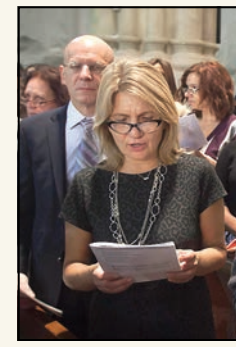




The

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



## No 'two-for-one'

No dispensation for this year's Christmas Mass on Monday, page 3.

CriterionOnline.com

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## The joy of a simple gift



As the head volunteer of the Christmas Store in Indianapolis, Nancy Hollinden leads a group of dedicated, year-round volunteers who offer families in need a place to shop for toys, clothing and household items for Christmas at the Catholic Charities Indianapolis venue. Here, the member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis shares a light moment with David Bethuram, executive director of Catholic Charities for the archdiocese.

(Photo by John Shaughnessy)

## Christmas stores bring holiday hope, love to hundreds of families in need

By John Shaughnessy

The story is one of Nancy Hollinden's favorites from the Christmas season.

Actually, this touching scene happened *the day after* a Christmas when Hollinden and her fellow year-round volunteers helped to make the holiday special for 800 families in need—including providing clothes and two toys for every child in these families.

"I was shopping at Walmart on the day after Christmas—because that's

when you get the great bargains—and I had a huge shopping cart full of things for the Christmas Store," recalls Hollinden, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. "The gentleman who was checking me out inquired about my large amount of stuff. I told him I was buying for a charity, and we give these gifts to children at Christmas.

"He said, 'Oh, I was one of those kids. I want you to know that my whole life long, I never, ever got anything for Christmas except from someone like you. You are doing a wonderful thing.'"

The 75-year-old grandmother pauses before she adds, "I just had tears in my eyes."

She had the same reaction when an elderly couple showed up one day at the Christmas Store in Indianapolis, one of the two Catholic Charities settings in the archdiocese—the other store is in Terre Haute—where people in need come to choose brand-new gifts for members of their family.

"They were grandparents living on Social Security, and they were in

See CHRISTMAS, page 8

## Vatican renews call for peace, negotiated solution on Jerusalem

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Following days of violence and backlash after U.S. President Donald J. Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the Vatican appealed for "wisdom and prudence" to prevail.



Pope Francis

The Holy See "reiterates its own conviction that only a negotiated solution between Israelis and Palestinians can bring a stable and lasting peace, and guarantee the peaceful coexistence of two

states within internationally recognized borders," the Vatican said in a Dec. 10 statement.

President Trump announced his decision on Dec. 6 to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, Israel, fulfilling a promise he made during his presidential campaign.

The announcement sparked anti-U.S. protests throughout Asia and the Middle East, including a four-day protest in the Palestinian territories, the news service Reuters reported. An Israeli security guard in Jerusalem, the report said, was in critical condition after he was stabbed by a Palestinian man at the city's bus station.

Pope Francis expressed his "sorrow for the clashes in recent days," and called for world leaders to renew their commitment for peace in the Holy Land, the Vatican said.

The pope "raises fervent prayers so that the leaders of nations, in this time of special gravity, commit themselves to avert a new spiral of violence, responding with words and deeds to the desires of peace, justice and security for the populations of that battered land," the Vatican said.

Trump's decision also drew warnings from Middle Eastern and European leaders that overturning the United States' long-standing policy would further complicate peace negotiations.

See PEACE, page 2

## Memories of loved ones and the virtue of hope are focus of inaugural 'An Evening of Lights'

By Mike Krokos

Advent is a season of hope, and our hope resides in something beyond what the world can offer, something beyond any given moment in this life.

And unlike the secular world where many people think of hope as wishful thinking or feeling, our faith teaches us that it is one of three theological virtues—along with faith and love.

"As the *Catechism [of the Catholic Church]* reminds us, ... these three virtues are the foundation of all other virtues," said Archbishop Charles C. Thompson to approximately 200 people during the inaugural "An Evening of Lights" program on Dec. 7 in Assembly Hall at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis sponsored by the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation (CCF).

Modeled after the annual Vatican Christmas tree lighting and Nativity reflection begun in 1982 by the late St. John Paul II in St. Peter's Square, the first-ever archdiocesan

See LIGHTS, page 14



The Christmas Star overlooks luminarias surrounding a Nativity scene during the Dec. 7 "An Evening of Lights" program at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

# Pope: God does not lead us into temptation, Satan does

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Italian and English translations of the “Our Father” can give believers the wrong impression that God can and does lead people into temptation, Pope Francis said.



Pope Francis

The Italian bishops’ television channel, TV2000, has been broadcasting a series of conversations between the pope and a Catholic prison chaplain looking at the Lord’s Prayer line by line.

The episode broadcast on Dec. 6 focused on the line, “Lead us not into temptation.”

Father Marco Pozza told the pope that friends have asked him, “Can God really lead us into temptation?”

“This is not a good translation,” the pope said.

The standard versions of the prayer are translated from the Latin, which was translated from the New Testament in Greek.

While he said nothing about ordering a new translation, Pope Francis noted how the French bishops had decided that beginning on Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent, French Catholics would change the line to the equivalent of “do not let us enter into temptation.”

French-speaking Catholics in Benin and Belgium began using the new translation at Pentecost last June. The common Spanish translation already is

“no nos dejes caer en la tentacion” or “do not let us fall into temptation.”

The Italian bishops’ conference in 2008 adopted a new translation of the Bible. For the Lord’s Prayer both in Matthew 6 and Luke 11, they chose “do not abandon us in temptation,” although they did not order the change in liturgical use. *The New American Bible*, revised edition, is the basis for the Lectionary used at English-language Masses in the United States; the petition from the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew and Luke is translated as: “do not subject us to the final test.”

Pope Francis told Father Pozza, “I’m the one who falls. But it’s not [God] who pushes me into temptation to see how I fall. No, a father does not do this. A father helps us up immediately.”

“The one who leads us into temptation is Satan,” the pope said. “That’s Satan’s job.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in its discussion of the Lord’s Prayer, says, “our sins result from our consenting to temptation; we therefore ask our Father not to ‘lead’ us into temptation. It is difficult to translate the Greek verb used by a single English word: the Greek means both ‘do not allow us to enter into temptation,’ and ‘do not let us yield to temptation’ ” (#2846).

Referring to James 1:13, the catechism in the same paragraph says, “‘God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one’; on the contrary, he wants to set us free from evil. We ask him not to allow us to take the way that leads to sin.” †

## Donors can still make contribution to Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship program

### Criterion staff report

There is still an opportunity this year for people who want to get the double bonus of helping children attend Catholic schools, and maximize the tax benefits of making a contribution to that effort.

As of Dec. 11, the Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship program still had about \$3.4 million in funds to support the efforts of helping students attend a private school—an option that may not have been possible for their families without the program.

When donors make a contribution to the program, they will receive a tax credit that could be up to 50 percent, according to Kim Pohovey, director of the archdiocese’s Mission Advancement for Catholic Education Initiatives.

“Through this innovative program, every donor is able to maximize their giving,” Pohovey notes. “For instance, if a donor contributes a gift of \$1,000 and receives the \$500 state tax credit plus a federal deduction—which varies

according to the individual donor’s tax status—that donor’s net gift, in terms of cost to them, may only be \$150 to \$360.”

At the same time, the tax credit scholarships help “struggling families to afford a quality, values-based Catholic education for their children,” she says.

“It not only offers them education options, it provides hope and a future. In turn, our schools prepare these students to be productive citizens and the future leaders of our community. This cycle of generosity benefits everyone.”

In the 2016-17 school year, contributions to the program raised more than \$7 million in tax scholarships that supported students in the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

(For more information about tax credit scholarships, contact Kim Pohovey at 317-236-1568 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1568. A video on the tax credit scholarship program can also be viewed through the link [bit.ly/2sVLKYN](http://bit.ly/2sVLKYN).) †



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 15-25, 2017

**December 15 — 2 p.m. (Central)**  
Installation Mass of the Most Rev. Joseph M. Siegel, Bishop of Evansville, St. Benedict Cathedral, Evansville

**December 15 — 5 p.m.**  
Little Sisters of the Poor Fundraiser Dinner, The Willows, Indianapolis

**December 16 — 5 p.m.**  
Mass and Reception—20th anniversary of the dedication of St. Jude Church, Indianapolis

**December 17 — 10:30 a.m.**  
Mass with Installation of Pastor, St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Indianapolis

**December 17 — 5:30 p.m.**  
Mass and Dinner with Knights of the Order of Malta, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

**December 18 — 8:45 a.m.**  
Leadership Team Meeting, Catholic Center, Indianapolis

**December 18 — 5 p.m.**  
Seminar Christmas Gathering, Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

**December 19 — 7 p.m.**  
President’s Dinner, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky

**December 20 — 5 p.m.**  
Commencement Address, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky

**December 21 — 10 a.m.**  
Leadership Team Meeting, Catholic Center, Indianapolis

**December 24 — 10 p.m.**  
Mass During the Night, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

(Schedule subject to change.)

## PEACE

continued from page 1

Former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush had made similar promises to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital during their presidential campaigns. However, once in office, they did not carry through with the move, citing its potential negative impact on Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

The Arab League, a regional organization consisting of 22 Arabic-speaking member states, held an emergency meeting in Cairo, Egypt, on Dec. 9 to discuss Trump’s announcement, calling it “dangerous and unacceptable.”

Recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital goes “against international law and raises questions over American efforts to support peace,” said Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Arab League’s secretary-general.

Just hours before Trump had announced his decision, Pope Francis

urged respect for “the status quo of the city in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.”

In his appeal, Pope Francis said, “Jerusalem is a unique city, sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims who venerate the holy places of their respective religions, and has a special vocation to peace.”

The Vatican consistently has called for a special status for Jerusalem, particularly its Old City, in order to protect and guarantee access to the holy sites of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

“The Holy See is attentive to these concerns and, recalling the heartfelt words of Pope Francis, reiterates its well-known position concerning the singular character of the Holy City and the essential need for respecting the status quo, in conformity with the deliberations of the international community and the repeated requests of the hierarchies of the Churches and Christian communities of the Holy Land,” said the Vatican’s Dec. 10 statement. †

## SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Saint Meinrad announce Christmas liturgies

The Christmas liturgical schedules for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis, and the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, are as follows:

### SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Dec. 24—5 p.m. Vigil Mass, and Mass During the Night at 10 p.m. with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson as the principal celebrant. Please note that the Mass During the Night at 10 p.m. is a change from the Midnight Mass celebrated at the cathedral in years past. Parking will be available for both Masses from 4 p.m. to

midnight behind the cathedral and at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St.

Dec. 25—10:30 a.m. Mass.  
All times for liturgies in the cathedral are Eastern Standard Time.

### Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church

Dec. 24—7 p.m. Vigil and 10 p.m. Mass.  
Dec. 25—9:30 a.m. Mass.

All times for liturgies at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church are Central Standard Time.

For the Christmas liturgical schedules of other religious communities or parishes in the archdiocese, contact their offices. †



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# No dispensation for this year's Christmas Mass on Monday

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Although Christmas this year is the day after the fourth Sunday of Advent, Catholics looking to count a Sunday evening Mass on Dec. 24 for both that Sunday obligation and Monday's Christmas Mass obligation will have to think again.

The U.S. bishops already saw this coming at the beginning of the year and said Catholics should attend separate Masses for the two days.

A newsletter issued in February by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship noted that a "two-for-one" Mass cannot occur in the very rare circumstances when two of the six holy days of obligation—the feast of the Immaculate Conception or Christmas—fall the day before or after Sunday.

"When consecutive obligations occur on Saturday-Sunday or Sunday-Monday, the faithful must attend Mass twice to fulfill two separate obligations," the committee said.

The reason Catholics might consider the idea of receiving dispensation from a Monday Mass likely stems from the U.S. bishops' vote in 1991 to lift the obligation to attend Mass on holy days of obligation that fall on Saturdays or Mondays. But that vote was only for three of the six holy days: the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on Jan. 1; the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Aug. 15; and the Solemnity of All Saints on Nov. 1.

This does not apply to Christmas and the feast of the Immaculate Conception, which is on Dec. 8. Most dioceses, including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, have transferred observance of the feast of the Ascension from the Thursday 40 days after Easter to the following Sunday.

The committee's newsletter offers a nuanced explanation of the required Mass

attendance on holy days falling before or after Sundays, noting that a "dubium," which is Latin for a request for clarification, about the possibility of "simultaneous fulfillment of obligations was answered in the negative by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy and approved by Blessed Pope Paul VI in 1970."

The committee notes that this clarification was not issued as a conclusive and authoritative interpretation, but it has weight since it was backed by the Vatican and the pope.

The newsletter also points out that in the absence of a "definitive interpretation by the Holy See, attendance at the evening Mass shared by the two holy days is indeed sufficient to fulfill both obligations," but the caveat here is that the Church's intention in providing vigil Masses was "never envisioned as a legal loophole, and, hence, separate obligations remain."

The divine worship committee also expresses hope that Catholics would want to go to Mass two days in a row, saying: "It would be hoped, of course, that Catholics foster a love for the sacred



People sing carols during midnight Mass on Christmas in 2014 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. A newsletter issued in February by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship reminded Catholics that they have the obligation to attend Mass on the fourth Sunday of Advent, on Dec. 24, and on Monday, Dec. 25, which is Christmas. (CNS photo/Carlo Allegri, Reuters)

liturgy and hold a desire to celebrate the holy days as fully as is reasonably possible."

There also is the tiniest amount of wiggle room. The committee acknowledges that situations arise where fulfilling Mass obligations on consecutive days is either impractical or impossible for an individual or a family, and in these cases pastors can grant individual dispensations. Similarly, diocesan bishops "may examine their regional circumstances

and grant general dispensations or commutations, while permitting their pastors to make judgments in individual cases," the committee said, but such judgment calls are exceptions to the general rule.

