



# The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

CriterionOnline.com

December 22, 2006

Vol. XLVII, No. 12 75¢

*And the Word became  
flesh and made his  
dwelling among us.*

*(Jn 1:14)*



# Canonization of Indiana's first saint tops local news in 2006

By Brandon A. Evans

Each December, media outlets look back at the passing year and recall the stories that have earned a special place in our memory.

For the Catholic press, this is no different (see Catholic News Service story, page 3), and it's the same for the editorial staff of *The Criterion*, who recently put their heads together to come up with the top 10 local news stories of 2006.

The following are the stories that made our top 10 list:

## 1. The canonization of St. Theodora Guérin

As one of the top American Catholic news stories as well as one of the top Indiana news stories, this was the obvious top choice for our staff.

The pace with which this story developed was almost dizzying: A Cause of Canonization had been started in 1909 and it took until 1998 to see the beatification of Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin.

By last year, we learned that a second miraculous healing attributed to Blessed Mother Theodore had "been unanimously recognized by a five-person medical commission as a cure unexplainable by medical science." The signs in 2005 of the Cause moving forward were clearly readable.

Then, within the span of a single year, the news broke that the "path to sainthood had been cleared."

Vatican leaders met, the pope got involved and by mid-summer the State of Indiana and

the world knew that Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin was to be proclaimed as St. Theodora in October.

Both the Sisters of Providence and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis began preparations for massive pilgrimages, and news coverage from outside the Catholic world began to ramp up.

All of it culminated in the Canonization Mass held at St. Peter's Square on Oct. 15, which was covered in a special keepsake edition of *The Criterion*.

The archdiocese, and certainly the Sisters of Providence, will continue to absorb the blessing of this canonization. In the waning months of 2006, this newspaper has continued to cover St. Theodora, in particular by noting an ongoing series of deanery Masses over the next year and the official proclamation of St. Theodora as patroness of the archdiocese.

## 2. Thousands participate in march for immigration reform

Especially being a mid-term election year, virtually every political issue was featured strongly in national news.

But one of the leading stories was immigration reform, and one of the defining moments of that debate took place on April 10 as people around the United States took part in a "Day of Action for Immigration Justice."

Leaving from St. Mary Church in Indianapolis, about 20,000 people marched through the downtown.

Not only was the rally the largest such organized event in Indianapolis history, but



Photo by Sean Gallagher

A tapestry hanging from the façade at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in Rome shows St. Theodora Guérin, one of four new saints canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on Oct. 15. St. Theodora founded the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and was a pioneer in Catholic education in Indiana in the 19th century.

the prominent presence of Catholic clergy left no doubt that this was an issue that was intrinsically tied to our faith.

## 3. Hundreds turn out for funeral of slain family

Indianapolis residents were numbed by another record in 2006, but this time it was a tragic and heartbreaking one.

On June 1, seven people were murdered in their home in the worst mass killing in Indianapolis history. The funeral for six of the residents—a Hispanic family that included three children—was held at

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

A somber Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein incensed the six caskets during the bilingual Mass, and Father Michael O'Mara delivered the homily.

"May our response not be hate or the desire for more death—even for those who have carried out this violence—but the desire to build the kingdom of God here on this Earth, in this world, in this city," Father O'Mara urged those present.

See **YEAR**, page 21

## On the cover

Mary and the Christ Child appear in this fragment from a larger 16th-century piece by Bernardino Luini. The Dec. 25 Christmas feast commemorates the incarnation of the divine Word at the birth of Christ. (*CNS photo/Erich Lessing, Art Resource*) †

## The Criterion mailed to all households this week

This week's issue of *The Criterion*, which features our annual Christmas Supplement on pages 9-16, is being mailed to all households in the archdiocese, including those that don't normally receive the newspaper.

*The Criterion* is Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein's primary evangelization tool.

This issue includes a review of 2006 from local, national and international perspectives, and our regular features, which include Archbishop Buechlein's "Seeking the Face of the Lord" column.

To all of you who already subscribe, we thank you, and to those of you who don't regularly receive *The Criterion*, we

hope you spend some time with this issue and consider receiving it each week.

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—Mike Krokos, editor

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The Criterion • P.O. Box 1717 • Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717

The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

1400 N. Meridian St.  
P.O. Box 1717  
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717  
317-236-1570  
800-382-9836 ext. 1570  
[criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.  
Copyright © 2006 Criterion Press Inc.

POSTMASTER:  
Send address changes to:  
Criterion Press Inc.  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
Box 1717  
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717

## The Criterion

### Phone Numbers:

Main office: .....317-236-1570  
Advertising .....317-236-1572  
Toll free: .....1-800-382-9836, ext. 1570  
Circulation: .....317-236-1425  
Toll free: .....1-800-382-9836, ext. 1425

Price: \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

### Postmaster:

Send address changes to *The Criterion*,  
P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206

Web site: [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com)

E-mail: [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

### Staff:

Editor: Mike Krokos  
Assistant Editor: John Shaughnessy  
Senior Reporter: Mary Ann Wyand  
Reporter: Sean Gallagher  
Online Editor: Brandon A. Evans  
Business Manager: Ron Massey  
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Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January. Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2006 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

# 2006: Encyclical, immigration and relations with Islam top the news

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Here is a month-by-month review of some of the religious news highlights of 2006:

## January

Explosion traps 13 coal miners in West Virginia mine; 12 die. New Zealand study shows higher mental health risk for women after abortion. Vatican report says child labor rising with more than 200 million children under 14 forced to work. Vatican agency reports 26 missionaries were murdered in 2005. New Jersey enacts moratorium on use of death penalty.

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Fla., chairman of international policy committee of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, urges "responsible transition" to full Iraqi self-rule. Pope Benedict XVI urges Italian officials not to legalize abortion pill or same-sex unions. New York appellate court upholds state law mandating contraceptive coverage in prescription insurance plans. U.S. Supreme Court upholds Oregon's assisted suicide law and New Hampshire law requiring parental consent for a minor's abortion.

Swiss Guard marks 500th anniversary of founding. Pope issues his first encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est" ("God Is Love"). Hamas victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections further clouds peace prospects.

U.S. Senate confirms Samuel Alito Jr., making him fifth Catholic on U.S. Supreme Court. Kentucky judge approves \$85 million settlement of Covington Diocese with 382 sex abuse victims.

## February

In post-hurricane plan, New Orleans Archdiocese announces closing of seven parishes, will delay opening 23 others until enough people return. Pope says truths of faith, science cannot conflict because God is source of both. World Council of Churches holds Ninth General Assembly in Brazil.

U.S. Catholic social action leaders, gathered in Washington, seek humane immigration reform, discuss effect of budget cuts on poor. Vatican official says religious orders must lead spiritual reform in Church. American Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, longtime head of Vatican bank, dies at age 84.

U.S. Supreme Court agrees to consider constitutionality of federal partial-birth abortion ban. Explosion in Mexican mine traps and kills 65 miners. Pope names 15 new cardinals, including American Archbishops William J. Levada and Sean P. O'Malley. South Dakota poses direct challenge to

1973 Supreme Court abortion decisions by passing law that would ban virtually all abortions. Supreme Court, reviewing 20-year-old case for third time, unanimously and definitively rules out use of extortion and anti-racketeering laws to prevent abortion clinic protests.

## March

Washington Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, other religious leaders defend national interfaith immigration reform campaign following political attack on it. Letter to Canadian bishops from representatives of more than 200 religious orders, calling Church too rigid and clerical, is leaked to media. Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., USCCB president, is accused of sexual abuse of a minor; he denies claim.

Catholic aid agencies warn repeated droughts have put 3.5 million Kenyans in danger of starvation. Boston Catholic Charities halts adoption programs because state law makes it offer adoptive services to same-sex couples. Chicago immigration rally draws 100,000. California Franciscans reach \$28 million settlement with 25 sex abuse victims.

Bishops' Administrative Committee reiterates opposition to legal recognition for same-sex marriages. Vatican shifts to emphasis on cultural exchange as basis for interreligious dialogue. The *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* is published in English and Spanish by U.S. bishops. Arlington (Va.) Diocese allows female altar servers, leaving Lincoln, Neb., as only U.S. diocese still banning female altar servers.

Dialogue with Islam is among topics of papal meeting with world's cardinals. New clergy sex abuse audits of U.S. dioceses are released; National Review Board says higher performance standards are needed in future audits. Analysis of new audits shows clergy sex abuse cost to Church has topped \$1.5 billion in last 50 years, almost all of it since 2002.

Abdul Rahman, Afghan who faced death penalty for converting from Islam to Christianity, is released from prison and allowed to take asylum in Italy.

## April

*National Geographic* magazine unveils publications about gnostic "Gospel of Judas." Half-million attend immigration protest in Washington. Hundreds of thousands attend similar rallies nationwide.



Pope Benedict XVI signs his first encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est" ("God Is Love"), in his private library at the Vatican on Jan. 23. The pope said his aim in the encyclical is to "speak of the love which God lavishes upon us and which we in return must share with others." Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, assistant papal secretary of state, stands by the pope.

Boston Archdiocese calls financial straits "dire" with \$46 million deficit in 18 months. Vatican marks 500th anniversary of laying of cornerstone for St. Peter's Basilica. Philadelphia Cardinal Justin Rigali calls constitutional amendment "only practical way" to protect traditional definition of marriage.

Cardinals, in Washington for Catholic University of America fundraising dinner, converge on Capitol Hill to lobby for humane immigration reform. Bishops urge end to genocide in Darfur region of Sudan as "Save Darfur" rallies are held in cities across United States. Portland (Ore.) Archdiocese, facing bankruptcy proceedings over clergy sex abuse, announces \$1 million cut in budget for central offices.

## May

May 1 immigration rallies draw large crowds across United States. Vatican says Pope Benedict was "profoundly displeased" by ordination of two Chinese Catholic bishops without Vatican approval. Dominican Sister Rose Thering, Catholic-Jewish relations

pioneer, dies. Father Gerald Robertson of Toledo, Ohio, is sentenced to life in prison for 1980 murder of Mercy Sister Margaret Ann Pahl.

Catholic Church campaign is credited for defeat of assisted suicide measure in British House of Lords. Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., head of USCCB Committee on Communications, urges Congress to adopt legislation assuring "net neutrality" so that religious content on Internet is not priced out of existence. After Vatican investigation of sex abuse allegations, pope bars Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, founder of Legionaries of Christ, from public ministry. *The Da Vinci Code* movie opens in theaters.

Pope makes four-day trip to Poland, calls his visit to Auschwitz death camp a "duty before God." Indonesian earthquake kills more than 5,400 people, destroys 45,000 buildings.

## June

Top-level U.N. conference on **See REVIEW, page 20**

## The Criterion and Catholic Center are closed from Dec. 22 to Jan. 1 for Christmas holiday

This week's issue of *The Criterion*, which includes the annual Christmas Supplement on pages 9-16, is the last issue of 2006.

*The Criterion* will be published again on Jan. 12 and resume its weekly

schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 22 through Jan. 1 in observance of the holidays.

Archdiocesan agencies will reopen at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 2. †

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## Editorial



Franciscan friars take part in a procession at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in the West Bank on Dec. 11. The church is believed to mark the spot where Jesus was born.

## The Holy Land in 2006

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, this year we find reasons for cautious optimism that the situation in the land where he was born might improve.

That's the way we began our editorial last year. Unfortunately, our reasons for optimism soon faded. We thought then that Ariel Sharon's new party, Kadima, would win Israel's election in March, and that he would continue efforts to return land to the Palestinians. Instead, Sharon suffered several severe strokes and was succeeded by Ehud Olmert.

We were also cautiously optimistic because the Palestinians had elected Mahmoud Abbas as their president. We believed that Sharon and Abbas would continue their efforts toward peace. But then the Hamas Party won the Palestinians' Jan. 25 election, putting men in power who refused to recognize Israel's right to exist.

The result is that the situation in the Holy Land appears worse today than it was a year ago. Much worse considering what happened in Lebanon this year when, after being provoked by Hezbollah, Israel invaded the country and destroyed much of it.

This was particularly devastating to the Christians of Lebanon because the war strengthened Hezbollah, which has long sought to make Lebanon an Islamic state.

Prior to the war in Lebanon, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora had been able to preserve the interreligious harmony that had existed there for some time. Since the war, many more Lebanese Christians have joined the exodus of Christians from the Middle East because of uncertainty about their country's future.

Christians continue to leave the area in droves. It's probably not surprising that 600,000 Iraqi Christians—more than half of the country's Christian population—have left since the U.S. invasion of their country. But they also are leaving Palestinian areas because Christianity has become more and more associated with the West, especially the United States, and the United States is seen as supporting Israel.

With all this bad news, is it possible for us to say again that we are cautiously optimistic that the situation will improve? Or will we be wrong again? What basis could we possibly have for optimism?

We believe that there is finally some recognition on the part of governments in the Middle East, as well as in the West, that there must be a comprehensive settlement between Israel and the Arabs. Therefore, we believe that more efforts will be made—by Arab governments, Israel and the United States—to find that settlement.

We should listen to Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem, who said during a Nov. 2 interview with Catholic journalists from the United States, "The main question for the U.S. administration and for Israel is survival. But if the United States wants Israel to survive, to be recognized, then it should take measures to surround Israel with friends. But current U.S. policy is surrounding Israel with enemies. That's not the way to protect your friend."

It's quite possible that only peace in the Middle East can save the ancient Churches of that area. But we agree with Jesuit Father Drew Christiansen, who wrote in *America* magazine on Sept. 11, "Middle Eastern Christians [Catholics, Orthodox, Copts, other oriental Christians, Protestants and evangelicals] are a resilient people, who have endured the coming and going of empires for two millennia. Given a chance, they will rebound."

Father Christiansen also wrote, "In a very real sense, the survival of Christianity in the Middle East, particularly of the Eastern Catholic Churches, depends on what happens in Lebanon, home to a number of Eastern patriarchates and to the Council of Catholic Patriarchs of the East."

As for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there are signs that many of the Palestinians now believe that they made a mistake by electing a government controlled by Hamas. When aid from the West was cut off because their government would not recognize Israel, the oil-rich Arab countries failed to come to the rescue. Once again, we are cautiously optimistic that they have learned a lesson, and will be more willing to negotiate with Israel.

Meanwhile, the Israeli people are tired of war, which is why they elected Olmert to be prime minister after Sharon's strokes. He should be a willing participant in the comprehensive peace negotiations we hope will occur next year.

— John F. Fink

Be Our Guest/Fr. Meinrad Brune, O.S.B.

## Rule of St. Benedict provides a guide to following Christ

The article "Rule of St. Benedict helps strengthen family life" by Delores

Leckey in the Nov. 24 issue of *The Criterion* was most interesting.

She did well in showing how the *Rule of St. Benedict* can work for families.

The *Rule* is a wonderful life guide for living the Christian life and growing

deeper in relationship with God.

I liked the practical way she explained applying St. Benedict's *Rule* to family life and our personal lives. Thank you for printing this article.

Whenever we speak of the importance of the *Rule of St. Benedict* in the lives of monks and all Christians, especially in family life, we usually speak of it as providing a "way of life" for those who have chosen to follow Christ.

St. Benedict sets us off on our journey with the Gospel as our guide so we can claim that our "way of life" is one that is based on Gospel values.

The *Rule*, then, applies the teachings of Christ to the daily life of the Christian, whether in community or family, in such a way that our life is shaped by its teaching.

