings is the juxtaposition of the crib and the cross. Any parish Nativity scene is in the shadow of the crucifix. That shadow is the sword piercing Mary's heart even as she stares in plaster rapture at her new child. All of us can share that confluence of joy and apprehension, knowing the promise and the pain that lie ahead. Like the Ukrainian babies born in bomb shelters or migrant babies born on perilous journeys to a new land, birth arrives with both promise and peril.

And yet knowing all those risks, we are still overcome by the birth of a child. As we gaze at this new human, this little creature with a whole lifetime



### AMID THE FRAY

GREG ERLANDSON

before her, our thoughts may turn to our own life, to the roads taken and not taken, the "yesses" we gave, the "nos" we may regret.

Part of the aging process is that our long-term memory may feel as if it is getting stronger while our short-term memory may not feel as sharp. We can remember all the words to the Byrds' "Turn! Turn! Turn!" when it comes on the radio, but we can't remember the name of the actor whose movie we just saw.

Perhaps, as with the arrival of a grandchild, this is God's way of having us reflect on our lives, on our choices, our loves, our failings. Likewise, when we are gazing at our granddaughter and thinking of what is to come, our thoughts turn to what has happened in our own lives.

What is constant is change, both subtle and abrupt. Marriages start. Jobs end. Loved ones are born and loved ones die. To everything there is a season, the psalm and the song say. Even that sweet baby we

ERLANDSON, page 21

## Who Were These Magi Driven by the Wish to Know God?



### THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

### Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord Matthew 2:1-12

This weekend, the Church celebrates the ancient Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, commemorating, and reflecting upon, the visit of magi "from the East" to the crib side of the newborn Savior.

For the first reading, the Church presents a passage from the third and last section of Isaiah. After four generations of exile in Babylon, survivors, or descendants of survivors, of the long past Babylonian conquest of the Holy Land finally were able to return to their homeland.

When Persia in turn overtook Babylonia, Persia's King Cyrus allowed the exiles to leave Babylon and to return to the Holy Land. Homecoming was bittersweet. The land to which they returned after so many years was desolate and unyielding.

The prophets insisted that, despite this desolation, times would change for the better, because God would not forget the Chosen People.

Thus, this reading rejoices in God's salvation. He will vindicate the people. In justice and mercy, God will come. The prophecy predicts a great new day!

For the second reading, the Church offers us a selection from the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is a frank and direct statement that God intends salvation also for the Gentiles, not only for the Chosen People.

St. Matthew's Gospel furnishes as the last reading. Among the four Gospels, only Matthew and Luke refer to the conception, birth, and very early life of Jesus. Mark and John are silent on these subjects.

Only Matthew has the story

of the magi. This story is one of the most profound and expressive revelations in the New Testament. To understand it requires recognizing the symbols and images contained in the passage.

First, the Gospel speaks of visitors "from the East" in the story. "From the East" was a phrase referring to much more than a direction of the compass. It meant a distant and unknown place. It was a term of mystery.

These visitors came from a place totally outside the Holy Land and Jewish culture and religion.

Who and what were they? Scholars cannot agree, and have not agreed, on a description for them. Some think that they were astrologers in a time when astrology fascinated everyone and was heavily associated with theology and philosophy. Others think they were nobles or kings. Another term is magi, but this term's meaning is unclear.

Whatever the answer, they were gifted, learned, resourced, and very sincere people from

someplace far away ... strangers to Jews ... driven by the wish to know God. Art and legend have seen them over the centuries as three in number.

Herod tried to frustrate their search hoping to remove any threat to his corrupt control over the people, fearful that a "newborn king" might be a rival. Looking for clues, he discovered that according to the Scriptures, the Savior would be born in Bethlehem. This discovery put the infant Lord and the Holy Innocents in jeopardy.

Overall, the message is powerful. The magi, only humans, yearn for God but cannot find God on their own. God assists them with a star in the sky and even through the evil Herod.

### Reflection

This wondrous feast teaches us a vital lesson. The magi were humans, lost and not knowing where to go. We are humans often not knowing where to go. We even are sinners, choosing to distance ourselves from God. We are help-

less in the last analysis.

The magi remind us to consider what is truly important in life. Too often people allow themselves to look for rewards in earthly terms. Inevitably, they are disappointed.

The magi knew that something wonderful, beautiful, and fulfilling was in life, in their lives, if they could find it. In Jesus, an infant, but Son of God, they found it, guided by the star, warned of danger.

