A blessed Christmas to all

We approach the crib this year as always, on our knees, and with the realization that here something is asked of us. What is asked of us? The commandment of the New Testament linked also to the Old Testament; namely, that we love God and love our neighbor. 

As Pope Benedict says in his beautiful encyclical “God is Love” — it is a commandment, which comes from within us. This means we can only truly love God when we have encountered him in prayer. Pope Benedict gives the example of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta. It is from the Eucharist, from holy Communion, from her eucharistic adoration that her heart was drawn to the love of God. So must it be for us as we approach together the observance of our diocesan Jubilee.

Kneeling at the crib and in our Christmas Mass, we realize that Jesus Christ is within us, drawing us to himself and to God our Father. He is also always drawing us in love to our neighbor in need. Only when our hearts turn in prayer to our neighbor, especially our neighbor in need, has the mystery of Christmas begun to take hold.

Also, this Christmas our hearts and minds reach out to places where there is a terrible war. Let us think of Iraq, a land torn by killings every day.

When we kneel at the crib, we must keep in mind all those who suffer, and raise our hearts to God for them. A blessed Christmas to all — a Christmas where your heart is raised to God for him, and where he preached, a land now torn by strife and killings.

Let us pray for the Holy Land where Jesus was born and where he preached, a land now torn by killings every day.

When we kneel at the crib this year as always, on our knees, and with the realization that here something is asked of us. What is asked of us? The commandment of the New Testament linked also to the Old Testament; namely, that we love God and love our neighbor. 

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When we kneel at the crib, we must keep in mind all those who suffer, and raise our hearts to God for them. A blessed Christmas to all — a Christmas where your heart is raised to God for those in need.

— John M. D’Arcy

Bishop John M. D’Arcy

LAUNCHING 150TH JUBILEE

On Jan. 7, all registered Catholic households will receive a special issue of Today’s Catholic with details associated with 150th anniversary of the diocese. The window decal, shown above, will be included. Bishop John M. D’Arcy will launch the jubilee year at the 9:30 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 31, Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

Beatification date of Father Basil Moreau announced

NOTRE DAME — The Venerable Basile-Antoine Marie Moreau, CSC (1799-1873), founder of the Holy Cross Priests, Brothers and Sisters, will be beatified in Le Mans, France, the place of his ministry and death, on Saturday, Sept. 15, 2007.

The Vatican Secretariat of State announced the news to major superiors of Holy Cross congregations in a Dec. 7 letter.

As a priest of the diocese of Le Mans and a seminary professor, Basile Moreau established the Association of Holy Cross consisting of two societies, one of men (brothers and priests) and one of women, for the principal purposes of the education of youth and evangelization.

Today there are four Holy Cross congregations: the Congregation of Holy Cross (priests and brothers); and three congregations of women: the Marianites of Holy Cross (France); the Sisters of the Holy Cross (Indiana); and the Sisters of Holy Cross (Montreal).

Since their beginnings the four Holy Cross congregations have grown and spread throughout the world. In the South Bend area, the priests are perhaps best known in the community for the University of Notre Dame; the brothers, for Holy Cross College and Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame; and the sisters for Saint Mary’s College and Saint Joseph’s Regional Medical Center. All three congregations also minister in educational institutions and social and pastoral ministries in the local community.

The Holy Cross congregations also minister in North and South America, Africa and Asia, furthering the educational and pastoral vision of their founder.

On April 12, 2003, Pope John Paul II had issued the declaration and bestowed on the Holy Cross founder the title Venerable. The Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints recommended to Pope Benedict XVI on Nov. 8, 2005, that Basile Moreau be declared blessed, the next step toward canonization or sainthood.

Boston auxiliary bishops’ ordination provides a retreat

BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY

A day of joy

I first met John Dooher when he was a deacon at St. John’s Seminary. It was the fall of 1968, and I had just returned from Rome. Tumultuous days and yet here was a steady man who expected to be a priest in a few months and had a clear idea of who a priest is.

He later served as a part-time spiritual director at St. John’s Seminary and led the Office of Spiritual Development and gave many parish retreats and missions. He held several other difficult and demanding posts in the Archdiocese of Boston. I sent him to Creighton University to study spirituality, and he gobbled it up. He served as chair of the advisory board of the Our Sunday Visitor. But he always remained a parish priest.

So it was a special joy to fly to Boston overnight for his consecration as an auxiliary bishop. Another priest, who was in the seminary when I was on the faculty, was ordained bishop with him — Bob Hennessy, who had spent nine years as a missionary with the St. James Society in Peru, and was now a pastor in a parish of Hispanic Catholics in East Boston.

A nostalgic trip

It was in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross where I was ordained a priest and 18 years later a bishop-op. I could see the bench where my family had sat, including my dear mother and father. But it was not about me. It was about two exemplars priests being made bishops. I have always believed that attending the ordination of a bishop, not so much the installation of someone already a bishop, but the ordination, is for a bishop a kind of retreat.

I heard again the promises I made on the altar in that gesture which John Paul II made a promise about prayer — are you going to pray constantly? There is a promise about devotion to the poor, preaching the Gospel and celebrating the sacraments. These two young men — well, young to me anyway — prostrated themselves on the altar in that gesture which John Paul II always called “evocative.” With full manly hearts, they made their promises. There was the beautiful instruction and the imposition of hands first, of course, by Cardinal O’Malley, by the two co-consecrators and then by all the bishops. The Litany of the Saints was prayed devoutly.

There is a striking moment at the end of the ordination of a bishop. The newly-consecrated bishop walks through the cathedral with the two co-consecrators, fully robed and carrying his crosier, he blesses the people. I had done that before. It is always joy-ful. But I do not think I ever saw such intense emotion. You remember everything that the great Archdiocese of Boston has been through — all the suffering, all the pain, all the scandal. Now here were two worthy young priests who had accomplished much. Each one would have been delighted to remain a parish priest for the rest of his life. The explosion of applause, tears and joy was like nothing I had ever heard. It seemed to grow stronger as we approached the hundreds of priests who were present. It was in the creed we pray: the worst is over. Christ is still with us. Grace is everywhere.

Afterward, I told Cardinal O’Malley that I thought Boston was on the way back. I am sure they have many hills to climb, but it certainly was a joy to go back to the cathedral of my boyhood and be joined to so many priests, some of them my companions with them this moment of faith and joy. It was a privilege to be there and to be part of the procession of blessing with Bishop Dooher at the end of Mass. This was at the invitation of the cardinal due to the incapacity of one of the co-consecrators who was unable to take this long and thrilling walk.

This community, with their focus on perpetual adoration and prayer, also has a strong sense of the contemporary needs of the church.

A Christmas gift

For the second year in a row, the sisters who are in formation, that is, novices, postulants and others of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration came to my home in Fort Wayne to sing Christmas carols. It brightened up a rainy and cloudy afternoon. Of course, as it so happens in these days, they brought cookies, brownies and other sweets with them. The temptations of the season. But it was wonderful to sing carols with them for a little time for discussion and prayer.

This community, with their focus on perpertual adoration and prayer, also has a strong sense of the contemporary needs of the church. Their superiors have often approached me to see about the needs in the diocese and see how they can help. So, they are involved throughout the diocese in ministry to young adults, in campus ministry, in Marian High School, in parish schools and in various endeavors. It was a joy to sing with them a week before Christmas.

**Television Mass**

We had over 100 people at the University of Saint Francis Chapel to celebrate together the 20th anniversary of the television Mass, as we did earlier in South Bend. It was all arranged by our devoted and very capable director of communications, Vincent La Barbera. I was delighted that Christine Bonahoom-Nix, now a mother of two, was there. Christine served with great energy and ability as director of communications. I also thought of Mary Lombardo and Beth Lohmuller, who played a key part in the television Mass. Especially moving was a reflection at the end of Mass by Sean McBride. Sean is the director every week of the television Mass. It was his father, Ed McBride, the father also of my assistant, Maureen Schott, who was central to the establishment of the television Mass. Afterward, there was a delightful brunch at Saint Francis University dining room.

Of course, it was a day of mourning around the campus. The wonderful Saint Francis Cougars once again came to the edge of a national championship, only to be defeated in faraway Savannah, Tenn. But they will be back, and they will bring home a championship. My congratulations to Coach Donley and to Sister Elisse Kris, OSF.

The coming Jubilee

I am just polishing off a pastoral letter to help launch our Jubilee. I believe it will be in the next edition of this newspaper. The Jubilee begins officially with a Mass I will celebrate at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 31, 2006, and the following week with a Mass at our co-cathedral, St. Matthew Cathedral. I hope you are looking forward to all these wonderful events as I am. More about it in our next edition.

I will celebrate Mass on Christmas Eve at St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend, followed by the midnight Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne, which will be televised throughout the Fort Wayne area. On Christmas morning, I will celebrate the television Mass on WISE-TV. Do not forget, there will be a beautiful Mass from St. Adalbert Parish, South Bend, on Christmas at 6 a.m. and 1 p.m. on WNDU-TV. We are not forgetting our homebound parishioners. A blessed Christmas to you. See you in two weeks.
Papal peace message stresses human rights even when terrorism strikes

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Even when faced with a potential terrorist attack or in the midst of war, basic human rights must be respected, Pope Benedict XVI said in his message for World Peace Day 2007.

“Peace is based on respect for the rights of all,” the pope said in his message for the Jan. 1 commemoration.

The message, “The Human Person, the Heart of Peace,” was sent to heads of state around the world and was released Dec. 12 at a Vatican press conference.

The pope’s message included prayers for peace in war-torn countries, such as Lebanon; special concern for child victims of violence; a condemnation of continued nuclear proliferation; and concern over the potential for violent conflicts over energy resources.

“On this basis of any hope for peace, the pope said, is a recognition that each human person is created in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, endowed with a dignity and with rights that cannot be usurped by anyone.

“Most countries around the world have adopted the tenets of international humanitarian law, recognizing that it applies in situations of conflict as well as in peacetime, he said.

“Unfortunately, to say nothing of past cases, this has not been consistently implemented in certain recent situations of war,” he said.

Specifically citing the July war in Lebanon between Hezbollah militias and Israel, Pope Benedict said the duty to protect, assist and avoid involving the civilian population “was largely ignored.”