Growing within the world, and especially in the United States, is the Benedictine Oblate movement. Oblates are Christian women and men, many living in family life, who yearn for a spiritual life deeply rooted in God and may be affiliated with either a men's or women's Benedictine monastery. They strive to live the spirit of the *Rule of St. Benedict* in response to this yearning.

At Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, more than 1,000 oblates participate in our oblate program. They

feel very comfortable in applying the *Rule of St. Benedict* both to their personal spiritual lives and their family lives. There are common threads among these oblates that include moderation, balance, stability, mutuality, prayer, work, study and service.

The *Rule* says for oblates, no less than for monks, "that all are to be welcomed as Christ," but for oblates this is lived out from their own place in the world and within their families, and to the best of their ability as their state in life permits.

Within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Saint Meinrad Archabbey has five chapters and one group of Benedictine Oblates:

- Saint Meinrad—Archabbey Guest House (chapter founded in the 1930s).
- Tell City—St. Paul Parish Hall (chapter founded in 1940).
- Indianapolis—Holy Spirit Parish Center (chapter founded in the 1940s).
- Madison—Prince of Peace Parish Center (chapter founded in the late 1940s).
- Bloomington—Adult Education Center of St. Charles Borromeo Parish (chapter founded in 1991).
- Shelbyville—St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Shelby County (group founded in 1995).

The mission of these chapters is to help the oblates to support one another and strengthen their spiritual life through prayer, liturgical celebration, instruction and fellowship in Christ, so "that in all things God may be glorified" (*Rule of St. Benedict* 57:9).

You may write to Saint Meinrad Archabbey for more information about the Oblate Program.

(Benedictine Father Meinrad Brune is director of the Office of Benedictine Oblates at Saint Meinrad Archabbey.) †

## Letters to the Editor

### During this Christmas season, take time to count your blessings

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth! Let us give glory to our God even when we question why things happen. Even when he takes the ones we love, whether that person has yet to be born or lived to a ripe old age, we must have faith that that was all part of God's plan. And he always knows best.

We must believe that everything that happens to us is for our own good, even if we don't understand. Someday, we will understand. He will reveal it to us at the right time, and only he knows when the right time is.

This is where faith comes in. If we have faith the size of a mustard seed, we can move mountains. We can move the mountains of doubt, the mountains of disbelief, the mountains of hate, the mountains of unforgiveness, the mountains of stubbornness. There are many mountains in our backyards that we

would like moved. And we can move these mountains if we have faith. But we must be persistent in prayer. Remember how long it took St. Monica to have her "mountain" moved.

So, during this Christmas season, while we're awaiting the birth of the baby Jesus, let's all count our blessings, both large and small. We all have many blessings if we stop and think about it. Oftentimes, we give credit to our own abilities, our own intelligence or just plain luck. But every good thing comes from God. Without him, we are nothing.

And, when we lose a loved one, let us say as the poet said, "Do not weep because he [or she] died, but rejoice because he [or she] lived."

Let us always give praise and glory to our all good and faithful God, not only at Christmastime, but all through the year.  
**Winferd E. Moody, Indianapolis**

## Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In

order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

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ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.



# SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

## BUSCANDO LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

### Let humble love be our Christmas gift to Jesus

St. Luke and St. Matthew begin their Gospel accounts with a very warm story of the birth of a baby.

St. John takes a different approach. Pope Benedict XVI, writing in 1982 as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, explains, “John, the eagle, looks out from the mystery of God and shows how this leads into the stable and, even deeper. ... What does the Church really want to tell us about Christmas day, the whole year and our own lives?”

He says we prefer to hear the warm words of the story of the birth of Jesus in Matthew and Luke to the account of St. John: “In the beginning was the Word ... and the Word was made flesh” (*Seeking God’s Face*, Franciscan Herald Press, 1982, pp. 82-83).

In fact, the Gospel accounts together explain the profound simplicity: God really became one of us. “The expression of John: ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us’ proclaims the real content of Christmas and our reason for joy” (cf. p. 83).

“He came unto his own and his own received him not.” Pope Benedict remarks, “The stall in which the Son of David was born because there was no room for him in his own town suddenly becomes visible through these mysterious words of the Gospel of John” (p. 82). John speaks of the holy night of Christmas.

What really happened at Christmas? He came unto his own as a child. But he did not come among us as a child who would be just any great man. Would it have been enough—that he came among us as a child in order to give us fresh hope?

To be sure, children give us hope. They are pure, and they are not jaded by the world. They are open. They can teach us to look at the world and see fresh possibilities.

But, our Holy Father reminds us, if we cling too much to the possibility of a new beginning in life that we see in children, we may have nothing at the end but sadness. Why? Because the newness of childhood can also be used by the world for its own devices. Children, too, enter the reality of worldly life (cf. p. 83).

Then why did the Son of God come as a child? His birth as an infant is much more than the birth of a baby boy. God’s own Son was born, something beyond our imagination and understanding. It was a birth that had been prophesied through all the centuries; it was expected, and it was necessary.

God came so close to us in the birth of Jesus so that we can touch him with our hands and see him with our eyes. He is not just an idea of God forming part of our world. He is the Word of God speaking to us. He knows us, he calls us, he leads us. The Son of the Living God was born in a

stable in Bethlehem.

Do we accept a “child God”? It is an important question for each of us as we pray before the Christmas crib in our churches and in our homes.

Is this divine Christmas gift too beautiful and too simple and yet too profound to seem true?

This Christmas child is also mighty God. And God is good. He is not some distant God who cannot be approached. He is able to be very near precisely because he is God. We can talk to him. He has time for us. As the Holy Father has said, he has so much time for us that he can lay in the crib as man and he has remained eternally man, one of us (p. 85).

“He came unto his own and his own received him not.” Is that still us, today, at Christmas 2006? Do we refuse to receive the God-man in our midst? Do we reject the child-God who from the crib in Bethlehem wants to touch our hearts? Are we too proud to accept a child God, to let ourselves be redeemed?

The test is answered by another question: Do we accept the homeless in our

own cities and towns? Pope Benedict’s remark that “His own people received him not” touches something deeper in all of us. “It penetrates to the innermost reason why so many are homeless in our world—in our pride, we close the door on God and our fellowmen. ... He came as a child to break through our pride” (p. 86).

We might give in more easily if he had come to us in power and majesty, but he came as a child. Why? God wants our love and not just our intellectual assent. He wants our love.

May this be our Christmas gift to Jesus as we pray at the crib—our humble love! †

Do you have an intention for Archbishop Buechlein’s prayer list? You may mail it to him at:

Archbishop Buechlein’s  
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#### Archbishop Buechlein’s intention for vocations for December

**Catholic Grade Schools:** that they may teach our children the Catholic faith and assist them in hearing and answering God’s call to service in the Church, especially as priests or religious.

### Permitamos que el amor humilde sea nuestro regalo de Navidad para Jesús

San Lucas y San Mateo comenzaron sus relatos del Evangelio con una historia muy conmovedora sobre el nacimiento de un bebé.

San Juan toma un enfoque diferente. El Papa Benedicto XVI dice: “John, el águila, ve más allá del misterio de Dios y nos muestra cómo esto lleva al establo, e incluso más allá ... ¿Qué es lo que la Iglesia quiere decirnos verdaderamente sobre el Día de Navidad durante todo el año y en nuestras propias vidas?”

Dice que preferimos escuchar el relato conmovedor del nacimiento de Jesús en las versiones de Mateo y Lucas, en contraposición al relato de San Juan: “En el principio existía el verbo ... y el verbo se hizo carne” (en *Buscando el Rostro de Dios*, Franciscan Herald Press, 1982, p. 82-83).

De hecho los relatos de todos los Evangelios juntos explican la profunda simpleza: Dios realmente se hizo uno de nosotros. “La expresión de Juan: ‘El verbo se hizo carne, y habitó entre nosotros’ proclama el contenido real de la Navidad y nuestra razón de júbilo” (cf. p. 83).

“A lo suyo vino, y los suyos no le recibieron.” El Papa Benedicto señala: “El pesebre donde nació el Hijo de David porque no había cabida para él en su propio pueblo, repentinamente se hace visible por medio de esas misteriosas palabras del evangelio según Juan.” (p. 82). Juan habla de la santa noche de la Navidad.

¿Qué sucedió verdaderamente en Navidad? Vino a los suyos como un niño. Pero no vino a nosotros como un niño que

sería simplemente otro gran hombre. ¿Acaso habría sido suficiente—que viniera a nosotros como un niño—para darnos una esperanza renovada?

Ciertamente los niños nos traen esperanza. Son puros y no están hastiados del mundo. Están abiertos. Pueden enseñarnos a mirar el mundo y ver nuevas posibilidades.

Pero nuestro Santo Padre nos recuerda que si nos aferramos demasiado a la posibilidad de un nuevo comienzo en la vida que vemos en los niños, quizás al final no tengamos más que desilusión. ¿Por qué? Porque el mundo también puede usar la novedad de la infancia para sus propios fines. Los niños también caen en la realidad de la vida mundana (cf. p. 83).

Entonces ¿por qué el Hijo de Dios vino como un niño? Su nacimiento es mucho más que el simple nacimiento de un niño. El propio Hijo de Dios había nacido, algo que se escapa a la imaginación y el entendimiento. Fue un nacimiento profetizado por siglos; se esperaba y era necesario.

Dios se acercó tanto a nosotros por medio del nacimiento de Jesús para que pudiéramos tocarlo con nuestras propias manos y verlo con nuestros propios ojos. No es simplemente una idea de Dios que forma parte de este mundo. Es la Palabra del Evangelio hablándonos. Él nos conoce, él nos llama, él nos guía. El Hijo del Dios Vivo nació en un establo en Belén.

¿Aceptamos a un “Dios niño”? Es una pregunta importante que debemos hacernos cada uno de nosotros mientras

rezamos ante el pesebre de Navidad en nuestras iglesias y en nuestros hogares.

¿Acaso es este obsequio de Navidad divino demasiado hermoso y demasiado simple, y al mismo tiempo demasiado profundo para ser verdad?

Este niño de la Navidad es también Dios poderoso. Y Dios es bueno. No es un Dios distante a quien no podemos acercarnos. Puede estar muy cerca precisamente porque él es Dios. Podemos hablarle. Tiene tiempo para nosotros. Como nos ha dicho el Santo Padre, él tiene tanto tiempo para nosotros que puede reposar en una cuna como hombre y ha permanecido eternamente hombre, uno de nosotros (p. 85).

“A lo suyo vino, y los suyos no le recibieron.” ¿Acaso somos así todavía hoy en día, en la Navidad del 2006? ¿Rechazamos recibir al Dios hombre entre nosotros? ¿Rechazamos al Niño Dios quien desea tocar nuestros corazones desde la cuna en Belén? ¿Acaso somos demasiado orgullosos para aceptar a un niño Dios, para dejar redimirnos?

El examen de conciencia se responde con otra pregunta: ¿Aceptamos a los que no tienen hogar en nuestras propias ciudades y pueblos? El Papa Benedicto señaló que “su propia gente no lo recibió” y esto debe tocar una fibra en todos

nosotros. “Nos adentramos en la razón más profunda de por qué muchos no tienen hogar en el mundo: en nuestro orgullo le cerramos la puerta a Dios y a nuestros compañeros ... Vino como un niño para atravesar nuestro orgullo” (p. 86).

Tal vez nos habríamos rendido mucho más fácilmente si hubiera venido con todo su poder y majestad, pero vino como un niño. ¿Por qué? Dios desea nuestro amor y no simplemente nuestro consentimiento intelectual. Quiere nuestro amor.

Que este sea nuestro obsequio de Navidad para Jesús mientras rezamos ante su cuna: ¡nuestro humilde amor! †

¿Tiene una intención que desee incluir en la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein? Puede enviar su correspondencia a:

Lista de oración del Arzobispo  
Buechlein  
Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis  
1400 N. Meridian St.  
P.O. Box 1410  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Traducido por: Language Training Center, Indianapolis

#### La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en diciembre

**Escuelas primarias católicas:** que ellos puedan enseñar la fe católica a nuestros niños y puedan ayudarles a oír y contestar la llamada de Dios para ser vir en la Iglesia, sobre todo como sacerdotes o religiosos.

# Events Calendar

## December 22

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Confession**, 4:30-5:45 p.m. Information: 317-636-4478.

## December 22-January 7

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Library, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **"Christmas Crèches" exhibit**, Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m., Sat. 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m., closed Dec. 22-26, Dec. 29 and Jan. 1. Information: 800-682-0988 or [www.saintmeinrad.edu](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu).

## December 23

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Confession**, 3-4:30 p.m. and 5:30-6:30 p.m. Information: 317-636-4478.

## December 24

St. Athanasius Byzantine Catholic Church, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Christmas Eve Mass**, 11 p.m. Information:

317-632-4157.

MKVS and DM Center, Rexville (located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South, 12 miles south of Versailles). **Mass**, 1 p.m., with Father Elmer Burwinkel, holy hour, 11 a.m., pitch-in following holy hour, drinks and dessert provided. Information: 812-689-3551.

## December 25

St. Athanasius Byzantine Catholic Church, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Christmas Day Mass**, 10 a.m. Information: 317-632-4157.

## December 26-29

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** 7 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

## December 29

Oldenburg Franciscans, Motherhouse, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Decorated trees and Nativities from around the**

world, 6-8 p.m. Information: 812-934-2475.

## December 30

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** Mass, 6 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

Church of the Holy Angels, 740 W. 28th St., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** 4-6 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

## December 31

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Charismatic Renewal, New Year's Eve Mass**, 11 p.m., fellowship and refreshments following Mass. Information: 317-592-1992 or e-mail [crci@inholyspirit.org](mailto:crci@inholyspirit.org).

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** Mass, 10 a.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

Indianapolis South Deanery parishes in Indianapolis, Beech Grove and Greenwood. **Visit churches to view Christmas decorations and manger scenes**, 1-5 p.m.

## January 1

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **"Khrist Kwanza,"** 8 a.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

## January 4

Ursuline Motherhouse Library, 3115 Lexington Road, Louisville. **Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, women's film festival, Outlawed and Panihari, the Water Woman of India**, 6 p.m., free to the public. Information: 502-212-1750.

## January 5

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei meeting**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., breakfast and program at Priori Hall,

\$10 members, \$15 guests. Information: 317-919-5316 or e-mail [Lumen\\_Dei@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lumen_Dei@sbcglobal.net).

## January 7

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. **"A Twelfth Night Gathering," Epiphany celebration**, vespers, 5 p.m., Newman dining room, meal, \$7 per person, reservations due Jan. 3, burning of the greens ceremony, 6:30 p.m. Information: 800-682-0988 or [www.saintmeinrad.edu](http://www.saintmeinrad.edu).

## January 8

St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **"Divorce and Beyond"** class, eight 10-week sessions, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 812-379-9353, ext. 333.

## January 9

St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **"Grief and Loss" group**, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 812-379-9353, ext. 333.

## January 9-February 13

St. Francis Hospice, 438 S. Emerson Ave., Greenwood. **Bereavement support group**, six sessions, 6:30-8 p.m. Registration: 317-865-2092.

## January 11

Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., buffet breakfast and program, \$10 per person. Information: [www.catholicbusinessexchange.org](http://www.catholicbusinessexchange.org).

Ursuline Motherhouse Library, 3115 Lexington Road, Louisville. **Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, women's film festival, Osama**, 6 p.m., free to the public. Information: 502-212-1750.