### READINGS

**Sunday:** Is 60:1-6 Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 Mt 2:1-12

**Monday:** Is 42:1-4, 6-7 Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 9-10 Mt 3:13-17

**Tuesday:** Heb 2:5-12 Ps 8:2ab, 5-9 Mk 1:21-28

**Wednesday:** Heb 2:14-18 Ps 105:1-4, 6-9 Mk 1:29-39

**Thursday:** Heb 3:7-14 Ps 95:6-7c, 8-11 Mk 1:40-45

**Friday:** Heb 4:1-5, 11 Ps 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8 Mk 2:1-12

**Saturday:** Heb 4:12-16 Ps 19:8-10, 15 Mk 2:13-17

# God Became a Baby

There is just something about a baby. If a baby is introduced into a crowded room, everyone will want to see him. Conversations will stop, smiles will spread across people's faces, arms will reach out to hold the child. Even the crustiest and most curmudgeonly denizen of the room will be drawn toward the baby. People who, moments before, had been arguing with one another will be cooing and making funny faces at the infant. Babies bring peace and joy; it's just what they do.

The central and still unnervingly strange message of Christmas is that God became a baby. The omnipotent Creator of the universe, the ground of the intelligibility of the world, the source of finite existence, the reason there is something rather than nothing — became an infant too weak even to raise His head, a vulnerable baby lying helpless in a manger where the animals eat. I am sure that everyone around the Christ child's crib — His mother, St. Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi — did what people always do around babies: they smiled and cooed and made funny noises. And they were drawn more closely together precisely by their shared concern for the child.

In this we see a stroke of divine genius. For the entire length of the history of Israel, God was endeavoring to attract His chosen people to Himself and to draw them into deeper communion with one another. The whole purpose of the Torah, the Ten Commandments, the dietary laws outlined in the book of Leviticus, the preaching of the prophets, the covenants with Noah, Moses, and David, and the sacrifices offered in the temple was simply to foster friendship with God and greater

love among His people. A sad but consistent theme of the Old Testament is that, despite all of these efforts and institutions, Israel remained alienated from God: Torah ignored, covenants broken, commandments disobeyed, temple corrupted.

## Babies Bring Peace and Joy; It's Just What They Do

So, in the fullness of time, God determined, not to intimidate us or order us from on high, but rather to become a baby, for who can resist a baby? At Christmas, the human race no longer looked up to see the face of God, but rather down into the face of a little child. One of my spiritual heroes, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, was known as "Thérèse of the Child Jesus." It is easy enough to sentimentalize this designation, but we should resist that temptation. In identifying herself with the infant Christ, Thérèse was subtly endeavoring to draw everyone she met out of themselves and into an attitude of love.

Once we understand this essential dynamic of Christmas, the spiritual life opens in a fresh way. Where do we find the God we seek? We do so most clearly in the faces of the vulnerable, the poor, the helpless, the child-like. It is relatively easy to resist the demands of the wealthy, successful, and self-sufficient. In point of fact, we are likely to feel resentment toward them. But the lowly, the needy, the weak — how can we turn away from them? They draw us — as a baby does — out of our self-preoccupation and into the space of real love. This is undoubtedly why so many of the saints — Francis of Assisi, Elizabeth of Hungary, John Chrysostom, Mother Teresa of Kolkata, to name just a few — were drawn to the service of the poor.



## WORD ON FIRE

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

I'm sure that most of those who read these words gather with your families for a Christmas celebration at some point in the season. Everyone will be there: Mom and Dad, cousins, uncles and aunts, perhaps grandparents and great-grandparents, some friends who find themselves away from home. There will be lots of food, lots of laughter, plenty of lively conversations, most likely a fierce political argument or two. The extroverts will be having a splendid time; the introverts will find all of it a little more challenging. I would be willing to bet that at most of these gatherings, at some point, a baby will be brought into the room: the new son, grandson, great-grandson, cousin, nephew, what have you. Could I urge you this year to be particularly attentive to what that baby does to everyone, to notice the magnetic power he has over the entire motley crew? And then I would invite you to remember that the reason you are gathering at all is to celebrate the baby who is God. And finally, permit yourself to be attracted by the peculiar magnetism of that divine child.

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

## ERLANDSON, from page 20

are holding in our arms becomes in a blink an energetic toddler racing around the living room with no time for embraces, and in another blink heads out the door.