The bishops' committee also has looked ahead to when this will happen again. In the next 12 years, Christmas will fall either on a Saturday or a Monday four times and the feast of the Immaculate Conception will fall on either of those days three times. †

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# The Criterion

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## Editorial



Figurines of Mary and Joseph are seen on Dec. 5 in an Advent wreath whose colors display the various parish ministries at St. Anthony of Padua in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

(CNS photo/Octavio Duran)

## Waiting in joyful hope, Advent brings out the best in us

“As we come closer to the great feast of Christmas, we’re right to proclaim that our hearts are filled with joy. Yes, there is much pain and sorrow ahead. Yes, evil will assert itself, and great crimes will be committed in the name of righteousness and God’s holy will. But our faith assures us that one is coming whom we do not recognize because our eyes are blinded by sin. That one is Jesus, our Savior, the cause of our rejoicing. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!” (Archbishop Charles C. Thompson)

In his “Christ the Cornerstone” column this week, Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson writes about the season of Advent. He tells us that Advent has an element of penitence to it because it is a time for watchful waiting and preparation for the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. But more fundamentally, the archbishop says, Advent is a time of great rejoicing.

Advent calls us to a renewed sense of wonder, beauty and peace. This is what we long for—the truth of our existence revealed in the most unremarkable way, the birth of a little child, the most vulnerable and innocent of all God’s creatures.

How unlike the commercial pre-Christmas season with all its noise and impatience! How different from the preoccupation with material things, and with the buying and selling of trinkets and gadgets and the latest fashions! None of these things can really satisfy us. What we long for is something far greater. With all our hearts, we long for a person, the Blessed Hope, Jesus Christ.

Can it really be true that what we seek most desperately in our heart of hearts, our deepest and most ardent longing, will come to us in this way? No artifice. No pomp or circumstance. No bravado. Will he really come like a thief in the night, noticed only by outcasts and foreigners, and laid in a manger with an ox and an ass?

Advent prepares for, and makes possible, the Christmas miracle. Christ comes, again and again, year in and year out, because of the eager anticipation of all who want a better life. That includes immigrants and refugees who are desperate to find a new home for themselves and their families. It includes people who are homeless and hungry—here in Indiana and throughout the

world. It includes those who suffer from serious illnesses, and whose only desire is to be well again. It even includes people who bicker and disagree with each other about the best ways to make life better for themselves and for us.

God’s promise many thousands of years ago to send a savior who would free us from the consequences of sin was fulfilled by the Christmas miracle. To prevent us from forgetting the meaning and importance of that miraculous, holy night 2,000 years ago, Jesus comes again. And again.

He comes in the daily Eucharist. He comes wherever two or three are gathered in his name. He comes whenever “the least of these, my brothers and sisters” (Mt 25:40), are fed and clothed, visited in prison or in a hospital, and therefore given genuine hope and comfort by one or more of his disciples.

Waiting for things to get better can be very frustrating. That’s why there is so much impatience among us.

It’s true we have to wait for the Lord’s coming. In the meantime, our hearts are empty until they can be filled once again with the grace and mercy of God. So, we are tempted to be frustrated and disillusioned by the current state of things in the Church, in society and in our own homes and families.

Advent is all about waiting patiently—and eagerly—for the Blessed Hope, Jesus Christ, who will come again this Christmas and in all the future Christmases until the end of time. He will satisfy our longing. He will turn our sorrows into joy.

During Advent, we renew this profound hope. In spite of our longing and frustration, life is not as bad as it seems. The hopes and fears of all the years are addressed with radical simplicity in the Christmas miracle: Love comes to us in the form of a child, calling us to throw off all our anxious burdens and cast aside the baggage of our impatient adulthood.

It is good that one wait quietly for the Lord’s salvation (Lam 3:26). Let’s examine our hearts, but also our actions. Let’s lift up our minds and hearts and hands to the Savior who has already come but who is coming again on the last day. When that day comes, all our frustrations and fears will be wiped away. Finally, we will know peace.

—Daniel Conway

Reflection/Andrew Pike

## Catholic Energies can help parishes live ‘Laudato Si’

In his 2015 encyclical letter “Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home,” Pope Francis states, “There is



an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gasses can be drastically reduced” (#26).

Reporting from the COP23 climate talks held in Bonn, Germany, in November, the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) echoes that sentiment and reminds us that, while advocacy is important, individual actions are just as important.

Systemic change is needed to address climate change. But systemic change, by its nature, is a slow process. The urgent challenge of climate change requires that we take actions in our homes and parishes now. GCCM believes that “individual change is important for catalyzing systemic, institutional change.”

Endorsed by Pope Francis, GCCM ([catholicclimatemovement.global](http://catholicclimatemovement.global)) is

a global network of more than 400 member organizations and a community of thousands of Catholics responding to the pope’s call to action in ‘Laudato Si.’ You may know them from their hashtag, #livedaudatosi. One dimension of their goal, as stated on its website, is “to help the Catholic community lead by example and dramatically shrink its collective carbon footprint.”

Our parishes are being called upon to do their part. “Local individuals and groups can make a real difference.

They are able to instill a greater sense of responsibility, a strong sense of community, a readiness to protect others, a spirit of creativity and a deep love for the land” (#179).

One way we can begin is to implement changes on our parish campuses to save energy. Studies show that up to 40 percent of the energy used in a building is wasted. Saving energy in our parishes also has

the benefit of saving money on utilities; that money can then be used for other ministries.

Parishes may want to eliminate energy waste and save money but not know where to start. The complexity of a typical Catholic campus with multiple structures built at different times can be intimidating when trying to develop an energy efficiency plan.

The Catholic Climate Covenant, a member organization of GCCM, has developed a program designed to help parishes do just that. Called Catholic Energies, this program is designed to guide Catholic campuses (churches, schools, hospitals and other Catholic organizations) through an energy assessment, design a plan for energy savings, and implement energy efficiency projects that reduce energy costs. They can also provide assistance in funding the projects.

Dan Last, Catholic Energies chief operating officer, said the program emerged in 2016 from hundreds of conversations with pastors, parish staff members and organizational leaders about the need for practical steps on behalf of the environment. For more

information on this program, go to [catholicenergies.org](http://catholicenergies.org).

Saving money in our parishes is a laudable goal. But more importantly, making changes to reduce energy use demonstrates our commitment to the principles of *Laudato Si’*. Catholic parishes serve as role models for the community. This is truly putting our faith in action.

How has your parish been successful in reducing its energy use? Please contact us at [creationcare@archindy.org](mailto:creationcare@archindy.org) and share your story.



(Andrew Pike is a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis and of the archdiocesan Commission for Creation Care Ministry, which is part of the archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Ministries. For help starting a creation care team or for more information, contact Deacon Michael Braun at 317-236-1531 or [mbraun@archindy.org](mailto:mbraun@archindy.org).) †

## Letter to the Editor

### No amount of gun legislation will change current culture of death, reader says

In the “Be Our Guest” column in the Dec. 1, 2017, edition of *The Criterion*, Greg Erlandson of Catholic News Service missed a golden opportunity to explore the reasons behind “mass murder and our culture of death.”

Instead, he provided a series of statistics about gun crimes. He quoted Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, who said, “a culture of life cannot tolerate, and must prevent, senseless gun violence in all its forms.”

The problem is that we don’t live in a culture of life in this country, and no amount of gun legislation will change that.

Essentially, we are reaping what we have sown. Over 1 million unborn children are aborted each year legally, and yet we expect children not to be abused.

Pornography is available on every smart phone and computer, and we are

surprised when women are treated as objectified sexual objects. Hollywood serves up a constant dose of violence, and then is shocked when shootings portrayed and even romanticized on the big screen are played out in real life.

The elderly and disabled are marginalized in a utilitarian society, and we wring our hands about physician-assisted suicide. The polarization inherent to identity politics causes those not in our group to be viewed with contempt.

Our secular society has turned away from God and objective truth, and essentially made each individual as if they were God, determining right and wrong. When that happens, everything becomes permissible.

Dr. Stephen O’Neil  
Indianapolis



# Christ the Cornerstone

## Rejoice always! And pray without ceasing

*"I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels" (Is 61:10-11).*

Advent has an element of penitence to it in that it is a time for watchful waiting and preparation for the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. But on the Third Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete* Sunday), we are reminded that we are called to "rejoice heartily in the Lord," and to proclaim his greatness by our actions as well as our words.

*Gaudete* Sunday takes its name from the Latin word for "rejoice." In his First Letter to the Thessalonians, St. Paul admonishes us to "rejoice always" and to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes 5:16-17). If we take St. Paul seriously, we'll recognize that these two instructions have a lot in common—and that both are more easily said than done.

Life is hard, filled with sorrow and bitter disappointments. How can we realistically maintain an attitude of constant rejoicing? Similarly, how can we "pray without ceasing" when our

busy lives require so much of our time, effort and attention? Even cloistered monks and nuns find it challenging to pray always.

As always, when we are perplexed about the demands of Christian life, we look to Mary, the Mother of God and our mother. Her example shows us the way.

In response to the first reading this year on *Gaudete* Sunday, the Church invites us to pray with Mary the great canticle known as the *Magnificat*. "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on his lowly servant" (Lk 1:46).

This was Mary's response to the challenging news that she was to be the mother of our Lord. Intuitively, she knew that this awesome responsibility would include much sorrow and hardship. But far more importantly, Mary knew that this was the fulfillment of God's promise—the long-awaited advent of the Messiah whom God would send to save his people (all of us) from their sins.

Mary's immediate response—to joyfully proclaim God's greatness—is an indication of her readiness to do whatever was necessary to carry out God's will for her. As a result, Mary

rejoiced always—even in times of great sadness—and she prayed without ceasing by making her entire life a proclamation of the Lord's goodness.

"From this day," we pray with Mary, "all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Lk 1:48-49)

The Gospel for the Third Sunday of Advent this year (Jn 1:6-8, 19-28) calls our attention to the other great figure of Advent, St. John the Baptist. At first glance, John hardly seems to be a model of rejoicing. He was a grim figure who lived in the desert eating locusts and honey, and he preached repentance, not rejoicing. When the priests and Levites confronted him and demanded, "What do you have to say for yourself?" (Jn 1:22) John proclaimed himself to be "not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet," but simply "the voice of one crying in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" (Jn 1:20-21, 23).

Like Mary, John's entire life was a proclamation of "the one who is coming after me." Both John and Mary embody the Advent spirit. Both "rejoice always" because of their confidence that God's promises are being fulfilled in their lifetimes. Both "pray without ceasing"

because their minds and hearts are wholly attuned to God's love and mercy, incarnate now in the person of Jesus—Mary's son, John's cousin and our brother.

St. Paul links our rejoicing to our openness to the working of the Holy Spirit. "In all circumstances give thanks," the Apostle tells us, "for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thes 5:18). So, even in prison sentenced to death, John the Baptist rejoiced. And Mary, the sorrowing mother, stood beneath the cross and gave thanks. "Do not quench the Spirit," St. Paul says. "Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good" (1 Thes 5:19-21).

As we come closer to the great feast of Christmas, we're right to proclaim that our hearts are filled with joy. Yes, there is much pain and sorrow ahead. Yes, evil will assert itself, and great crimes will be committed in the name of righteousness and God's holy will.

But our faith assures us that one is coming whom we do not recognize because our eyes are blinded by sin. That one is Jesus, our Savior, the cause of our rejoicing. Let our whole lives be a fervent prayer without ceasing: *Maranatha*, Come, Lord Jesus! †



## Cristo, la piedra angular

## ¡Alégrense siempre! Y oren sin cesar

*"Yo desbordo de alegría en el Señor, mi alma se regocija en mi Dios. Porque él me vistió con las vestiduras de la salvación y me envolvió con el manto de la justicia, como un esposo que se ajusta la diadema y como una esposa que se adorna con sus joyas" (Is 6:10).*

El tiempo de Adviento tiene un componente penitencial puesto que es una época de espera vigilante y preparación para la venida de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Pero en el tercer domingo de Adviento (*Gaudete*) se nos recuerda que estamos llamados a "desbordar de alegría en el Señor" y a proclamar su grandeza a través de nuestras acciones y nuestras palabras.

El domingo de *gaudete* debe su nombre a la palabra latina "regocíjense." En su Primera Carta a los Tesalonicenses, san Pablo nos exhorta a que estemos "siempre alegres" y a que "oremos sin cesar" (1 Tes 5:16-17). Si tomamos en serio a san Pablo, reconoceremos que estas dos instrucciones tienen mucho en común: que es más fácil decir las que cumplirlas.

La vida es difícil, llena de dolor y de amargas decepciones; entonces, ¿cómo podemos mantener una verdadera actitud de alegría constante? De igual forma, ¿cómo podemos "orar sin cesar" cuando nuestras vidas tan ajetreadas nos devoran tanto tiempo, esfuerzo y

atención? Inclusive para los monjes y las monjas de claustro a veces es un desafío rezar constantemente.

Como siempre, cuando nos sentimos turbados ante las exigencias de la vida cristiana, observamos a María, la Madre de Dios y nuestra madre y su ejemplo nos muestra el camino.

En respuesta a la primera lectura del domingo de *gaudete*, la Iglesia nos invita a rezar con María el fantástico cántico conocido como el *Magnificat*. "Mi alma canta la grandeza del Señor, y mi espíritu se estremece de gozo en Dios, mi salvador, porque el miró con bondad la pequeñez de tu servidora" (Lc 1:46-48).

Esta fue la respuesta de María ante la difícil noticia de que iba a ser la madre de Nuestro Señor. Instintivamente sabía que esta enorme responsabilidad conllevaría mucho dolor y penurias, y todavía más importante: María sabía que se trataba del cumplimiento de la promesa de Dios, el tan anhelado advenimiento del Mesías que Dios enviaría para salvar a su pueblo (todos nosotros) de sus pecados.

La respuesta inmediata de María, de proclamar con alegría la grandeza de Dios, es señal de que estaba lista para hacer lo que fuera necesario para cumplir con lo que Dios le tenía deparado. Como resultado, María siempre se regocijaba, inclusive en momentos de gran dolor, y oraba sin

cesar al transformar su vida entera en una proclamación de la bondad del Señor. Así pues, rezamos con María: "En adelante todas las generaciones me llamarán feliz, porque el Todopoderoso ha hecho en mí grandes cosas: ¡su Nombre es santo!" (Lc 1:48-49).