## January 14

Cathedral High School, 5225 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe,"** 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., \$5 per person. Ticket line: 317-968-7436. †

## Retreats and Programs

### December 31-January 1

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Be the Peace of Christ in the World,"** Father Keith Hosey and Precious Blood Sister Maureen Mangen, presenters, \$135 per person, \$250 per married couple. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### January 6

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"A Table for Three,"** Conventual Franciscan Father Troy Overton, presenter, \$125 per couple. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### January 6-12

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **"School of Humility,"** Benedictine Sister Mary Margaret Funk, presenter. Information: 317-788-7581 or [benedictinn@comcast.net](mailto:benedictinn@comcast.net).

### January 7

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"The Rule of St. Benedict 101,"** Benedictine Sister Kathleen Yeadon, presenter, 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### January 12-14

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Tobit Weekend" for engaged couples**. Information: 317-545-7681 or e-mail [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. **"Listening to God in Our Dreams: Experiencing the God With-In,"** Franciscan Sister Olga Wittekind, presenter. Information: 812-933-6437 or e-mail [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com).

### January 16

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. **Day of Reflection**. Information: 812-933-6437 or e-mail [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com).

### January 16-18

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. Mid-week retreat, **"A Personal Preparation for the Paschal Mystery,"** Benedictine Father Jeremy King, presenter. Information: 812-357-6611 or e-mail [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

### January 28

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Pre-Cana Conference" for engaged couples**, 1:45-6 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681, 317-236-1596 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1596.

### January 29

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Volunteers, Seniors and Friends Monthly Mass and Social,"** 9 a.m., continental breakfast, free-will offering. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### February 1

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Morning for Moms: Moms and Prayer,"** Father Jim Farrell, presenter, \$25 per person, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., baby-sitting available. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### February 2-4

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Tobit Weekend" for engaged couples**. Information: 317-545-7681 or e-mail [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. Couples retreat, **"All You Need Is Love,"** Benedictine Father Noël Mueller, presenter. Information: 812-357-6611 or e-mail [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

### February 6

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Day of Reflection,"** Father Jonathan Meyer, presenter, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., \$35 per person. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### February 8

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Theology of the Body for Parents and Teens,"** Father Jonathan Meyer, presenter, 6:30-9 p.m., no charge. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### February 9-11

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mount St. Francis. **"Married Couples Retreat."** Information: 812-923-8817.

### February 11

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Lent 101,"** 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### February 17

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Lectio Divina: Seeking Intimate Communion with God,"** Gwen Goss, presenter, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$35 per person. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

### February 18

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Pre-Cana Conference" for engaged couples**, 1:45-6 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681, 317-236-1596 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1596.

### February 23-25

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"What Is God's Dream for You?"** Matthew Kelly, presenter, \$300 per person. Information: 317-545-7681 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

## VIPS

**F. Thomas Pottratz and June (Spinner) Pottratz**, members of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 27.



They were married on Dec. 27, 1956, at St. Joseph Church in New Albin, Iowa. They have six children: Bryan, William, Scott, John, David and Michael Pottratz. They also have 13 grandchildren. †

Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mount St. Francis. **"Lenten Retreat."** Information: 812-923-8817.

Kordes Retreat Center, 841 E. 14th St., Ferdinand, Ind. **"Praying with Scripture: Lectio Divina,"** Benedictine Sister Maria Tasto, presenter. Information: 812-367-2777, 800-880-2777 or [kordes@thedome.org](mailto:kordes@thedome.org).

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive,

St. Meinrad. **"Benedictine Peace: Not As the World Gives,"** Benedictine Father Vincent Tobin, presenter. Information: 812-357-6611 or e-mail [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu).

### February 27-March 1

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. Mid-week retreat, **"Peace, the Benedictine Way,"** Benedictine Father Eric Lies, presenter. Information: 812-357-6611 or e-mail [mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu). †



## Our Lady of Guadalupe

Above, several Hispanic children and women wearing traditional clothing pose in the foyer of St. Lawrence Church in Indianapolis on the evening of Dec. 12. The group had gathered with other members of the parish to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Left, Jessica Martinez, portraying Our Lady of Guadalupe, arranges roses in the tilma of St. Juan Diego, played by Sabino Valle, at St. Mary Church in New Albany during a Dec. 12 celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

See more photos, page 23.



Members of the Catholics Returning Home team in the New Albany Deanery are shown in front of one of the many signs they display in the area to attract participants. They are, from left, Tony Aemmer, Harold Beebe, Karen Jordan and Ann Marie Camarata.

## Inactive Catholics are welcomed home in New Albany Deanery

By Angela Hayes

NEW ALBANY—"I saw the sign!" "That is what most inactive Catholics say when I ask them, 'How did you find out about the program?'" said Tony Aemmer, a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany.

Aemmer is a team member and one of two people who fields calls about the Catholics Returning Home (CRH) program offered at the parish.

The sign referred to is one of many yard signs and banners placed throughout the 19 parishes within the New Albany Deanery to advertise the program.

Catholics Returning Home, in its third year in the deanery, is a program offered to help non-practicing Catholics return to the practice of their faith.

"After two years, there have been approximately 70 participants who have attended the program," Aemmer said. "We are very pleased with the success of the program."

The Catholics Returning Home program is presented three times a year by a team of lay men and women, many of whom had been away from the Catholic Church and have returned.

The team accepts participants with love and compassion.

"Many Catholics who have been away from the Church for an extended period of time may feel uncomfortable returning, especially if they have been away prior to the changes brought about by Vatican II," said Ann Marie Camarata, a member of the CRH team.

"We strive to be welcoming, compassionate and nonjudgmental. It sometimes takes all of the courage a returnee can muster up just to walk through the doors," Camarata said. "We try to receive them with open arms and open hearts."

The returnees are given an opportunity to share their stories as well as their hopes and expectations in a confidential and accepting environment.

During the sessions, a brief update of the Church since Vatican II is given along with an explanation of the Mass, reconciliation and the Nicene Creed. There are no strings attached with this program.

The team encourages, directs and facilitates in any way possible. This includes encouraging participants to talk to one of the many pastors in the

New Albany Deanery.

At the end of each six-week session, the participants are asked if they would be interested in becoming members of the team for future sessions. New team members provide insight and new energy to the program.

Harold Beebe, another CRH team member, said, "One of the big advantages of this program is that it requires only limited direct involvement of the pastor. Father Paul Etienne, the pastor here at Our Lady [of Perpetual Help Parish], supports our program and the team, and is available any time, if needed.

"However, he [Father Etienne] does not attend team meetings nor is he involved in the planning of each session," Beebe said. "He visits the program once during each

six-week session, welcoming the participants and inviting them to call if they need him for any reason."

The Catholics Returning Home program has been approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It was developed by Sally Mews, a former inactive Catholic who saw a need for a program welcoming non-practicing Catholics

***"We strive to be welcoming, compassionate and nonjudgmental. It sometimes takes all of the courage a returnee can muster up just to walk through the doors."***

— Ann Marie Camarata

back to the Church.

After years of trial and error, she authored the book *Inviting Catholics Home*, which is used to present the parish-based program.

"It's cheap, easy and it works," Mews said.

On Jan. 8, 2007, a new session begins at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

Program leaders have already begun preparations by making team assignments, praying for the participants and clearing their calendars for six consecutive Monday nights from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The signs are out again at each of the New Albany Deanery parishes along with brochures, flyers and bulletin announcements.

Although the program is held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, all the New Albany Deanery parishes cooperate with advertising and promotion.

For more information, visit the Web page at [www.olphna.org](http://www.olphna.org) or call 812-945-3112.

(Angela Hayes is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany and the Catholics Returning Home team.) †

## MARRIAGE SUPPLEMENT



## Be a part of our Marriage Supplement

February 9, 2007, issue of *The Criterion*

If you are planning your wedding between January 30 and July 1, 2007, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement on the form below.

### Pictures

You may send us a picture of the bride-to-be or a picture of the couple. Please do not cut photograph. The picture must be wallet-size and will be used as space permits. We cannot guarantee the reproduction quality of the photos. Please put name(s) on the back of the photo. Photos will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

### E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format, be a minimum 200 dpi/resolution and at least 3 inches or 600 pixels wide. Please send your photo as an attachment to the e-mail.

### Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by Monday, January 22, 2007, 10 a.m. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date).

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to:  
ATTN: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206  
Deadline: Monday, January 22, 2007, 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride: (first, middle, last) \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bride's Parents \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bridegroom: (first, middle, last) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bridegroom's Parents \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person furnishing information \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Photo Enclosed  No Picture

# Advent Wreath Prayer helps families prepare for birth of Christ

Catholic Spirit Syndication Service

(Fourth of four parts)

The following Advent Wreath Prayer is intended to help busy households make Advent a prayerful time during the rush of Christmas preparations. The language is fairly simple to be used by groups of adults or adults with children, and options are noted to allow for participation by a variety of members of the household.

**Leader:** The fourth and final week of the season of Advent begins today. As we near Christmas, we take these few moments in prayer so that we are better prepared to welcome the Christ Child into our hearts and into our lives.

**Light all four of the candles on the Advent Wreath.**

Read aloud Micah 5:1-4a, Hebrews 10:5-10 and Luke 1:3-45 (optional)

**Leader:** This Fourth Week of Advent, the reading from the Hebrew Bible reminds us how the birth of the Savior was foretold generations before. The Jewish people waited many, many centuries for a savior. And St. Paul won't let us forget the reason for Christmas—that Jesus was born so that he could die and atone for our sins. The familiar story of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth should make us reflect on how both those women put their trust in God to give birth to sons. Have we that kind of faith?

**Closing prayer**

(Leader may read all or others in the household may each read a segment.)

(1.) Father in heaven, help us learn to be patient. We know that you know our needs and will satisfy them in your time.

(2.) God above, as you found favor in the Virgin Mary and her cousin, Elizabeth, help us live so that you find favor in our lives. Give us the courage to accept your will.



(3.) Along with Mary, help us too to say "yes, God." Do with me as you want. Make me your hands on Earth.

(4.) Holy Spirit, inspire us to live every day as if Christmas is just a day away. †

## Doubleday acquires rights to Pope Benedict's first book as pontiff

NEW YORK (CNS)—Doubleday has acquired rights to publish the first book Pope Benedict XVI has written as the Holy Father.

Bill Barry, vice president and publisher of the company's religious publishing division, made the announcement on Dec. 12 in New York.

The book, titled *Jesus of Nazareth: From His Baptism to His Transfiguration*, is written for the general reader. It will be published next spring.

The announcement said Doubleday acquired world English, first serial, audio and exclusive Spanish-language rights in North America from the Italian publisher

Rizzoli, which licensed international rights to the book at the request of Libreria Editrice Vaticana, the Vatican publishing house.

"Having previously published works by Popes John XXIII and John Paul II," said Barry, "we are especially honored by the Holy Father's confidence in Doubleday in entrusting to us the English-language publication of his book."

He said Pope Benedict's "scores of books written as the theologian [Cardinal] Joseph Ratzinger demonstrate His Holiness' erudition.

"But the appeal of this work will be in

the personal passion he means to share about the intimate friendship with Jesus as the central figure of Christianity. It is truly a gift for all believers and sure to be an instant spiritual classic," Barry added.

*Jesus of Nazareth* represents the culmination of Pope Benedict's lifelong quest to defend historical Christianity in the modern world. It is, he writes in the book's preface, the result of a "long interior journey" and "an expression of [my] personal search for the face of the Lord."

The now 79-year-old pope began his work on the book in the summer of 2003 and because, as he explains, "I don't

know how much time and how much strength I will still be given, I have decided to publish the first 10 chapters [from Jesus' baptism to transfiguration] as Volume One."

In the book, Pope Benedict paints a vivid portrait of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels, and says that "only if something extraordinary happened, if the figure and words of Jesus radically exceeded all the hopes and expectations of his age, can his crucifixion and his effectiveness be explained."

Doubleday is a division of Random House Inc., whose parent company is Bertelsmann A.G. †

### LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

*For Our Children and the Future*

## CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION OFFERS FUN, ENRICHES LIVES

What wildly successful youth initiative mixes sports, spirituality and life-long learning?

Look no further than the Catholic Youth Organization, better known to most people as CYO. Every year more than 12,000 children take part in the archdiocesan program throughout a network of parishes and Catholic schools.

CYO offers 14 different sports activities for boys and girls from fourth grade through high school as well as many other activities such as science fairs and music contests. CYO also provides a summer camp program and year-round educational opportunities at Camp Rancho Framasa, located near Nashville in Brown County.

"CYO helps archdiocesan youth grow spiritually, socially and athletically through extracurricular activities," said Ed Tinder, director of the archdiocesan CYO program. Every activity CYO offers, whether it's soccer, music or camp, is an extraordinary experience for the young people who take part. Anticipated funds from the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign will help CYO continue its great work for future generations.

"CYO's basic mission is to continue teaching the Catholic school curriculum using other tactics outside the classroom," Tinder said. "CYO helps bring youth to their full potential by providing opportunities for young people to develop strong moral character, self-esteem and leadership qualities."

That reflection echoes the experience of Claire Chappell, an Indianapolis resident and alumna of both St. Matthew Catholic School and Cathedral High School.

"The first year I played CYO volleyball for St. Matthew, I lacked most of the skills, but I loved it," Chappell said. "Learning a new sport, spending time with friends and



*"CYO helps bring youth to their full potential."*

growing in other ways made my experience positive. The other benefit was that our coaches were students from Cathedral High School near my parish. They were our role models, and we wanted to be just like them."

"To be so young and find true passion for something was remarkable on many levels," Chappell added. "It was just the beginning of how volleyball and CYO enriched my life. As a student at Cathedral, I too went back to St. Matthew and coached sixth and seventh graders for two years."

Like CYO athletics, Camp Rancho Framasa is a distinctive youth experience that also offers a core faith component. Tinder believes the camp is just one other example of how CYO blends Catholic spirituality with education, outdoor activities such as horseback riding, crafts and other pursuits. The camp also shows how CYO serves as an extension of Catholic education—one that is simply outside the classroom in a woody setting.

The multifaceted role of CYO can be especially beneficial for the many young Catholics who do not attend Catholic school. Such youth often seek extracurricular activities that connect them to their parishes.

Within the many traditional CYO athletic programs, Tinder believes coaches serve children in more ways than just managing their teams. They also create legacies and deliver early examples of stewardship by learning significant lessons about giving their time, talent and treasure.

"It is important that our CYO coaches realize that they are part of perpetuating the volunteer spirit and will have a great impact on future volunteers," Tinder said. "When children grow up they remember their coaches fondly and want to give back in the same way."

That sensibility is part of the foundation for young adults such as Chappell, who continued coaching youth volleyball while she was a student at Indiana University.

"To this day, I remember how important it is to set an example—either as a teammate or as a coach—and to continue serving God with every choice on and off the court," Chappell said. "That's why I'll never forget my memories of CYO."

*Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocesan capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as CYO. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to CYO and used to support its programs.*

Please visit the new online home of the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign. Our campaign Web site is <http://www.archindy.org/legacy>. It can also be accessed at [www.LegacyforOurMission.org](http://www.LegacyforOurMission.org)



*Maranatha!*

*May the fragile gift of peace,  
once hummed like a melody  
into your spirit  
as you were birthed and held  
in the tenderness of God,  
sing anew in your heart.  
May the passion for peace  
weave its refrain within you  
until your feet fairly dance  
to new rhythms  
of reconciliation.*

*Maranatha!*

*Come, O Christ, our Peace!*

By Sister Barbara Leonhard, O.S.F.

