



The

Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

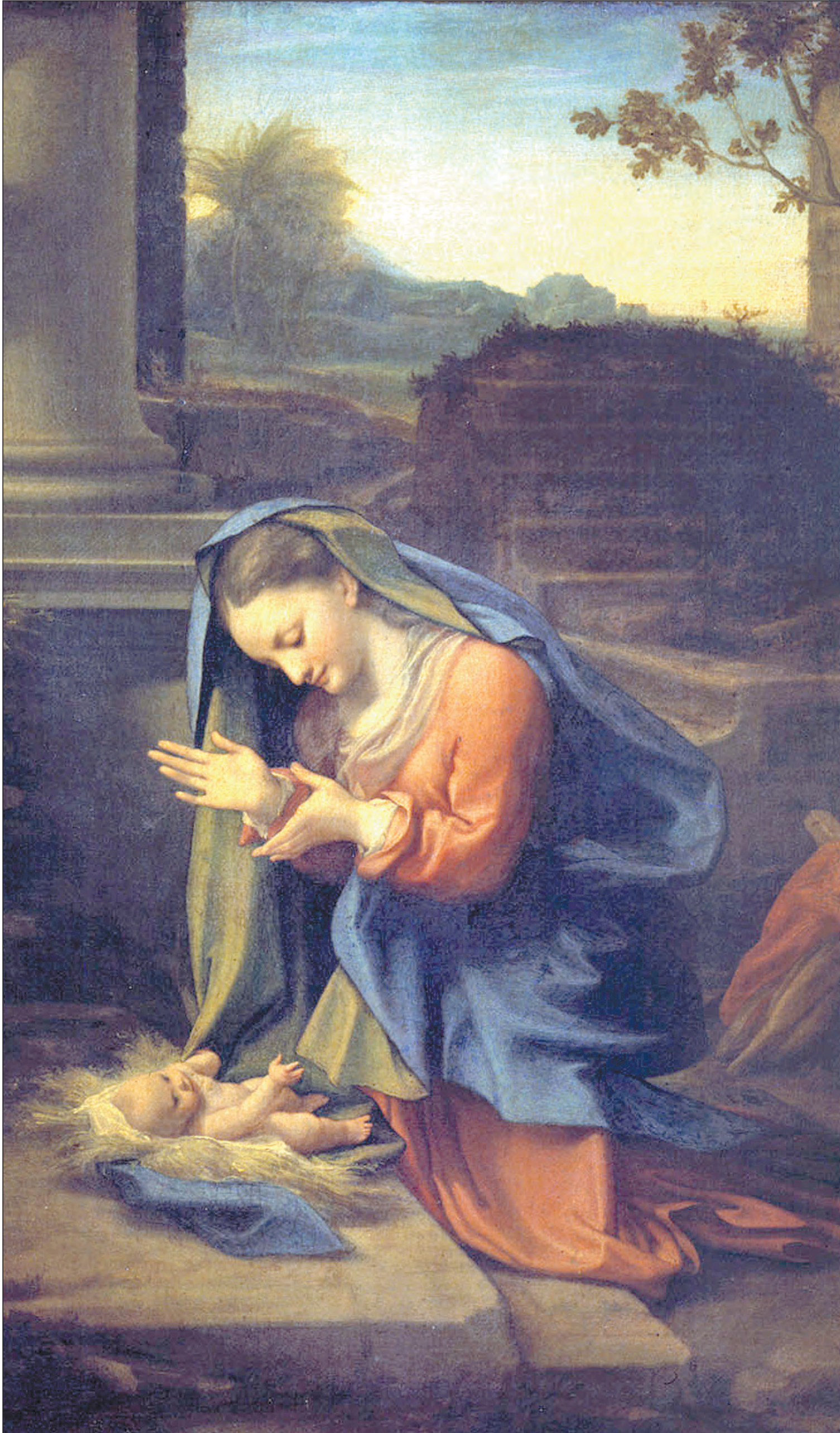
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December 22, 2000

Vol. XXXX, No. 12 50¢



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

— John 1:14

Jubilee year dominates religious news in 2000

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 dominated religious news over the past year, and at its center was the aging but still remarkably active Pope John Paul II.