El Evangelio del tercer domingo de Adviento de este año (Jn 1:6-8, 19-28) destaca a otro personaje importante del Adviento, san Juan, el Bautista. A simple vista, Juan apenas podría considerarse un modelo de alegría. Se trataba de un personaje sombrío que vivía en el desierto, se alimentaba de saltamontes y miel, y predicaba el arrepentimiento, no la alegría. Cuando los sacerdotes y los levitas lo confrontaron y lo interpellaron: "¿qué dices de ti mismo?" (Jn 1:22) Juan declaró que no era "el Mesías, ni Elías, ni el Profeta" sino sencillamente "una voz que grita en el desierto: Allánan el camino del Señor" (Jn 1:20-21, 23).

Al igual que María, toda la vida de Juan fue una proclamación del "que vendrá después de mí." Juan y María representan el espíritu del Adviento; ambos están "siempre alegres" por su confianza en que las promesas de Dios se cumplirán durante su vida. Ambos "oran sin cesar" porque sus mentes y sus corazones están completamente sintonizados con el amor y la

misericordia de Dios, encarnado ahora en la persona de Jesús, el hijo de María, primo de Juan y nuestro hermano.

San Pablo vincula nuestra alegría a nuestra disposición a entregarnos a las obras del Espíritu Santo. "Den gracias a Dios en toda ocasión—nos dicen los Apóstoles—esto es lo que Dios quiere de todos ustedes, en Cristo Jesús" (1 Tes 5:18). Así pues, incluso en la cárcel y sentenciado a morir, Juan el Bautista se regocijaba. Y María, la madre dolorosa, estaba de pie ante la cruz y daba gracias. "No extingan la acción del Espíritu—nos dice san Pablo—no desprecien las profecías; examínenlo todo y quédense con lo Bueno" (1 Tes 5:19-21).

Conforme nos acercamos a la gran festividad de la Navidad, con toda razón proclamamos que nuestros corazones están llenos de alegría. Sí, es cierto que en el camino encontraremos mucho dolor y sufrimiento; sí, el mal se mantendrá firme y se cometerán grandes crímenes en nombre de la justicia y de la voluntad de Dios.

Pero nuestra fe nos asegura que alguien vendrá y no lo reconoceremos porque nuestros ojos están cegados por el pecado. Ese alguien es Jesús, nuestro Salvador, el motivo de nuestra alegría. Que toda nuestra vida sea una oración ferviente e incesante: *Maranatha*, ¡ven, Señor Jesús! †

# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## December 20

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany. **The Longest Night: A Mass of Consolation**, for people experiencing loss during the holidays, all are welcome, 7-7:40 p.m. Information: 812-945-2374, [tyost@olphna.org](mailto:tyost@olphna.org).

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On: Sacrament of Reconciliation**, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681, ext. 107 or [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima).

## December 21

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or

[www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

St. Joseph Church, 1401 S. Mickley Ave., Indianapolis. **Third Thursday Adoration**, interceding for women experiencing crisis pregnancy, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., with Mass at 5:45 p.m.

## December 24

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Christmas Eve Liturgies**, 5 p.m. Vigil Mass, 10 p.m. Mass During the Night with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, parking available for both Masses from 4 p.m.-midnight behind the cathedral and at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols**, Scripture readings, prayer, singing of carols and

candle lighting, 7-8 p.m., open to all faith traditions.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christmas Eve Liturgies**, 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. CT.

## December 25

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 10:30 a.m.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Christmas Mass**, 11 a.m.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christmas Mass**, 9:30 a.m. CT.

## December 28

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Monthly Ecumenical Taizé Prayer Service**, sung prayers,

meditation and readings. 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-926-7359 or [rectory@saintmichaelindy.org](mailto:rectory@saintmichaelindy.org).

## December 31

St. Monica Church, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **New Year's Eve Adoration and Midnight Mass**, 11 p.m. adoration, midnight Mass, followed by breakfast and fellowship, bring a breakfast dish to share. Information: 317-253-2193 or [dbartet@comcast.net](mailto:dbartet@comcast.net).

## January 2

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. **Senior Discount Day**, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off clothing, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

## January 3

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St.,

Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

## January 5

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday** celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or [info@olgreenwood.org](mailto:info@olgreenwood.org).

St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Charismatic Renewal Praise and Mass**, praise and worship 7 p.m., Mass 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-546-7328, [mkeyes@indy.rr.com](mailto:mkeyes@indy.rr.com).

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Father Kyle Rodden presiding,

optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, [www.womenscarecenter.org](http://www.womenscarecenter.org).

## January 6

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, prayers, rosary, confession, meditation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

## January 9

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, theme "Praying for Peace in the World and in Our Hearts," 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952, [provctr@spsmw.org](mailto:provctr@spsmw.org).

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild**, Christmas Party and Pitch-In, noon. Information: 317-223-3687, [vlgmimi@aol.com](mailto:vlgmimi@aol.com). †



## Experiencing experiments

Ben McCall, left, and Christina Troll, students at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, perform an experiment at Purdue University on Nov. 5. They were among 11 students from the school's Advanced Placement (AP) chemistry class who participated in a kinetics laboratory experience during the "AP Fridays" program at Purdue that day. The program is open to any Indiana high school, and was developed to provide students and their teachers with the time and support needed to conduct suggested labs in a guided-inquiry format on a college campus. For more information about AP Fridays, contact Sarah Nern at [snern@purdue.edu](mailto:snern@purdue.edu) or 765 494-7861. (Submitted photo)

## VIPs



**Tony and Judy (Miller) Ardizzone**, members of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 26.

The couple was married at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 26, 1967.

They have four children: Angela Kendall, Toni, Joseph and Michael Ardizzone.

The couple also has seven grandchildren. †

## St. Philip Neri Parish to host Christian-Muslim prayer service on Dec. 17

A Christian-Muslim prayer service called "Discovering the Common Love of Jesus and Mary" will be held at St. Philip Neri Church, 550 N. Rural St., in Indianapolis, from 4-5 p.m. on Dec. 17.

Father Chris Wadelton, St. Philip Neri's pastor, and Imam Ahmad Al-Amine will lead the service celebrating the common love and admiration of Jesus

and the Virgin Mary in the two faiths.

Eyas Raddad will present on the importance and love of the person of Jesus and the Virgin Mary from the Islamic tradition.

A reception with light refreshments and an opportunity for questions and answers will follow until 6 p.m.

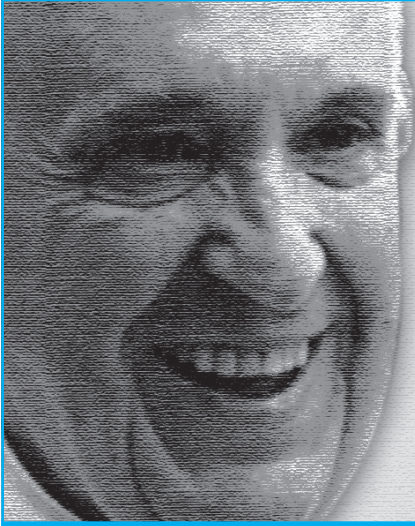
For information, call 317-631-8746. †

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to [www.archindy.org/events/submission](http://www.archindy.org/events/submission), or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Cindy Clark, or by fax at 317-236-1593.



## Providence Associates celebrate 10 years

Providence Associates smile after a service on Nov. 18 during which 22 men and women made their first commitment as a Providence Associate with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. The ceremony coincided with the 10-year anniversary celebration of the program. Providence Associates are men and women of faith who choose to have an intentional relationship with the sisters. There are currently more than 200 associates in the United States and Taiwan. For more information about the associate program, contact Debbie Dillow at [ddillow@spsmw.org](mailto:ddillow@spsmw.org) or 317-250-3294. (Submitted photo)



# The Face of Mercy

(from Pope Francis' papal bull "*Misericordiae Vultus*")

By Daniel Conway

## Finding Jesus this Christmas while attending to others

*"If we want to celebrate Christmas authentically, we need to contemplate this sign: the fragile simplicity of a small newborn, the meekness of where he lies, the tender affection of the swaddling clothes. God is there."* (Pope Francis, Christmas Eve homily 2016)

Last year on Christmas Eve, Pope Francis challenged us to contemplate the "fragile simplicity" of the infant child that Christmas celebrates. This is the "enduring sign to find Jesus," he said. "Not just then, but also today."

It's sad that Christmas has become so complicated, so commercial. The truth is that God enters our world quietly, with profound simplicity. The noise of everyday living distracts us and prevents us from noticing his divine presence and his humble humanity. The frenzy of the Christmas season distorts our perspective. We risk losing our perspective on "the meekness of where he lies," and "the tender affection of the swaddling clothes."

Jesus "does not appear in the grand hall of a royal palace, but in the poverty of a stable; not in pomp and show, but in the

simplicity of life; not in power, but in a smallness which surprises," the Holy Father said. So if we want to find him, "we need to go there, where he is: we need to bow down, humble ourselves, make ourselves small."

This is the paradox of Christmas: God makes himself small. The infinite, almighty God who created all things visible and invisible becomes an infant lying in a manger, utterly dependent on others for his most basic human needs. As St. Paul says, he "empties himself" and takes on our fragile humanity, giving up the prerogatives of divinity in order to become like us in all things but our selfishness and sinfulness.

In his homily, the pope said the Child Jesus "challenges us" by inviting us "to leave behind fleeting illusions and go to the essence, to renounce our insatiable claims, to abandon our endless dissatisfaction and sadness for something we will never have," and rediscover "peace, joy and the meaning of life."

The infant in the manger is a challenge, but Francis also urged attendees to allow themselves to be challenged by the children of today, "who are not lying in a cot caressed with the affection of a mother

and father, but rather suffer the squalid mangers that devour dignity."

Many children today hide underground to escape bombs or are forced to sleep either on the streets of large cities or at the bottom of boats overflowing with immigrants, he said, noting that this reality should also challenge us.

"Let us allow ourselves to be challenged by the children who are not allowed to be born, by those who cry because no one satiates their hunger, by those who have not toys in their hands, but rather weapons."

Christmas is a mystery of both hope and of sadness, the pope said, noting how the arrival of Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem points us to the indifference of many in the face of those who are discarded.

The same indifference is present in modern society "when Christmas becomes a feast where the protagonists are ourselves, rather than Jesus; when the lights of commerce cast the light of God into the shadows; when we are concerned for gifts, but cold toward those who are marginalized."

But Pope Francis insists that

Christmas is also a sign of hope. Despite the darkness in our lives, God's light "shines out." His gentle light doesn't make us fearful, but rather, "God who is in love with us, draws us to himself with his tenderness, born poor and fragile among us, as one of us."

If we want to encounter Jesus this Christmas, we need to step outside the neon lights of the commercial Christmas and enter into the shadows where homeless travelers like Mary and Joseph are found. To find the infant Jesus, we must refuse to make Christmas "a feast where the protagonists are ourselves." We must truly make this a holy season, a time to attend to the needs of others, especially the poor and vulnerable.

"Let us enter into the real Nativity with the shepherds, taking to Jesus all that we are, our alienation, our unhealed wounds," Pope Francis teaches. "Then, in Jesus we will enjoy the flavor of the true spirit of Christmas: the beauty of being loved by God."

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion's editorial committee.) †

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

## Encontrar a Jesús en la Navidad y cuidar a los demás

*"Si queremos celebrar la verdadera Navidad, contemplemos este signo: la sencillez frágil de un niño recién nacido, la dulzura al verlo recostado, la ternura de los pañales que lo cubren. Allí está Dios."* (Homilía del Santo Padre Francisco en la Santa Misa de Nochebuena, 2016)

El año pasado, durante la víspera de Navidad, el papa Francisco nos exhortó a contemplar la "sencillez frágil" del niño recién nacido que celebramos en la Navidad. Este es el "signo de siempre para encontrar a Jesús," afirmó. "No sólo entonces, sino también hoy."

Resulta muy triste que la Navidad se haya convertido en algo tan complicado, tan comercial, cuando la verdad es que Dios entra en nuestro mundo silenciosamente, con una profunda sencillez. El ruido de la cotidianidad nos distrae y nos impide percibir Su divina presencia y Su humilde humanidad. El frenesí de la época navideña distorsiona nuestra percepción y corremos el riesgo de perder la perspectiva con respecto a "la dulzura al verlo recostado" y "la ternura de los pañales que lo cubren."

Jesús "no aparece en la sala noble de un palacio real, sino en la pobreza de un establo; no en los fastos de la apariencia, sino en la sencillez de la vida; no en el

poder, sino en una pequeñez que sorprende," señala el Santo Padre. Por lo que si deseamos encontrarlo "hay que ir allí, donde él está: es necesario inclinarse, abajarse, hacerse pequeño."

Esta es la paradoja de la Navidad: Dios se hace pequeño. El infinito y poderoso Dios que creó todo lo visible y lo invisible se convierte en un recién nacido acostado en un pesebre, totalmente indefenso y que depende de los demás para sus necesidades humanas más básicas. Tal como lo expresa san Pablo, "se vuelca" y adopta nuestra frágil humanidad, renunciando a las prerrogativas de su condición divina para asemejarse a nosotros en todo, excepto en el egoísmo y el pecado.

En su homilía, el papa destacó que el Niño Jesús "nos interpela" y "nos llama a dejar los engaños de lo efímero para ir a lo esencial, a renunciar a nuestras pretensiones insaciables, a abandonar las insatisfacciones permanentes y la tristeza ante cualquier cosa que siempre nos faltará," y a redescubrir "la paz, la alegría, el sentido luminoso de la vida."

El recién nacido en el pesebre nos interpela, pero el papa Francisco también exhorta a que quienes lo visiten se dejen interpelar también por los niños de hoy en día que "no están recostados en una cuna ni

acariciados por el afecto de una madre ni de un padre, sino que yacen en los escuálidos pesebres donde se devora su dignidad."

El Sumo Pontífice nos dice que hoy en día muchos niños se esconden en refugios subterráneos para escapar de los bombardeos o se ven obligados a dormir en las aceras de una gran ciudad, en el fondo de una barcaza repleta de inmigrantes, y destaca que esta es una realidad que también debería interpelarnos.