*Christmas  
Supplement*



# Archangel Gabriel shares story of his role in the Incarnation

By John F. Fink

Hello. My name is Gabriel. I'm an archangel, a title that means chief messenger, and I've been privileged to be the messenger of God himself.

As an angel, I'm a pure spirit and one of the nine orders of the celestial hierarchy: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels and angels.

I'm not the only archangel. Christian and Jewish writings identify seven of us, of whom Michael, Raphael and I are the most prominent. But there are also Uriel, Chamuel, Zophiel and Zadkiel. I could tell you more about each of them, but that's not my purpose today. I want to tell you about something far more important.

We who enjoy eternity in heaven don't have time as you do on earth, but it's hard to explain what happened without referring to time. So let's say that one day God gave me an assignment. He told me that he had decided that the time had arrived for him to accomplish the redemption of humanity on earth. He said that he planned to send his Son, whom we angels constantly adore as the Second Person of the Trinity, to earth as a mere human being, and he would redeem humanity.

He didn't tell me how he'd do that. That wasn't important for my assignment.

When God told me his plan, my first thought was, "Wow! Talk about humbling yourself! God himself is going to become a human being with all those limitations."

Of course, I didn't know the half of it. As you know now, he not only became a human, but he died a most cruel death—by crucifixion. But now I'm getting way ahead of myself.

In putting his plan into motion, God said that he had two assignments for me.

First, I was to appear to a man named Zechariah, a Jewish priest who lived in Judea with his wife, Elizabeth. God had decided that they were to be the parents of a man who would precede God the Son and would prepare the way for him.

My second assignment was to tell a young woman named Mary that she was to become God's mother.

Unfortunately, things didn't go too well on my first mission. I went to see Zechariah while he was burning incense in the Temple in Jerusalem. As I said, he was a priest. He was a member of one of the 24 divisions of priests who, for a week at a time, twice a year, served in the Jerusalem Temple.

I'm afraid that I startled Zechariah when I appeared to him. When I sensed his fear, I said what we angels have always said to try to reassure recipients of a heavenly vision: "Do not be afraid."

Then, as I had been instructed, I told him that he and his wife's prayers for a child had been heard, that Elizabeth would bear a son, and that they should call him John—a name that means "Yahweh has shown favor" to indicate that he would play a role in



Photo by Mary Ann Wyard

This historic mural of the Holy Family depicts their flight to Egypt with protection from an angel of the Lord. It is painted on the wall to the right of the altar at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

salvation history.

Before he had a chance to say anything, I continued to tell him that John was to be consecrated by a Nairite vow and set apart for the Lord's service as were Samson and Samuel. Therefore, like them, he was not to drink wine or strong drink.

I further said that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb, thus born without the stain of original sin. I said that he would have the power of Elijah the prophet and would use this power to prepare a people fit for the Lord.

Well, Zechariah didn't seem to believe me. He replied that he was an old man and that Elizabeth was also advanced in years. So I got a bit forceful.

"I am Gabriel, who stands before God," I told him. "I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time."

He was indeed mute from then until John's birth.

Things went much better, thank God, when I appeared to Mary six months later in the village of Nazareth in Galilee. She was betrothed to Joseph at the time. I appeared to her much as I had done to Zechariah and began my greeting, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

She, too, was troubled by my appearance, so I also told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."

Before she could speak, I continued, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called

Son of the Most High [God], and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Unlike Zechariah, Mary didn't doubt what I said, and I know full well that she understood what I was telling her. She was well aware of the Jewish prophecies of a Savior who would be born of the house of David. She did have some questions, though, mainly how this could happen because she planned to remain a virgin.

So, as God had explained it to me, I told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her so the child would be conceived through the power of God.

"Therefore," I said, "the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

I also told her about Elizabeth's pregnancy despite her old age, and couldn't resist adding, "For nothing is impossible for God."

Mary believed me immediately and just as quickly replied, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

She had always considered herself God's servant and, if this was what God wanted of her, she was eager to obey.

The evangelist Luke reported all this in the Gospel he wrote. But the evangelist Matthew also wrote about the involvement of an angel in the birth of God the Son as a human.

This time the angel appeared in dreams to Joseph three times. Matthew didn't give the name of the angel, but I think you can figure that out for yourself.

The first time happened after Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant and

knew that he was not the father. He was trying to decide what to do about it when the angel appeared in a dream to let him know that Mary had not had sexual relations with another man, but that the child had been conceived through the Holy Spirit.

The second time was when King Herod was about to send soldiers to kill all the babies in Bethlehem after he learned from the Magi that a king had been born there. The angel warned Joseph and told him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt.

Then, after Herod's death, the angel again appeared in a dream to tell Joseph that it was safe to return.

We angels were also involved after Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This time we were sent to announce the good news to lowly shepherds. We startled them while they were tending their sheep at night, so again we had to tell them, "Do not be afraid."

After telling them that a Savior had been born who is Messiah and Lord, we all sang, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Well, that was my involvement in the great mystery of the Incarnation. As the evangelist John wrote, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." He emphasized that the Word was God who existed from all eternity and that "all things came to be through him." But then, without losing his divinity, he took on human nature.

Of course, the Incarnation was only the beginning of you humans' redemption. But the Incarnation made the redemption possible. I feel privileged that God asked me to play my small role in the birth of Jesus.

(John F. Fink is editor emeritus of The Criterion.) †

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# Readers share favorite Christmas memories

## God's love made visible during birth of grandson on Christmas

By Jim Welter  
Special to *The Criterion*

The Scripture readings for the Christmas season speak to us of those who waited and longed for the birth of a child.

The story of Elizabeth and Zechariah, who were "advanced in age," comes to mind as does the story of Simon and Anna, who spent years in the temple waiting and praying for the birth of Mary's child.

My wife and I walked that Advent journey in a very special way last year as we waited and longed for the birth of our first grandchild.

And what a special joy it was to finally welcome Calvin Joseph Welter into the world at 11:49 p.m. on Christmas Day!

As we surrounded the hospital bed to get our first glimpse of Calvin Joseph, emotions poured forth: "Welcome to our world, Calvin!" "We've been waiting for you, little guy! We love you." "Don't be afraid, we'll take care of you."

That night, the words of Advent seemed to be written just for us: "A child is born to us, a son is given to us." "God is with us." "Don't be afraid." "What will this child be?" "A child shall lead them."

Someone reminded us that there would not be another day like that one, on which the feasts of Christmas and Hanukkah converged, for another 400 years. Suddenly, even Isaiah's idyllic vision of peace—"the lion will lie down

with the lamb"—seemed somehow possible.

For some years now, I have been identifying with the "more mature" characters as I read the stories in Scripture. And now, as a grandparent, I'm also experiencing that sense of generational connectedness and the sense of life being "passed on" that is so often expressed in those stories.

The most enduring message I heard in the hospital room on that most special Christmas Day was the one spoken more than 300 times in both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures: "Do not be afraid."

It is spoken to the life that is beginning: "Do not be afraid—we have been waiting for you; we love you and we'll take care of you!"

And it is spoken to the life that is ending: "Do not be afraid—we are waiting for you; we love you and we'll take care of you!"

Life is a circle. We have nothing to fear. A Child is born to us—God's love made visible.

*(Jim Welter is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis and is a regular contributor to the e-mail reflection ministry of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, which sends daily readings to more than 6,000 subscribers each business day. This memory is an excerpt from his new book titled Come Next Spring ... Scripture Reflections of Hope and Promise, which is available from the publisher at [www.AscendingView.com](http://www.AscendingView.com).) †*



## Holy Family

This sculpture of the Holy Family, created by master sculptor Timothy P. Schmalz of Toronto, Canada, was dedicated by Father Michael Welch, pastor of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis, on Dec. 2 at the northwest corner of the parish property at 5301 W. 16th St. near Biltmore Avenue on the west side.

## Soldier is grateful to attend Christmas Mass during war

By Paul Buckler  
Special to *The Criterion*

On Christmas Day in 1944, in the midst of World War II, I asked my commanding officer if I could go to church. We were encamped near a small village in France.

He surprised me and said yes even though there was heavy patrolling on both sides of the combat zone.

I went with two other soldiers into the village. We carried our rifles on our

shoulders.

About one-fourth of the top of the church was shelled out. It was snowing fairly hard right down through the opening.

The church was full of French civilians and American soldiers.

I was very thankful to be able to celebrate Christmas 1944 at that church in France, and will never forget that Mass.

*(Paul Buckler is a member of St. Mary Parish in Richmond.) †*

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### Angelic window

This stained-glass window depicting an angel of God is located in the balcony stairwell of the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. The Sisters of Providence are restoring the stained-glass windows in the historic church at their motherhouse.

## Generosity results in doll for little girl

By Robert McAuliffe  
Special to *The Criterion*

My Dad was a rural mail carrier out of the small community of St. Paul, Ind. Charlie knew all his patrons, and shared their joys and sorrows as he delivered their daily mail.

In the summer months, he would often find a present of fresh vegetables in a mailbox, and in the winter months there would be gifts of baked goods or canned food items as a way to show appreciation for the caring man who was always at their service.

As Christmas 1937 neared, the economy was poor as the nation struggled to recover from the Great Depression that began in 1929.

As Charlie drove up to a rural mailbox, Mrs. Smith was waiting for him.

"Charlie, did anything come for us from Sears Roebuck?" she asked. "I ordered a doll for my little girl for Christmas."

"Not today, Mrs. Smith," he said, kindly. "Maybe tomorrow. I'll watch for it."

Each day, Charlie had to tell her, "Not today, Mrs. Smith." He could see the disappointment in her eyes and it really bothered him.

On Christmas Eve, the doll had not arrived. When Charlie finished his route and returned to the Post Office, he shared the story with Elie Avery, the aging postal clerk.

She smiled broadly and said, "Charlie, I may have a solution for your problem."

"What can we do?" Charlie asked. "The stores are closing. It's too late to find a doll for her."

"Not so, Charlie," Miss Avery said with vigor in her voice and twinkling eyes. "I've got a doll that I had as a child. It has a porcelain head, hands and feet. The doll is still in great shape. I'll get it and its extra clothes, and wrap it in tissue if you will deliver it."

Dad immediately agreed. Late that Christmas Eve, we delivered the beautiful doll and its wardrobe. Knowing the little girl would awake to Santa's gift made us very happy.

The memory of that Christmas Eve is as fresh in my mind as if it were yesterday.

(Robert McAuliffe is a member of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg.) †

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# Helping men with disabilities made Christmas 2005 special

By Amy Duncan  
Special to *The Criterion*

Our son, Carl, was born two months prematurely on Christmas morning in 1982. Nothing will ever top that Christmas, but last year came close.

Due to his premature birth, Carl developed cerebral palsy and is mildly mentally disabled. He always lived with us until the summer of 2005.

In July of last year, he moved into a brand new group home that opened in our area. For the first few months, Carl and Joe were the only residents of the home.

That changed when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in August 2005. Forty group homes owned by the company that operates my son's home were affected by the storm that decimated the Gulf Coast region.

Four men moved in within days of the hurricane. Greg was sickly. Mike was happy-go-lucky. Eugene was always cold and wanted to go home. Brien loved to chew on anything—especially socks. I don't think Carl had a decent pair of socks the whole time that Brien was in the house!

As Christmas approached, Carl's Dad and I knew that the holidays wouldn't be the

same without Carl in our home. We needed something to help the "empty nest" feeling we were experiencing so we decided to "adopt" the men living in Carl's home for Christmas.

My husband, Carl and I shopped for gifts for the men. Our friends, Micki and Roger, wanted to help, too. Besides shopping for the men, Roger agreed to play Santa. I had the Santa suit and Roger provided Santa's sleigh bells.

Before Santa arrived, we told Roger how to identify each of the men in Carl's home. Santa called each man by name as he gave him a gift.

All the men received the basics—T-shirts and socks—and there was a special gift for each man.

Joe, who likes cartoons, received some new DVDs. Greg and Mike received some much-needed new shirts. Eugene, who was always cold, was a big NASCAR fan. His special gift from Santa was a fleece blanket with a race car design. Brien's special gift was supposed to be some black sweatpants but, judging from the look on his face, I know his special gift was the bag of socks he was given!

I don't think any of us will ever forget



## Jolly St. Nick

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary parishioner Steve Skull of Indianapolis used his acting expertise to portray St. Nicholas on Dec. 6, the saint's feast day, to help students at Central Catholic School in Indianapolis learn about giving during the Advent and Christmas seasons. He spent the day visiting classrooms to tell the students about St. Nicholas, who was the bishop of Myra in the fourth century in Lycia, Asia Minor.

the expressions on those men's faces that night.

Greg returned to Louisiana on the day after Christmas. Mike, Eugene and Brien returned there shortly after the first of the year.

Christmas 2005 was different at our house. Yes, our "nest" was empty, but it sure was full at Carl's home.

(Amy Duncan is a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany.) †

# Mother of 13 children copes with her husband's death at Christmas

By Martha Welch Mendez  
Special to *The Criterion*

This is not my story but my mother's. It was December 23, and a busy day for a 40-year-old stay-at-home mother of 12 children with one child sick in bed with scarlet fever.

At dinner, her husband talked about feeling as though he was getting the flu.

He went upstairs after eating and the next sound she heard was a loud thud.

She called out to the older children to watch the young ones, call the fire department and go to the end of the driveway to direct them to the house.

Unfortunately, her husband didn't survive the heart attack.

Santa and the opening of gifts still proceeded as planned on Christmas Eve.

The little children couldn't understand what had happened, and their mother felt it best to keep things as normal as possible.

His funeral took place after Christmas.

My mother was tremendous. She was able to see all 13 of us—including the son she was pregnant with—through Catholic high school.

We just celebrated Mom's 82nd

birthday with her at the nursing home where she lives.

I just wanted to say a heartfelt thank you to Mom from all us kids for the love and support we have had through the years.

(Martha Welch Mendez is a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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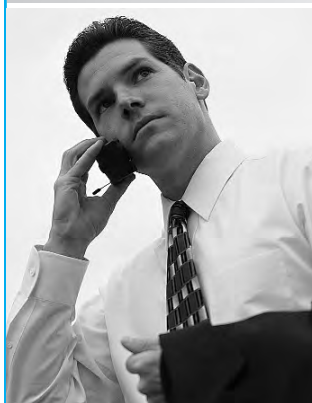
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## Nativity play of 1972 was special surprise performance for parents

By Kathleen Mitchel  
Special to *The Criterion*

I am the second oldest of eight children—five girls and three boys, in that order, with 10 years separating the oldest from the youngest.

The Christmas of 1972 had Cindy, Lori, Jill, Jennifer, Andrew, Michael, Samuel and me rehearsing our live performance of the Nativity.

We seemed to be pretty professional. At least in our eyes, we were. We practiced and practiced until our rendition of the Bible story was perfect.

So it happened on one cold December night just days before Christmas Eve. The stage was set and the tree was adorned in white lights that filled the living room with a halo-like glow.

My brothers and sisters and I were costumed in our bath robes, and we had covered our heads with bath towels to

replicate the authentic look.

There we stood around the Christmas tree—Mary, Joseph, an angel, two shepherds and the Three Wise Men, just waiting for the curtain to open.

It was now time to get Mom and Dad so they could behold the greatest production of the Nativity story ever performed in a house on a country road in Carmel, Ind.

The story was told and acted out while songs of joy filled the room. A sense of peace fell upon us all. The anticipation of the birth of Our Savior was felt that night and every Christmas since.

That play was our gift to our parents, Steve and Rosalind Mitchel. It was a secret just between us kids, and we kept it until the start of our big show.