This is the season of new birth. We celebrate the arrival of the Christ Child. We celebrate the arrival of a new year, a time of changes wished and fresh

resolutions. In the darkest days of winter, we are filled with new hope, just as when we hold that new child.

And the lesson for all of us is Emmanuel: "God is with us." Amid the births and deaths, the losses, the changes, the new beginnings and the last chapters, God is with us. Some of us greet change with excitement, some with trepidation. Our faith tells us we are not alone.

## HALLENIUS, from page 20

of the person underneath, our habitual good actions display a new and more virtuous person to everyone we meet. But there is a fundamental difference here as well: as a piece of clothing, the religious habit itself does not change the person wearing it, whereas a habitual action does indeed modify our very soul — whether for virtue or for vice.

The Holy Spirit, whom we invoke when we pray the *Veri Creator Spiritus* on New Year's

Day, aids us to develop virtuous habits by showering us with His sevenfold gifts: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. The grace of fortitude is particularly helpful as we work to establish new habits, as it gives us the strength to persevere, particularly when we are not inclined to do so. For example, if I'm trying to develop the habit of waking up in the morning 20 minutes earlier to have time for private prayer, I will certainly need the gift of fortitude to

respond immediately despite my grogginess when my alarm rings (and not, hopefully, use this gift of strength to smash the dock).

As we begin 2023 together, my prayer for you is that "God, who has begun the good work in you, will bring it to fulfillment" (Philippians 1:6). Happy New Year!

Ken Hallenius is a syndicated radio host and podcaster living in South Bend. For more, visit [blog.hallenius.org](http://blog.hallenius.org).

# SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for January 8, 2023

Matthew 2:1-12

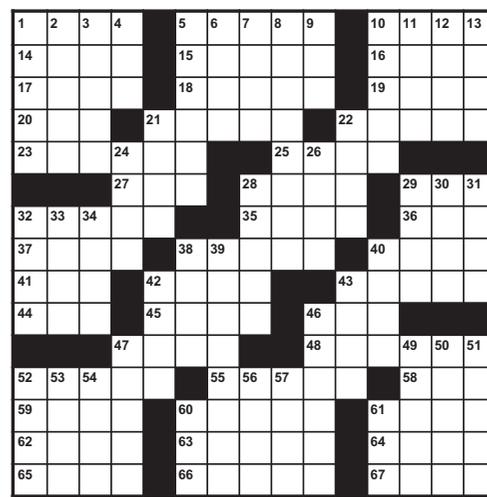
Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the feast of Epiphany, Cycle A: The Magi visit the Holy Land. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

HEROD	STAR	RISING
HOMAGE	CHIEF PRIESTS	PEOPLE
JUDEA	PROPHET	JUDAH
LEAST	SHEPHERD	SECRETLY
DILIGENTLY	CHILD	FOUND HIM
STOPPED	ENTERING	HOUSE
MARY	GIFTS	A DREAM