"Dejémoslos interpelar por los niños a los que no se les deja nacer, por los que lloran porque nadie les sacia su hambre, por los que no tienen en sus manos juguetes, sino armas."

El Santo Padre destaca que la Navidad es un misterio de esperanza y de tristeza puesto que la llegada de María y José a Belén pone de manifiesto la indiferencia de muchos ante la presencia de quienes son rechazados.

Esa misma indiferencia se hace palpable en nuestra época moderna "cuando Navidad es una fiesta donde los protagonistas somos nosotros en vez de él; cuando las luces del comercio arrinconan en la sombra la luz de Dios; cuando nos afanamos por los regalos y permanecemos insensibles ante quien está marginado."

Pero el papa Francisco insiste en que la Navidad es también un signo de esperanza.

porque pese a la oscuridad de nuestras vidas "la luz de Dios resplandece." Su suave luz no da miedo; al contrario, "Dios, enamorado de nosotros, nos atrae con su ternura, naciendo pobre y frágil en medio de nosotros, como uno más."

Si deseamos encontrar a Jesús en esta Navidad, debemos apartarnos de las luces de neón de la Navidad comercial y adentrarnos en las tinieblas donde se encuentran los viajeros sin hogar, como María y José. Para encontrar a Jesús recién nacido, debemos negarnos a que la Navidad sea "una fiesta donde los protagonistas somos nosotros." Debemos hacer que esta sea, en verdad, una temporada santa, un momento para cuidar de las necesidades de los demás, especialmente de los pobres y los vulnerables.

"Entremos en la verdadera Navidad con los pastores, llevemos a Jesús lo que somos, nuestras marginaciones, nuestras heridas no curadas, nuestros pecados," nos exhorta el papa Francisco. "Así, en Jesús, saborearemos el verdadero espíritu de Navidad: la belleza de ser amados por Dios."

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.) †

## Washington Archdiocese considers next step in lawsuit over transit advertisement

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Archdiocese of Washington was weighing its options after a federal judge denied a request for an emergency injunction over the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) advertising guidelines.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson on Dec. 8 denied the archdiocese's request that WMATA be required to post an ad promoting its annual "Find the Perfect Gift" initiative for the Advent season.

Transit authority officials had denied the ad based on 2015 policies that ban ads "that promote or oppose any religion, religious practice or belief."

"We are disappointed that the federal court denied our emergency request for an injunction to run our 'Find the

Perfect Gift' Advent campaign," Ed McFadden, the archdiocese's secretary for communications, said in a statement on Dec. 9.

"While this preliminary ruling that there should be no room made for us on WMATA buses is disappointing, we will continue in the coming days to pursue and defend our right to share the important message of Christmas in the public square," the statement said.

Berman found that while buses are controlled by a government agency, the authority's rules likely are legal and reasonable because WMATA's restrictions are not based on whether the agency opposes the advertiser's particular views.

The archdiocese contended WMATA's policy that "prohibits all noncommercial advertising, including any speech that purportedly promotes a religion, religious practice or belief," is a violation of the free speech and free exercise of religion clauses of the First Amendment and a violation of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment.

The rejected ads highlight the archdiocese's annual "Find the Perfect Gift" campaign, which refers viewers to the [FindThePerfectGift.org](http://FindThePerfectGift.org) website that includes Mass schedules, reflections on the meaning of Advent and Christmas, religious holiday traditions and opportunities for charitable service. The image is a silhouette of shepherds and sheep standing on a hill. †

# CHRISTMAS

continued from page 1

a situation that came out of the opioid crisis,” Hollinden says. “Two of their children were arrested for drug dealing, and they had to take custody of their 10 grandchildren.

“They told the kids they wouldn’t get anything for Christmas. Then they were referred to the Christmas Store. They got clothes and toys for all the kids. They were in tears, and we were in tears. Tears of joy. They said that when they were able, they would pass along that kindness to other people.”

## ‘The best Christmas ever’

Such are the moments that have kept Hollinden volunteering for the past 10 years at the Christmas Store in Indianapolis, including the past five years as the head volunteer.

“It’s so heartwarming. It’s such direct help to people who wouldn’t have Christmas otherwise,” she says. “Our purpose is to make sure as many children as possible are not forgotten at Christmas.”

That goal requires a year-round commitment from a group of volunteers who share a common passion.

“Of the 14 of us who do it year-round, most are in their 60s, two are in their 80s, and I’m 75,” she says. “Most of us have been in caring professions our whole lives—nurses, teachers, a school psychologist, a dental hygienist. Once you do this, you’re hooked.”

Five of them shop for deep discounts all year long, using the money that is donated to the effort. All of them combine their efforts to create a “store” for the shoppers.

“We call it a store because the parents come in and shop for their families,” Hollinden says. “They know the sizes for their children’s clothing, the colors they want, the toys they already have, and the toys they want. They get to choose what they want for their children.

“When it started 28 years ago, there were 30 families. This year, we have appointments scheduled for 800 families. We average between 2,500 and 3,000 children every year, and they each get two toys.”

A mother of three expressed her thanks to everyone at the Christmas Store in Indianapolis for “the best Christmas ever” that her family had last year.

“The whole experience was wonderful, and the gifts were wonderful,” the mother noted. “I wish all of you could have seen the smiles and giggles my children had opening the nice gifts.”

## The joy of a simple gift

The Christmas Store in Terre Haute will also bring the joy of the season to more than 700 families this Christmas, according to Jennifer Buell, development director of Catholic Charities Terre Haute.

The stories from the Christmas Store in Terre Haute are also touching, including one about a man who arrived with a purpose beyond the clothes and toys that the store offers families. His focus was on the area of household items from which families also get to choose a gift.

“When his opportunity came to choose a household item, he quickly responded that he didn’t need to look around at what was available,” Buell says. “He said he had ‘been watching a box the whole time, hoping someone else didn’t take it.’

“Prodded for what it was and why it meant so much to him, he announced, ‘It’s this set of dishes. There are 10 people living in our house, and we can’t all eat together because we don’t have enough dishes.’”

Buell still thinks about the man and the reality of a family not having enough dishes to eat together—and how a simple gift like that meant so much to him.

## ‘That’s how important this is to people’

The emphasis of the Christmas Store in both Indianapolis and Terre Haute is to serve people in need, not based upon their religion, Hollinden says.

At the Christmas Store in Indianapolis, every family that is helped is referred by one of 90 social service agencies. Some of the store’s “customers” arrive in wheelchairs and walkers. Once, a person came in a hospital bed. Recently, a woman came for her scheduled time just two hours before she was being induced into labor.

“That’s how important this is to people,” Hollinden says. “We had a single mom who had five children of her own. Her sister died, and she took in all six of her sister’s children. So she was a single mom with 11 kids. I got to know her. She told me that she got all the older kids through high school and kept them out of gangs. She’s so grateful for what the Christmas Store has done for her family.”

Hollinden is thankful for the 11 parishes, the three schools and the many people who have consistently donated toys, household items and money through the years. She’s especially touched by the donations of Catholic school children who send their folded, crunched-up dollar bills, quarters, dimes and nickels to the Christmas Store in Indianapolis.

“It’s children donating to other children,” she says. “People are so



At the Christmas Store in Terre Haute, volunteer P.J. Aubin, in the red Santa hat, helps a shopper find just the right gifts at the Catholic Charities Terre Haute venue that will help more than 700 families in need enjoy Christmas this year. (Submitted photo)



At the Christmas Store in Indianapolis, volunteers create a welcoming atmosphere for families in need to shop for toys, clothing and household items for Christmas. Karen Boyer, left, Nancy Hollinden, Judy Steiner, Mary Ann Payne, Marilyn Knapp and Anne Reed are some of the volunteers who have worked year-round to make Christmas special for about 800 families in Indianapolis this year. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

generous. They want to help other people. We couldn’t do it without them.”

She views her efforts for the Christmas Store as an expression of her faith.

“You have Jesus saying, ‘Whatever you do for the least of my people, you do for me.’ It embodies the Catholic faith. Pope Francis is always stressing how much we need to help people in need. And all of us are helping people in need. It’s just a wonderful, wonderful thing.”

So is the feeling she gets on Christmas. “When I celebrate Christmas with my own family, I’m happy to know we’ve

helped to make Christmas better in a small way for so many people.”

(For information about the Christmas Store in Indianapolis and how to contribute to its efforts, contact Stephanie Davis at 317-236-1556 or by e-mail at [sdavis@archindy.org](mailto:sdavis@archindy.org).

For information about the Christmas Store in Terre Haute and how to contribute to its efforts, contact Jennifer Buell of Catholic Charities Terre Haute at 812-232-1447 or by e-mail at [jbuell@ccthin.org](mailto:jbuell@ccthin.org).) †

## Some see crunch time, others negotiation time, for immigration woes

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Supporters of youths who came to the U.S. without documents as children descended on Washington in early December, risking arrest and seeking attention from lawmakers during what they believe is the last window of opportunity this year to pass legislation to help the youths stay in the country.

Supporters came from California, New York and places in between, with signs, drums, guitars, photos and thoughts of loved ones, taking out their worries and frustrations, venting their hopes for passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors, or DREAM Act, at a Dec. 6 rally near the U.S. Capitol.

In September, President Donald J. Trump announced he was ending the Deferred Action for Child Arrivals program, or DACA, that allowed some 750,000 to 800,000 young adults who were brought into the country as children and who met certain conditions to attend school, work and even have a driver’s license. Though he ended the program, he urged Congress to find a solution before the first of the program’s permits expire as early as March.

That expiration date and what will happen when it arrives has many young adults and their loved ones worried,

said Vamba Fofana, national executive vice president for the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas in New York, who attended the day of action and demonstration at the Capitol.

Since the youths had to provide the government information about where they work and where they live to apply for DACA, many young adults who benefited from it now worry the information they gave will be used to deport them, Fofana told Catholic News Service (CNS). Some of them don’t know whether they can remain in school or at work, or drive since those documents are at peril.

“Obviously, they are in limbo,” said Fofana, whose organization was part of a larger group that included worker movements, faith groups, including many Catholics, and students at a mass gathering to show support. “We feel we can collectively put pressure on Congress.”

Supporters want a solution by the end of the year. Though little has been revealed, some speculate that Democrats are seeking to negotiate DACA as part of a spending bill that must be approved by Dec. 22, or the country faces a government shutdown. Republicans have publicly said they do not want to include legislation benefiting immigrants as part of the spending bill, setting up a political showdown over immigration just before Christmas.

As some lawmakers and congressional staffers passed by the gathering on Dec. 6,

some attendees sang “Trump can’t grab this dream, we shall not be moved...” to the tune of “We Shall Not Be Moved,” a popular civil rights anthem, just outside Union Station, a main transportation hub for politicians going in and out of Washington en route to the Capitol. The song expresses resiliency in adversity because of faith in God.

“We’re here to join in solidarity,” said Fofana. “We think [the youths] have a future in this country, a country immigrants have helped advance.”

Bob Fulkerson, state director and co-founder of the grass-roots organization Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, said this is a unique time. And it is probably, he said, about as close as supporters have ever come to a successful legislative solution to help the youths, but it can’t be done while putting in place actions to hurt other immigrants, including carrying out plans to end programs such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

The TPS program, as it is popularly known, has been around for 27 years and provides a work permit and reprieve from deportation to immigrants from some countries recovering from conflicts or natural disasters.

In November, the Trump administration wiped out TPS, effective July 2019, for about 59,000 Haitians who benefited from the program after a devastating earthquake

on the island in 2010. TPS programs for El Salvador and Honduras also will be up for renewal in early 2018, and Trump’s chief of staff, John Kelly, has signaled that he wants to end those programs.

Fulkerson, who was one of hundreds arrested on Dec. 6 for refusing to disperse from the steps of the capitol as he demanded Congress take action, said this is the time for lawmakers to do something but without seeking to hurt others. A variety of polls from major news organizations show a majority of the U.S. public favors finding a solution to help the youth, who serve in a variety of careers, including in the military and as teachers in public schools. Many are enrolled in college.

Supporters worry that any negotiations to help the youths will ultimately end up hurting their family members, as deals are made to protect some migrants and not others.

Catholics such as Sara Benitez, Latino program director for the Washington-based Faith in Public Life, joined religious brothers and sisters, including Maryknoll and Franciscans, and other lay Catholics in getting arrested on Dec. 6 to call attention to the immigrants’ plight.

“My faith calls me to love my neighbor,” Benitez said. “Today my immigrant neighbors, who have DACA and TPS, are in danger of being separated from their families and their communities.” †





# 800 years later, Franciscans still make a difference in the Holy Land

By Natalie Hoefler

In 1217, St. Francis of Assisi commissioned a group of his friars to start a mission in the Holy Land to protect the sanctity of the region where the Son of God dwelled.

Now, 800 years later, that mission continues—with the additional intent of maintaining a Christian presence in a land where hardships and persecution of followers of Christ have caused their population to dwindle.

“Our Church [there] is dying,” said Franciscan Father Peter Vasko, president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL), at a fundraising event in Indianapolis on Oct. 21. “It needs to be rebuilt. At present there are only 150,000 Christians out of 8 million people. If that continues to go down, most Church officials are saying that within 60 years, Christianity could disappear from the very place that Christ founded his Church.”

Event guest speaker Msgr. Frank P. Lane of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio—whose 50 years as a priest include service as a chaplain, teacher, writer, radio host and more—spoke to the crowd of more than 150 about why keeping a Christian presence in the Holy Land is “such a critical, crucial undertaking on the part of our Church ... [and] for the sake of civilization itself. ... Too often, you get into the idea that ... religion is a problem without ever realizing what it contributes to a society.”

In a talk outlining reasons why maintaining a Christian presence in the Holy Land is imperative, he began with the Christian concept of justice as healing, an idea introduced by Christ as

a juxtaposition to the Middle East’s form of revenge as justice—“an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”

According to chapter 5 of the Gospel of Matthew and chapter 6 of the Gospel of Luke, Msgr. Lane said, “Justice basically is a form of medicine for an illness within a society. ... That sense of curing the ill through penance or punishment has always been within the Christian mindset—‘Love your enemies.’ ... The presence of Christianity in all parts of the world has to be there to bring into the society this particular element of civilization.”