The pope, who turned 80 in May, made a memorable Jubilee-year pilgrimage to the Holy Land in March. Images of him praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem and placing a message there with a trembling hand moved Catholic-Jewish relations to a new level worldwide.

In Rome, he hosted almost innumerable special Jubilee days—for families, the elderly, teachers, health workers, priests,

bishops, religious, journalists and many others.

But two such days stood out especially: World Youth Day in August, for which an estimated 2 million people gathered in Rome for Mass with the pope, and the Day of Forgiveness in March, when the pope led a reconciliation service asking forgiveness of those harmed in the name of the Church.

Also evoking wide interest was his invitation to religious leaders everywhere to submit names of Christian martyrs of the 20th century, including non-Catholics, for a special Jubilee ceremony commemorating

all such witnesses to the faith in one of history's bloodiest centuries. Among the thousands of names submitted to Rome was that of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Besides his March 20-26 visit to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories, Pope John Paul made two other foreign trips in 2000.

He visited Egypt on Feb. 24-26, where he met for the first time with Pope Shenoudah III, patriarch of the world's Coptic Orthodox Christians.

He went to Fatima, Portugal, May 12-13 to beatify Francisco and Jacinta Marto, two of the three shepherd children who saw

visions of Mary there in 1917.

At the end of the beatification Mass, the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, revealed the contents of the third secret of Fatima. He said part of it described the gunning down of a "bishop clothed in white," which the pope interprets as a reference to the 1981 attempt on his life.

In August, the United Nations observed the year 2000 with a Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, bringing together hundreds of representatives

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New Albany Deanery Catholic Charities celebrates 20 years

By Jennifer Del Vecchio

There are dozens of stories the director of the New Albany Deanery Catholic Charities can tell about how the agency has helped people.

But when it comes to summing up how the agency has thrived for 20 years, only one of them counts.

"I think it's God's will," said Barbara Williams, director. "It's a divine plan that guides us. We don't have set goals in mind. We're happy serving individual people who have turned to us, and we try never to turn a person away or make a person feel abandoned or uncared for."

That philosophy takes shape in many different forms as the agency serves more than 300 people each year in Clark, Floyd and Harrison counties.

New Albany Deanery Catholic Charities, which is a member agency of the archdiocesan Catholic Charities, also has served people in Washington, Madison, Jefferson and Jennings counties and Louisville, Ky.

The agency has done everything from teaching people the skills they need to live on their own to providing supervised visitation services to parents.

Founded in 1980 by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, New Albany Deanery Catholic Charities initially provided counseling services for parishioners and parochial school students.

Now it provides other services that include:

- Semi-independent living services for developmentally delayed persons and residential-based habilitation for individuals capable of progressing from a group home environment to independent living.
- Court Appointed Special Advocates, which trains volunteer child advocates to do independent investigations of children declared in need of services by the courts.
- Supervised visitation services, a parental visitation alternative when the courts have restricted visitation privi-



Barbara Williams, director of the New Albany Deanery Catholic Charities, talks to two people the agency is helping. The agency recently celebrated 20 years of service. They provide counseling, semi-independent living services, family support services and child advocacy services.

leges to a "supervised" status.

- Catholic Divorce Recovery Network of Southern Indiana, which has professional counselors to perform workshops that extend support and counseling on such things as reception of the sacraments and letting them know the Church embraces them.

- Supported Housing Case Management program that provides services to families who are homeless and works toward the goal of home ownership.

The agency works with a \$240,000 annual budget, and the staff has grown to two full-time employees and seven part-time employees. It started out with a \$50,000 budget and a part-time director.

Behind the figures are the smiles, tears and hard work.

When Williams first came to the agency, she was a part-time director and the main service offered was counseling.

In the late 1980s, the agency began to offer other programs.

"Each service came to us," Williams said. "That's very unique."

The first program that approached the agency was assisting the disabled in "supported living" environments.

Williams wasn't sure how they would provide the ministry that helps people with delayed development to live on their own.

She did know one thing. "I feel the pro-life philosophy of the Catholic Church means we help the disabled when they become adults. The

See CHARITIES, page 3

Sisters sing to help their own

By Jennifer Del Vecchio

They sang for eight hours a day in a room with no air-conditioning and the windows closed.