*(Kathleen Mitchel is a member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis.) †*

## God's gift of another year of life is best present of all for cancer patient

By Jean Allen  
Special to *The Criterion*

I have many Christmas memories and they are all precious to me. But the most recent memory is from December 2005. Last year, I was diagnosed with cancer.

I started chemotherapy and radiation therapy in October and finished the treatments in December. Then, in January, I was scheduled to have surgery.

But December 2005 was a good and

happy Christmas. Just being able to spend it with my family was a miracle for me because I did not know if I would be here or not next Christmas.

God has been good to me, and that goes to show that you should not take your health or your life for granted.

Thanks to God for letting me share another Christmas with my family this year!

*(Jean Allen is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.) †*



### Christmas lights

Colorful Christmas lights stream in the dark at the Indianapolis Zoo on the evening of Dec. 16. The photo was taken from a moving train at the zoo.

## Surprise visit from Santa Claus reminds girl to count her blessings

By Mary Williams  
Special to *The Criterion*

It was a cold, snowy Christmas Eve in 1959.

We had "painted" Christmas scenes on the picture window in the living room with stencils and Glass Wax.

The snow was falling and it looked like a Norman Rockwell scene outside.

As we children were peering out the window contemplating Santa's arrival, we heard a loud "Ho, Ho, Ho" outside. Seven pairs of eyes grew huge when we saw Santa walking down the middle of our street. The younger siblings were stunned. Here came Santa walking up our driveway straight to the front door!

We lunged for the door, opened it and

were just about speechless as Santa handed each of us a present. Then he warned us to get to bed because he was ready to start making deliveries.

We scrambled over our feet to get to our rooms and fall asleep.

As I laid there thinking about what just had occurred, I remember feeling all warm and cozy about being in a family that loved each other, sharing a room with my sister, smelling the turkey starting to bake down in the kitchen and knowing that the manger scene was tucked nicely under the tree where Santa could see it.

I knew that our family was truly blessed.

*(Mary Williams is a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.) †*

# A story for Christmas: Bringing home the house of bread

By Fr. Stanley J. Konieczny

Catholic News Service

It felt good to wake up at home in her own bed, far from the rowdiness of the college dormitory.

"Everything is the same," Patricia thought as she padded down to the kitchen where Mom was baking and assembling her annual gingerbread house.

Maureen's gingerbread houses were legendary not so much for their sleek design and lavish decorations, but for the architectural disasters of falling chimneys and melting candy mortar. She was busy at work on this year's creation when Patricia crept behind her and gave her a hug.

"Morning, Mom. I see you're hard at work," Patricia said.

Maureen responded by talking about the gingerbread house.

"It is much more than just a family tradition," she said. It is "our most authentic Christmas decoration."

"How is that, Mom?" Patricia asked, nibbling on the remnants of a failed wall.

"Do you remember what the name 'Bethlehem' means?" Maureen asked.

Patricia shook her head no, unable to speak with a mouth full of construction faults.

"Bethlehem means 'House of Bread,'" Maureen explained. "Jesus was born in the House of Bread, so it is most appropriate that we remember his birth with a gingerbread house."

"And for me, the most touching line in the Christmas story is that there was no room for the family at the inn," she said.

"Maybe it's a bit silly, but I feel I can make up for that lack of hospitality in some way by building my own little house just

for Jesus."

Patricia recalled Jesus saying that he would never have a place to lay his head.

"My gingerbread houses may be a bit ramshackle, but they make you think," Maureen chuckled.

The master baker paused, walked over to the counter, poured two mugs of tea and announced, "It's break time!"

As they savored the warmth of the tea and the kitchen, Patricia observed that the house smelled like Christmas.

"It comes with baking gingerbread. The whole house smells fresh and spicy, and that's straight out of the Christmas story, too," Maureen said.

"How so?" Patricia asked with a perplexed look.

Maureen thought a moment then answered, "Remember how the Magi came to the Christ Child and brought coffers brimming with gold, frankincense and myrrh? Well, myrrh and frankincense were very aromatic, just like baked ginger and nutmeg and cinnamon."

"When I smell those spices in my kitchen at Christmastime, it conjures up visions of visitors from the East riding camels laden with fragrant gifts. And, who knows? Out of thoughtfulness, the Wise Men may have presented Mary with a small bunch of cinnamon sticks or a pouch of ginger as a gift for the new mother!"

"I like the gumdrops," Patricia announced as she snatched one from the landscaping around the little brown cottage with the precarious tilt.

"I can see," Maureen said, trying unsuccessfully to scold her.

"No, Mom," Patricia said. "I mean I think the gumdrops with all their colors remind me of the rich robes that artists use to dress the Magi in paintings and statues. And they're

spicy, too!"

Just as Patricia swiped another gumdrop, the graham cracker roof began to shift and slide off the gingerbread walls.

"I didn't do it, Mom. Honest," Patricia protested.

"Don't worry. After 19 years, you should know how fragile my gingerbread houses are. That's another reason I love to make them. They are fragile and uncertain, just like our lives—just like the human life Jesus humbled himself to share in," Maureen said, a bit wistfully.

"My gingerbread houses are fragile like my faith, too," she added quietly.

"Mom," Patricia moaned, "you are the most faith-filled woman I know."

"I have my moments when I shift and slide, too," Maureen replied. "Like my Christmas house, I am very fragile. My faith and my life are held together with prayer and white icing."

"White icing?" Patricia asked her.

"Yes, the white icing of my marriage commitment to your Dad, the love of family and friends, my love for others and for my Church," she said almost in a whisper.

The kitchen grew still for a moment until Maureen laughed.

"And then, like a gingerbread house, I'm propped up behind the scenes sometimes by the occasional chocolate-covered pretzel or even a toothpick!" she said. "See kiddo, you don't know all of my secrets!"

"Now let's put some extra icing on that roof and, Patricia Ann, will you please stop eating all the gumdrops?"

(Father Stanley Konieczny is associate pastor of St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish in Belleville, Ill.) †



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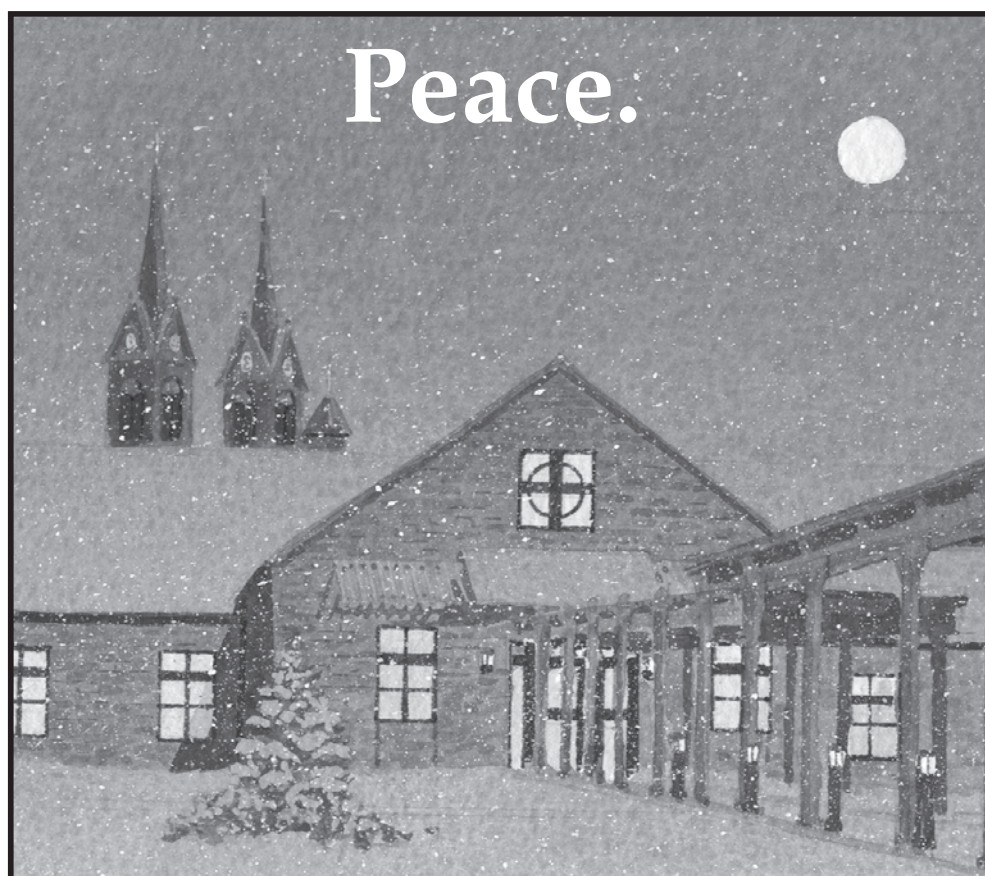
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# Reporter, colleagues reach out to help family facing hard times

By Moises Sandoval

Catholic News Service

The woman's voice on the telephone was desperate. She and her husband and their three children were going to be evicted from their apartment on the day before Christmas because they had exhausted his unemployment benefits and public assistance.

Saying that they had nowhere to turn, she pleaded for my help. At the time, I was working as a reporter for *The Albuquerque Tribune*, and I suppose she picked my name out of the bylines in the paper simply because I am Hispanic.

Touched by her desperation, I went to visit the family in the threadbare little apartment where they lived.

Their plight touched my heart. I could not see them homeless on the street on the day that the Christ Child came to bring Good News to the poor.

I therefore went to Catholic Charities to ask for help on

their behalf. Times were hard, however, and officials there could only give me \$50, which was half the monthly rent.

My wife, Penny, and I were in no position to pay the other half of the rent. I was earning only \$100 a week then and—because our second child, Mark Thomas, had been born with a heart defect that ultimately took his life—we had a mountain of medical and hospital bills.

I told Penny about the family being evicted, and we talked about whether we could afford to put up the other \$50. We finally decided that, yes, we could survive without that \$50.

I told my colleagues, and they also were touched by the family's plight. They took up a collection. Several days before Christmas, I took the \$100 to the family, accompanied by several reporters with boxes of groceries so that the family would have both food and shelter on Christmas Day.

Memories of countless other Christmases have blurred, but this one remains sharply etched. We were not much better off than the family we helped. Our celebration was rather simple,

but we never regretted having responded to that cry for help.

For us, the important thing was that, on that day so long ago when the angels sang "Glory to God in the highest and peace to the people on earth," that married couple and their children could sense a little of the wonder and joy of the birth that changed the course of history.

Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes writes that in the Hispanic world the family is "the security net" in times of trouble.

"And when have the times not been troubled?" he asks.

But it sometimes takes time, as in this case, for a family to rearrange furniture and make room by their hearth for family members who have ventured from their traditional community into the crueler world of urban America, but failed to earn enough money to pay for their food and shelter.

(Moises Sandoval is proprietor of Moises Sandoval Communications, specializing in bilingual editing.) †




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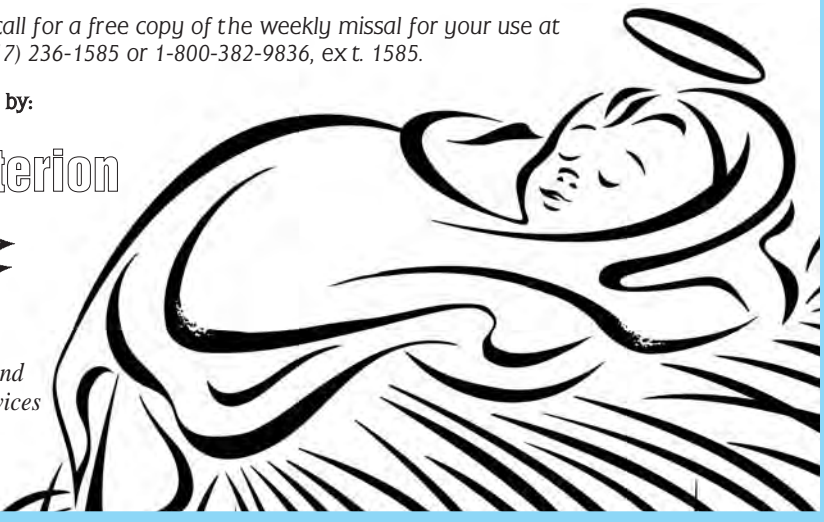





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## Mystery of Christmas is truly about Lord's presence all year

By Fr. Herbert Weber

Christ was born during a time and in a place of uncertainty and tumult. It is precisely in that context that his birth can be understood best.

Just as Jesus was born in a nation that was oppressed and into a people who felt helpless, observing the anniversary of his birth still brings hope to those who feel overwhelmed.

It would be nice to approach Christmas without wars or terrorism, without divided families or people grieving someone's death. Nonetheless, those situations should make the significance of Christ's coming all the more important.

Christmas is not merely a time to recall that Jesus was born more than 2,000 years ago. People today continue to encounter the Lord as they face daily struggles. Often, Jesus is found in the midst of pain and difficulty.

One year, I was called to the hospital during the afternoon on Christmas Eve. I ran into a parishioner there, who told me that she is a volunteer and always comes to the hospital on Christmas Eve to make sure that everyone has a visitor. I suddenly felt blessed being able to be with one patient who needed my presence.

Another time I recall telling my family that I would be late for Christmas dinner because several parishioners were going with me to the county jail to celebrate

Mass with some inmates.

With Larry playing his guitar and Joe assisting in the singing, the men in the jail started to cry in joy. The Mass was moving, and I knew that Jesus was fully present there.

What Christmas allows is an opportunity to see Christ living on this Earth, a mystery that continues to unfold throughout the year.

The Incarnation means that God is joined to humanity and has entered into the good and bad of human experience.

A nurse told me that she comes to church each week not to escape the world, but to find a way to bring Christ into the world.

In her work at the maternity wing of a hospital, she often sees parents rejoicing at the birth of their long-awaited children. Sadly, she also sees parents grieving about the birth of stillborn babies and premature infants who are at great risk. She reminds herself that Christ is present, and shares her conviction with parents during happy and sorrowful times.

Christ has entered the world and continues to share people's lives.

A woman in Haiti runs a house for children with profound physical and mental disabilities. Many children have been abandoned.

One little boy, David, was brought to her after he was found lying in a pile of trash. No one knows his age or even his real name. He is physically very limited



Ongoing war and violence do not stop an Iraqi man from dressing as Santa Claus and visiting children at Holy Family Church in Baghdad at Christmastime. Often, Jesus is found in the midst of pain and difficulty.

and usually lies on a little mat.

As I held David, I found that I could get a little response from him as I rubbed his stomach—a slight smile that was an expression of the kindness he felt there.

I celebrated Mass in the yard, and having the children there for the Eucharist was a statement of solidarity. The Lord was present in their home sacramentally, and in the love and

goodness of their caregivers.

The mystery of Christmas is truly about the Lord's presence throughout the year and in every part of the world. Through Jesus' birth, hope and joy are brought to each situation in daily life.

(Father Herbert Weber is the founding pastor of Blessed John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio.) †

## Church has officially observed Christmas since fourth century

By Joseph Kelly

The Gospel accounts of the Nativity in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 do not say what day Jesus was born.

There were attempts to calculate the day, but by the third century Christians realized this was impossible so they tried other ways to determine a date for Jesus' birth.

Many people believed the world was re-created on the first day of spring, which is March 25 of the Julian calendar followed in ancient Rome.

How appropriate, then, for the world's Redeemer to become incarnate on that day.

Other scholars argued that Jesus became incarnate, not at his birth but at his conception. If Jesus was conceived on March 25, he would have been born nine months later on Dec. 25.