“Heart-rending situation in Lebanon and the new shape of conflicts, especially since the terrorist threat unleashed completely new forms of violence, demand that the international community reaffirm international humanitarian law and apply it to all present-day situations of armed conflict,” the pope said.

While recognizing the difficulties posed by the threat of terrorism, Pope Benedict said countries must conduct “a profound reflection on the ethical limits restricting the use of means and methods of guaranteeing internal security.”

Cardinal Renato Martinotti, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, told reporters at the Vatican Dec. 12 that the global fight against terrorism was the “Fourth World War. The Cold War was the third.”

He continued, “But this war does not have the parameters of the wars we experienced in history. This must push countries to ask, ‘What should we do?’ and to develop regulations that will provide security while guaranteeing respect for human rights.

“In his message, Pope Benedict also called for ‘a vision of the person untainted by ideological and cultural prejudices or by political and economic interests which can instill hatred and violence.’

“And he urged members of religious communities and their leaders to renew their commitment to dialogue and to denouncing ‘conceptions of God that would encourage intolerance and recourse to violence against others.’

“War in God’s name is never acceptable,” the pope said.

Throughout the document, Pope Benedict called for a universal recognition that basic human rights are God-given or natural; when an individual or a society decides it can determine who will enjoy which rights, both human dignity and peace are threatened, he said.

“As far as the right to life is concerned, we must denote its widespread violation in our societies,” the pope said.

“Alongsides the victims of armed conflicts, terrorism and the different forms of violence, there are the silent deaths caused by hunger, abortion, experimentation on human embryos and euthanasia,” he said.

“How can we fail to see in all this an attack on peace?” Pope Benedict asked.

“The pope also condemned as a violation of human dignity, and a threat to peace, situations in which individuals are not free to practice their religious faith, either because a national regime imposes one religion on its residents or because a ‘systematic cultural denigration of religious beliefs’ encourages people to hide their faith or limits their ability to express religious beliefs in public.

“In addition, he said, violations of ‘the natural equality of all persons’ also threaten peace.

“Obviously, he said, the fact that so many of the world’s people have no access to the essentials needed for life, including food, water, shelter and health ‘lies at the root of violent reactions and thus inflicts a terrible wound on peace.’

“But also, the pope said, ‘inadequate consideration for the condition of women helps to create instability in the fabric of society,’ especially when women are exploited or ‘where women are still firmly subordinated to the arbitrary decisions of men with grave consequences for their personal dignity and for the exercise of their fundamental freedoms.

“There can be no illusion of a peace, the pope said, which individuals are not free to practice their religious faith.

“Peace is an essential of faith” in all three religious traditions, they said.

“The only authentic way forward is a negotiated settlement based on justice, freedom, self-determination and respect for human rights,” the letter said.

“The path to peace requires a rejection of violence and an embrace of dialogue,” the letter said.


The Rev. Michael E. Livingston, president of the National Council of Churches, and leaders of 12 Orthodox or non-Pontifical denominations or national organizations also signed the letter and statement.

“Among the 12 Jewish signatories were Rabbi Harry K. Donziger, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism.

“The seven Muslim signatories were Rabbi Harry K. Donziger, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As the feast of Christmas draws near, we are called not only to remember that holy night when the Savior was born but, in a real sense, to relive it. We ponder in our hearts once again the incredible fact that the greatest gift we will ever receive has already been given — Jesus Christ, son of the living God. God loved us so much that he wanted to be close to us, to come among us, to become one of us, like us in all things but sin.

The central question that surrounds our celebration of Christmas must be this: will we welcome him as once Mary and Joseph and the shepherds and Wise Men welcomed him? The description of the Last Judgment in Matthew’s Gospel reminds us in a powerful way that we will be judged on how well we welcomed Christ in our midst, present especially in the little child, and in those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick and in prison.

Our diocese has a wonderful tradition of taking up a collection on Christmas Day for the work of Catholic Charities, as a concrete way of welcoming Christ in our midst. In the child developing in its mother’s womb, in the refugee hoping for a new life in our nation, in the poor family who has lost their home, we are called to see the face of Christ and to do whatever we can to welcome him. This is the heart of the work of Catholic Charities, which provides counseling and assistance and support to so many in our diocese, sharing in the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of people’s daily lives.

The feast of Christmas calls us to see the face of Christ in those who depend on others for their flourishing. In the name of the newborn Savior, who comes to us still in the least of his brothers and sisters, looking for our love and concern, I ask you to make a contribution to this important collection.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

Most Rev. John M. D’Arcy

Religious leaders declare hope for Mideast, urge strong U.S. role

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Leaders of 29 national Christian, Jewish and Muslim organizations issued a joint call for the Bush administration and the new Congress to make Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace a top foreign policy priority.

Peace is “an essential of faith” in all three religious traditions, they said.

They asked U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to meet with them to discuss the “urgent situation” in the Middle East and the need for “active, fair and firm leadership by the United States to promote a comprehensive peace in the region.

In a consensus statement and a letter to Rice, both dated Dec. 12 and released Dec. 14, the leaders expressed the belief that the current crisis can be turned into an opportunity for peace and that the current Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire offers hope for restarting negotiations.

“The crisis in Gaza and the war in Lebanon and northern Israel remind us that the status quo in the region is unwell and untenable,” they said in the seven-page statement. “Military action will not resolve the conflict.”

“Pope Benedict XVI

Rescue workers evacuate a wounded man from a building after it was hit by a rocket in Haifa, Israel. July 17. Pope Benedict XVI cited the war in Lebanon between Hezbollah militias and Israel as a situation where the duty to protect, assist and avoid involving the civilian population was “largely ignored.”

“War in God’s name is never acceptable.”

Most Rev. John M. D’Arcy

OF PHOTO/AVI KATZ, REUTERS

BY JERRY FITEAU

“Pope Benedict XVI

MIDEAST, PAGE 4
included Sayyd Muhammad Syeed, national director of the Islamic Society of North America’s Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances, and Naim Bag, secretary-general of the Islamic Circle of North America.

The leaders in December 2003 formed the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East and urged the United States to exercise leadership at the highest levels and take concrete steps to press for peace in the region. “We have been disappointed that the United States did not more actively pursue a ‘road map’ for peace which we felt held great promise,” the consensus statement said. “While much has changed since December 2003, our fundamental call for the United States to fully engage in the work for a two-state solution to the conflict has not.”

More than half of the consensus statement was devoted to specific recommendations to the United States regarding its own role in peace-building and how it should relate to Palestinian leaders, Israel and the United Nations “to create conditions that bring about serious negotiations on a two-state solution” of Israel and Palestine enjoying sovereignty and security.

They asked the government to build on the principles and practical ideas of earlier peace initiatives but also to explore bold new initiatives that could help bring the parties to negotiated solutions.

They called on the United States to help rebuild Lebanon’s civil infrastructure in the wake of the recent widespread bombing by Israel in retaliation for Hezbollah attacks from Lebanon into Israel.

In addition to encouraging a series of concrete peace initiatives by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, they said the United States should undertake diplomatic efforts to restart peace negotiations between Israel and Syria and between Israel and Lebanon. At a conference in September at which the consensus statement was developed, Cardinal McCarrick said, “We gather at a time of crisis in the Middle East. But times of crisis can also become opportunities for change.”

Rabbi Paul Menitoff, immediate past president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, said, “We know how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will end. There will be two states living side by side in peace with mutually acceptable arrangements for sharing Jerusalem and resolving the issue of refugees. The only question is how many more Israelis and Palestinians will die before this vision is realized.”

**BY CINDY WOODEN**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — After centuries of allowing themselves to grow apart, Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox must seek forgiveness and learn to work together for the good of the world, said Pope Benedict XVI and Orthodox Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and all Greece.

The pope formally welcomed the prime of the Orthodox Church of Greece to the Vatican Dec. 14, solemnly signing with him a commitment to preaching the Gospel together and to working for full communion.

“I want to live more intensely in the form of a figure-eight and is two and a half inches long. In their speeches to each other and in their declaration, the pope and the archbishop acknowledged how far apart their communities had grown over the centuries and how difficult their relations were, even as late as the 1990s.

Pope Benedict said Catholics and Orthodox should have learned from what the New Testament describes as the situation of the early church in the Greek city of Corinth, which knew “the difficulties and serious temptations of division.”

“In effect, a real danger appears that persons want to identify themselves with one group or another,” rather than with Christ, the pope said.

Through increased contacts and formal dialogue, the pope said, Catholics and Orthodox have come to value each other’s spiritual, liturgical and theological traditions and to see them as gifts from God. Pope Benedict and Archbishop Christodoulos vowed to use the newly rediscovered fraternity of their churches to ensure the future of Christianity in Europe and to address a host of modern challenges facing society.

The archbishop told the pope that “in our role as spiritual fathers of the pious members of our churches” the two of them must raise an alarm about “all that threatens the values and structures of European civilization deeply impregnated by the Christian faith.”

The “progressive de-Christianization of Europe,” attempts to exclude faith-based speech from the public arena, “religious fanaticism,” and attacks on human life, including research on embryos, call for religious leadership and moral guidance, Archbishop Christodoulos said.

Archbishop Christodoulos also thanked Pope Benedict for deciding to give a very important relic to the Greek church: links from the chain venerated as that which bound St. Paul during his imprisonment in Rome.

The Vatican said church documents from as early as the middle of the third century spoke of the chains kept at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, the site of St. Paul’s burial.

Over the centuries, links have been distributed to others for veneration; the gift to Archbishop Christodoulos consisted of two of the remaining nine links, each is in the form of a figure-eight and is two and a half inches long.
One-year anniversary Mass held at St. Patrick Church on Dec. 16

BY TIM JOHNSON

FORT WAYNE — “Let us pray for and protect our little children. In the face of a child, we see God.” Jesus Christ said “let the little children come to me.” So fathers and mothers, and teaching aunts and priests should protect little children.

These were the words of encouragement Bishop John M. D’Arcy offered to those who gathered on a Dec. 16 Mass of remembrance at St. Patrick Catholic Church, celebrated by Father Eloy Jimenez Zuniga, associate pastor. Bishop D’Arcy, who presided at the Mass, addressed the congregation.