## A SEARCH

```

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



- 2 Farewell, from Jacques
- 3 Watery fruit
- 4 A step in ballet
- 5 "Behold, I am with you ..." (Mt 28:20)
- 6 Type of bag
- 7 Parisian bath
- 8 Writer
- 9 Nevertheless
- 10 Juan's derygman
- 11 Suffix (zool.)
- 12 Between white and black
- 13 Long fish
- 21 "O \_\_\_\_! We crown thee with blossoms today"
- 22 Classic Jags
- 24 705, to Cato
- 26 Lyric poems
- 28 Catholic Academy Award-winning actress Hayward

## ACROSS

- 1 "Your word is a \_\_\_\_ for my feet" (Ps 119:105)
- 5 Monastic press?
- 10 Leaf of a book
- 14 Notion
- 15 Contract
- 16 Land measure
- 17 Lubricates
- 18 Narrowest part of the torso
- 19 Something we all look for
- 20 Fascist leader?
- 21 Desert food
- 22 They are just what the doctor ordered
- 23 The Lord's Day
- 25 "For my \_\_\_\_ is easy, and my burden is light." (Mt 11:30)
- 27 Catholic international aid org.
- 28 KFC add-on
- 29 TV station
- 32 "Have \_\_\_\_ on us"
- 35 Employs
- 36 Smelter input
- 37 Sch. of higher learning
- 38 Communion wafers
- 40 Foretell

- 41 Religious instruction, formerly (abbr.)
  - 42 Conclusion
  - 43 Clerical color
  - 44 Half a laugh
  - 45 "Let's go"
  - 46 Gaslight, for one
  - 47 Per \_\_\_\_
  - 48 Priest and missionary to the Far East
  - 52 Veranda
  - 55 Joseph was sold into slavery here
  - 58 High-tech hosp. test
  - 59 *East of Eden* son
  - 60 Kitchen top
  - 61 French protest cry
  - 62 Part of Cassius' look, in *Julius Caesar*
  - 63 Rock the Church is built on
  - 64 Think
  - 65 Wan
  - 66 Winter Jack
  - 67 Prom attendee
- DOWN**
- 1 "So the king ordered Daniel to be brought and cast into the \_\_\_\_ den." (Dan 6:17)

- 29 NYC nightclub
- 30 Bric-a-\_\_\_\_
- 31 Search
- 32 Great in quantity
- 33 Differ ending
- 34 Astronaut Sally
- 38 Tarsus, to Paul
- 39 Distance measuring instrument
- 40 Belgrade resident
- 42 202, in ancient Rome
- 43 Spoiled child
- 46 Practiced
- 47 Catholic comedian DeVito
- 49 Inspire profoundly
- 50 Take off the board
- 51 He is \_\_\_\_!
- 52 Refrain syllables
- 53 Mars, to the Greeks
- 54 Genesis skipper
- 56 Reliable kind of guy
- 57 Dominican theologian Congar
- 60 Burn-prevention rating, briefly
- 61 Total (abbr.)

Answer key can be found on page 23



Tim Lilley

Diocese of Evansville Bishop Joseph M. Siegel concelebrates Mass on Saturday, Dec. 10, to bless and rededicate the renovated St. Joseph Church in Jasper, Indiana.

# Diocese of Evansville Bishop Rededicates St. Joseph Church

BY TIM LILLEY

JASPER, Ind. — Eight years.

That's how long it's been since St. Joseph Parish in Jasper began looking at the long-term needs of its church. Significant cosmetic and structural issues came to light, and the process of renovation actually began with a plan for addressing everything.

Parishioner Alan Hoffman, the parish representative for the renovation project, has been there every step of the way. "We had three goals with the effort," Hoffman said on Dec. 10, just before Bishop Joseph M. Siegel celebrated Mass to bless and rededicate St. Joseph Church and its altar. Eighteen priests of the Diocese of Evansville and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis concelebrated Mass with Bishop Siegel.

Hoffman said of the goals, "We wanted to preserve the history of the church, and we wanted to respect its heritage. We also wanted to make the renovation timeless."

Visitors need only take a few steps into the new gathering area to see that Hoffman and everyone who worked on the project succeeded.

Make no mistake; this was no small effort, and the team that saw it to completion reflected that. Dan Fritch, who coordinated the Our Time campaign to finance renovation of the church's exterior and interior, and Hoffman were the most visible members of the team. However, as he greeted people before Mass and talked about the project, Hoffman offered the same comment many times as people talked about the project. He said, "It took a village."

During his homily, Bishop Siegel recognized the whole of the parish community — dating to its founding in 1837, when what was then the Diocese of Vincennes was in its infancy. He mentioned Father Joseph Kundek, St. Mother Theodore Guerin, and all who followed them. He expressed his gratitude to the pastors and associates of St. Joseph during the project — Father Ray Brenner, Father Eugene Schmitt, Father Andrew Thomas, Father John Brosmer, Father Bill Traylor, Father Homero Rodriguez, and Benedictine Father Christian Raab. He thanked Hoffman, Fritch, and all of the volunteers who supported the effort.

Bishop Siegel also talked about his tremendous appreciation and respect for St. Joseph parishioners, who patiently supported the effort and gathered to celebrate Mass in the Kundek Center for 19 months while the church was closed for renovation.