This date didn't catch on immediately, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean

region where people believed that Jesus was born on Jan. 6.

But in the West, Dec. 25 had much appeal. Why?

Many Romans venerated the Sun, whose birthday was Dec. 25, or a virility god named Mithra with the same birthday. The Romans also observed a raucous celebration called Saturnalia on Dec. 17-23. Thus, Dec. 25 offered a date with a good theological basis that also would counter several pagan holidays.

Although we don't know the final steps, in 336 the Church at Rome officially observed the "birth day of Christ" on Dec. 25. This tradition spread throughout the world.

But what about Jan. 6?

The Church decided to use that day for Jesus' manifestation to the whole world, symbolized by the Magi.

The Magi were three kings named

Melchior, Caspar and Balthasar, right? Not really. Matthew's Gospel speaks only of Magi and doesn't call them kings or say they rode camels or give their names.

The early Christians looked to the Old Testament for prophecies relating to Jesus.

One prophecy in Isaiah said that foreigners traveling on camels would bring gold and frankincense to the Messiah, while a psalm spoke of kings coming.

Naturally, the Christians interpreted the Messiah as Jesus, and the only foreigners who brought him gifts were the Magi. By the third century, we find Christians speaking of the Magi as kings riding camels.

How many Magi were there?

A great Egyptian scholar named Origen found a Genesis passage in which three pagans honored the Hebrew patriarch Isaac. Origen said the three symbolized the Magi, but didn't say why.

Names for the Magi do not appear until the sixth century and all are fictional.

"Balthasar" may be a corruption of Belteshazzar, a Babylonian king in the Book of Daniel. "Melchior" may be a combination of two Hebrew words for "king" and "light." And "Caspar" may derive from the name of an Indian king converted by early Christians.

These names first appear in the West in a sixth-century mosaic in the Church of St. Apollinaris Nuovo in Ravenna, Italy.

The date for Christmas may have been settled by the fourth century, but legends of the Magi grew throughout the Middle Ages.

(Joseph Kelly is the chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at John Carroll University in Cleveland. He wrote *The Origins of Christmas*, published by Liturgical Press.) †

### Discussion Point

## Families celebrate Christmas traditions

### This Week's Question

Describe a unique or continuing family Christmas tradition in your home.

"Our three children usually go to a CCD Advent program. At home, I have a wonderful storybook set and Advent calendar that my mother gave me in 1995. Each little book gives a Scripture reference, and we go to the Bible and look up the references and take the journey in the word in anticipation of Christmas." (Kim Parra, Albuquerque, N.M.)

"We make a homemade Jesse Tree. We cut a pine branch and weave a wreath around it. We have little kids—7, 5 and 2—so we cut out fold-up tickets for each day, and my wife draws a symbol on each one and we read that

story." (Jay Reszka, Bennett, Col.)

"When our kids were younger, we always had a birthday cake for Jesus, at home, on Christmas Day. Our Jesse Tree has always been made from a dead branch from the woods, so it is a tree. Reading the Scripture verses every day is a neat way to make Advent very meaningful." (Mary Glenn, Denison, Iowa)

### Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: How have you changed as a parent? Why did you change?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to [cgreene@catholicnews.com](mailto:cgreene@catholicnews.com) or write to *Faith Alive!* at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

## Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

(Eleventh in a series)

Considering all that God has done for us, we should be expressing our gratitude constantly.



The greatest prayer of thanksgiving, of course, is the Eucharist. The word itself means thanksgiving, from the Greek *eucharistia*.

During the celebration of the Eucharist, time is supposed to be reserved after the reception of Communion for a period of silence for "thanksgiving after Communion."

We learned to make this thanksgiving before we received our first Communion, but it seems to me that this period of silence is frequently skipped over in many Masses today. We just want to get on with our hectic lives, and if a priest sits too long for meditation after the Communion hymn is over, I can feel people thinking, "Come on, Father, get

on with it."

If we find a priest who doesn't bow to this pressure, that's one more thing we should thank God for in our prayer of thanksgiving.

Prayers of intercession are nothing more than prayers of petition except that, instead of praying for something for yourself, you pray for someone else. There is no limit to the people we can and should pray for.

Is there a Christian parent anywhere who doesn't pray for his or her children? When they leave the nest—even if it's only to go to school—we know that they are beyond our physical care, if only for a while, so we ask God (or their guardian angels) to take care of them. Once they leave the nest for good, sometimes the *only* way we can continue to care for them is through our prayers.

We pray for the sick, for those facing a particular trial, for those on a trip, for the newly married, for the bereaved, for those who are having difficulties with their faith, for all our friends and acquaintances. And yes, we should also pray for our enemies—people whom we

have antagonized for one reason or another.

Prayers for the dead are a source of controversy because many good Christians believe that it's too late to pray for someone after he or she is dead. They don't at all understand the Catholic doctrine of purgatory.

Neither, though, do many Catholics. They sometimes think of it as a place between heaven and hell, and it is not. Purgatory is the name given to a process of purification, not to a place the soul might go to after death.

Catholics believe that we, the relatives and friends of the deceased, can assist those who have died with our prayers of intercession. This is part of the doctrine of the communion of saints that we say we believe in when we recite the Apostles' Creed.

The souls in purgatory are not separated from the saints in heaven or from us on Earth. We all remain united in the Mystical Body of Christ, and we can therefore offer up prayers and good works on behalf of our brothers and sisters in their process of purification. †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

## Human possibility comes with Christ's birth

Imagine a world in which God chose not to send a Messiah, the Christ Child of this seasonal celebration. What would the world be like?



For one thing, there would be no limit to despair. Hopelessness would be the human condition, with evil rampant in every aspect of life. There would be no apparent

reason to choose the good, leaving selfishness as the only sensible motive for human behavior.

Survival and self-interest would rule out of necessity. Babies would be born of simple lust rather than love, and nurtured only to serve their elders and keep them from extinction.

Pleasure would come, not from human relationships or spiritual abstractions, but solely from filling elemental human needs: finding enough food to stave off hunger, having sex, sleeping under shelter and staying warm. The good of the community, as in cooperative farming or hunting, would be an afterthought if it even existed.

The powerful would lead by sheer force or physical dominance. Ordinary people

would follow these tribal leaders and do their will in order to stay alive in a reasonably stable existence. They would use the Earth and its creatures without any thought to care or preservation of their usefulness.

War and fighting in general would be the only way people resolved their differences. And their differences would be primitive rather than ideological or spiritual. The powerful would send the weak to die in battle, not for the common good, but for their personal gain of more territory, greater wealth or other people to turn into slaves.

Often, these leaders would make themselves into objects of worship since everyone would know they were the source of their security. Again, ordinary people would be the ones providing the required offerings at the altars of greed.

Life would be a pretty bleak prospect for most folks, and joy as we know it would be almost impossible. The best people could hope for would be physical survival without injury or cruel subjugation.

Luckily, our loving God did send us a Messiah, and we have the happy feast of Christmas to remember and celebrate that fact. If despair is the condition of a world without Christ, hope is the nature of Christ's world.

But does this mean that all is sweetness and joy now? Are war, meanness and greed eliminated from human life? Well, no. We're not exactly home free. We have the privilege of hope but, as with most privileges, it comes attached to responsibilities as well.

Our free will, like Christ, is a gift from God. And so we have the responsibility to work, to raise kids, to live with neighbors, in fact, to do everything we do in life according to God's will. God has given us the responsibility not to waste our opportunity.

We can make babies out of love and commit to them and their other parent for life. We can perform our work the absolutely best way we're able. We can be truly present for everyone we meet, we can listen, we can lift them up with affection and concern. We can care for our Earth and resolve our differences with patience and reason.

We can do everything with hope and optimism because that is what Christ brings to our human world. Merry Christmas, indeed!

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

## Part 2: 'Hark the Harold' story for the holidays

Last week, I promised to share the rest of the story about Harold, the "day worker" for a moving company who suffered severe physical symptoms after collapsing on a hot summer day in Belleville, Ill., my hometown.



I had been visiting there at a time when my sister Beverley's son, Jim, and his wife

were moving. After Harold's collapse, Bev and I did what we could to relieve his suffering. Jim went to a neighbor's apartment to phone for help.

Last week's column explained how the neighbor, Carolyn, ministered to Harold in a unique and prayerful way. Bev and I took care of his physical needs as best we could before an ambulance arrived, but what we witnessed through her was something none of us had seen before.

With her arms around Harold's torso and a hand on his head, she fervently and repeatedly prayed. This was more than a

stress-easing technique.

Before following the ambulance to the hospital, we praised Carolyn's gentle action. She said humbly, "I take no credit. It was God ... God's power through me ... I was doing the best I could with God's help. I'm no healer."

At the hospital, Bev and I discussed what we observed as we waited for a doctor to talk with us. When she entered the waiting room, the doctor asked for Harold's family. She was surprised when our two blond heads bobbed up because Harold is black.

The doctor ushered Bev and me into the emergency room cubicle where Harold was attached to a heart monitor, oxygen and an IV. We talked and promised to call his family.

Still wadded in my hand was the roll of bills that one of the other movers had given me as payment for Harold's work. I slipped the money into his icy cold hand. It wasn't even enough to pay the ambulance bill. He shivered and his muscles twitched uncontrollably, but the doctor promised us that would stop.

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

## Cherish the gift of Providence at Christmas

We are fast approaching the end of what could well be described as the "Year of Providence" for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.



In February, we learned that the Holy See's Congregation for the Causes of Saints had cleared the way for the canonization of now St. Theodora Guérin, the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

In July, Pope Benedict XVI announced the date on which the canonization liturgy would take place.

And, of course, on that grand Oct. 15 morning, hundreds of Catholics from across the archdiocese were at St. Peter's Square in Rome to witness the solemn declaration of Indiana's first saint.

All these moments were once-in-a-lifetime events to be remembered and cherished forever by the faithful throughout central and southern Indiana.

*Our heavenly Father not only provides for our needs. Through my experience of life with my family, I have become convinced that he also provides those things that can make life truly sweet.*

But as Christmas is now only days away, perhaps this year's focus on a holy woman's trust in Providence can lead us to do the same and to see it as a gift greater than those we'll unwrap on the morning of Dec. 25.

Our heavenly Father not only provides for our needs. Through my experience of life with my family, I have become convinced that he also provides those things that can make life truly sweet.

This happens in ordinary ways, such as when my son, Michael, takes joy in opening up one more door on our Advent calendar or blowing out the candles on our Advent wreath.

But God makes life sweet in big ways, too.

God has already blessed my wife and I with two wonderful young sons. And in recent months, we learned that we have been blessed with another child that is due to be born sometime next May.

While the gift of children is always a blessing, there comes with them the necessity to provide for their needs.

In recent years, this has become increasingly difficult as the cost of those things that all of us truly need—medical care, heating, gasoline and food, among others—seem to have increased faster than our incomes.

But seen through the eyes of faith, such circumstances are but an invitation to trust in the Providence of God all the more.

It is in these instances, then, that the words of St. Theodora can lift us up:

"If you lean with all your weight upon Providence, you will find yourself well supported."

Admittedly, sometimes that is hard to do when large bills stare us in the face.

But when we step away and turn our vision, in a sense, behind us to our own history, we quickly realize that if God has provided so well for our needs in the past, we can trust that he will do so once again.

In any case, at this time of year when we share gifts of sweaters and sweets, ties and toys, we can find comfort and strength in the definitive sign that our heavenly Father will indeed provide for all our needs: the birth of Jesus 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem. †

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 24, 2006

- Micah 5:1-4a
- Hebrews 10:5-10
- Luke 1:39-45

This weekend, the Church observes the last Sunday in Advent.

The first reading is from the Book of Micah, who is regarded as one of the Minor Prophets.



It is a relatively short book, containing only seven chapters. By contrast, the Book of Isaiah has 66 chapters. The author was a contemporary of Isaiah, the author of the first

section of the Book of Isaiah.

Very few biographical facts are known about the author of Micah. He came from a small village some 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. However, nothing is known of his background.

As did so many prophets of ancient Israel, Micah saw his mission as calling the Chosen People away from indifference to God and sin to piety and loyalty to the Covenant with God.

He lived in a time when piety was in short supply. Greed and exploitation flawed the economy. Religious practices were sparse, and often insincere and poorly presented when they did occur.

This weekend's reading offers a passage from Micah in which the prophet promises that a Savior will come. This Savior will lead the people away from sin and to God. The Savior will come from Bethlehem.

Of course, for Micah, the reference is to David, who was born in Israel. David became the king of Israel, but his royal role was not primarily political. Instead, it was religious. As monarch, his task was to see that the nation upheld the Covenant and obeyed God.

When this Savior becomes king, all will be well. All will be at peace.

For its second reading, the Church this weekend gives us a lesson from the Book of Hebrews.

Heavy with its Hebrew symbolism, this epistle also is renowned as the great source of extolling Jesus as Lord and as the Lamb of God.

In Hebrews, Jesus appears as the perfect victim and priest. His sacrifice on Calvary was sublime, perfect, utterly unique and eternal. Its effects of reconciling humanity with God will never cease. Thus, no other sacrifices are necessary. All has been accomplished.

St. Luke's Gospel furnishes the last reading.

It is the story of the Visitation. Mary travels from her own home to a place in the hills of Judah. Traditionally, it has been thought that this place is the site now called Ein Karem. Once a few miles from Jerusalem, it has been absorbed by the growth of the city and for all practical purposes is today a part of Jerusalem.

Mary travels there to meet her cousin, Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah. Elizabeth is pregnant, and her unborn child will be John the Baptist.

Since Elizabeth was past the childbearing age for a woman, her conception was regarded as miraculous. Her child had a special destiny. He was holy.

Elizabeth realizes that Mary is expecting a child, and the child will be the Messiah. Elizabeth's unborn child understands the profound character of all that is transpiring, and the unborn child senses God in the presence of Mary and her own unborn infant. Elizabeth and her unborn testify to the Messiah.

## Reflection

It is the last day of Advent, and for most people Christmas Eve will be a busy, hurried day even as it is a day of excitement, anticipation and joy.

Nevertheless, it is not too late to spiritually prepare for Christmas. So, in these readings, on the last day of Advent, the Church calls us to Jesus.

He is everything, the Church emphatically and joyfully declares. It gives us the words of Hebrews. It reinforces its belief in Jesus as Lord by recalling the Visitation. And, in the writings of Micah, it reminds us that when we allow Jesus to come to us, all peace and happiness will abide with us. †

## Daily Readings

**Monday, Dec. 25**  
The Nativity of the Lord  
(Christmas)  
Midnight  
Isaiah 9:1-6  
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14  
Dawn  
Isaiah 62:11-12  
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12  
Titus 3:4-7  
Luke 2:15-20  
Day  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 98:1-6  
Hebrews 1:1-6  
John 1:1-18  
or John 1:1-5, 9-14

**Tuesday, Dec. 26**  
Stephen, first martyr  
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59  
Psalm 31:3-4, 6-8, 17-21  
Matthew 10:17-22

**Wednesday, Dec. 27**  
John, Apostle and evangelist  
1 John 1:1-4  
Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12  
John 20:2-8

**Thursday, Dec. 28**  
The Holy Innocents, martyrs  
1 John 1:5-2:2  
Psalm 124:2-5, 7b-8  
Matthew 2:13-18

**Friday, Dec. 29**  
The Fifth Day in the Octave of Christmas  
1 John 2:3-11  
Psalm 96:1-3, 5b-6  
Luke 2:22-35

**Saturday, Dec. 30**  
The Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas  
1 John 2:12-17  
Psalm 96:7-10  
Luke 2:36-40

*continued on page 22*

## Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

# Scripture offers clues about the Communion of Saints

Recently, a co-worker asked about our belief in the Communion of Saints, specifically Scripture references about our having a relationship with the ones who have died and are in heaven.