“The Mass of remembrance was in observance of the one-year anniversary of the funeral Mass celebrated by Bishop D’Arcy of Ana Casas-Rios and her three daughters, Liliana Karen, 10; Katherine, 4; and Thammy Karolinnna, 20 months, and Alejandra Gutierrez, 10, who were all killed last year. ‘This was not the will of God,’ Bishop D’Arcy said.

Speaking with the help of a translator, Bishop D’Arcy spoke about the third Sunday of Advent.

“This is the third Sunday of Advent, a day of joy. Christmas is near – near the birth of Jesus Christ,” he said.

With the nearness of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, just days prior, Bishop D’Arcy told the congregation that he would like to celebrate that feast at St. Patrick Parish in Fort Wayne next year. This was met with the delight and applause from the congregation.

“Be sure to open your hearts to Jesus Christ at Christmas,” Bishop D’Arcy encouraged. "As St. John the Baptist tells us, we must repent of our sins. This is best done by going to the sacrament of penance. And with Mary, we open our hearts and ask Jesus Christ to come into our hearts.”

He concluded by wishing the community a merry Christmas.

“The power of Jesus Christ, we will someday make it to heaven with our beloved Alejandra and the others who were killed. Let us pray to Our Lady to make it so,” he said.

The congregation sang “Amigo,” a hymn that acknowledged the friendship of the bishop to the Latino community.

“You thank you for the beautiful hymn, I will keep it in my heart,” he told the congregation.

Through Sister Herodia, the family of Ana Casas thanked the St. Patrick community, Father Jack Overmyer, Father Eloy Jimenez Zuniga and Father Chau Pham, SVD, for their support through the year. The family also thanked Bishop D’Arcy for his spiritual support.

After Mass, balloons were launched by young and old outside of the front steps of St. Patrick Church.

An earlier memorial on Wednesday was coordinated through a partnership between the City of Fort Wayne and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Pope asks world to do more to meet needs of Iraqi refugees in Syria

BY JOHN THAVIS

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI appealed on behalf of Iraqi refugees in Syria, asking the international community to do more to meet their needs.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees estimated in October that 450,000 Iraqis had taken refuge in Syria, with at least 40,000 more arriving each month. Many of the refugees are Christians.

“I raise my prayer to the Lord, that he may give comfort to these brothers and sisters and stimulate generosity in the hearts of many,” he said.

The United Nations has estimated that up to 1.6 million Iraqis are now outside their country, most of them in Syria and Jordan. Tens of thousands who passed through those countries have moved on to Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, the Gulf states and Europe, the United Nations said.

In his main talk delivered to a large crowd in St. Peter’s Square, the pope asked Christians to think of the poor at Christmas — especially those “poor in joy.”

“Let us think of our brothers and sisters who, especially in the Middle East, in some areas of Africa and in other parts of the world, are living through the drama of war: What joy can they experience? What will their Christmas be like?” he said.

The pope also recalled the many sick and lonely people who may feel abandoned at Christmas. People should figure out a way to share joy the joy of Christmas with them, while respecting their suffering, he said.

But he said it was not only the sick and aged who need attention. He said that many people, especially the young, have lost the true sense of joy in their lives and look for it in the wrong places: in alcohol and drugs, in consumerism, in false entertainment and in “the exasperated search for self-affirmation and success.”

He said the church’s invitation to share in the joy of Christmas is not something that should alienate people or merely soothe their feelings. Instead, he said, it is a call to internal renewal that can lead to salvation.
A shaft of light falls on a woman as she walks through the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank, Dec. 17. The church is built over the site traditionally believed to be the birthplace of Jesus.

**WOMAN WALKS THROUGH CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY**

 крайне неэффективное в вопросах Дарфура. Более того, он добавил, что Ватикан не подписал бы документ, в котором говорится о том, что он несет ответственность за жертвы Холокоста. Среди прочего, говорится о том, что похищение и вторжение в Дарфуре являются преступлениями против человечности, на которые Ватикан не может уйти от ответственности.

**VATICAN OFFICIAL: WORLD HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE IN HELPING DARFUR**

**ROME (CNS) —** The International community has failed to act effectively in putting an end to the tragic conflict and “horrible violation of human rights” taking place in the Darfur region of western Sudan, a Vatican official said. The “killing of children, sexual abuse and rape of girls and women, forced uprooting of (the) population, burning of villages, attacks on internally-displaced-people camps” are all part of the human and environmental disaster continuing to unfold in the region, said Archbishop Silvano Tomasi. The Vatican’s representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva spoke Dec. 12 at an emergency session of the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva on the human rights situation in Darfur. Catholic News Service in Rome obtained a copy of his text. The crisis under discussion has proved “frustrating and disappointing,” the Vatican envoy said. “The international community’s response to the humanitarian and human rights crisis in Darfur has not been effective in putting an end to the killings, not wrangling or controversy should be concrete measures and commercial interests,” he said.

**Baltimore cardinal condemns ‘revisionist history’ of Holocaust**

**WASHINGTON (CNS) —** Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore condemned “revisionist history” of the Holocaust, the systematic efforts by Nazis during World War II to do away with Jews as also known as the Shoah, a Hebrew word meaning destruction or catastrophe. The cardinal took particular exception to a Dec. 12 conference in Tehran during which speakers “sought to diminish the scope of the Holocaust.” Speakers at the conference in Tehran included David Duke, former U.S. leader of the Ku Klux Klan, and several authors who have written books denouncing the Holocaust for denying the Nazis' mass murder of European Jews. Cardinal Keeler, president of the Concilium of Catholic-Jewish relations for the U.S. bishops, condemned “revisionist history” that seeks to minimize the horror of the Holocaust, saying that the conference in Tehran was “an attempt to diminish the scope of the Holocaust.” The cardinal said, “The crisis under discussion has proved frustrating and disappointing.”

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Students at St. Joseph School, Mishawaka, purchased, wrapped and sent gifts for 75 patients at Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center's Healthy Family Center.

**Most Precious Blood School places third in We The People competition**

**FORT WAYNE** — Most Precious Blood School eighth graders placed third in the We the People City-wide competition.

“The past two years we have placed higher than the previous years,” said Ann Baker, eighth grade social studies teacher. “This year we placed third, which is a great accomplishment.”

The first-place winners go on to the state competition to compete against other congressional districts in Indiana.

The “We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution” program stresses civic understanding as well as civic responsibility with the students.

The culminating activity is a mock congressional hearing in which students “testify” before a panel of judges. The class, working in cooperative teams, identified a social issue, created a proposal and presented it to a panel of judges. The judges were scored on their presentation and knowledge of the topics.

This year’s winners were: third place — Most Precious Blood School; second place — Memorial Latin School; and first place — Bishop Dwenger High School.

**Make a Difference Michiana assists charity**

**SOUTH BEND** — Make a Difference Michiana encourages the community to make a donation to their favorite charity this holiday season.

“It’s the season of giving, and local nonprofits need the community’s support. We live in a very generous community. People are willing to help if you explain the need and show them a way,” suggests Mary Dunbar, president and founder of Make a Difference Michiana.

“Visitors to the Make a Difference Web site can read about the services students in preschool through eighth grade. Full day kindergarten and full or half day preschool options are available. Most Precious Blood School is located at 1529 Barholt St., Fort Wayne. Visit the Web site at www.mostpreciousblood.org for more information.

**Students more engaged at Saint Mary’s College**

**NOTRE DAME** — A report recently released by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) shows that Saint Mary’s College students are more engaged, on average, than those at peer institutions (as classified by Carnegie) and those at other women’s colleges.

Student engagement is a vital component to the success and retention of college students. A key finding from the 2006 NSSE report states that “Student engagement is positively related to grades and to persistence between the first and second year of college.”

Another key finding shows that students at liberal arts colleges, like Saint Mary’s, “more often participate in class discussions and view their faculty more positively than students at other institutions.”

Survey results for Saint Mary’s align with this finding.

Each of the 523 participating schools was measured against five benchmarks of effective education practice: 1) level of academic challenge; 2) active and collaborative learning; 3) student-faculty interaction; 4) enriching educational experiences; and 5) supportive campus environment. In each of those categories, Saint Mary’s scored higher — sometimes significantly higher — than its peers.

“This survey measures things that truly matter to student learning and, therefore, our effectiveness as a teaching institution,” says Dr. Carol Ann Mooney, president of Saint Mary’s College. “The benchmarks used by NSSE are associated with many desired outcomes of college.”

**A World at Prayer is a World at Peace**

**FORT WAYNE** — St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne, will host John Angotti in concert on Friday, Dec. 29, at 7 p.m. A free will donation will be taken.

On Dec. 31, Saint Vincent will host a New Year’s Eve party featuring Angotti from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Price is $25 per person in advance and includes party favors, food and drink. Champagne at midnight and a cash bar.

Angotti has recently been recognized with three UMCVA (United Catholic Music and Video Association) Awards including Male Vocalist of the Year. For information about Angotti, visit www.johnangotti.com.

For information about the concert, contact Tony Andorfer at (260) 498-3537, ext. 210.

Special accommodations are available. Ann Baker, eighth grade social studies teacher, said, “We want to ensure that all students can hear the presentation, regardless of hearing or vision disabilities.”

**Christmas cheer around the diocese**

Students from St. Joseph Mishawaka Parish provide Healthy Family Center with Christmas cheer

**MISHAWAKA** — “This is the season for giving and parishioners and students of St. Joseph Mishawaka Catholic Church/School answered the Christmas bell for Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center’s Healthy Family Center. As a result of the generosity, 75 patients from the Healthy Family Center will receive Christmas presents they would otherwise not be able to enjoy.

A Christmas tree was placed in St. Joseph Church at the beginning of the Advent season. The tree had paper ornaments with Christmas gift ideas for the 75 patients. Parishioners took the ornaments and purchased the suggested items.

The patients received two presents with a value totaling $25. With 75 patients, the total present value came to $3,750.

Boys and Girls Scouts, gift from kindergarten through eighth grade at St. Joseph Elementary, then spent part of a day wrapping all the gifts and later delivered them to the Healthy Family Center for the patients.

“The generosity is inspiring,” said Bonnie Bejma, director of Clinic Operations at the Healthy Family Center. “Obviously, we could not have done this without the St. Joseph Church community. And a big thank you to the Healthy Family Center’s Kathy Christiansen and Christine Browns who helped coordinate this event. It is an enormous amount of time and effort on everyone’s part.”