To all involved, 19 months had to seem like an eternity. To provide some perspective, however, it amounts to a small percentage of St. Joseph Church's service. Completed in 1880 and consecrated in 1888, the church is 142 years old.

Tim Lilley is Editor of The Message.

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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

### Christmas at the Diocesan Museum

FORT WAYNE — A holiday photo exhibit of different parish altars decorated for Christmas is now at the Diocesan Museum, 1103 S. Calhoun St. The Museum is free and open to the public Tuesday thru Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Museum is located next to the Cathedral at 1103 S. Calhoun St., Fort Wayne. There is free parking available. Handicap entrance is on the south side of the building. Contact Kathy Imler at 260-424-1485 or [kimler@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:kimler@diocesefwsb.org).

### Epiphany Candlelight Choral Festival

MISHAWAKA — The Epiphany Candlelight Choral Festival resumes this year at St. Monica Church, 222 W. Mishawaka Ave., on Sunday, Jan. 8, at 4 p.m. Admission is canned goods for the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry. Choirs from St. Monica, St. Bavo, and St. Joseph will be featured with all of the choirs singing together as the finale. Assembly participation is part of the fun. A reception will follow in Columbus Hall. Contact St. Monica Parish Office at 574-255-2247 or [krohrer@stmonica-mish.org](mailto:krohrer@stmonica-mish.org) for information.

### Epiphany Concert at St. Therese Church

FORT WAYNE — In celebration of the Christmas Season, an Epiphany Concert will be held on Sunday, Jan. 8, at 7 p.m., at St. Therese Catholic Church, 2304 Lower Huntington Rd. The concert is free and open to the public.

### Eucharistic Formation Day

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades invites you to a day of catechesis and theology on the awesome gift and great mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist on Saturday, Jan. 14, at St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 4916 Trier Rd., from 9 a.m.

## REST IN PEACE

<b>Arcola</b> Carl Joseph Nicolosi, 100, St. Patrick	Mark DeVlieghe, 41, St. Joseph	Christine Jablonski, 81, Holy Family
<b>Auburn</b> Gloria Klein, 95, Immaculate Conception	Audrey Sobbecki, 88, St. Joseph	Henry Martin, 89, Holy Family
<b>Fort Wayne</b> Sister Thomas Jeanne Doriot, 85, St. Patrick	Deborah Weist, 60, St. Joseph	Gloriana Navarrete, 12, St. Adalbert
<b>Fort Wayne</b> Philip Roman, 85, St. Vincent de Paul	Helen Domnanovich, 86, Christ the King	<b>Wabash</b> Leonard D. Droom, 90, St. Bernard
<b>Mishawaka</b> Janice Bell, 72, St. Bavo	John Ehmann, 93, Holy Cross	Mary C. Lengel, 87, St. Bernard
	Barbara Ham, 70, Holy Family	Joseph Salvatore Savarino, 85, St. Bernard

to 3 p.m. The day will feature talks from Bishop Rhoades, a question and answer session, a Eucharistic Miracles exhibit, expo on informational materials, and more. The conference is open to all. Lunch is included. To register, go to [diocesefwsb.org/eucharist](http://diocesefwsb.org/eucharist) or email [info.revival@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:info.revival@diocesefwsb.org).

### Theology on Tap Offers Winter Sessions

FORT WAYNE — This winter's Theology on Tap Series, titled "Called by Name", offers a unique opportunity for young adults to build community and explore a deeper relationship with the Lord. Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 24, weekly talks at the Historic Women's Club in Fort Wayne will explore an in-depth understanding of our identity which is rooted in the Lord who calls us by name into communion and urges us on mission. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the talk begins at 7. Food and drink are available for purchase. The series will conclude on Feb. 21 with a 6:30 p.m. Mass at the USF Chapel followed by a party at the Brookside Manor on USF Campus. For information, visit [diocesefwsb.org/tot-fw](http://diocesefwsb.org/tot-fw).

### Pro Life Holy Hour with Bishop Rhoades

FORT WAYNE — Join Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades on Thursday, Jan. 19, from 8-9 p.m. for a Holy Hour to pray for the protection of all human life from conception to natural death at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 1105 Calhoun St. The Holy Hour will be live streamed for those who cannot attend in person. Contact Caty Burke at 260-422-4611 or [cburke@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:cburke@diocesefwsb.org).

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