Do those in heaven retain their own identity? Are they aware of others in eternity? Are they aware of people on Earth? Or do they exist as part of the entire consciousness that is the Creator? (Virginia)

First, we must admit that there is much we do not know—and could not possibly know—about the nature of eternal life with God.

Even in heaven, while we somehow will be absorbed into the divine life of love, we will not be God. The divine nature will forever be beyond our ability to comprehend totally.

On the other hand, there is much we do know from God's revelation. Christian belief on the subject comes directly or indirectly from the Scriptures, especially from the New Testament, and most particularly from the actions of Jesus after the Resurrection.

For St. Paul, the risen Christ is the model of what our own resurrection will be like. The Father who raised Jesus will also raise us to be with him (2 Cor 4:14). Paul's most elaborate discussion of this theme is in 1 Corinthians 15. The resurrection of the Christian is proof of our liberation from sin. Christ is the first to rise; we rise in him. Our resurrection fulfills our Lord's victory over sin and death.

So, what was Jesus like after the Resurrection?

First, he kept his identity. He was still their friend, Jesus, who lived among them and died. Yet he was different. He moved and acted in ways he could not—or did not—before then. He appeared from nowhere and disappeared the same way. His closest friends did not know him, and then finally did recognize him.

Without going further, this tells us much about our own resurrected future. We keep our identity. We can know and relate to each other, though on some different level than

here. We are aware of ourselves and each other.

These conclusions from the words and actions of Jesus that we find in the Bible underlie Christian tradition about what our risen life with each other will be like. They are not novelties dreamed up centuries later. They are part of Christian literature and belief from the beginning of the Christian story.

To offer just one example, one of the most beautiful descriptions of the heavenly kingdom we receive from the early Fathers of the Church is in a homily by a giant of early Christianity, Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, North Africa.

Before his martyrdom under the Roman emperor in the year 259, Bishop Cyprian encouraged his people to be strong and not afraid to die for the faith they had received from the Christian past.

Here on Earth we are exiles, he reminded them, while death is a homecoming that we should welcome.

"We look on paradise as our country," he said, "and a great crowd of our loved ones awaits us there, a countless throng of parents, brothers and children long for us to join them. Assured though they are of their own salvation, they are still concerned about ours. What joy both for them and for us to see one another and embrace!

"There the merciful are rewarded, those who fulfilled the demands of justice by providing for the poor. In obedience to the Lord's command, they turned their earthly possessions into heavenly treasures.

"Let all our longing be to join them as soon as we may."

Some Christians may disagree with Cyprian and with us. But at least we can speak confidently that our belief in this aspect of the Communion of Saints is one that derives from Jesus himself, and from the first great leaders of our faith who walked in his steps.

(A free brochure in English or Spanish, answering questions that Catholics ask about baptism practices and sponsors, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 5515, Peoria, IL 61612. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of [jjdietzen@aol.com](mailto:jjdietzen@aol.com).) †

## My Journey to God

# Christmas Eve

The night is alive  
With a breath of excitement.  
The church bells are pealing  
A tale of enticement.  
The people are coming  
With hearts gladly humming.  
O Christians rejoice!  
Christmas is here.

The candles are glowing,  
The flowers are bright.  
The priest is singing with all of his might!  
The incense delivers our prayers up above;  
Receive them, dear Lord, in your infinite love.  
O Christians rejoice!  
Christmas is here.

And the holly and stars,  
The shepherds and kings,  
The angel on high  
Who so beautifully sings.  
The Virgin so mild,  
The Heavenly Child.  
O Christians rejoice!  
Christmas is here.

The trees and the lights,  
The wreaths and the ribbons,  
The people rejoicing

(Linda Abner is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.)



Without a misgiving.  
The altar sublime,  
Our Savior Divine.  
O Christians rejoice!  
Christmas is here.

The heavens are open  
Holy and near.  
God in his mercy  
Has joined with us here.  
O Gift yet increasing,  
Love never ceasing.  
O Christians rejoice!  
Our Savior is here.

By Linda Abner

# REVIEW

continued from page 3

HIV/AIDS finds world still behind on target goals to combat the disease. Federal marriage amendment fails on cloture vote in Senate.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, Vatican's chief ecumenist, warns Church of England bishops that if they ordain women bishops it will destroy possibility of full unity with Catholics and Orthodox.

Philippine legislators pass bills to abolish death penalty.

At spring meeting in Los Angeles, bishops approve new translation of key Mass prayers. They also study restructuring of USCCB and approve a 10-year extension of collection for retired religious. They endorse a statement by Bishop Skylstad, USCCB president, calling current U.S. immigration system "morally unacceptable."

U.S. Episcopal Church elects Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori of Nevada as its first female presiding bishop.

## July

Top courts in Georgia and New York affirm their state bans on same-sex marriage. First international conference on Catholic ethics, in Padua, Italy, draws more than 400 moral theologians from 63 countries. Pope makes two-day visit to Spain, urges strong family life.

Zambian Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo moves to Washington, starts Married Priests Now! movement seeking end to mandatory celibacy for Catholic priests. Israel answers Hezbollah attacks out of Lebanon with bombing raids across Lebanon. Religious leaders criticize both sides. Pope warns of consequences of escalating violence in Middle East, criticizes Hamas and Hezbollah for fomenting violence, calls on Israel to exercise restraint.

President George W. Bush vetoes bill that would expand federal funding of human embryonic stem-cell research. Vatican rules when a parish is suppressed its assets must go to the receiving parish. As Israeli-Hezbollah conflict mounts, pope urges immediate cease-fire. World Methodist Council adopts 1999 Catholic-Lutheran joint declaration on justification, saying it fully accords with Methodist faith. Washington state Supreme Court upholds constitutionality of state law defining marriage as heterosexual.

## August

Iraqi bishop says exodus of Iraq's Christians since 2003 has reduced their numbers from 1.2 million to 600,000. Gail Quinn, executive director of USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, retires after 40 years with conference.

Dutch Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, pioneer in ecumenism and Catholic-Jewish relations, dies. Catholic relief worker in Lebanon says hundreds of thousands of Lebanese are displaced by Israeli attacks, lack of cease-fire prevents aid getting through.

Catholic institutions around world are in forefront of assisting those with HIV/AIDS as XVI International AIDS Conference meets in Canada. New Orleans Archdiocese reports uninsured property losses from Hurricane Katrina totaled \$120 million. U.S. bishops' Labor Day statement focuses on immigrants' rights, role in American society. Loretto Sister Mary Luke Tobin, pioneer in religious renewal and social causes and only U.S. woman religious to attend Vatican II as an auditor, dies at age 98.

New U.S. Program of Priestly Formation is approved, replacing program in effect since 1992.

## September

More than 150 religious leaders from around world gather in Assisi, Italy, for shared prayers for peace; pope calls gathering "prophetic."

Pope makes second trip to native Germany since his election, muses whether it might be his last, visits country's most famous Marian shrine at Altotting. He searches relationship between faith and reason, delivers academic speech in Regensburg that includes a negative reference to Islam as a religion of the sword—which becomes focal point of world controversy over Catholic understanding of Islam as a world religion. Pope subsequently says he deeply regrets any misinterpretations his remarks may have provoked. By year's end, papal remarks are still seen as critical to future of Catholic-Muslim relations, but their ultimate impact remains undetermined.

At Vatican-sponsored congress on stem-cell research, pope endorses research and therapy involving adult stem-cells. Archbishop Milingo re-ordains four married bishops who are former Catholic priests, claiming rites make them Catholic bishops. Vatican says Church law automatically excommunicates Archbishop Milingo and the four bishops he ordained.

Two weeks after Regensburg speech, pope meets with more than 40 Islamic leaders and ambassadors from Islamic countries, urges dialogue and reconciliation. Congress adopts stringent immigration enforcement legislation, calling for 700-mile fence on Mexico border, despite strong opposition from U.S. bishops and other religious leaders. Two Florida priests are accused of stealing \$8.6 million from their parishes in decades-long scheme.

## October

Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl, celebrating his first Red Mass in nation's capital, says spheres of faith and public life are distinct but interrelated. Spokane Diocese sells diocesan headquarters for \$2 million as part of bankruptcy proceeding to meet sex abuse claims.

U.S. Rep. Mark Foley resigns from Congress after revelations he sent lurid e-mails to underage congressional pages; attorney says the Florida Republican was sexually abused by a priest in his teens. First official U.S. national dialogue of Catholics and Sikhs is held. Facing more than

See REVIEW, page 21



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# YEAR

continued from page 2

## 4. Youths lead by example as archdiocese continues to help hurricane victims recover

The utter devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 could not help but overflow into the next calendar year.

The effort to restore the livelihood and well-being of the peoples of Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana is still in full swing, and will be for some time.

Not once, but twice the leadership for youth ministry in the archdiocese endeavored this past year to take dozens of young people right into the heart of the devastation—Biloxi, Miss.—to dig their hands into the mess and help to bring about needed healing for the region.

Our special correspondent, Katie Berger, wrote: “In Pascagoula and Biloxi, the youths spent their days working on jobs that ranged from removing debris from yards and beaches to helping with homes that hadn’t been touched since the hurricane.”

## 5. Six Catholic schools named as Blue Ribbon Schools

The archdiocese continued its track record of excellence in education this year as it saw six more of its schools honored by the U.S. Department of Education as “No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence.”

The six schools earning that honor are Christ the King School in Indianapolis, Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison, St. Bartholomew School in Columbus, St. Lawrence School in Indianapolis, St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg and St. Monica School in Indianapolis.

It is a distinction for schools who either achieve in the top 10 percent of the nation or who have “at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance on state tests.”

In the past four years, 21 different schools in the archdiocese have earned the Blue

Ribbon distinction. No other diocese in the United States has matched that distinction.

## 6. Legacy for Our Mission campaign moves into full gear

The archdiocese is now in the middle of a three-year \$100 million capital campaign that is coming to parishes in waves.

The year 2006 saw not only the successful conclusion of the “pilot wave,” but also the beginning of the campaign in more than dozens of other parishes—and its conclusion in some parishes.

The funds raised in the campaign “will benefit both the parishes that have raised the funds as well as the archdiocese’s shared ministries and home missions, which include the formation of seminarians and the support of retired priests,” wrote reporter Sean Gallagher.

“The Legacy for Our Mission: For Our Children and the Future Campaign is intended to help all 150 archdiocesan parishes and the archdiocese as a whole [carry out their mission] by involving as many Catholic households in central and southern Indiana as possible,” he wrote.

## 7. First class graduates from Richmond’s Seton Catholic High School

Eleven seniors got the exciting chance to make history this year when they became the first to graduate from Seton Catholic High School in Richmond—a new school opened in 2002.

The students were the first class to graduate from a Catholic high school in Richmond in 70 years. (The former St. Andrew High School closed in 1936).

## 8. St. Vincent Health celebrates 125 years

A major milestone for Catholic health care in Indiana was also the chance to recall humble roots and a “legacy of integrity.”

St. Vincent Health, started in 1881 as a handful of religious sisters, celebrated 125 years of providing health care and continuing a mission to serve Jesus Christ in the poor.

“The four Daughters of Charity came with



In a class of their own, the first graduates of Seton Catholic High School in Richmond include, from left, Shane Soper, Allison Cook, Brent Ropp, Jackie Brown, Kelsie Rheinhardt, Michelle Valentini, Jennifer Sugas, Marissa Stevens, James Hoover, Abby Hunt and Ben Naseman.

just \$34.77 and a dream of taking care of the city’s sick and underserved,” wrote assistant editor John Shaughnessy. “As they worked to convert an abandoned seminary into a downtown Indianapolis hospital, the sisters never imagined that they were starting what has become one of the largest healthcare systems in Indiana—16 hospitals serving 45 counties under the name of St. Vincent Health.”

## 9. Scott Nobbe is ordained to the priesthood

An event that is always a celebration for the archdiocese—and a high note for the year—is the ordination of one or more men into the lifelong service of the priesthood—a service dedicated to bringing the saving grace of the sacraments to the people of central and southern Indiana.

This year, Scott Nobbe was ordained a priest at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral during a June 24 Mass that reporter Sean Gallagher described as “a liturgy imbued with rich symbols, the love of his family and friends, and the fellowship of Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein and his new brother priests.”

## 10. Local coverage of Pope Benedict XVI’s first encyclical, “God is Love”

The inclusion of this last top news story was a matter of some debate in the newsroom, as it is really an international story that didn’t originate in our archdiocese.

While the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (“God is Love”) was certainly covered by a broad range of media, it was a document that was discussed for its local implications in a two-part series written by reporter Sean Gallagher.

“Catholics across the archdiocese have been reading the pope’s words and considering their meaning for their everyday lives of faith,” Gallagher wrote.

The encyclical covered a lot of ground, from a discussion on married love to charitable work to the connection of love to the Eucharist.

(To read more about these 10 stories, including links to all our original Criterion news coverage in 2006, log on to our Web site at [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com).) †

# REVIEW

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two dozen sex abuse lawsuits, Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, files for bankruptcy protection after jury awards \$1.5 million to one victim.

Orthodox priest in Iraq is kidnapped and decapitated, reportedly for not doing enough to denounce pope’s negative comment on Islam. Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin, 19th-century French nun who founded the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in Indiana, is canonized St. Theodora on Oct. 15.

New Jersey Supreme Court rules same-sex couples must have same rights as married couples.

## November

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is sentenced to death by hanging; Vatican official objects, calling death penalty “killing out of vengeance.” In off-year elections, Democrats regain control of House and Senate and majority of state governorships. Voters in seven states pass bans on same-sex marriage while Arizona becomes first state to defeat such a ban by popular vote. South Dakotans repudiate a strict abortion law, while Missourians narrowly approve a constitutional amendment permitting any stem-cell research allowed by federal law. Voters in seven states adopt higher minimum wage.

U.S. bishops mark 200th anniversary and reopening of renovated Baltimore basilica, nation’s first cathedral, with concelebrated Mass. At fall meeting in Baltimore, bishops issue statements on worthiness to receive Communion, on marital love and contraception, and on pastoral care of those with a homosexual tendency. They also adopt new strategic plan for USCCB involving dramatic reduction in number of bishops’ committees and cutting more than 60 jobs at their national headquarters. They endorse a statement by Bishop Skylstad, their president, urging policy review aimed at responsible transition in Iraq.

Pope urges international agreements protecting rights of migrants and refugees; Vatican official calls planned 700-mile

U.S. border fence “inhuman project.”

French bishops say they support outreach to reconcile traditionalists with Church but warn that use of Tridentine Mass should be carefully regulated. Top Roman Curia officials, convened to discuss Archbishop Milingo’s call for married clergy, reaffirm value of clerical celibacy in the Latin-rite Church.

Pope Benedict, Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury meet at Vatican, express continuing commitment to ecumenism despite new obstacles raised by divisions over women bishops and homosexuality.

Pope, on four-day trip to Turkey to visit with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, seeks to advance Catholic-Orthodox and Catholic-Muslim relations. He celebrates Mass at Ephesus for Turkey’s tiny Catholic community. In late addition to his itinerary, he visits Istanbul’s famed Blue Mosque, where he prays. For third time in 2006, a Chinese bishop ordains another bishop without Vatican permission.