Despite the dire conditions, Franciscan Sister Jerilyn Fuhrmann called it "one of the most exciting things I've done in my whole life."



Sister Jerilyn Fuhrmann, O.S.F.

Sister Jerilyn joined 80 other nuns from across the nation to record "Sisters in Song Rejoice," a collection of songs aimed at helping meet financial needs of retiring sisters and priests.

The six-day endeavor took them to a recording studio in Los Angeles to work with an internationally-known composer on the grounds of Mount St. Mary College.

Benedictine Sisters Mary Joyce Trimble and Sister Rosemary Dauby from Ferdinand joined Sister Jerilyn, a representative from the archdiocese with the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. They were chosen from 600 sisters across the nation.

The effort is crucial as religious orders struggle to support themselves as members get older. Many times, motherhouses are sold to support their aging members.

At least 50 percent of Catholic sisters are past age 70, according to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Maryland. Other statistics indicate that at least 33 percent of men religious are more than 70 years old.

The situation is compounded because of the low Social Security benefits that are based on an individual's lifetime earnings. Priests and religious have received low salaries and sometimes only stipends that lead to an average annual Social Security benefit of \$3,329. Some receive no Social Security benefits.

For those who do receive benefits, there is a \$17,000 difference between the benefit and the average cost of care that

See SONG, page 3

The Criterion

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Mother of two finds room at Holy Family Shelter

By Margaret Nelson

Nicolette Sebree and her two children await Christmas at the Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis, a Catholic Social Services ministry.

Earlier this year, she was living at the Julian Center for Battered Women in Indianapolis because she had suffered domestic violence. She gave up her space there when she went back to live with the abuser, sure that things would work out.

"Everything was going good at first," she said. Then the man she met in her college criminal justice class "started

back with the verbal abuse, then mental abuse and some physical abuse.

"Then he kicked me and my kids out on the street," she said. "We had nowhere to go; no one to turn to."

"By the Grace of God, I was able to come here," said Sebree.

Last year, Holy Family Shelter served 380 families—1,206 people, mostly children.

Sebree has a daughter who turned 2 years old on Dec. 9 and is enrolled in the child care service at the shelter. Her son, who will celebrate his 8th birthday on Jan. 29, attends a nearby school.

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CHARITIES

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Church would want that child to be born," Williams said. "We have to be there throughout their life and help support them and their families. It's been a challenge and a great experience for me."

The agency also helps families in various ways.

Calls were coming in about helping Catholics who were divorced. Before the "Divorce Recovery Ministry," the agency had to send Catholics to other churches for help.

"These were Catholic people calling a Catholic agency and asking for support, and we didn't have anything except personal counseling," Williams said.

Now, there's "Divorce and Beyond" programs that run for six weeks and help individuals know that "to us they have a presence and that the Church cares about them."

Through all the new programs the agency has started, Williams said the staff always took the attitude of "we will try."

"I don't have an agenda," she said. "I wanted to help people. We have an obligation to say, 'We'll try,' and more often than not things have worked out."

"We are working to be a visible sign of what the Church believes," she said. We believe in the dignity of all and a person's right to self-sufficiency. We are trying to do that by reaching out and helping all people."

For more information about New Albany Deanery Catholic Charities, call 812-948-0438. †



Photo by Susan M. Biernan

It was through the agency's supported living program that a hidden talent was found in Marilyn Caraway. Caraway saved her money to buy a keyboard and then learned how to play it. She provided the entertainment at an agency luncheon. She is one of 19 people the agency helps live on their own.

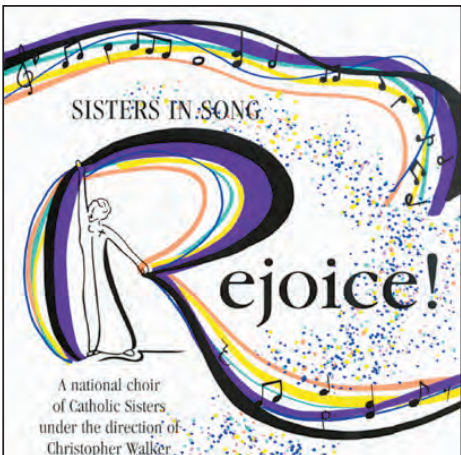
SONG

continued from page 2

must be made up by the orders.