This is the fourth year Healthy Family Center and St. Joseph Church have collaborated on this gift giving event.

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The culminating activity is a mock congressional hearing in which students “testify” before a panel of judges. The class, working in cooperative teams, identified a social issue, created a proposal and presented it to a panel of judges. The judges were scored on their presentation and knowledge of the topics.

“We The People competition was fun. Sure it was a lot of work, but in the end I learned a lot about government that I never knew before,” said Alexa Hamel.

The active participation of members of Congress, as well as support from professional, business and community organizations, sponsor the program across the nation. The program in the third congressional district is one of the largest participating districts.

“My favorite topic was about the freedom of religion especially in the schools. I liked learning about this because we are dealing with that lot today especially with the prayer in school and the Pledge of Allegiance with the statement of ‘under God’,” said Sunhine Moss.

Most Precious Blood School services students in preschool through eighth grade. Full day kindergarten and full or half day preschool options are available. Most Precious Blood School is located at 1529 Barholt St., Fort Wayne. Visit the Web site at www.mostpreciousblood.org for more information.

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“The Rosary Bowl carries for-
TV Mass celebrates anniversary in Fort Wayne

Twenty years ago, Vince Tippmann donated funds, which were used by Bishop John M. D'Arcy, to put the TV Mass on the air in Fort Wayne. Now celebrating its 20th anniversary, Bishop D'Arcy was the celebrant of the Dec. 17 Mass in Fort Wayne on WISE-TV, Channel 33. Volunteers were honored at a luncheon after the Mass, which is transmitted from the chapel at the University of Saint Francis.

Some of the TV Mass volunteers who run the cameras include John Henry, Andrew Lamping, John Bobay, Tess Steffen, Amber Warnick and Christopher Lamping. The TV Mass operates under the diocesan Office of Communications. Vince LaBarbera and his assistant Joanne Summers coordinate the scheduling of priests and parishes in South Bend and Fort Wayne.

In the annual Advent drive, Bishop Luers students, teachers and staff collected items to be donated to the Christ Child Society in December. They collected a variety of newborn items along with 148 packages of diapers. The students were given the opportunity to wear jeans to school on Friday, Dec. 15, if they donated a baby item or $2. Over $800 was collected along with the baby items. Christ Child Society uses these baby items throughout the year in preparing layettes for new mothers in need.
Social worker offers tips when visiting loved ones in nursing home

BY LISA PITSCH

If you are planning to visit a relative or friend in a nursing home over the holidays, follow these suggestions to help ensure positive interactions.

**General tips**

- Call ahead to the unit where the person resides, to find out the best time of day to visit.
- Plan to visit when you are not rushed for time.
- Bring something with you: flowers and a vase, a photo album, a magazine or newspaper, a guest book for visitors to sign, a favorite music tape or CD, or a special food treat.
- Position yourself at eye level, face to face. Ensure you are close enough and speaking loudly enough that the person can adequately see and hear you.
- Actively listen to what the person has to tell you. Express interest in their daily activities, and allow them to vent their feelings about their situation.
- Encourage reminiscing about pleasant events, especially those from past holidays.
- Tell some jokes or a funny true story, or bring in a humorous videotape to watch together.
- If conversation is difficult or impossible, share news about family, friends and current events, read aloud or listen to music together. Sit in the lobby and people-watch. And learn to become comfortable with silence.
- Check the recreational activities schedule for special events, such as a holiday bazaar or a visiting choir — and accompany the person you visit to one of them. Also check if there’s a Mass you could attend together.
- Telephone between visits if you can’t get in as often as you’d like.

**Visiting the person with dementia**

Visiting a person who is cognitively impaired can be particularly challenging. You may not be able to relate with them in the usual ways. Visits can still be meaningful, however, once you adjust your expectations and learn new ways of interacting. Here are some guidelines:

- Visit alone if possible. It is much easier for the person to deal with one visitor at a time. If you find visits awkward, though, bring along a friend for moral support.
- Come prepared for any possible mood. Or, call ahead and ask what kind of day the person is having. If it’s a bad one, postpone your visit.
- Approach the person slowly and from the front, giving them time to see you coming. Make eye contact, and use touch as appropriate.
- Address the person by name, and identify yourself as well. Be prepared that they may not recognize you or may not recall previous visits. Rest assured this does not make your presence any less valuable. Your visits not only provide mental stimulation, they also validate the person as a unique and worthwhile individual.
- Find a quiet place to visit in order to avoid distractions, since over-stimulation leads to agitation.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Use familiar words and simple sentences. Avoid clichés. Talk in a calm voice, using a low-pitched tone.
- Ask simple questions that require a short answer — preferably yes or no. Avoid posing questions that challenge long-term memory, such as “What did you do today?”
- Use body language — gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice — to help get your message across.
- Don’t argue when the person has facts confused. If a conversa- tion appears to be causing frustration, change the subject. If they become restless during an activity, try something else.

**Ideas for activities**

- Watch home movies or rent a favorite movie — perhaps a holiday classic.
- Decorate the room: bring in pictures, a calendar, a sun-catcher for the window, a plant, special knickknacks or a seasonal decoration.
- Share a project, such as sorting through family photos.
- Look through picture books or albums that reflect past events.
- Write a letter to someone special.
- Play a card game or board game.
- Play a musical instrument.
- Give a manicure or set hair.
- Give a hand or foot massage.
- Bring your pet in to visit (find out the facility’s policy first).
- Bring children or grandchildren with you.

South Bend Serrans host seminarians’ luncheon

SOUTH BEND — The Serra Club of South Bend will host the traditional Christmas luncheon for diocesan seminarians and their families on Thursday, Dec. 28, at Holy Family Parish.

President Ronald Moser said invitations for the event have been extended to 18 seminarians and their families.

The luncheon will begin at 10:45 a.m. with the rosary. Bishop John M. D’Arcy will celebrate Mass. The luncheon for the seminarians, families, guests and the Serrans will be held in the Holy Family School cafeteria. Father Bernard Galic, director of vocations in the diocese and pastor of Holy Family Church, and Moser will be speakers.

— EJD

St. Vincent School celebrates with pie

BY KRISTI WARD

ELKHART — After a successful pie sale at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Elkhart, a couple of very special pies were reserved for two very special people. These pies were meant to be enjoyed — but not by eating.

Instead, parents, teachers and students gathered to watch two top pie sellers from St. Vincent School do something most kids can only dream about — a Three Stooges pie-throwing idea with the pie-throwing idea as Hardy directed his pie at Shaw. To the delight of everyone present, Quinn and Shaw then faced each other, bowed politely, and aimed their pies at each other.

School pie sale organizers Teresa Zinich and Gloria Taylor said the fundraiser was held to help the Rosary Society. A total of 502 pies were sold, one third of those by students at the school. Funds earned will go to the Rosary Society’s treasury to purchase needed sacristy and church supplies.

Zinich said they came up with the pie-throwing idea as a way to make the fundraiser fun. “And it was great — it was perfect. I think they loved it.”

She said of the students. Shaw said she enjoyed the experience. “They didn’t ask me to do it,” she said. “I volunteered — I said I would do it because the kids would love to throw a pie at me.”

Quinn has a habit of coming up with unique ways to motivate her students. Kissing a cow and letting students decorate her with Silly String, make-up and hair paint for a day are some of her past rewards.

“I’m really into getting these kids into service.” Quinn said. “I don’t know if that’s what they see selling pies as, but I’ll do anything — well, almost anything — to help them learn that.”

In the aftermath of a pie-throwing event to celebrate a successful pie sale, from right, St. Vincent preschooler Noah Hardy, playground supervisor Jeannie Shaw, principal Donna Quinn and top pie salesman fourth grader Morgan Matthew enjoy a messy moment of fun.

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Who's birthday is it anyway?

Believe it or not but I hate a lot about this time of the year. People are running around frantically buying things they often cannot afford. Christmas cards are playing in stores even before the Halloween decorations are taken down and people put up their Christmas trees earlier and earlier. The crowds are more and more and some people will get up at 5 a.m. to stand in line for store Christmas specials. And the examples go on and on. I get sick just thinking about it. I want to shout at the top of my lungs, “Who’s birthday is it anyway?”

Now, don’t get me wrong. I am not against Christmas or giving gifts. A gift is an expression of appreciation and love. However, many are buying one another or giving gifts only because someone else is giving them to us seems ridiculous.

In this country we have the tendency to think that more is better. Our culture reeks with materialism. Our wants have become our needs. Many want the best and the latest. Children bound their parents and Santa for the most popular toys that usually cost a great deal. I know parents who agonize because they can’t afford these items and often go into debt just to give their children what “everybody else” is getting.

There is a saying that “Jesus is the reason for the season.” We often, even Christians, lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. After all, it is Christ’s birthday, not ours. The gifts we do give should be expressions of God’s love that gave us Jesus.

Right now I can almost read the minds of those who bother to read this column. “What could I possibly do to go against the mainstream? How can I avoid being sucked into what is happening around me?” These are good questions, ones that I also ask myself. The following are a few suggestions that might help us all.

One is to examine our gift giving. Who are the people on our Christmas lists and why do we give them gifts? Is it because we think we have to or because we want to show our love? Does a more expensive gift show more love than an inexpensive one?

Reinforce with our families, especially children, that the joy of Christmas does not depend on how many presents we receive. By spoiling our kids we are continuing to promote our materialistic culture. Suggest to children and to our young adults that gifts don’t always have to be things. How about promising to shovel someone’s driveway and sidewalks this winter without expecting to be paid or get a friend or relative some nights of free babysitting, etc.? Use your imagination. Time is a precious gift. We can also make our gifts. It is a way of really putting ourselves into our giving. If we are not into crafts, how about baking some goodies like cookies or candy to give our loved ones? It is something our children can do also. I know it means a lot to me when I know someone has taken the precious time to do something special for me.

Another Christmas gift is to send Christmas cards to people we will not see during the holidays. We share the gift of our time by letting friends know what is going on in our lives. As far as I am concerned, don’t waste a stamp if all you are going to do is sign your name. (Oops, lots of people are probably going to drop me off their Christmas card list.) Also, remember that the church’s Christmas season goes far beyond Dec. 25 so the cards don’t have to make it to their destinations by that day.