The Church must also continue in the Holy Land to serve as a physical presence of Christ in the form of the sacraments, he said, “... a healing presence in the midst of a broken world. ... It is Jesus who remains present and incarnate in the world [through] sacrament and Church.”

And the Church teaching that each person is sacred because they are created in the image and likeness of God is also of imperative value, he said. This belief “is something Christianity must share with the world. In a world twisted by hate and violence as it is, it isn’t religion that’s the problem—it’s not knowing who we are. Without this sense of self identity, we don’t know who our neighbor is.

“The proclamation of the love of God for us in the incarnation of Jesus and in the creation of ourselves is that seed which needs to be planted in the midst of every society. ... It is an emergency situation in the Holy Land.”

Ultimately, Msgr. Lane said, “God has placed [Christians] in the Middle East to be the root and the spring and the life of a new kind of understanding, a new era of possibility, a new exchange of the nature of the human person and the nature of our God.”

One way in which the FFHL helps to maintain such concepts in the Holy Land is “to extend that Christianity through higher education for these young people there who, once they get a scholarship, have great academic standing,” said Father Peter. “But unfortunately, they’re very poor. So we’re looking for those young people to be the future leaders of the Holy Land.”

As an example, Father Peter shared the story of a girl in the Palestinian-controlled town of Bethlehem who lost both parents in the span of three years. She was left to care for her younger sister.

“She wanted to become a nurse, and she applied to our foundation grant for college,” the Franciscan priest said. “Here’s a girl with no parents. She’s



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

working, trying to take care of her sister and going to college. She became a nurse, and she has never forgotten what the Franciscans did for her. ... That’s a real success story.



Marina Abdullah, 18, is seen in a screen shot from a video in which she speaks about her desire to continue to live in the Holy Land. The video, shown during a fundraising dinner for the foundation held on Oct. 21 in Indianapolis, featured people who have benefited from scholarships provided by the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land that help young adults get an education and stay in their ancestral home. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

“Another one was a girl who decided she wanted to take business courses. Later on, she then became a nun. There’s all sorts of stories where there’s one parent missing, there’s three kids. That’s who the friars are here for—to help those Christians exist in an honorable way.”

According to Father Peter, 425 Christian students in the Holy Land have received a free college education through the FFHL, 260 of whom are currently studying. Of those who have graduated, 85 percent are working in law, accounting, medicine, education, banking and other professions. The remaining 15 percent are women who have gotten married and are continuing to raise Christian families. All of the scholarship recipients have stayed in the Holy Land.

The plight of Christians in the Holy Land is something noted by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, who was present at the event.

“Arab Christians have been under a great deal of oppression and persecution, especially in the last few years,” he said. “Fewer and fewer are there. The foundation is trying to maintain that Christian presence in the Holy Land by



Msgr. Frank P. Lane, a priest of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, speaks during a fundraising dinner for the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land in Indianapolis on Oct. 21.

supporting those who are trying to live there, trying to maintain the sacred places there, those who are continuing to try to live out the Gospel there. This [event] is a great sign of support, prayer and concern for those people.”

Father Peter expressed his gratitude to the crowd for such support.

“We’ve been doing this for the last 25 years, and we see it paying off,” he said. “It’s a confirmation from the vicar of Christ to us saying, ‘keep trudging along.’”

“It only takes one candle to light the darkness. I hope you can be a candle to light the darkness for those young people who are desperately seeking your help.”

(For more information on the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land or to contribute, go to [www.ffhl.org](http://www.ffhl.org) or call 317-574-4194.) †

**‘We’ve been doing this for the last 25 years, and we see it paying off. It’s a confirmation from the vicar of Christ to us saying, “keep trudging along.” It only takes one candle to light the darkness. I hope you can be a candle to light the darkness for those young people who are desperately seeking your help.’**



—Franciscan Father Peter Vasko, president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land

## Iraq archbishop, Pence meet to discuss plight of persecuted Christians

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil, Iraq, reported that he and U.S. Vice President Mike Pence “had a substantial discussion on the needs of the



Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil, Iraq, is seen during a memorial Mass for victims of the Islamic State at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington on Nov. 28. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

Christians, and other religious minority communities, in Iraq.”

The archbishop met with Pence on Dec. 4. The visit came during an extended visit the prelate made to the United States. Part of his trip included several events during and after the Week of Awareness for Persecuted Christians on Nov. 26-Dec. 2.

Pence is to visit the Middle East in late December. He has said his discussions there will focus on protecting religious minorities, especially Christians, the continued threat imposed by the Islamic State and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Archbishop Warda said he updated Pence “on the situation facing our people, and expressed our hope that peace would soon come to Ninevah.

“On behalf of our people, I expressed our gratitude for his promise of swift assistance to our communities who suffered genocide at the hands of ISIS,” the archbishop said. Catholic News Service received an e-mail with his remarks from the Knights of Columbus.

“I noted the importance of having the U.S. and U.N. work with the three major Christian groups together through the Ninevah Reconstruction Committee,



Vice President Mike Pence

and the importance of this group in the resettlement of thousands of Christians in Ninevah and in furthering the unity of the Christian communities in Iraq,” Archbishop Warda said.

The prelate also said he described to the vice president “the importance of the aid and support we have received” from the Knights of Columbus and Aid to the Church in Need.

At the end of their meeting, Archbishop Warda gave Pence a crucifix from the town of Karamles, which was targeted and badly damaged when ISIS invaded. “I also assured him of our

prayers and told him that if he ever visits Iraq, he is most welcome in Erbil,” he added.

In a tweet, Pence said he had “an important dialogue” with Archbishop Warda about President Donald J. Trump’s “commitment to directly assist persecuted Christians and religious minorities in Iraq. I’m heading to the Middle East this month to discuss U.S. plans to accelerate funding those impacted in the region.”

The Knights recently completed fundraising for a \$2 million initiative to rebuild Karamles, a predominately Christian town in Ninevah.

On Oct. 25 in a keynote address at the Solidarity Dinner for the Washington-based group In Defense of Christians, Pence announced the Trump administration would provide direct U.S. aid to persecuted Christians in the Middle East and route it through the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The aid will go to “faith-based and private organizations” to help those who are persecuted in the region, Pence said. †

# Indiana town embodies Santa Claus and his spirit of love, peace, joy

By Katie Rutter  
Catholic News Service

SANTA CLAUS, Ind.—Belief in that iconic Christmas figure, the rotund merry man with a bag full of presents, inspires thousands of children to write letters addressed to “Santa Claus” each year.

Surprisingly, many of these wish lists actually do get delivered to Santa Claus. But rather than landing in a magical workshop at the North Pole, the notes wind up in a little Indiana town that bears the same name as the jolly old elf.

“We have already answered 5,000 [letters], and we’ll be getting more this morning,” Patricia Koch, founder of the Santa Claus Museum and Village, told Catholic News Service (CNS) on Dec. 2. “They come from the U.S.A. and from all over the world.”

Koch and a dozen other volunteers work long hours to “help” Santa answer the letters that find their way to the Santa Claus post office. Koch calls this letter-writing a ministry and is dedicated to keeping the spirit of Santa Claus, the person, alive.

“Our world can become very self-centered and commercialized,” she explained, “so I think Santa Claus has that spirit of love and forgiveness and peace and joy.”

The town itself, with a population just over 2,400, seems to embody the persona of Santa Claus. Streets are named “Sleigh Bell Drive” and “Candy Cane Lane,” or even “Melchior,” “Balthazar” and “Kaspar” after the traditional names of the three wise men. Unsurprisingly, the Catholics of the town named their church in the Evansville, Ind., Diocese after the man who inspired the myth: St. Nicholas.

“Just looking at his acts, we just see this kindness and seeing those who were less fortunate,” said Father John Brosmer, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in nearby Dale, which encompasses St. Nicholas Church and two other nearby worship sites.

St. Nicholas, also known as Nicholas of Myra, was a bishop in present-day Turkey who lived from about 280 to 343. He was the orphaned son of wealthy parents, and according to an ancient story, threw bags of gold through the window of an impoverished family in the dead of night.

“In later versions, he drops a bag of gold through the chimney where it lands in a stocking that was hung there to dry,” explained Adam English, chair of the Christian studies department at Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C., and author of the historical book *The Saint Who Would Be Santa Claus*.

“What’s really memorable about it is that it’s an absolutely ordinary act of charity, of goodwill. This is the kind of thing that anybody can do,” English said.

That simple act of generosity inspired generations of anonymous gift-giving. Givers attributed mysterious presents to St. Nicholas and passed his story from culture to culture. In the Netherlands, his nickname was “Sinter Klaas,” which evolved to “Santa Claus” when Dutch immigrants arrived in New York.

St. Nicholas’ identity was forever established as a “jolly old elf” by the famous poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas,” penned by the American writer Clement Clarke Moore in 1822.

“[The poem] starts to change him from being a Christian bishop, stern and austere and presiding over the Eucharist, to being more of a gift-giver who’s maybe more a magical creature,” said English.

Today, the familiar images of this magical man are recreated throughout the town of Santa Claus. Huge statues that adorn the main highway and the town hall depict a smiling, rosy-cheeked figure with a large bag of toys, his red coat and hat looking nothing like clerical garb.

Still, for Santa enthusiasts, even this depiction echoes Christian beginnings that were simply transformed by American culture.

“I use the expression ‘extreme makeover,’ ” explained Father Joseph Marquis, a Byzantine Catholic priest who operates the St. Nicholas Institute. His program, based in Detroit, teaches the saint’s history to professional portrayers of Santa.

“They took away his miter and gave him a triangular cap, and his bishop’s coat was shortened and lined with fur. The candy cane is an evolution from the crosier,” Father Marquis said.

Nicholas of Myra likely lacked the rounded figure characteristic of a diet of milk and cookies. His place in history would paint a stature hardened by persecution, perhaps even bearing the scars of torture. A contemporary of the emperor Diocletian, Nicholas lived through the most terrible persecution of the early Church and was himself imprisoned.

“We know for sure his nose was broken,” said Father Marquis, referencing historical research done on the bones of the saint.

“They tortured his priests who were members of his flock to make him recant, and he wouldn’t do it,” Father Marquis said.

Nicholas of Myra also was hailed as a defender of justice, which might have led to Santa’s common question to young children, “Have you been good?” and the naughty-nice list that he must “check twice.” According to tradition, the bishop found out that a local judge had accepted a bribe and falsely condemned three men to death.

“Nicholas ran to the spot and literally grabbed the sword out of the executioner’s hand,” related Father Marquis.

“He pointed right at the guy for condemning them to death, and the man actually confessed that he took money to condemn them,” he said.

St. Nicholas Church hosted a visit from its namesake to anticipate his Dec. 6 feast day. A white-bearded man wearing a miter and long red robes made a surprise appearance at the Sunday Vigil Mass on Dec. 2, and handed out ornaments to all the parishioners.



A sign welcomes visitors to the town of Santa Claus, Ind., on Dec. 2. Proud of their namesake, townspeople host Christmas celebrations all through December. (CNS photos/Katie Rutter)



Storyteller Susan Fowler relates legends about St. Nicholas of Myra on Dec. 2 as Tait Wetzel, 9, acts as a stand-in for the saint. Dozens of children gathered for story time hosted by the Santa Claus Museum and Village in the town of Santa Claus, Ind.

“You can’t get away from Santa Claus here,” laughed parishioner Deacon Jim Woebkenberg.

The voice of St. Nicholas likely pursues Catholics during every Sunday liturgy. Historical documents confirm that Nicholas attended the Council of Nicaea in 325. While his direct contributions, if any, are unknown, it was during this council that the Nicene Creed was written.

“You have echoes of the voice of St. Nicholas every Sunday when we recite the creed, which for me as a big St. Nicholas fan, indebted to him for so many things in my life, that’s important to me,” said Father Marquis.

Similarly, every bright-eyed child who rushes to the Christmas tree on Dec. 25 is indebted to this saint for the legacy of giving. But just as the town of Santa Claus stays on the map even after the holiday season, the local pastor said that the true spirit of St. Nick leads Catholics to generosity all year long.

“Growing up as a Christian, you want to share your gifts you want to give of yourself,” said Father Brosmer. “The true Christian is St. Nicholas, it’s that generosity all the time.”

(Katie Rutter is a freelance writer and member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington. To watch a related video, go to <https://bit.ly/2iEbkgz>.) †



Young parishioners shake hands on Dec. 2 with an actor portraying St. Nicholas, the namesake of their church. St. Nicholas Church in Santa Claus, Ind., hosted the visit from “St. Nick” ahead of the saint’s feast day, which is on Dec. 6.

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## Inner joy can nurture us in busy days before Christmas

By Maureen Pratt

The crunch is upon us! Christmas is near, and there is too little time, too much to do and still more to come. We're supposed to shout, "Joy to the world!" but the actual feeling of joy might seem quite distant or exhausting, forced, like a photographer's insistence that we smile when we really don't feel like it.

The wonderful readings for this Third Sunday of Advent come to the rescue of our harried hearts. Each in its own way brings this blessed time into comforting focus and, as a gift for today and tomorrow, provides effective ways that we can grasp and cultivate lasting joy, not from external sources, but from deep within, where Christ dwells and the Holy Spirit moves.

First, the reading from Isaiah (Is 61:1-2, 10-11) helps us reorient ourselves from our daily, more mundane tasks to an inner purpose that leaps forth with gratitude and eagerness to serve.

Through our baptism, we are called to "bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives," and, most especially, to "rejoice heartily in the Lord" for we are clothed "with a robe of salvation."

No matter where, no matter when, the more we reflect on how truly blessed we are and how wonderful is the message that we carry, the more room we have inside for true joy.

The responsorial psalm from the Gospel of St. Luke (Lk 1:46-50, 53-54) is perfect for times when we are so tired from our daily duties, weighted even more by the activity of the holiday season.