Enter the Sisters in Song chorus that was organized in 1994.

The idea took shape shortly after the



Sisters in Song recently released their third collection of music.

release of the movie *Sister Act*, a story about a group of singing nuns.

Previously, the founder of Sisters in Song and a member of the board of SOAR—Support Our Aging Religious—had been doing dinner fund-raisers.

"But it was a lot of work for little profit," said St. Joseph Sister Theresa LaMetter, the project director for Sisters in Song.

The thought was why not have a "real sister choir" on a national level, she said. From there, 675 congregations were contacted to make up a choir of 80 women. To date, the group has raised \$500,000 from their first two recordings. Already, \$100,000 has been raised from the third recording. The goal is to raise more than \$1 million to be distributed to the National Religious Retirement Office and to Support Our Aging Religious.

It also creates an outlet for sisters who have a music ministry, said Sister Jerilyn.

While she is a trained musician, and currently a music teacher and director,

many sisters had no formal training—only talent.

Sister Jerilyn said they were always reminded to "pray" the music, not just sing it.

"It was almost like a retreat," Sister Jerilyn said.

For example, a song with verses about injustice was a time to think about real people they knew in prison or who were going through tough times.

Sister Jerilyn believes the thoughts and prayers come through in the songs.

"This isn't just pretty music," she said. "It's prayer music."

Sisters ranging in age from 35 to 78 made up the chorus. Two were former opera singers, others were chemists, teachers and managers.

"It was the hardest work I've ever done singing," Sister Jerilyn said. "Still, it was the most prayerful experience I've had with my music."

Also, the experience allowed her to use her talents to help support her sisters in a different way.

Because her ministry is based in Cincinnati, she can't speak at many of the Masses that ask for money for retired religious.

"This is a gift I have and I can use it ultimately to help," Sister Jerilyn said.

The CD includes the songs "Celtic Alleluia," "How Great Thou Art" and the chant "Salve Regina." It can be ordered by calling 800-548-8749. †

The Criterion's last issue until Jan. 12

This week's edition of *The Criterion*, which includes the annual Christmas Supplement, is the last edition of 2000 (and of the second millennium). *The Criterion* will be published again on Jan. 12, 2001, and resume its regular weekly schedule.

The Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center will be closed from Dec. 23 through Jan. 1, 2001. †

The Great Jubilee Video

Responding to popular demand!

The joyous gathering of more than 30,000 people in the RCA Dome on September 16 is now available on a two-hour videotape. This event was a special, historic occasion for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and the video will make a terrific Christmas present!