Changing our materialistic way of celebrating Christmas will not happen overnight, but each of us can do our part to keep in focus just whose birthday we celebrate and perhaps remind others who are caught up in the frenzy. It will also help us to celebrate the meaning of Advent and relieve a lot of stress so we can truly enjoy this beautiful season.

Today’s Catholic contributor reflects on grandparents’ special Christmas Eve

BY LISA KOCHANOWSKI

SOUTH BEND — While most children’s early explanation of Christmas is the birth of the baby Jesus, mine was a talk about the meaning of Christmas and how Christmas Eve is the day Dziadzi and Babci came to this country.

Julian and Maria Walesiewicz came to the United States on Christmas Eve in 1949. Known to me as Babci (grandmother in Polish) and Dziadzi (grandfather in Polish), they had spent years as slaves in the German concentration camps when the German army invaded Poland before being released to America. Accompanying my grandparents to America was my then 3 year old aunt Casmira (Cassie).

Being strong, devout Catholics made their arrival to a new free life even more special. They had endured years of torture and persecution at the hands of mad men, and they were brought to freedom on the birth of the Savior of the world.

What could be more poetic? Each year, my family thanks God for giving us his only son and says an extra thank you for bringing two special people home.

Dziadzi’s uncle Chester Walesiewicz, who was president of the Polish-American Central Civic Committee, sponsored my grandparents to come to this country and helped them find a place to live and work.

Dziadzi was 33 years old when he came to this country. He fought in the Polish army when World War II started. The Russians captured him at Drodzyń in eastern Poland while the Polish army opposed both the Nazis and the Reds as they partitioned Poland in September 1939. He was released by the Russians to the Germans in exchange for Ukrainian prisoners of war. He remained in a war prison until April 27, 1944, when he regained civilian status.

My grandparents went through years of pure agony in the concentration camps and never talk about those years. They were so focused on being alive that they didn’t think much about those years. The little bits I have heard have been horrific and I just thank God every day for letting them survive those tumultuous times.

Things like digging their own graves, watching people die at their feet, constantly worrying about being gassed and being witness to physical degradation are just some of the horrors they had to witness.

Germany. The pair met at German concentration camp and were married while living in slavery. Shortly after they wed, they had my aunt Cassie, who lived with them at the camp.

I am not much older now than my grandmother was then, and just a little younger than my grandfather was when he first came to this country. God has blessed me with a loving husband of 10 years and two beautiful children; Kyle, 7, and Andrew, 3. I cannot imagine how overwhelming they felt at being young married couple, with a young child living in a place far from their native land.

Each day I wake up, hustle the kids off to school and myself to work in a life that has become very routine. At this time of year, I always find myself stepping back and thinking about what my grandparents’ life was like some 57 years ago.

My grandparents went through years of pure agony in the concentration camps and never talk about those years. The little bits I have heard have been horrific and I just thank God every day for letting them survive those tumultuous times.

Things like digging their own graves, watching people die at their feet, constantly worrying about being gassed and being witness to physical degradation are just some of the horrors they had to witness.

Babci told me once that she remembers the day she came to the states. There was a man, selling hot dogs on the street corner, and my aunt started to cry because she was hungry, but they had no money to buy any food.

They came to a place that was better than slavery, but it was filled with a great deal of obstacles — from proper employment to constant language barriers. In the end, they built a home filled with love, three children, family and lots of good friends.

When I was a child I use to smile when I saw my grandparents tear up on Christmas Eve, but as an adult I find myself not just smiling but also tearing up on Christmas Eve. It saddens me that I cannot always spend Christmas Eve with my grandparents, but they are always close to my mind and my heart each and every year.

When I became a mother, I decided that helping my children understand Catholic teachings of the holidays was important. Even more important to me, is making sure that on Christmas Eve my sons understand that our world got the baby Jesus and our family got a special Babci and Dziadzi. I hope that they too will pass this story on to their children and their grandchildren.

Naz Drowie, Dziadzi and Babci, Health and happiness always.
Tradition of Christmas Eve ‘holy bread’ bonds Polish families

Lou Ciesielski looks over at his wife, Jeanette’s cookbook while he holds the family Oplatek that will be used this Christmas. Lou remembers the tradition back to his childhood. He and his wife cherish their family traditions which include the small, thin, rectangular piece of wafer with the design of the Nativity pressed in to it.

“It brings out that if there are all feelings between one another, the sharing offers forgiveness and acceptance of one another. This is a holy bread. It’s the bonding of the families that come together,” said Lou who noted that the sharing is to bring people back to starting anew. The sharing continues until everyone has individually greeted each person who is there.

The tradition, which Lou and Jeanette cherish, continues with family members near and far. Since their children have moved away from the area, they send Oplatek to whoever cannot come to celebrate the meal together. This Christmas season, they hope to carry on their tradition of breaking oplatek with their young granddaughter Sara, 9, who will be coming to visit.

Christmas vigil

Lou and his wife, Jeanette, noted that along with the Oplatek, the family of Polish heritage also shared the Wigilia meal. Traditional foods included fish, kutia, a mix of wheat and honey and poppy seed cake. This meal would be large since there was a lasting fast during Advent from meat.

“We also keep an extra plate at our table for unexpected guests who come by,” they noted during that they would be received into their home just as Jesus would have welcomed them.

After the meal, there were the singing of Christmas carols, Koledy, in preparation for the entire family’s participation in the parish Midnight Mass (Pasterka). The season does not end with Christmas, but rather extends from the vigil to the feast of the Baptism of the Lord with times set aside for visiting with family and friends and more sharing of the Christmas wafer.

Lou noted that on or near the Feast of the Epiphany, older members of the family are encouraged to bless their home with their entire family present and to mark the lintel (top) of the doorway with the initials of the Three Kings and the Year of the Lord — 20+K+M+B+07 — which indicates to those entering that they are entering a Catholic home.

Parishes offer roster of Christmas Mass times

The Office of Catechesis solicited parishes for Mass times for Christmas. The following parishes responded with information.

South Bend — “You are sharing something very special. It means a lot to us.” said Lou and Jeanette Ciesielski of their Polish tradition of sharing Oplatek, pronounced usu-powah-tek or Koleja in Polish during the Christmas season.

Oplatek, which is not shared other times of the year but can be shared anytime during the Christmas season, is usually purchased or by donation depending on the church from the parish office.

The wafers are usually the size of a folded napkin and include mostly white oplatek and one pink. Legend has it that the pink wafer is usually shared with the animals and pets of the household. This legend also has it that the animals who share the Oplatek talk to each other at midnight on Christmas.

Polish in heritage, the St. Adalbert parishioner remembers the tradition of sharing the Christmas wafer since he was a child noting that usually the wafer is shared on Christmas Eve. “A child or the youngest member of the family, looks for the appearance of the first star,” he said. After the star is seen, he or she tells the family and the Wigilia, or vigil begins. “It is must have a holy get together,” said Lou who said that the head of the family would begin sharing of the Oplatek. The oldest member would usually take a plate or platter on which the wafer was served. If it was a large wafer, it would be broken in to enough pieces so that every family member would receive a piece to share with every other family member. The plate was then offered by him to each member to take a piece. After everyone would receive a wafer, the sharing would begin.

“The head of the household would start and would mention what the wafer means,” said Lou who said that the father would offer his piece to another family member, often the youngest. Each person would break off a small piece of the other’s wafer to consume, offering wishes for happiness and health, followed by a kiss or hug.

“I want you to become like children and think of the first Christmas.” added Sister Agnes in the reflective Advent talk. Everyone should make sure their crite or is up and in a prominent place in their home that they should not “put the baby Jesus in yet” she noted. Instead, “sit and think about the place in your hearts of Mary, Joseph, of that wonderful scene, that first Christmas.” It is not by a rare coincidence that the liturgical year is the way it is, explained Sister Agnes who pointed out that we are now especially now noticing the darkness outside.

“This time of year, all start to notice the darkness. It’s not by accident that the church’s liturgi- cal year plays into it. Right now, we’re celebrating the darkest part of human history before Christ came,” she said adding that up until around Dec. 21 or 22, the days are long and dark. After Christmas, a day, which she said was chosen because it was the

Parishes offer roster of Christmas Mass times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fort Wayne-Allen County</th>
<th>Sunday, Dec. 24</th>
<th>Monday Dec. 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Precious Blood</td>
<td>5 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 10:30 p.m.</td>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Charles Borromeo</td>
<td>4 p.m. 6:30 p.m. (Children’s Mass) Midnight Mass (music at 11:30 p.m.)</td>
<td>9 a.m. 11 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John the Baptist, FW</td>
<td>4:30 p.m. Midnight Mass</td>
<td>8 a.m. 10:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph, Brooklyn</td>
<td>5 p.m. (Children’s Mass) Midnight Mass (bilingual, concert at 11:15 a.m.)</td>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Jude</td>
<td>5 p.m. 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>9 a.m. 11 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick, Arcola</td>
<td>4 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 6 p.m. (Youth Mass) Midnight Mass</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
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North of Fort Wayne

| St. Gaspar, Rome City  | 4 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 10:30 p.m. (choir at 10 p.m.) | 9 a.m. 10:30 a.m. |
| St. Paul of the Cross, Columbia City | 5 p.m. (Children’s Mass) Midnight Mass (music at 11:30 p.m.) | 9 a.m. |

South of Fort Wayne

| St. Bernard, Wabash    | 5:30 p.m. (Children’s Mass) Midnight Mass (music at 11:30 p.m.) | 9 a.m. |
| St. Joseph, Bluffton    | 5 p.m. (children’s pageant at 4:15 p.m.) Midnight Mass (music at 11:30 p.m.) | 9 a.m. |
| St. Mary, Huntington    | 5:15 p.m. Midnight Mass | 8 a.m. 10:30 a.m. |
| St. Mary/Assumption, Decatur | 4 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 10 p.m. (music at 9:30 p.m.) | 8 a.m. 9:30 a.m. |
| Ss. Peter and Paul, Huntington | 5 p.m. | 8 a.m. 10 a.m. |