Inviting Mary's beautiful prayer of praise and thanksgiving to flow into our hearts, we can be rejuvenated in grateful faith, reminded of how much the Lord loves us, blesses us and keeps us—yes, even in our current frazzled state!

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, St. Paul's prayer and instruction give us a different

set of eyeglasses with which to view our lives in the coming days. Instead of compartmentalizing Advent and Christmas into the crimped boxes on a calendar, we are invited to broaden our vision—rejoicing "always," praying "without ceasing" and "in all circumstances" (1 Thes 5:16-18), giving thanks.

This permission to put faith first and everywhere can assist in weeding out the things that sap our time and leave us feeling empty instead of filled. It also helps us better cultivate inner peace, building our joy on a thriving spirit within. And it gives us a potent action to take anytime we wait in seemingly endless lines or on hold!

The Gospel acclamation (Is 61:1) echoes the readings before it and leads us into a glorious Gospel passage—St. John 1:6-8, 19-28—that invites us to reflect on our faith beginnings: our baptism.

Most of us probably do not remember being baptized. As squalling, wriggly babies, we were very simple-minded (adorable, yes, but, still simple-minded), caring most to eat, sleep, bawl and repeat. Even if a few of us were the paragon of cherubic virtue (a very few), the likelihood of being aware of what was happening as adults gently guided us through the first sacrament is, well, unlikely.

Yet, as clueless as we were as babes about the great mystery unfolding in our lives, that early initiation set us on a pivotal path of faith.

In subsequent years, we grew in grace and understanding, toddling,



Sister Joseph Maureen Hobin of the Little Sisters of the Poor proclaims a Scripture reading during Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis in St. Louis. The readings for Mass on the Third Sunday of Advent invite those who hear them to discover an inner joy that can provide calm in the busy days leading up to Christmas. (CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review)

then treading along the Christian walk. Slipping and sliding sometimes, yes, in our humanity, but still moving and building grace within, even if at times we did not fully comprehend what was happening.

Ours has not been an unfamiliar road: Ancestors, saints, prophets, Apostles and many others laid the pathway. Mary, the mother of Our Lord, gave herself, her "yes." Joseph, her husband, too. And Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, then walked through his remarkable life to death and resurrection so that we might be saved.

Now, as with our first baby steps, we do not walk in isolation. Family, friends, the faithful of the Church—both near and far—are in step all around us. The Holy Trinity—Father, Son and

Holy Spirit—are never away, but with us in all and through all.

And we, no matter how beleaguered we might be because of the worldly cares we take on, have access always to the pure joy that comes from the sacrament of baptism and the continual flow of God's love, support and grace.

As we move through the remaining days before Christmas, busy though they might be, remembering our baptism and all of the wonder that comes with it can bring our gratitude for all of God's gifts to light. We can share the Good News like never before and let our joy shine brilliantly, brightly, from the inside, out!

(Maureen Pratt is a columnist for Catholic News Service. Her website is [www.maureenpratt.com](http://www.maureenpratt.com).) †

## Encountering Christ in Advent brings joy and peace beyond understanding

By Effie Caldarola

Rejoice always! Those words from St. Paul in his First Letter to the Thessalonians reverberate through the ages, through prayer and song. Again, I say rejoice.

This Advent, we take time to pray with St. Paul, one of history's most compelling figures. A focused and intense man, he initially dedicated himself to persecuting followers of Jesus. Then, after a dramatic encounter on a journey to Damascus left him blinded and dazed, St. Paul changed course entirely.

He had encountered Christ, personally and vividly, and his life would never be the same.

St. Paul, we ask that you help us to understand the indescribable joy that an encounter with the risen Christ can bring.

In our lives, we seek happiness. We ask, St. Paul, that you help us to understand the difference between the superficial things of this life that sometimes bring us brief happiness and the deep down, impregnable joy for which we yearn and which will shepherd us through life's hardest moments.

St. Paul, in your letters, we sometimes find you in prison. We ask you to help us sit with you in the dank, humid environment of a Roman prison. Help us to be with you in the quiet of prayer. We ask to be present to the cruel or indifferent guards whom you encountered, the filthy conditions, the darkness of a lonely Roman night.

Help us to understand those things that imprison us this Advent season. Amid the twinkling lights and the gaily wrapped presents, help us, as we spend time

with you, to enumerate what sometimes hinders our joy.

Are we lonely for someone we miss this season, and feel our hearts cannot endure the absence? Are we discouraged by the waste and overabundance that sometimes mark the holidays? Are we struggling against overconsumption, either of food, alcohol or other substances that enslave us?

Are we struggling financially? Are we struggling with faith? Do we sometimes feel overwhelmed by the evil present in our world?

St. Paul, the tables had been turned for you as you embraced Christ. You, the pursuer, became the hunted. The persecutor had become the persecuted. How did you sustain your joy through these challenges?

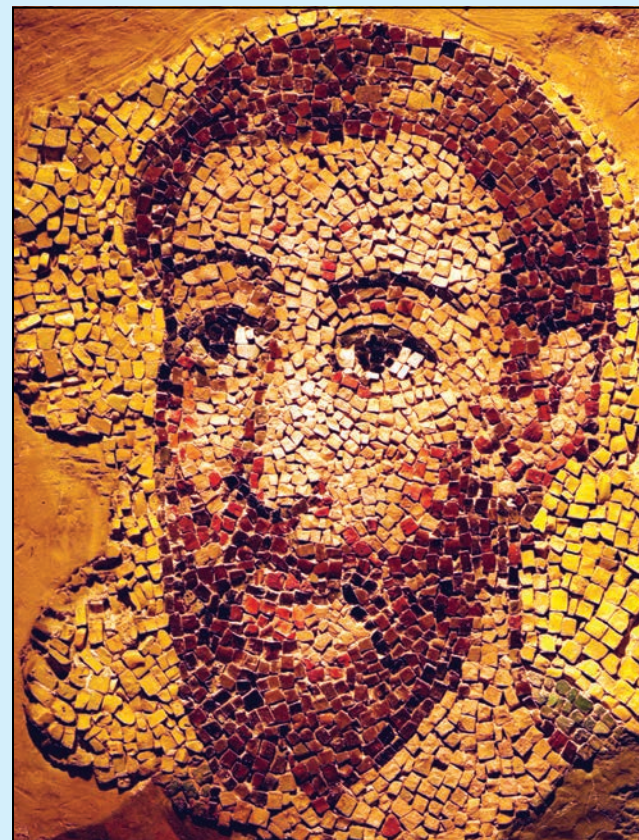
We remember the words of Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical "*Deus Caritas Est*" ("God Is Love"): "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (#1).

No debate or argument produced the joy you feel, St. Paul. No "lofty idea" convinced you, but instead an encounter with the person of Christ changed you forever.

We ask you to help us share in boundless joy in the midst of our own limitations and challenges.

We pray for the grace, this Advent season, to encounter, as St. Paul did, a person, the person of Christ who brings a peace that the world cannot give, a joy and peace surpassing understanding, a joy not confined or constrained by prison walls.

(Effie Caldarola is a freelance writer and a columnist for Catholic News Service.) †



This mosaic of St. Paul is frequently on loan from the Vatican at exhibits throughout the world. This Advent, we take time to pray with St. Paul, one of history's most compelling figures, to experience, like him, an encounter with Christ that leads to a deep peace and joy. (CNS photo/Vatican press kit)

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

## William Rosecrans almost became our first Catholic president

When I've visited my son in San Diego, I've noticed Rosecrans Street running near the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery.



And when I've visited my daughter in Santa Monica, we've driven on Rosecrans Avenue in southern Los Angeles. I'm reminded of a once-important Catholic in U.S. history. He

almost became the first Catholic president.

But William Starke Rosecrans didn't get to California until after he made a name for himself during the Civil War, where he fought mainly in Tennessee.

He was born in Ohio in 1819, and managed to get an appointment to West Point Military Academy. After graduating fifth in his class in 1842, he had an engineering assignment before returning to West Point to teach engineering.

It was then that he converted to Catholicism, and he was a devout one, known to wear a crucifix and pray the rosary. After he told his family about his conversion, his brother Sylvester also converted. Sylvester became the first

bishop of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio.

William was given an engineering assignment to Newport, R.I. While there, he volunteered to lead the construction of St. Mary Church, one of the largest churches constructed at that time. It's where John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Bouvier were married in 1953. There's a memorial window in Rosecrans' honor in the church.

He resigned from the Army in 1854 and soon became a successful businessman, including heading an oil refinery in Cincinnati. He obtained patents for numerous inventions.

When the Civil War began, Rosecrans offered his services, serving first in Ohio as a colonel. He was quickly promoted to brigadier general as he began to win victories for the Union forces. He served briefly in Washington where his opinions clashed with those of Gen. Ulysses Grant and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton.

Given command of the Army of the Cumberland, he fought battles in Tennessee, winning most but losing the Battle of Chickamauga, apparently because of a badly-worded order. The northern press loved Rosecrans for his bravery, displayed as he fearlessly rode ahead of his troops. He became one of

President Abraham Lincoln's favorites.

Lincoln was campaigning for re-election in 1864. During the Republican convention, he had James Garfield send a telegram to Rosecrans asking him to be his running mate in the election. Rosecrans immediately accepted with a return telegram, but Lincoln never received it. It's believed that Secretary of War Stanton intercepted it.

After not hearing from Rosecrans, Lincoln chose Andrew Johnson, who became president after Lincoln was assassinated. If Lincoln had received the telegram, Rosecrans might have been the first Catholic president.

After the war, Rosecrans moved to California. He was one of the incorporators of the Southern Pacific Railroad. He served as U.S. ambassador to Mexico for a short while. He was asked to run for governor of Ohio twice and governor of California, but he refused, earning the nickname "the Great Decliner." He did, though, serve as a U.S. Congressman from California from 1881 to 1885.

He died at age 78 at his ranch in Redondo Beach, Calif., in 1898. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. †

Worship and Evangelization Outreach/Erin Jeffries

## 'An Advent Dialogue with the Sick'

Recently, I had the joy of beginning Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's (now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) short book



*The Blessing of Christmas*. The first part of this book is "An Advent Dialogue with the Sick."

Though Benedict is speaking primarily to people who are sick, and therefore isolated, I found myself thinking of all the

ways we can be isolated during this time of year. Those who, like my husband and myself, are far from family, those who are new to the area or who are in group homes or care facilities, those who work long or odd hours or perform solitary work, or those who struggle with seasonal depression, to name a few.

All of these circumstances can prevent people from being able to share in the joy others feel at this time. In fact, I would imagine this is something we can all relate to in one way or another.

Benedict presents Advent as "a medicine for the soul that makes it easier to bear the enforced inaction and the pain of [one's] illness. Advent can help us discover the unobtrusive grace that can lie in the very fact of being sick," or isolated for that matter.

The word "Advent" (*adventus* in Latin) can actually be translated as "presence" or "arrival." Typically that is not the first thing that comes to mind. We think first of the waiting, or anticipation of the arrival. This translation leads to a different focus—on God's *presence* and *closeness*, his love—and the blessing he brings in his presence.

When we are sick, isolated or lonely, we are taken out of the rush of typical daily life, where there is little time and little encouragement to reflect and make intentional choices about our external activity or inner life. Benedict tells us "When I am sick, I am obliged to be still. I am obliged to wait. I am obliged to reflect on myself; I am obliged to bear being alone. I am obliged to bear pain, and I am obliged to accept the burden of my own self. All this is hard."

Yet, this is where the time of Advent can be especially full of blessing and meaning.

This time, as difficult as it may be, can be seen as an opportunity, and Benedict challenges us to see it this way. "The Lord has interrupted my activity for a time in order to let me be still." He proposes that it is in the stillness that God is waiting for us, adding, "We rebel against it, this is not only because it is painful or because it is hard to be still and alone. We rebel against it because there are so many important things we ought to be doing and because illness seems meaningless. But it is not in the least meaningless! ... It can be a moment in our life that belongs to God, a time when we are open to him and thus learn to rediscover our own selves."

Often when a person is chronically ill or feeling lonely and isolated, small progress, days when he or she feels better, little gestures of genuine friendship, become a beacon of light and a moment to celebrate. Memories of those good moments also remain, and they have the ability to sustain us in the hard days when we are not feeling consolation. To focus on these things can be, as Benedict puts it, beautiful and healing. They remind us of the truth that we are loved, that we are not really alone, that there is good, and above all that the Lord is present.

(Erin Jeffries is the coordinator of Ministry to Persons with Special Needs in the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis. She can be reached at 317-236-1448 or [ejeffries@archindy.org](mailto:ejeffries@archindy.org).) †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

## Annual worship service offers chance for faiths to be one in prayer

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) is annually celebrated on Jan. 18-25. This period is bracketed by the feast of the Chair of St. Peter and the Conversion of St. Paul. This "octave" (eight days) offers an intense time for prayer "that all may be one."



At 7 p.m. on Jan. 21, Mount Zion Baptist Church,

3500 Graceland Avenue, in Indianapolis, will host the Christian community of greater Indianapolis for our annual WPCU worship service. A reception will follow. All are welcome.

Each year, the Pontifical Commission for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches choose a region of the world whose Christian leaders are invited to prayerfully prepare a prayer service.

Special care is taken in choosing the Scripture passages, symbols, gestures and songs reflective of the region's history and culture. But these must be universal enough to be used in other regions of the world.

This year's prayer service was prepared by a committee from the Caribbean region. The committee was comprised of Roman Catholic, Baptist, Anglican, Methodist, Moravian, Presbyterian and

United Church of Christ representatives.

The preparers chose Exodus 15:1-21, especially verse 6, "Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power," as the scriptural motif. This is known by many as the song of Moses and Miriam, which describes the Israelites' joy after crossing the Red Sea and being saved by God from the enslavement in Egypt.

For the preparers, the Bible and three sets of chains became integral symbols for this worship service.

The introduction to the service describes the symbols in this way: "The Bible is especially important in the experience of the Caribbean churches. Historically, indigenous and enslaved peoples experienced atrocities perpetrated by colonizers who, at the same time, brought Christianity. Yet, in the hands of the oppressed peoples of the region, the Bible became a primary source of consolation and liberation. ...