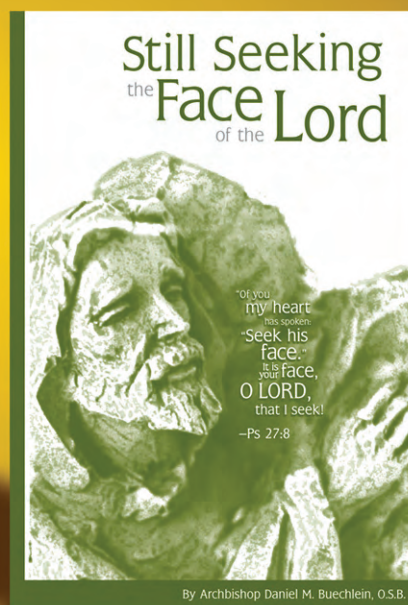
## December

Los Angeles Archdiocese reaches \$60 million settlement with 45 clergy sex abuse victims. *The Nativity Story* opens in U.S. theaters. U.N. study on AIDS in southern Africa highlights strong role of Catholic Church in AIDS prevention and treatment.

Kidnappers free two Chaldean Catholic priests in Iraq. Vatican officials announce archaeologists have found St. Paul’s tomb—a rough marble sarcophagus inscribed, “Paul Apostle Martyr”—several feet below the main altar of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. *Picturing Mary*, documentary on the Blessed Virgin in art, begins airing on PBS television outlets. Oregon judge announces mediated settlement for Portland Archdiocese to pay 150 sex abuse claimants; does not give dollar figure.

As Iran hosts conference questioning the existence of World War II Holocaust of Jews, Vatican issues statement calling Holocaust an “enormous tragedy” that must be remembered and not repeated. Vatican launches Christmas appeal to fund AIDS treatment for some of world’s poorest people. †

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# Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

**BACHUS, Joseph William**, 17, Holy Guardian Angels, Cedar Grove, Dec. 7. Son of Thomas and Pam (Brown) Bachus. Brother of Elizabeth, Charles and John Bachus. Grandson of Jeroma Brown.

**BOARMAN, David A.**, 59, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Husband of Stephanie Boarman. Father of Angela, Chad, Jason, Jonathon and Richard Boarman. Brother of Doris Hansert, Mary Jo Kaiser-Brown, R. Jeanne Kelley, Elenor Neth, Beverly Olsen, Mildred Parmenter, Margaret, Regina, Joseph, Paul and Ronald Boarman. Grandfather of two.

**BUENING, Dennis**, 40, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 12. Husband of Susan (Lesnek) Buening. Son of Maurice and Mary Jane Buening. Brother of Julie Morris, Duane, Mark and Rick Buening. Grandson of Sylvia Ortman.

**BUENNAGEL, Clare Mae**, 96, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Mother of Lu Ann Lerchen. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of four.

**BURKE, Margaret Jane (Wilson)**, 92, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Mother of Kathleen Rice. Sister of Marian Dillion. Grandmother of two.

**CLAFLIN, Thelma Joann**, 77, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 6. Wife of Daniel Clafin. Mother of Emma Devery and Linda Sage. Sister of Mildred Miles and Betty Thacker. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of two.

**CLARK, Thelma Julia**, 94, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Mother of Linda Lou Grosvenor, Connie Merkel, Virginia O'Connor and Thomas

Clark. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of seven.

**CUNANAN, Adriano Y.**, 86, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Father of Blessie, Gloria, Grace, Arnold, Dino, Johnny, Ramon, Renato and Wilfredo Cunanan. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of four.

**DEEM, Charles E.**, 61, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Nov. 14. Husband of Patricia Deem. Father of Stephanie Minch, Charles, Patrick and Scott Deem. Brother of Carol Kirby, Louise Pedigo, JoAnn, James, John and Robert Deem. Grandfather of nine.

**DERMANELIAN, Margie (McGuire)**, 48, St. Agnes, Nashville, Dec. 5. Wife of Michael Dermanelian. Mother of Marissa, McKenzie, Michaela and Miranda Dermanelian. Daughter of Pauline (McGuire) Thomson. Sister of Marianne Strzelecki, James McGuire and Johnny Rowe.

**DRESCHER, Elizabeth**, 86, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 28. Mother of Jeanne Potts, Bart, John, Michael and William Drescher. Sister of Helen Raber. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 11.

**DUDLEY, Helen T.**, 86, St. Luke, Indianapolis, Nov. 27. Wife of Ralph Dudley. Mother of Cathy and Michael Dudley.

**EMBORSKY, Raymond J.**, 52, St. Gabriel the Archangel, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Husband of Gloria Emborsky. Father of Elizabeth, Christopher and Matthew Emborsky. Brother of Eugene and Rodney Emborsky.

**FIELDS, Agnes M. Scheidt**, 85, St. Agnes, Nashville, Dec. 8. Mother of Sandra May, Patricia Stotts, Frank, Robert and Steve Scheidt. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of five.

**FREIBERGER, Betty Jean**, 80, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs, Dec. 9. Mother of Larry Proctor, Debra Thompson, Edward, Gerald, Ronald and Steven Freiburger. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 11.

**GLADDEN, Katherine E.**, 87, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Mother of Kathy Duffin.

**GORDON, Tamara Orton**, 45, St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Wife of Lawrence Gordon. Mother of Ashley Orton. Daughter of Robert and Doris Kennie Sr. Sister of Rhonda Archey, Angela Milby, Bryan, David, John and Robert Kennie Jr.

**HUMMELL, Mitchell**, 78, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Dec. 11. Husband of Virginia Hummell. Father of Gloria Cowin, Donna Miller, Mark and Mike Hummell. Brother of Mary Gunter and Evelyn Osborne. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 12.

**KERN, James P.**, 83, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Nov. 30. Father of Dr. J. Paul and Philip Kern.

**KLEEMAN, Ambrose J.**, 83, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 5. Father of Rosie Odle, Danny and Ronnie Kleeman. Brother of Mary Jarboe, Rosa Thaxton, Ferdinand and Norbert Kleeman. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of 36. Great-great-grandfather of six.

**KNARZER, Lolabelle (Sims)**, 88, Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Nov. 15. Mother of Phyllis King and Thomas Knarzer. Sister of Jean Wilson and Jack Sims. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 18. Great-great-grandmother of one.

**KNIERIM, Robert H.**, 85, St. Anne, Hamburg, Dec. 11. Father of Sandy Meyer, Ken, Larry, Mike and Stan Knierim. Brother of Harriet Baldwin. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of three.

**KUSH, Frank W.**, 88, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, Nov. 20. Husband of Margaret Kush. Father of Gloria Carter, Kathi Rowland, Gary and John Kush. Brother of Anna Allen, Sophie Balcerzak, Rose Whitter, Joseph and Walter Kush. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of nine.

**LAMPERT, Mary Margaret**, 81, St. Gabriel, Connerville, Dec. 8. Wife of Jerry Lampert. Mother of Mary Copley, Carol Schuell and Susan Wulff. Sister of Ruth Bien. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of one.

**MARSHALL, Paula J.**, 52, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Dec. 4. Mother of Bridget Sommers and Erin Webb. Daughter of Rosemary (Graham) Hardesty. Sister of Julie Choate, Linda Hiatt, Susan Hott, Joseph and

Thomas Hardesty. Grandmother of five.

**MEYER, Ernest B.**, 79, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 5. Brother of Velma Meyer and Mildred Nobbe.

**MUCKERHEIDE, Leonard C.**, 91, St. Maurice, Decatur County, Dec. 4. Brother of Frances Hoog.

**NAULT, Nina Lorraine**, 76, St. Luke, Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Wife of Dwaine O. Nault. Mother of Jane and Stephen Nault.

**NOE, Marie Caroline**, 100, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Mother of James and Nicholas Noe. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of 10.

**PHILLIPS, Joann C.**, 80, St. Luke, Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Mother of Georgia Palmer, Michele Spaulding, Ann Yoder, Bill and Joe Phillips.

**ROGIER, Emogene**, 78, St. Augustine, Leopold, Dec. 5. Mother of Norma Ramsey, Gary, Jim, Paul and Ray Rogier. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of three.

**ROTH, Eileen A.**, 85, St. Philip Neri, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Aunt of one.

**SALLEE, Kathryn**, 94, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Dec. 1. Mother of Stephen Sallee. Grandmother of three.

**SPONSLER, Bernadine**, 70, St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute, Dec. 6. Mother of Jane Tardy, Evelyn Hood and Bryan Sponsler. Grandmother of five.

**THOMAS, John C.**, 88, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Dec. 6. Father of Mary Ann Hightshue. Brother of Allie Helm and Margaret Wyman. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of six.

**WEINTRAUT, Bernard I.**, 88, St. Joseph, Shelbyville, Dec. 2. Husband of Emojean Weintraut. Father of Choya Stroup. Brother of Ruth Brown and Mary Schutemeyer. Grandfather of one.

**WHITTEN, Aloyse M.**, 81, St. Agnes, Nashville, Dec. 3. Mother of Hazel Brandenburg, Patty Hollingsworth and Jodie Tuttle. Sister of Mary Alsop and Victor Hennessy. Grandmother of five.

**YOUNG, William R.**, 60, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Nov. 3. Stepson of Marilyn Young. Brother of Patricia Hodgson. †

## Providence Sister Mary Esther Larkin was a teacher and principal

Providence Sister Mary Esther Larkin died on Dec. 1 at Mother Theodore Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 92.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 5 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

The former Alice Muriel Larkin was born on Aug. 29, 1914, in Loogootee, Ind.

She entered the congregation of the Sisters of Providence on Aug. 15, 1932, professed first vows on Jan. 23, 1935, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1940.

During 74 years as a member of the congregation, Sister Mary Esther ministered as a teacher and principal for 52 years at Catholic schools staffed by the sisters in Indiana and Illinois.

In the archdiocese, Sister Mary Esther served at St. Charles Borromeo School in Bloomington from 1953-56, the former Holy Trinity

School in New Albany from 1967-69 and St. Simon the Apostle School in Indianapolis from 1971-77.

She also ministered at St. Michael School in Greenfield from 1977-79, Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Indianapolis from 1979-81 and St. Lawrence School in Indianapolis from 1984-89.

At the motherhouse, Sister Mary Esther served in health care services from 1981-82, as a receptionist from 1982-83 and in the senior sisters' prayer ministry from 2001 until her death.

Surviving are three sisters, Martha Keith of Punta Gorda, Fla.; Mary Pat Thompson of Largo, Fla.; and Dorothy Williams of Loogootee, Ind.; as well as several nieces and nephews.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

## Providence Sister Margaret Ellen O'Conner was a teacher, librarian

Providence Sister Margaret Ellen O'Connor died on Dec. 3 at Mother Theodore Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 89.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 7 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

The former Ellen Margaret Mary O'Connor was born on June 24, 1917, in South Bend, Ind.

She entered the congregation of the Sisters of Providence on July 19, 1934, professed first vows on Jan. 23, 1937, and professed final vows on Jan. 23, 1943.

During 72 years as a member of the congregation, Sister Margaret Ellen ministered as a teacher for 43 years at Catholic schools staffed by the sisters in Indiana, Illinois, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

She also served as a circulation librarian at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods

College at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods from 1981-92.

From 1992 until 2000, Sister Margaret Ellen ministered in residential services at the motherhouse then began her prayer ministry with the senior sisters.

In the archdiocese, Sister Margaret Ellen taught at St. Joan of Arc School in Indianapolis from 1943-45, the former Cathedral Grade School in Indianapolis from 1948-50 and St. Andrew School in Indianapolis from 1959-61.

Surviving are two sisters, Elizabeth O'Bastien of Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., and Providence Sister Ann Kevin O'Connor of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods; and two brothers, Donal O'Connor of Normal, Ill., and Maurice O'Connor of Overland Park, Kan.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

## Daily Readings, continued from page 19

### Sunday, Dec. 31

The Holy Family of Jesus,  
Mary and Joseph  
*Sirach* 3:2-6, 12-14  
*Psalms* 128:1-5  
*Colossians* 3:12-21  
or *Colossians* 3:12-17  
*Luke* 2:41-52

### Monday, Jan. 1

The Octave Day of Christmas:  
The Blessed Virgin Mary, the  
Mother of God  
*Numbers* 6:22-27  
*Psalms* 67:2-3, 5-6, 8  
*Galatians* 4:4-7  
*Luke* 2:16-21

### Tuesday, Jan. 2

Basil the Great, bishop and  
doctor of the Church  
Gregory Nazianzen, bishop and  
doctor of the Church  
*1 John* 2:22-28  
*Psalms* 98:1-4

*John* 1:19-28

### Wednesday, Jan. 3

The Most Holy Name of Jesus  
*1 John* 2:29-3:6  
*Psalms* 98:1-3, 6  
*John* 1:29-34

### Thursday, Jan. 4

Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious  
*1 John* 3:7-10  
*Psalms* 98:1, 7-9  
*John* 1:35-42

### Friday, Jan. 5

John Neumann, bishop  
*1 John* 3:11-21  
*Psalms* 100:1-5  
*John* 1:43-51

### Saturday, Jan. 6

Blessed André Bessette, religious  
*1 John* 5:5-13  
*Psalms* 147:12-15, 19-20  
*Mark* 1:7-11

or *Luke* 3:23-38  
or *Luke* 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38

### Sunday, Jan. 7

The Epiphany of the Lord  
*Isaiah* 60:1-6  
*Psalms* 72:2, 7-8, 10-13  
*Ephesians* 3:2-3a, 5-6  
*Matthew* 2:1-12

### Monday, Jan. 8

The Baptism of the Lord  
*Isaiah* 42:1-4, 6-7  
or *Acts* 10:34-38  
*Psalms* 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10  
*Luke* 3:15-16, 21-22

### Tuesday, Jan. 9

*Hebrews* 2:5-12  
*Psalms* 8:2a, 5-9  
*Mark* 1:21b-28

### Wednesday, Jan. 10

*Hebrews* 2:14-18  
*Psalms* 105:1-4, 6-9

*Mark* 1:29-39

### Thursday, Jan. 11

*Hebrews* 3:7-14  
*Psalms* 95:6-11  
*Mark* 1:40-45

### Friday, Jan. 12

*Hebrews* 4:1-5, 11  
*Psalms* 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8  
*Mark* 2:1-12

### Saturday, Jan. 13

Hilary, bishop and doctor  
*Hebrews* 4:12-16  
*Psalms* 19:8-10, 15  
*Mark* 2:13-17

### Sunday, Jan. 14

Second Sunday in Ordinary  
Time  
*Isaiah* 62:1-5  
*Psalms* 96:1-3, 7-10  
*1 Corinthians* 12:4-11  
*John* 2:1-11

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## Patroness of the Americas



Martha McQueen, a member of the Committee of Guadalupe, offers a reflection during Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish's Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass on Dec. 12. This year marked the 475th anniversary of the Virgin of Guadalupe's appearance to St. Juan Diego in Tepeyac, Mexico.



Diana Riegel and Josh Wormann process to the front of the church during the children's offering of red roses. The 11th annual solemn Mass was organized by the Committee of Guadalupe, which consists of St. Rose of Lima, SS. Francis and Clare, St. Barnabas and Our Lady of the Greenwood parishes, along with Marian College and Roncalli High School. Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, Our Lady of the Greenwood pastor, said one of the themes of the celebration was that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the mother of all peoples and all races. "God gives us all an equal dignity," Msgr. Svarczkopf said. "We need to further the message of Our Lady of Guadalupe that we are united."

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