South Bend and St. Joseph County

| Christ the King         | 4 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 6 p.m. Midnight Mass | 9 a.m. 11 a.m. |
| Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lakeville | 4:30 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 10:30 p.m. | 9 a.m. 11 a.m. |
| St. Joseph, South Bend  | 4 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 10 p.m. | 10 a.m. |
| St. Matthew Cathedral   | 4 p.m. (Children’s Mass with Bishop) 6 p.m. Midnight Mass (Lessons and Carols at 11:30 p.m.) | 9 a.m. 11 a.m. |
| St. Patrick, Walkerton  | 5 p.m. Midnight Mass | 9 a.m. 11 a.m. |
| St. Pius X, Granger     | 5 p.m. (Mass in church and gym) 7:30 p.m. 11:30 p.m. | 9 a.m. 11 a.m. |

East of South Bend

| St. Thomas the Apostle, Elkhart | 4 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 6 p.m. (adult choir) | 8 a.m. 10 a.m. |
| St. Joseph, La Grange | 5 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 10 p.m. (bilingual) | 10 a.m. |

South of South Bend

| Sacred Heart, Warsaw    | 4 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 6:30 p.m. (Children’s Mass) Midnight Mass | 10 a.m. |
| St. Martin de Porres, Syracuse | 5 p.m. (Children’s Mass) Midnight Mass | 9 a.m. |
| St. Michael, Plymouth   | 4 p.m. (Children’s Mass) 6 p.m. (Spanish) Midnight Mass | 8 a.m. 10 a.m. 2 p.m. (Spanish) |
Caregiver relies on God, others to make it through

BY DEB WAGNER

FORT WAYNE — Who would think that one Sunday morning in September would be spent with mother and daughter and five other family members completing a Christ Renews His Parish (CHRP) weekend, and the next Sunday, the same mother is thankful that her daughter is still alive — her leg bones crushed like grapes that had been stomped? This is a question that Catherine (Tikke) Andrews reflects upon as this tragedy and several other hospitalizations happen to family members during a short six-week period.

Catherine is no stranger to the caregiver role. Just the month prior to her daughter’s accident, Catherine’s mother-in-law, Irma Andrews, was admitted to the hospital due to unexplained nausea and low oxygen levels in her blood. Irma, who sometimes stayed for extended periods with Catherine and her husband, Jim, had to have a valve replaced in her heart. She was then transferred to another location for rehabilitation. After exactly a week had passed, Catherine and Jim received a telephone call that their daughter was suffering from a motorcycle accident when another driver pulled in front of them from a dead stop. The result of the low-speed impact to their right legs left them broken and crushed.

Amputation was the standard protocol because of the extent of the injuries. But due to their excellent physical condition at the time of the accident, doctors thought they could reconstruct their legs using muscle and bone from the calves of the injured legs. Karen endured four surgeries; Dan had three surgeries. Shrapnel was scraped from the wounds, pins and rods inserted and skin grafted. In a day and age where outpatient procedures are more common than overnight hospital stays, they were released from the hospital after two long weeks. With manual wheelchairs, crutches and the inability to drive or care for their basic needs, they were sent home to houses with steps and an estimated recovery time of three to six months.

Catherine recalls sitting in the waiting room for one of the earlier surgeries with a sinking heart asking, “O Lord, how can this be happening? Irma is in rehabilitation at a different facility and we don’t know the long-term outcome for Karen and Dan’s legs.” Catherine spent her time visiting each person in the hospital while trying to work at a floral department in a grocery store and undergo cataract surgery herself. She went to bed at the end of the day only to repeat the same schedule the next. Now all of this would be grueling, without complications. But there were complications. Jim Andrews was unable to help his wife very much during this time. He was at home suffering from edema and other complications from diabetes. He was later admitted to the hospital and released after four days. Catherine experienced eye infections after her cataract surgery. Let’s not forget about Irma. Irma usually stays with John when Jim’s brother, Jerry and his wife, Alice, are out of town but that was not feasible this time. Irma was transferred to an assisted living facility for a month while Jerry and Alice flew to California to be with their daughter who was having a baby.

Catherine obviously could not be caregiver for all simultaneously. Yet, she managed to take time for herself and found solace at Most Precious Blood Church, Fort Wayne.

“When I was at church and involved with the people I knew through CHRP, I was at peace. I was comfortable. Every night I thanked God for the day and hoped that if it was God’s will, I’d have another day,” she said. She is currently on family medical leave. Friends and family have also been helping around Karen’s house, bringing meals to the home and running other errands. Son-in-law, Greg Cherney, drove from Georgia to spend a week with them.

When Karen reflects on the accident and the outcome, she says spontaneity is out and planning is in. “I don’t want to say it’s an inconvenience, but you’ve got to rethink how to do everything you already know how to do because using crutches doesn’t allow you to use your hands as you did before. You need to plan for everything, leave a little earlier and depend on others to get anywhere.”

Financially, it is still tough because there was no income coming in for over two months. It was through word-of-mouth from a friend through a Methodist church that Karen received one cart of perishables and canned goods from their food bank for her family.

While the recovery from the motorcycle accident is ongoing, Karen has returned to work although Dan has not. Jim and Irma are doing well at home. Catherine has continued in the role of loving caregiver by driving people to and fro and helping where needed.

All of these events have made the Andrews family want to do more for others since so many did for them in a time of great need. This year there is not going to be an abundance of gifts; it’s a time of giving thanks. The best present they will give to each other will be that they are all still alive and able to be with each other during this Christmas season. Faith, hope and love and the greatest is love.
MANGER
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

first day we start noticing the longer, lighter daytime, the days get longer and brighter until around June 21 or 22, which almost coincides with Pentecost.

“It would be real easy for us to be tremendously pessimistic. We know the final story,” said Sister Agnes who noted that “God was so much in love with us, he gave us his Son.”

“Remember the light is in our hearts. To bring his freedom from the darkness, God’s love is what it is all about,” said Sister Agnes who also suggested that everyone “go out into the darkness in the night and wonder about the mystery. Feel it and remember who the light is.”

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
1100 South Calhoun Street - Fort Wayne

Christmas Eve Masses:
5:00 PM (Children’s Mass)
Midnight Mass
(Music begins at 11:15 PM)
Christmas Morning Masses
8:00 & 11:30 AM
Saturday, December 30 - 5:00 PM
New Year’s Eve
Sunday, December 31
7:30, 9:30 & 11:30 AM
5:00 PM
New Year’s Day 9:00 AM

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Savor our Savior's season

Visit any tree collection site on Dec. 26, perhaps as early as Dec. 25, and you may find long lines of those ready to toss the trees away. While the trees went up before or the day after Thanksgiving, it may be dried out and ready to be tossed.

As much time that is preoccupied through the Advent season — finding the perfect gift for so and so — it almost seems like we can’t wait for Christmas to be over and for life to return to the usual rut, and onward to New Year’s and Valentine’s Day.

But for Catholics, the church season of Christmas presses onward through the first week of January. It actually ends on Jan. 8, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

The vigil begins Sunday, Dec. 24. While some may be looking for a two-for-one deal with Mass, the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas must be celebrated as two separate Masses.

While “secular Christmas,” which focuses on the commercial push leading up to the holiday, will tell us Christmas is over Dec. 25 — the Christmas music on the radio is stowed away, the lights unplugged, the trees sent to compost — we must keep in mind the real spirit of the season.

As Catholics, we can reclaim Christmas during the days that follow Dec. 25. When we sing the song “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” we are actually referring to the days after Christmas, not before. The octave gives us an opportunity to cling to the Christmas spirit. It is a time to celebrate the greatest gift ever given to humanity, the Incarnate God, who graced this earth for 33 years in human form and remains with us in the Eucharist.

Pope Benedict XVI, in a Dec. 14 meeting with Roman university students, said, “Christmas gifts remind us of the gift par excellence, that which the Son of God made of himself in the Incarnation.”

In its canonical and extra-canonical martyria, these nameless martyrs-to-be are as blaming President John F. Kennedy for “blazing a trail that no other American politician ever approached.” Kennedy is apposite to the day: the Christian, in fact, is the Protomartyr. This clearly reflects the Gospel’s call to be wise and innocent and innocent as doves (Mt 10:16). Further, Stephen’s act of faith in the presence of the Christ is set within the context of false witness about him (Acts 6:13; 7:58).

The Spirit who is promised by Jesus to those who follow the Word-made-flesh endures in modernity’s demand that religion be compartmentalized and held in the private, as seen in the modern-day situation, he went to Mass in the morning. Since then, all presidents have been expected to attend on their inauguration day. Before Kennedy, this was true of many Catholic politicians, but he was the first non-Catholic to attend.

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Jesus brings peace and happiness

4th Sunday of Advent Lk 3:9-15

This weekend the church in Rush, Ireland, will be busy on Christmas Saturday. The first reading is from the Book of Micah. Micah is regarded as one of the Minor Prophets. As a prophet, Micah’s message was to the people of ancient Israel. The people of Israel were feeling that they had been abandoned by God. Micah brought a message of hope and peace.

The Next Day:

1. Who erected a great church, the Church of the Nativity, over this site? a. King Herod the Great b. Mary c. David


3. Who was always associated with Bethlehem? a. King Herod the Great b. Mary c. Rachel

4. And Ruth’s husband was from Bethlehem. He was: a. Joseph Shickelgruber b. Boaz c. Levi

5. Who was the sort of place that the Church of the Nativity was built? a. House of pain b. town where Jesus might be born c. five miles southwest of Jerusalem

6. But some scholars suggest this more pagan etymology: a. Golgotha, site of the crucifixion b. the cave as the site of Jesus’ birth c. Jesus was by prophecy to be born in the city of Pilate.

7. This is an example of Jesus being the messiah: a. Joseph b. Mary c. Rachel

8. And Ruth’s husband was from Bethlehem. He was: a. Joseph Shickelgruber b. Boaz c. Levi

9. This king was always associated with Bethlehem: a. Pilate b. Caesar c. David

10. In fact, Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem because: a. Joseph was of the house of David, and all families were to return home for a census. b. Mary was of the house of John the Baptist who ministered in Nazareth where Jesus was raised, but Bethlehem. c. It was the center of the Christian community.

11. As early as the second century, Christian tradition place the recognized the following holy place in Bethlehem: a. Golgotha, site of the crucifixion b. the cave as the site of Jesus’ birth c. It was where the angel appeared to Mary.