"Chains are a very potent symbol of enslavement, dehumanization and racism. They are also a symbol of the power of sin which separates us from God and from each other. ... During the worship service, the ... chains are replaced by a human chain expressing bonds of communion and united action against modern slavery and all kinds of individual and institutionalized dehumanization."

A song associated with the ecumenical movement in the Caribbean helps to

"voice" the brokenness, sinfulness and hope expressed throughout the worship service. "The Right Hand of God" reflects the song of Miriam and Moses. It praises the liberating action of God suffusing the Book of Exodus.

I hope that what has become clear through this column is that a desire for Christian unity must be grounded in desire to acknowledge shared human experience. In this case, it is the shared work of the churches to overcome the shared social challenges facing the people of the Caribbean region.

But it is also the case that their reality speaks to our region's social justice challenges of enslavement (to sin, possessions, consumerism), dehumanization (poverty as a "fault" of the poor, profit undermining family, ignoring of the common good) and racism (veiled or overt based in ethnicity, religion or national origin).

Come join Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and the leaders of many of our local Christian denominations for this prayer service. All are welcome at 7 p.m. on Jan. 21.

Let us be as one in prayer, that "all may be one."

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism. He is also pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

## Truly celebrate Christmas by becoming fully absorbed in its meaning

We must wonder how many will truly celebrate Christmas this year, making it the best ever?

What is meant by a "true celebration"?



Leonardo da Vinci's painting "Madonna and Child with Flowers"—also called "Benois Madonna"—contains one answer. In it, we see the Christ Child fully absorbed with a cross-shaped flower that Mary is handing him. In the

book *Leonardo Da Vinci*, author Walter Isaacson points out, "Jesus carefully [focuses] on the flower, as if just learning to discern the form of an object from its background."

To truly celebrate Christmas is to become fully absorbed in its awesome meaning, to allow that meaning to touch us inwardly, to wonder about an

omnipotent God choosing to enter time as a baby, to wonder why we are so favored and to marvel about the message of love and humility Christ's birth sends. Why choose this means and not another means?

When we fall asleep, there is a letting go of self and entering into a dream world. Christmas encourages us to dream about God's decision to enter our world and to let go of that which militates against our reverie.

Christmas music sings of peace on Earth. But are we truly peaceful? Isn't it truer that we are hurried by urgencies like, "Few days left to purchase your presents: a limited time offer." How, then, can we cultivate true peacefulness?

The answer may be in our own backyard, but most important, it is within us.

I am constantly edified by the large number of young, middle-aged and elderly people who attend our morning Masses. Even though the rest of their day is filled with nonstop activities, they start

the day by entering a blessed temple and momentarily leaving the mundane world behind them.

This is but one way to prepare for a true celebration of Christmas: to repeatedly center on God at the beginning of the day in a holy setting.

Not everyone can attend church daily, but all of us can create time to let go of our concerns and turn to a spiritual awareness.

A Benedictine friend told me, "I make it a point throughout the day to remind myself I am in God's presence. It doesn't take much, just turning one's thoughts to the moment and realizing God is concerned about me."

To follow the example of sensing God's presence and to start the day in that presence is to live a daily Christmas leading to Christmas Day.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for *Catholic News Service*.) †

Third Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 17, 2017

- *Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11*
- *1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*
- *John 1:6-8, 19-28*

This weekend, the Church celebrates “*Gaudete Sunday*,” the name coming from the opening word in Latin of the entrance antiphon for the Mass for the day.



In Latin, “*gaudete*” is a command to “rejoice.” Rejoicing is not indicated because Advent, and its stress on prayer and penance, is half completed, but rather because Christmas is nearer.

Another reason for rejoicing is that, hopefully, we all feel closer to God as a result of observing Advent with prayer, reflection and penance. If we have used Advent as intended by the Church, we are nearer to a fuller communion with the Lord, the light of the world.

Priests may wear rose-colored vestments on this weekend, symbolizing the dark violet of Advent already being lightened by the forthcoming light of the Lord’s arrival in our souls and into the world.

The third part of Isaiah furnishes the first reading. When this passage was written, God’s people were weary and frustrated.

They, or their forebears, had undergone the humiliation, uncertainty and misery of exile in Babylon. When finally allowed to leave Babylon and return to their homeland, they were understandably overjoyed.

Upon their arrival, though, they found a sterile and parched land awaited them. Life was brutally hard. Had God tricked them, providing for their release from Babylon only to subject them to further, worse trials at home? Did God even exist?

Typically for this section of Isaiah, this reading glows with optimism. Whatever may be the reality of the moment, for those loyal to God, a wondrous future awaits.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Thessalonians provides the second reading. Belief in the Lord’s second coming and impatience to see it occur were widespread in the first generations of the Christian faithful. This reading catches well this mood.

Longing for the second coming among the early Christians is not hard to explain. They had much to endure. Actual, severe

persecution had developed. The culture all around the Christians was hostile. Temptations to renounce the Gospel abounded.

Paul reassured the Christians of Thessalonica, urging them to be true to the Gospel. God and his goodness will one day prevail.

St. John’s Gospel is the source of the last reading. The reading is a story about St. John the Baptist, whose own identity puzzled his contemporaries. Some assumed that John was the Messiah. Others wondered if he was Elijah or another prophet who had returned to Earth.

John was firm in replying to these questions. Another would follow him, he insisted. John was to prepare the way for this future representative of God, who would be wonderful for all humanity. John is not worthy even to untie the straps of his sandals.

## Reflection

In calling us to rejoice on *Gaudete Sunday*, the Church either presumes that we have spent the weeks of Advent pondering within ourselves the meaning of salvation for us personally and individually, or it urges us to use the remaining time in this season to seek God with all our hearts.

Excitedly, the liturgy proclaims that when the Lord’s kingdom comes, how wonderful it will be! “*Gaudete!*” Rejoice!

Why? When the Lord’s kingdom comes, death and evil indeed will end. We nonetheless must voluntarily turn to God, admitting him into our hearts. We must wholeheartedly reject our own sin.

Many influences will weaken our determination to reject sin. To seek holiness requires resolve, conviction, discipline and focus. Paul was correct in telling the Thessalonian Christians to be strong in faith, saying that they will not be patient in vain.

Always the good teacher, the Church, through this reading from John’s Gospel, instructs us to look for Jesus as Jesus actually is, never creating our own false versions of the Messiah.

Jesus was obedient to God. Our lives and hearts must reflect Jesus in every respect. Understanding all this is the purpose of Advent. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, December 18

*Jeremiah 23:5-8*  
*Psalms 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19*  
*Matthew 1:18-25*

### Tuesday, December 19

*Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a*  
*Psalms 71:3-6, 16-17*  
*Luke 1:5-25*

### Wednesday, December 20

*Isaiah 7:10-14*  
*Psalms 24:1-6*  
*Luke 1:26-38*

### Thursday, December 21

St. Peter Canisius, priest and doctor of the Church  
*Song of Songs 2:8-14*  
or *Zephaniah 3:14-18a*  
*Psalms 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21*  
*Luke 1:39-45*

### Friday, December 22

*1 Samuel 1:24-38*  
(Response) *1 Samuel 2:1, 4-7, 8abcd*  
*Luke 1:46-56*

### Saturday, December 23

St. John of Kanty, priest  
*Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24*  
*Psalms 25:4bc-5ab, 8-10, 14*  
*Luke 1:57-66*

### Sunday, December 24

Fourth Sunday of Advent  
*2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16*  
*Psalms 89:2-5, 27, 29*  
*Romans 16:25-27*  
*Luke 1:26-38*

### Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

*Isaiah 62:1-5*  
*Psalms 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29*  
*Acts 13:16-17, 22-25*  
*Matthew 1:1-25*  
or *Matthew 1:18-25*

## Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

### The Church allows non-Catholic people to be buried in Catholic cemeteries

My son passed away recently at the age of 35. We held a memorial service for him since we could not have a funeral Mass.



He was not baptized as an infant—which was my decision, of course, not his.

I have been a Catholic all my life, have followed Christian principles and have raised my children with those same values. My

parish priest is saying that since my son was never baptized, he cannot be buried in our parish’s cemetery where our family has already purchased plots for cremains.

I was saddened to be told this—because now, until my husband or I die, we will hold onto our son’s ashes; and we ourselves will now choose to be buried in a non-Catholic cemetery so that our son is not laid to rest alone. We want him to be next to us. I would appreciate whatever information or guidance you might offer. (Texas)

First, my condolences and the assurance of my prayers. Losing a child is, I think, the hardest loss of all—one for which no one is ever really prepared.

We live with the understanding that our parents are likely to predecease us and that our spouses might as well, but we never expect to outlive our children. So I will pray for you, that God will ease your sorrow—and for your son, that he may enjoy the peace of God’s presence and one day welcome you there.

Meanwhile, please take comfort in the fact that your son’s remains can in fact be buried with you in the family plot you have purchased. Family ties are sacred, and the Church has no interest in separating loved ones—either in life or in death. Nothing in canon law prohibits a non-Catholic from being buried in a Catholic cemetery.

The website of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, for example, says clearly: “Non-Catholics may be buried with their Catholic spouses or other family members ... in a Catholic cemetery.” It is true that, in most circumstances, a Catholic funeral Mass may be offered only for those already baptized as a Christian. Several of the ritual’s prescribed prayers refer directly to the baptism of the deceased, but there is no such limitation regarding the place of burial.

I recently read an article in our Catholic newspaper about the ministry of a deacon in a parish not far from my own. That deacon regularly baptizes people and distributes Communion at Mass. What I don’t understand is where he gets the authority to do those things.

The deacon in our parish is not allowed to do any of that. With most parishes now having only one priest, wouldn’t it be helpful if deacons could do more? (Indiana)

Deacons are authorized by the laws of the Church to baptize, witness marriages, perform wake and funeral services outside of Mass, distribute holy Communion, proclaim the Gospel, preach homilies and expose the Blessed Sacrament for eucharistic adoration.

A deacon is not empowered—as a priest is—to consecrate the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, to administer the sacrament of confirmation in particular circumstances, to hear confessions or to anoint the sick.

The ministry of a deacon, however, is done at the discretion and under the immediate supervision of the pastor of the parish to which that deacon is assigned. So there can be some variation from parish to parish as regards the particular ministries of the deacon assigned there and the frequency with which those ministries are exercised. As you have pointed out, the current shortage of priests has made the work of deacons in the Church today all the more valuable.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

## Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The *Criterion* invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to [critterion@archindy.org](mailto:critterion@archindy.org). †

## My Journey to God

### Juan Diego, Cuauhtlatohuac, “The Eagle Who Speaks”

By Patrick Harkins

In the midst of repent and turn comes the call,

“rejoice and be glad.”

*Gaudete, Christus natus est ex Maria virgine, gaudete.*

One who spoke like an eagle had reason enough when his tilma turned from roses to the maiden of peace, queen of Bethlehem in brilliant colors to quicken the hearts of rich and poor who saw the stars of creation in the miracle, heard the song we are in the image of a woman.

The high and low now met. We with stain find love in one who has no sin.

Let it be that we turn and have reason to rejoice.



(Patrick Harkins is a member of St. Joseph University Parish in Terre Haute. A carved wood relief depicting St. Juan Diego is seen on June 22, 2016, at the San Diego Retreat house in Albuquerque, N.M.) (CNS photo/Octavio Duran)

# 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.

**BAYSINGER, James W.**, 87, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 27. Father of Mariellen Cassidy, Jane and Bob Baysinger. Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of two.

**BONOMO, Agnes**, 90, Sacred Heart, Clinton, Nov. 16. Mother of Veda Jo Gregory. Grandmother of two.

**CLANCY, Rosanne (Frey)**, 85, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Wife of James Clancy. Mother of Bridget and Marjorie Brown, Ann Lee, Mary Ellen Poe, Kathryn, James and Joseph Clancy. Sister of Kathryn Canty and Richard Frey. Grandmother of 21. Great-grandmother of six.

**DEMAREE, Robin L.**, 56, Prince of Peace, Madison, Nov. 28. Husband of Melissa Demaree. Father of Alyssa Demaree Shelton, Katie and Travis Demaree. Brother of Evie Sanders and Carl Demaree.

**EFFING, Jeremy C.**, 45, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 3. Husband of Amber Effing. Son of Diane Effing. Brother of Stacey Weaver. Grandson of Marjorie Wissler, Loretta

and John Effing. Uncle of several.

**HARRIS, George J.**, 72, St. Mary, New Albany, Nov. 29. Brother of Yvonne Harvey, Dale and Patrick Harris. Uncle of several.

**MONDRAGON, Nemecio Garcia**, 39, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, Nov. 4. Husband of Elva Vega Alcala. Father of Maria, Jose and Oscar Garcia Vega. Brother of Juan Garcia Mondragon.

**MUCKERHEIDE, Bob**, 80, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 5. Husband of Donna Muckerheide. Father of Nancy Elvestad, Bill and Mike Muckerheide. Brother of Carol Hahn, Marilyn Land, Dale and Jim Muckerheide. Grandfather of four.

**RECEVEUR, Dr. Robert L.**, 84, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 30. Husband of Diana Receveur. Father of Kerry Jones and Kelly Receveur. Brother of Carol, Mary, Suzanne and Paul Receveur. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of five.

**SANNEMAN, Anthony J.**, 75, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Nov. 30. Husband of Linda Sanneman. Father of Andrea and Scott Sanneman. Brother of Larry Sanneman. Grandfather of three.

**SCHEELE, Lambert E.**, 84, Holy Family, Oldenburg,



## Honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe

Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles stands with his crozier as he concelebrates Mass honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 3 in Los Angeles. The Mass came ahead of the Dec. 12 feast day, which celebrates the appearance of Mary to indigenous peasant St. Juan Diego in 1531 near present-day Mexico City. Archbishop Gomez is vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

(CNS photo/Victor Aleman, Vida Nueva)

Nov. 30. Husband of Dolores Scheele. Father of Roberta Weisenbach, Theresa, Edward and Michael Scheele. Brother of Clara Becker, Alice

Stenger, Irene Tebbe and Mary Scheele. Grandfather of four.