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### 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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## CUPERTINO, from page 3

This game plan, according to Sullivan, consisted of out-rebounding the priests on both ends of the court and playing a fast brand of basketball. The priests responded with intensity and physicality, diving on the floor for loose balls and not shying away from contact when taking the ball inside the lane. They used this hard-nosed approach to their advantage, tying the game at 25-25 midway through the third quarter on a layup by Father Ben Landrigan.

However, that was as close as the priests would get. The seminarians outscored the priests 21-10 the rest of the way, icing the game with a number of drives to the hoop by Sullivan. Playing on his home floor, the former Saint Joseph standout and collegiate player at Ave Maria University put on a show, finishing with a game-high 21 points on 10-of-18 shooting, while adding 11 rebounds and 3 assists. He got plenty of help from Deacon Brian Florin, who also recorded a double-double with 11 points and a game-high 12 boards. Andy Barnes (8 points), Deacon Jake Schneider (4 points), and Eric Plude (2 points) rounded out the scoring for the seminarians.

Although the seminarians walked away with a 46-35 victory — their fourth win in five tries, knotting the all-time series at 4-4 — Sullivan was quick to commend his opponents and eventual teammates.

"They're our brothers in Christ," said Sullivan. "They're our fathers spiritually. We look up to them; we're trying to be them. But on the court, we're still able to have the friendly intense competition, which I think is good to show the guys — especially the young men in the stands — that we're still dudes, we can still get up here and play. But at the end of the day, we're all going to join each other in the pews and hopefully one day in the sacristy."

For the priests, Father Landrigan led the way with a team-high 12 points, while Father Terry Coonan scored 11 and connected on all four of his free throw attempts. Father Matthew Coonan chipped in 7 points and pulled down a team-high 7 rebounds, and Father Dan Niezer added 2 points and 5 boards. However, the largest cheer of the night came when Father Drew Curry drained a deep three-pointer in the third quarter — his only bucket of the game.

"Yeah, it was really cool," said Father Curry, giving a nod to some students from St. John Bosco parish who cheered him on with the help of some homemade cardboard cutouts of their pastor. "They're always fun like that; they're always bringing the party and the joy, and I appreciate that a lot. At



Photos by Eric Peat

For the second year in a row, the seminarians were victorious in their annual matchup against the diocesan priests. Pictured from left, Deacon Ryan Timossi, Deacon David Langford, Eric Plude, Andy Barnes, Deacon Jacob Schneider, Deacon Brian Florin, and Greenan Sullivan. This victory tied the all-time series at 4-4, with the seminarians winning four of the last five games.

Mass, I think people are rooting for me, but it's a little more of a formal, liturgical experience."

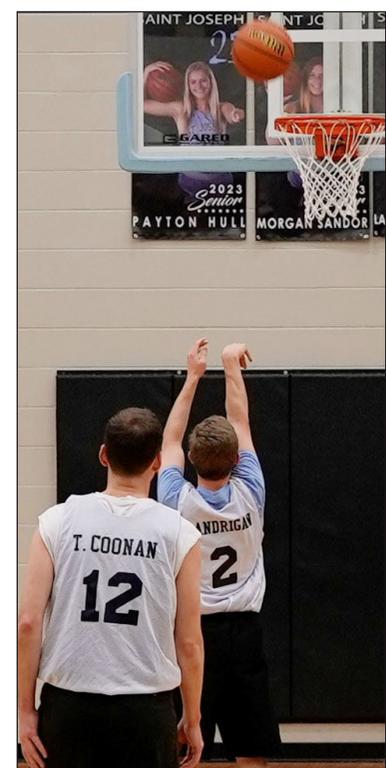
At the conclusion of the game, Father Budzinski again addressed the crowd, this time holding up the 2022-23 Diocesan seminarian poster and echoing the question printed across the top.

"Who is the next seminarian from your parish? Because if someone asks a young man, 'Hey, have you ever thought about being a priest?' or 'Have you ever thought about being a seminarian?' he's twice as likely to fill out an application. When three different people ask the same young man, 'Have you ever thought about being a priest?' he's five times more likely to fill out an application. So, I need your help not only praying for vocations, but asking for vocations."

He then closed the night by leading the entire gymnasium in singing the Salve Regina. Much like the game itself, this song served as a unifying display of the beauty and joy of the priesthood. Sullivan's advice to those discerning a religious vocation was a simple one: open your heart to the Lord.

"If you're thinking about it at all, you've got to give God a chance. Give God the chance first, and even if you do go to seminary and it doesn't work out, you're going to be much better for it. Your prayer life is going to be better; your relationship with God is going to be better. If you're a young man, that's the primary attribute you need as a father anyway."

Those interested in learning more about vocations to the priesthood or religious life can visit [diocesefwsb.org/vocations](http://diocesefwsb.org/vocations).



Seminarian Sam Martinez and Deacon Bobby Krisch spread awareness about vocations at the entrance to the gymnasium at Saint Joseph High School, South Bend.