12. We know specifically of one Christian leader who lived near and confirmed the site in the second century: a. Justin b. Justin Martyr c. Jumping Justin

13. Who erected a great church, the Church of the Nativity, over this site? a. King Herod the Great b. Joseph of Arimathea c. Constantine and his mother Helena

14. This scholar and translator worked in that same site for decades: a. Jerome b. Augustus c. Justin Martyr

15. Who controls Bethlehem now? a. It is part of Israel. b. It was in the West Bank annexed to Israel in 1948 and is now under the UN. c. It is in the area controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

ANSWERS:
1b, 2c, 3a, 4b, 5c, 6a, 7c, 8b, 9c, 10a, 11b, 12b, 13c, 14a, 15c

RUSH, PAGE 16

‘Christmas rush’ takes on new meaning at Irish parish

By Cian Molloy

RUSH, Ireland (CNS) — The Christmas rush has taken on a whole new meaning at St. Maura Parish, where tickets were issued to control crowd numbers at its annual Christmas Eve children’s Mass. Last year, the children’s Mass in Rush, in northeastern Dublin County, was so crowded that one girl fainted from the heat. Many were concerned about elderly people and young children forced to stand in the aisles.

The introduction of tickets for the Mass made national headlines at the end of November after some parishioners contacted RTE radio to complain that access to the Christmas Eve Mass was being limited to regular Mass attendees. They argued that Mass should always be open to all, whether they regularly attended church or only at Christmas and Easter.

Under the ticket distribution scheme devised by the parish council, tickets were available only from the sacristy after Saturday vigil and Sunday morning Masses the first weekend in December.

Father Kieran Coughlan, parish pastor, said numbers had to be limited for health and safety reasons, and this was the system devised by the parish council and the children’s Mass committee following a review of other parishes’ practices.

Despite this, the last weekend of the weekend distribution, the church was full. Paula Leyden, a parishioner and mother of two who opposes the ticket scheme, told Catholic News Service Dec. 3, “I understand that numbers have to be limited, but I would prefer if another Mass could be put on.”

But Father Coughlan told CNS that unlimited attendance was not possible with the parish’s current manpower. Each Sunday he and his two assistants celebrate four Masses, one of which takes place in the local secondary school. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day they will celebrate six Masses, including the children’s Mass.

Angela Flynn, a mother of three, said: “I would prefer if there wasn’t a need for tickets, but it was pretty uncomfortable last year. Numbers had to be limited.”

Not everyone who wanted tickets got them.

As the severe storm howled outside the church, a mother zipped up the coat of her 3-year-old daughter and said: “The tickets are all gone. We’re too late. There is nothing we can do, only make sure we go to the 7:30-Saturday evening Mass this time next year.”

Several parishioners speaking to CNS asked not to be named; the children’s Mass had become a very sensitive issue after the parish had been satirized in national media for having “the hottest tickets in town.”

The lampooning was partly fueled by the obvious “Christmas rush” pun.

One mother commented that the ticket scheme was not as bad as neighboring St. Patrick Church in Skerries, where “once the church is full, they will slam the door in your face.”

Father Leo Quinlan, the parish priest at St. Patrick, confirmed he sent a Christmas card to all parishioners requesting adults without small children to consider attend-

RUSH, PAGE 16

CATEQUIZEM

The town that comes to mind at Christmas is not mighty Jerusalem, nor Nazareth where Jesus was raised, but Bethlehem.

1. Why is Bethlehem associated with Christmas? a. It was where the angel appeared to Mary. b. It is where Jesus was born. c. It was the center of the Christian community.

2. Where was Bethlehem? a. fifty miles north of Jerusalem in Galilee b. ten miles west of Jerusalem in Samaria c. five miles southwest of Jerusalem

3. When the two Jewish kingdoms were split, where was Bethlehem? a. in Judah, like Jerusalem b. in Israel, like Judah c. in Judah, but not in the same kingdom as Jerusalem

4. An older name for Bethlehem was Ephrath, which means: a. fruitful b. town where Jesus might be born c. homestead

5. What is the commonly accepted meaning of the name “Bethlehem”? a. House of pain b. House of the Lients (Romans) c. House of bread

6. But some scholars suggest this more pagan etymology: a. House of Lahmu (a pagan god) b. House of the Latins (Romans) c. House of Laertes (a Hellenistic Greek)

7. This female biblical figure was buried near Bethlehem according to Genesis: a. Eve b. Mary c. Rachel

8. And Ruth’s husband was from Bethlehem. He was: a. Joseph Shickelgruber b. Boaz c. Levi

9. This thing was always associated with Bethlehem: a. Pilate b. Caesar c. David

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15. Who controls Bethlehem now? a. It is part of Israel. b. It was in the West Bank annexed to Israel in 1948 and is now under the UN. c. It is in the area controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

ANSWERS:
1b, 2c, 3a, 4b, 5c, 6a, 7c, 8b, 9c, 10a, 11b, 12b, 13c, 14a, 15c
Pope Benedict is not alone in addressing love

Pope Benedict last year wrote an encyclical letter called "God is Love." If Jesus came 2,000 years ago, why did it take so long for us to decide that God's essence is love?

Anonymous

While Pope Benedict devoted his first encyclical to divine love, he is hardly the first figure to make this association in the Christian tradition. In fact, we see this kind of language, first thought in the New Testament itself, most particularly in the three Letters of John. What Pope Benedict was seeking to do is to make clear what we mean when we call God "Love" — especially since there are the uses term so loosely (“I love my wife,” “I love the Cubs,” “I love chocolate”).

The ancient Greeks, for example, had at least four words for what the English language expresses with the one word "love": philia, or friendship; storge, or familial affection; eros, or passionate yearning and desire; and agape, or sacrificial love. Pope Benedict rightly began by discussing eros or the passionate desire, which can, when purified, lead us to God (it is to this kind of love to which much contemporary, over-sexed media reduces love). But he also rightly observes that eros cannot complete itself that agape (or love as self-gift) is enough to complete and perfects what eros cannot of its own achieve.

What are Catholics supposed to think of environmentalism? Do animals have rights?

Catholics believe that God has entrusted all of creation to our earthly care, drawing on the high calling of Adam and Eve to be stewards of the creation found in the garden. Therefore, Catholics also recognize a "hierarchy of being" or "hierarchy of goods" which are the goods (human life is greater than others, such as animals, which are themselves greater than still others (mountain landscape)).

All of creation is good, but there are varying degrees of goodness; in fact, we all implicitly accept this hierarchy and function in a way that reflects it; for example, if our house is on fire, our first instinct is to save your chil-dren, then perhaps your pets, and then only then would you think of perhaps dashed back in to save your toothbrush. The whole issue of "rights" is a vexed one and often raises as many problems as it solves. Animals, if they possess "rights" certainly do not have "rights," which could trump more fundamental "rights" of persons. This, however, does not mean that humans may exploit the animal kingdom or despoil it. As stewards of creation, we must exercise prudence and care for all that is entrusted to us.

Father Michael Heinrich, rector of St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend, answered these questions.

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION

My daughter, who studies in New Zealand, is with us on her holiday. She will be 21 and has a very intelligent mind. She does not believe in abortion but was debating with me that Natural Family Planning is another form of contraception.

I am afraid that I just could not con-vince her that it was not. She seems to have the opinion that Natural Family Planning is only good in so far as it helps couples who are trying to have children understand the best time for pregnancy. But if it was to avoid preg-nancy, it was no more than a form of contra-ception. So why can’t other contracep-tive aids, e.g., condoms, be used? Could you help me enlighten her please?

Marianne, Sri Lanka

NFP is not "Catholic" contra-ception. The church endorses NFP (as seen in “Humanae Vitae”), and condemns contraception as harmful. Why? Because NFP when used correctly and for good motives, is a morally good expres-sion of responsible parenthood. NFP is one of God’s gifts to us in these times to help us space our families.

Father Matthew Habiger, OSB, provided this information.

Today’s Catholic welcomes ques-tions from readers. E-mail your questions to editor@fwdioceane-
fwish.org or mail them to Today’s Catholic, That’s A Good Question, P.O. Box 1169, Fort Wayne, IN 46865. Include your name, city and an e-mail address on your submission, so we can contact you if necessary. ANonymity will be preserved on request.

Books for Christmas

T he past year has seen the publication of any number of books I’ve wanted to write about, but didn’t. Here they are, as suggestions for Christmas gifts that will provoke thought and give pleasure throughout the year.

Michael Burleigh, “Earthly Powers: The Clash of Religion and Politics in Europe, from the French Revolution to the Great War” (Oxford). Beginning with his monumental study of “German National Socialism, The Third Reich: A New History,” British historian Michael Burleigh has been restoring religi-ous (and pseudo-religious) pas-sions to their rightful place in the study of modern history. “Earthly Powers” is a great, sprawling smorgasbord of a book, showing how the emer-gence of the modern state in Europe, and its displacement of religion from public life, opened the door to a variety of fanati-cisms that laid the cultural foun-dations for the totalitarianisms of the 20th century (which Burleigh explores in depth in a follow-on volume, “Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics from the Great War to the War on Terror,” to be published in the U.S. in 2007). Demanding but richly rewarding reading, and likely to change the way reasonable people think about the past 200 years.

Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures (Regnum Books/ Touch Press): Here is the pope’s most succinct formulation of his pro-posal for a cultural renewal of the West — “Even the one who does not succeed in finding the path to accept the existence of God ought nevertheless to try and direct his life...as if God did indeed exist.” Former Italian Senate president Marcello Pera, himself a nonbeliever, comments in a foreword, “This proposal should be accepted, this challenge accepted, for one basic reason: because this is one of the church who acts (as if God indeed exist) becomes more responsible in moral terms. He will no longer say that an embryo is a ‘thing’ or a ‘lump of cells’ or ‘genetic material.’ He will no longer say that the elimination of an embryo or a fetus does not infringe any rights. He will no longer say that a desire that can be satisfied by some technical means is automatically a right that should be claimed and grant- ed,...will no longer accept half a man, one lacerated and divided.”

Like the 2005 volume, “Without Roots” (Basic Books), this important study of Christianity and the “Crisis of Cultures” opens a window into one of the most important, and hopeful, conversations underway today.