**SHEELY, Mary Jo**, 78, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Dec. 3. Wife

of Gene Sheely. Mother of Cheryl Morphew and Rhonda Vandivier. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of one.

**STUCKEY, Joan L. (Franz)**,

85, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Nov. 19. Mother of Sharon Sullivan, Janet, James and Robert Stuckey. Grandmother of two. †

## Franciscan Sister Stephanie Zimmer served in Catholic schools for 28 years

Franciscan Sister Stephanie Zimmer died on Dec. 5 at the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. She was 86.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 11 at the Motherhouse Chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Mary Magdalen Zimmer was born on Sept. 18, 1931, in Indianapolis and grew up as a member of the former St. Catherine of Siena Parish. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on

Sept. 8, 1949, and professed final vows on Aug. 12, 1955.

Sister Stephanie studied education at Marian University in Indianapolis, Xavier University in Cincinnati and the Catholic University of America in Washington, earning respectively a bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees at those schools.

During 68 years as a Sister of St. Francis, Sister Stephanie ministered as an educator for 28 years in Catholic schools in Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

In the archdiocese, she served at St. Michael School in Brookville from

1952-55, St. Mary School in Greensburg from 1958-59, the former Sacred Heart School in Clinton from 1977-83, and in Indianapolis at St. Michael the Archangel School (now St. Michael-St. Gabriel Archangels School) from 1955-58, 1959-63 and 1992-93, and at St. Lawrence School from 1963-64. She ministered at the motherhouse from 1993-2000 and at Marian University starting in 2000 before retiring from ministry in 2004.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036-0100. †

# LIGHTS

continued from page 1

"An Evening of Lights" event included a reflection by Archbishop Thompson, Scripture, the blessing and lighting of the archdiocese's Christmas tree, and music by the archdiocesan choral group Vox Sacra.

For the event, members of parishes throughout central and southern Indiana were also able to donate \$10 or more to dedicate a luminaria in memory of a loved one. Approximately 160 luminarias were lit and blessed by Archbishop Thompson during the service.

Nearly \$2,000 was donated through the event, and CCF will place those monies in the Archdiocesan Growth and Expansion Fund, which supports the growth of parish, school and agency ministries in central and southern Indiana.

Hope is instilled into us by God's grace, the archbishop said, and especially given to us through sacraments like baptism and confirmation.

"Hope is the conviction of our being," Archbishop Thompson added, citing Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical "Saved by Hope." "God is the foundation of hope, and it's a God, he says, who has a human face. That's what makes Christianity unique from any other religion. We don't have some great prophet or some other figure to represent God to us. We have the face of God in Jesus Christ."

It is not someone who points to God for us, it is God, the archbishop noted, "the second person of the Holy Trinity, who came and gave his life for us, through the Incarnation, of course, as the Nativity scene reminds us, who died that we may have life."

Elisa Smith, CCF director, said

collaboration played a key role in pulling together what she said will become an annual event.

"[We were able to do this] definitely through the grace of God and through the excellent team that was so dedicated and worked so well together," she said. "I thought how wonderful would it be for our archdiocese to combine the two [tree lighting and Nativity] into a single event, and have a prayer service remembering our deceased loved ones with a blessing of a Christmas tree and Nativity scene."

Smith said that the holidays can be a time of sadness and loneliness as people miss loved ones, but noted that programs like this can help people in their time of need.

"This prayer service with Archbishop Thompson's message of hope brought these individuals together and gave them comfort in knowing that the Church is there for them during this season and always," she said.

Mary Schliessmann lit a luminaria in honor of her late husband, Jack, who died in 2011.

"Time goes so fast for me, and Advent was so special growing up, as was Lent," said Schliessmann, a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. "I thought this was a nice thing to do."

Tom Hirschauer, also a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, said Archbishop Thompson's message resonated with him.

"The whole thought about hope and what Christ brings to us in hope came through clearly," he said, "in the fact that our hope is that we will, in fact, be together with our families some day soon."

Hope, Archbishop Thompson noted, is that firm conviction that God is always with us.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson prepares to bless the archdiocesan Christmas tree, luminarias and a Nativity scene during the Dec. 7 "An Evening of Lights." Assisting him is Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. (Photos by Mike Krokos)

"As we gather here tonight, we celebrate that assurance of eternal life for each person represented by these luminarias, and for each one of us," Archbishop Thompson said.

"Even in the midst of our sadness, of our grieving, we celebrate our hope, our confidence, our trust, our conviction, by God's grace, that we will see our loved ones again, in the kingdom of heaven," he continued.

"And our hope, and our trust, and our conviction is, that when we do see them again face to face, as we have seen the face of God in Jesus Christ, there are no more goodbyes, no more farewells, no more tears."

(For more information on the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation, visit [archindy.org/CCF](http://archindy.org/CCF).) †



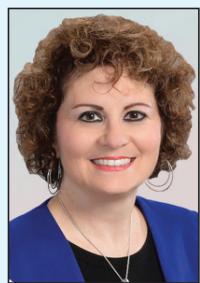
Lucy Thibault, a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, prayerfully walks through the luminarias at the Dec. 7 "An Evening of Lights" program.

Investing with Faith/Elisa Smith

# Endowment distributions fulfill response to social teaching

Many Advent Giving Trees are up in parish churches throughout central and southern Indiana, and tags are ready to be selected. Our participation in this activity is a response to Catholic social teaching, and challenges us to live our call to love our neighbor as we love God.

One archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation endowment, the Christian Social Action Endowment for St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, is living out that call year-round by funding Christian social action initiatives at the parish, national and international levels.



Bill Spangler, chairman of the Christian social action commission at St. Luke Parish, recently shared with me, “Back in 2005, we helped the commission take \$250,000, raised during a capital campaign and invest it in an endowment fund to be used for supporting Christian initiatives outside that parish.”

With the \$12,000 to \$16,000 income the endowment creates each year, the commission provides small grants, mostly \$1,000 and under, to support projects consistent with the goals of Catholic social teaching. The commission supports everything from local teachers’ outreach programs to projects fighting poverty in Appalachia, Honduras and Tanzania.

“I like the fact that most of our grants are small grants,” Spangler told me. “They go to help organizations that aren’t tremendously well-funded. Our grants are

a good kick-starter for programs that are just gaining some wind or in desperate need of funding.”

Spangler also admitted that establishing an endowment fund was not his first thought. Fortunately, another commission member, Fred Hofheinz, who worked for Lilly Endowment, Inc., in Indianapolis, suggested establishing one through the Catholic Community Foundation.

“To see this go on year after year and have the kind of impact it has had is amazing,” said Spangler. “I would not have thought of it myself because outreach people often get caught up in immediate needs, but it’s been extraordinarily beneficial. Twelve years of really helping others, it’s a legacy that I think we are very proud of.”

If you find yourself wondering how you

can also use endowment giving to create a legacy for Catholic ministries in need, feel free to reach out to me by e-mail at [ccf@archindy.org](mailto:ccf@archindy.org) or by phone at 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1482, or 317-236-1482. You can also visit our website at [archindy.org/CCF](http://archindy.org/CCF). We’ll be happy to assist you in the same way we did St. Luke’s Christian social action commission.

From all of us at the Catholic Community Foundation, have a blessed Christmas and New Year!

*(Elisa Smith is director of the Catholic Community Foundation. Tax information or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice and cannot be relied on to avoid statutory penalties. Always check with your legal, tax and financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.) †*

## Don’t wait to be perfect to answer vocational call, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Men and women contemplating a vocation to the priesthood, consecrated life or marriage should not be afraid because God wants only for them to experience the joy that comes from serving others, Pope Francis said.

“Our slowness and our sloth” should not delay a response, and Christians need not be “fearful of our limitations and sins, but instead open our hearts to the voice of the Lord,” the pope said in his message for the 2018 World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

“It will not fill our hearts if we keep standing by the window with the excuse of waiting for the right time, without accepting this very day the risk of making a decision,” the pope wrote. “Vocation is today! The Christian mission is now!”

The papal message for the day of prayer, which will be observed on April 22, 2018, was released on Dec. 4 at the Vatican. The 2018 theme is “Listening, discerning and living the Lord’s call.”

In his message, Pope Francis said God’s call “is not as clear-cut as any of those things we can hear, see or touch in our daily experiences” because God “comes silently and discreetly, without imposing on our freedom.”

Christians, he said, must learn to listen carefully and “view things with the eyes of faith” in order to listen to his voice, which is “drowned out by the many worries and concerns that fill our minds and hearts.”

“We will never discover the special, personal calling that God has in mind for us if we remain enclosed in ourselves, in our usual way of doing things, in the apathy of those who fritter away their lives in their own little world,” the pope said.

Listening is increasingly difficult in today’s society, which is “overstimulated and bombarded by

information” and “prevents us from pausing and enjoying the taste of contemplation” and discerning God’s plan, he said.

Often stifled by “the temptations of ideology and negativity,” he said, Christians need spiritual discernment which allows them to “discover the places, the means and situations through which” God calls them.

“Every Christian ought to grow in the ability to ‘read within’ his or her life, and to understand where and to what he or she is being called by the Lord, in order to carry on

his mission,” Pope Francis said.

He also urged men and women to live out their calling once it is discovered and “become a witness of the Lord here and now,” whether in marriage or priesthood or consecrated life.

“If [God] lets us realize that he is calling us to consecrate ourselves totally to his kingdom, then we should have no fear!” Pope Francis said.

“It is beautiful—and a great grace,” he said, “to be completely and forever consecrated to God and the service of our brothers and sisters.” †



Campers pray in the chapel in early July during the Quo Vadis Camp at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, N.Y. Seventy-six teenagers from the New York dioceses of Rockville Centre and Brooklyn attended the camp, which provided an opportunity for participants to have fun and deepen their faith while encouraging them to be open to God’s call to the priesthood or religious life. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, Long Island Catholic)

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### Employment

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Holy Cross High School is a Catholic, Co-Educational environment serving the families of Southwest Louisville and beyond. The school is dedicated to providing a small learning environment for each student and has an 11:1 student/teacher ratio. Students are challenged with rigorous and relevant real-world experiences to create a true 21st century education through a creative internship program and immersion in STREAM education. Holy Cross High School, seeks dynamic, creative and innovative candidates to lead the instructional vision for the school.

Candidates must be practicing Catholics who are active in his/her parish and possess a desire to lead Holy Cross faculty and students in the growth of Catholic Identity. Candidates must be 21st century educators who believe in the combination of content and skills as well as effective engagement with instructional technology.

Candidates must possess a Master’s degree in School Administration and experience is preferred. Interested applicants should email cover letter and resume to Danielle A. Wiegandt [dwiwandt@holycrosshs.com](mailto:dwiwandt@holycrosshs.com)

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The Metropolitan Tribunal is seeking a full-time professional person to serve as Defender of the Bond to propose and clarify everything that can be reasonably adduced against nullity or dissolution of marriage (cf. canon 1432).

As Defender of the Bond, the applicant must possess a JCL or JCD degree from a recognized faculty of canon law and must be a Catholic in good standing.

The position involves the evaluation of initial petitions to see if there is anything that would warrant rejection of the petition for consideration; the offering of specific topical areas or questions to be asked of the parties or the witnesses; the reading and analyzing of completed cases for decision including the writing of an argument in accord with canon 1432; and the performance of other duties, as necessary, to contribute to the effectiveness of the Tribunal such as participating in Favor of the Faith, Pauline, and Ligamen processes.

The position requires an understanding and acceptance of Church teaching and theology concerning marriage. Excellent oral and written communications skills, strong analytical skills, interpersonal teamwork, proven organizational ability, and sensitivity to confidentiality are also essential. Computer skills including word processing are very important for this position.

Please send a résumé and salary requirements by December 31, 2017 to:

Very Rev. Joseph L. Newton, JCL  
Vicar Judicial

Archdiocese of Indianapolis • 1400 N. Meridian St. • Indianapolis, IN 46202  
[jnewton@archindy.org](mailto:jnewton@archindy.org)



### St. Pius X Girls' Track Team

The girls' track team from St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis was the runner-up in the girls' division of the 1980 City-Wide Track meet. They posed with their trophies in this photo. The coaches in the back row, from left to right, are John Collins, Brian Walker and Bill Farney. If you know the names of any of the girls on this team, please let us know!

(Would you like to comment on or share information about this photo? Contact archdiocesan archivist Julie Motyka at 800-382-9836, ext. 1538; (317) 236-1538; or by e-mail at [jmotyka@archindy.org](mailto:jmotyka@archindy.org).)



### Award-winning parish

Donn Paquette, right, a member of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, receives on behalf of his Batesville Deanery faith community an award from Jarred Holbrook of Indiana Landmarks, left, an organization dedicated to historic preservation in the state, during a Dec. 1 celebration at Hillforest Mansion in Aurora. The parish received the organization's 2017 Rosemary Prentice Award for Historic Preservation for its work in restoration work done on its four historic campuses. Looking on are members of All Saints' music ministry. (Submitted photo)

# Marriage

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition  
Feb. 2, 2018, issue of *The Criterion*

If you are planning your wedding between Jan. 30 and July 1, 2018 or if you were married between July 1, 2017 and Jan. 30, 2018 and did not have your engagement announced in *The Criterion*, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement using the form below or electronically at [www.archindy.org/criterion/local/forms3/wedding-form.html](http://www.archindy.org/criterion/local/forms3/wedding-form.html).

#### E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend to have a photo where the couple's faces are close to each other. Please send your photo as an attachment to the following e-mail: [cclark@archindy.org](mailto:cclark@archindy.org). Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If you are unable to e-mail a photo, you may mail us a photo to scan with the bottom form. Please, no photocopied photos. If you want the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

#### Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 19, 2018. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Cindy Clark, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367  
Deadline with photos: Friday, January 19, 2018, at 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 (first, last)			
City		State	
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)			
Name of Bridegroom's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Wedding Date	Church	City	State
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Enclosed			
<input type="checkbox"/> Return photo			
<input type="checkbox"/> No Picture	Signature of person furnishing information	Relationship	Daytime Phone

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