Mary Habeck, “Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror” (Yale University Press), and Lawrence Wright, “The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11” (Knopf): Habeck’s book is the best single introduction to the ideas that drive jihadist Islam; Wright is a brilliant piece of reportage, showing how the ideas Habeck analyzes shaped (and mishapened) the men who made 9/11 possible, ideologically and operationally. If you don’t want an Egyptian intellectual’s unhappy experience of a church social in Greeley, Colo., in the late 1940s to end in the deaths of some 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001, you should: and Wright tells the story masterfully. Both books are must reads for any friends you have in government.
Sioux Falls holds off Saint Francis 23-19

BY BILL SCOTT

SAVANNAH, Tenn. — No question disappointment and frustration were described the mood of the University of Saint Francis football team after second-ranked University of Sioux Falls (S.D.) held off the top-ranked Cougars 23-19 in the NAIA Football Championship Series National Title Game on Saturday.

“Hold your heads high,” USF coach Kevin Donley told the Cougars in the closed post-game locker room. “We weren’t even supposed to win our league this season after losing 19 seniors.”

“The next few days are gonna stink because it hurts, but it will get better. Hold your heads up. Nobody is in this room quit. We’ve got heart.”

For the seniors — NAIA Player of the Year Brian Kurtz, Eric Hooks, John Wolf, Bo Thompson, Derrick Alderman, Cody Van Deurs, Eric Wagner, Matt Millhouse, Adam Blakey, Clint Bontempo, Nate Stephenson, and Matt West — Donley offered special words of praise as their active football career came to a bitter end.

Donley said in a firm, proud voice, “51-4 over the last four seasons — my gosh, we all owe you so much,” and the room erupted in applause. “The seniors did a tremendous job of leading this football team.”

Sioux Falls scored the first 10 points of the second half to break out to a 23-13 lead after the two teams battled to a tie at 13 in the first 30 minutes. Then Sioux Falls withstood its own turnovers — a 46-yard Tim Farrel pepper interception in the third and a fumble with 9:05 to play in the fourth quarter — to hold off USF long enough to revamp their Three yard line, all he could do was fall on it. The second half opened with an interception by USF safety Mike Knepper blocked Lodgins extra.

USF head coach Kevin Donley and NAIA Player of the Year Brian Kurtz pause for photos after the Banquet of Champions on Friday, Dec. 15. Kurtz was an NAIA Player of the Week twice this season and Mid-States Football Association Mideast League Player of the Year.

He is just the second player from the defensive side to earn the award.

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Catholic actor Peter Boyle dies at age 71

NEW YORK (CNS) — Peter Boyle, who was once a Christian Brother before he pursued a career in acting, died Dec. 12 at New York Presbyterian Hospital. Boyle, 71, had been suffering from multiple myeloma and heart disease.

Boyle became familiar to U.S. television audiences as perpetually cranky Frank Barone, the father of Ray Barone, on the sitcom “Everybody Loves Raymond” (1996-2005). The show lasted nine seasons, filming 201 episodes.

But Boyle had a fine career in movies, breaking out into stardom as the title character of the drama “Joe” (1970), and reaching a zenith playing the singing, dancing monster in “Young Frankenstein” (1974).


Boyle was 71.

Sen. Joseph McCarthy in “Tail Gunner Joe,” Adm. John Ponder in “Guts and Glory: The Ruse and Fall of Oliver North” and David Dellinger in “Conspiracy: The Trial of the Chicago 8.” He portrayed Howard Hansen in “Master Spy: The Robert Hansen Story.” He also was featured in the TV miniseries version of “From Here to Eternity.” After seeing how audiences cheered when his character in “Joe” went on a violent rampage, he turned down the role of Popeye Doyle in “The French Connection” and other films that glamorized violence.

In a 2005 interview, Boyle, a Christian Brother for five years — he went by the name Brother Francis de Sales, the same name as the Philadelphia parish of his boyhood — Boyle said he was lax in the practice of his Catholic faith for much of his adult life until 1999.

That year, he said, “I had a heart attack … and after that, I decided I wasn’t going to fool around anymore, and got myself back to Mass.”

A 1957 graduate of LaSalle College — now University — in Philadelphia, the school’s communications department gave him its Shining Star award in 2005.

Boyle’s first stage experience was in a parish Christmas pageant. “Theater and religious ritual are very connected,” he said. “It’s the using of an inner process to express an outer reality, or something mysterious.”

As a young actor, Boyle joked that his Christian Brothers experience was an asset. “It prepared me for a life as a struggling actor,” he said. “When I first went to New York, I wasn’t starving but I really got into that vow of poverty.”

Boyle met his wife, Loraine Alterman, when as a reporter for Rolling Stone magazine she visited the “Young Frankenstein” set for a story. Through Alterman’s friendship with Yoko Ono, Boyle became best friends with her husband, John Lennon, who was the best man at their 1977 wedding.

Survivors include his wife and two daughters, Lucy and Amy. A private funeral was to be held in New York, and plans also called for a memorial service.

U.S. Catholic actor Peter Boyle arrives for the wrap party of “Everybody Loves Raymond” in Santa Monica, Calif., in this 2005 file photo. Boyle, who played the monster in the movie “Young Frankenstein” and more recently starred as the father in the TV series “Everybody Loves Raymond,” died Dec. 12 at New York Presbyterian Hospital. He was 71.

‘Loves Abiding Joy’ released in early January

CENTURY CITY, Calif. — With the journey West behind her, a young woman looks forward to creating a home and family on the new frontier in “Loves Abiding Joy,” airing on DVD for the first time Jan. 2, from Fox Faith, a newly branded faith-based programming label.

Based on the fourth novel in the Love Comes Softly series by best-selling author Janette Oke, “Loves Abiding Joy” expresses an outer reality, or something mysterious.”

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**MISC. HAPPENINGS**

Ed Fox fish and tenderloin dinner supports music boosters

Fort Wayne — An Ed Fox fish and tenderloin dinner will be held Friday, Feb. 2, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Bishop Dwenger High School cafeteria. Adults $7, children $5 and children 5 and under are free.

REJOICE at the next XLT

Fort Wayne — XLT will be held Jan. 6. Confessions will be heard beginning at 7:15 a.m., followed by a rosary at 7:45 a.m. with the Mass to follow. First Saturday devotions are also held at St. Patrick, Arcola; St. Rose, Monroeville and St. John, New Haven.

First Saturday devotions

Fort Wayne — The World Apostolate of Fatima will hold devotions of reparation at St. Joseph, corner of Brooklyn and Hall on Jan. 6. Confessions will be heard beginning at 7:15 a.m., meditation at 7:30 a.m. and the rosary at 7:45 a.m. with the Mass to follow. First Saturday devotions are also held at St. Patrick, Arcola; St. Rose, Monroeville and St. John, New Haven.

TV MASS GUIDE FOR JANUARY

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As we begin the liturgical year celebrating the birth of the Christ Child, we express appreciation to our readers for the privilege of coming into your homes through the year as we follow the life of our saviour with descriptions of his youth, his ministry, his healing and forgiveness, and finally his death and glorious resurrection.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

From Everyone at Today’s Catholic
St. Hedwig, South Bend, Est. 1877

By Mark Weber

B ogdaska is a Polish word meaning God’s gift and was used as a common name for St. Hedwig Parish because it was the original Polish parish, the first of four on South Bend’s west side.

The same term could be applied to St. Hedwig’s founding pastor, Holy Cross Father Valentine Czyzewski, whose influence on South Bend’s religious, culture, politics as well as the Congregation of Holy Cross’s Polish-American ministry, although dimmed by time, is not yet fully measured.

In today’s terms, his achievements would be measured at the superstar level; but first, he had to be fired as gold in the furnace as one who would lose his father at age 10, be an oppressed seminarian and, finally at age 22, one of the many winding up at Ellis Island and then LaPorte, Ind., as a railroad laborer. Led by Providence, he became the first Polish-American vocation of the Congregation of Holy Cross, and within two days of his ordination was assigned by his superiors at Notre Dame to organize a parish for South Bend’s Poles, who worshiped at St. Patrick with Irish and Germans without benefit of a Polish speaking priest.

Although Father Czyzewski was well prepared to handle the spiritual needs of his people, raising $3,500 for a church building was a daunting task when the average worker earned about 15 cents an hour in an unsteady economy. Against these odds, the church called St. Joseph became a reality with a small school next door. Within two years, a tornado destroyed the church and heavily damaged the school.

Another fund drive was necessary, and by 1883 a new church was up at a new location and it had a new name: St. Hedwig. By 1896, St. Hedwig School had an enrollment of over 1,000 and was the largest grade school in the diocese.

This statue honors St. Hedwig parishioners who served in the armed forces and who made the supreme sacrifice.

In the postwar years of World War II all of this changed. The suburbs beckoned, the Polish blood thinned and new families went to new parishes.

By 1964, after 87 years of service, Congregation of Holy Cross was forced to withdraw its personnel from St. Hedwig because it could no longer supply Polish speaking priests.

Since July 1, 2001, St. Hedwig has been a combined parish with its neighbor St. Patrick. The parish mission statement points out that both parishes, founded by Father Valentine Czyzewski.

With this growth, came many religious vocations; young men and women who grew up in the Polish neighborhoods, joined Congregation of Holy Cross and returned to the West Side as pastors and teachers.

In today’s terms, his achievements would be measured at the superstar level; but first, he had to be fired as gold in the furnace as one who would lose his father at age 10, be an oppressed seminarian and, finally at age 22, one of the many winding up at Ellis Island and then LaPorte, Ind., as a railroad laborer. Led by Providence, he became the first Polish-American vocation of the Congregation of Holy Cross, and within two days of his ordination was assigned by his superiors at Notre Dame to organize a parish for South Bend’s Poles, who worshiped at St. Patrick with Irish and Germans without benefit of a Polish speaking priest.

Although Father Czyzewski was well prepared to handle the spiritual needs of his people, raising $3,500 for a church building was a daunting task when the average worker earned about 15 cents an hour in an unsteady economy. Against these odds, the church called St. Joseph became a reality with a small school next door. Within two years, a tornado destroyed the church and heavily damaged the school.

Another fund drive was necessary, and by 1883 a new church was up at a new location and it had a new name: St. Hedwig. By 1896, St. Hedwig School had an enrollment of over 1,000 and was the largest grade school in the diocese.

This statue honors St. Hedwig parishioners who served in the armed forces and who made the supreme sacrifice.