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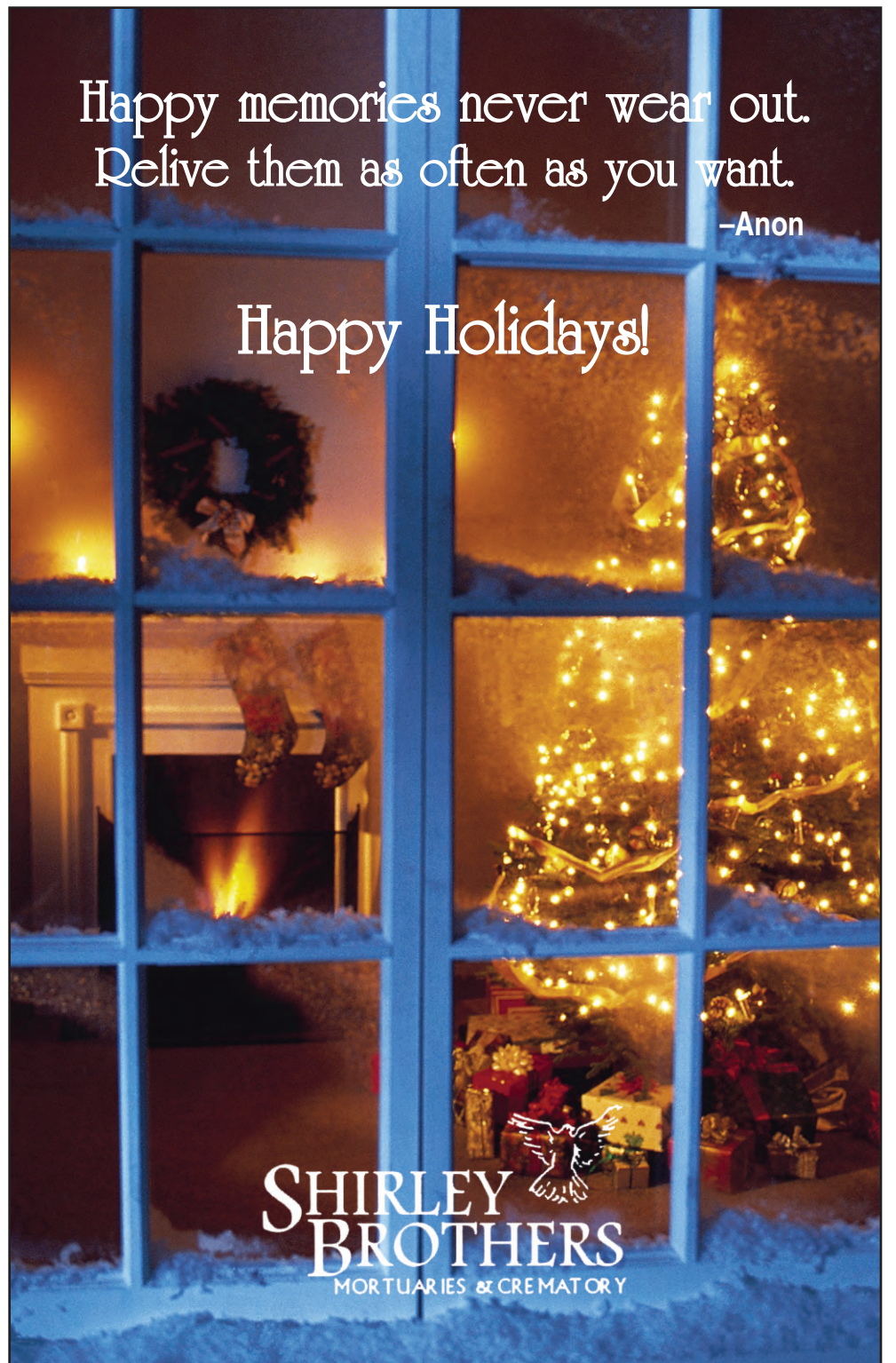


Happy memories never wear out.
Relive them as often as you want.

—Anon

Happy Holidays!

SHIRLEY BROTHERS
MORTUARIES & CREMATORY



Editorial

A divided Church

Our country's presidential and congressional elections showed that we are indeed a divided nation. The presidential vote was a virtual tie and the new U.S. Senate and House of Representatives will be about as evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats as it's possible to be.

Those elections also showed just how divided American Catholics are, as if we really needed the elections to know that. As we reported in our Nov. 17 issue, the Voter News Service's exit polls showed that Catholics nationwide voted by a 50-47 margin for Vice President Al Gore over Texas Gov. George W. Bush. The article also gave percentages for white Catholics, those who go to religious services regularly, and those who are strongly pro-life, all of whom favored Bush.

The election results, though, are not the only things that show how divided American Catholics are. A new survey by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) revealed the disturbing fact that 49 percent of American Catholics considered themselves pro-choice and only 45.7 percent call themselves pro-life. A whopping 62.1 percent believe that abortion should be legal. With attitudes such as this, it's no wonder that so many Catholics vote for pro-abortion candidates.

It's not only about abortion that Catholics differ with the teachings of their Church. The CARA survey also revealed that Catholics are evenly divided on whether or not assisted suicide should be legalized. And other polls indicate that a large majority favors capital punishment despite the pope's and the bishops' opposition to it.

The reaction of many people, when they learn about statistics like these, is to say that people who disagree with the Church's teachings aren't really Catholics. We published a letter in our Nov. 24 issue that basically made that point. David Neely said in that letter, "We as Catholics have an obligation to defend the sanctity of human life in all circumstances," echoing what Pope John Paul II has written. Neely then wrote, "Those 'Catholics' who choose otherwise should do us all a favor and

join some other Church or group whose philosophy is consistent with their pro-choice sentiments."

Although we understand those sentiments, we don't agree with them. The Catholic Church is in the business of welcoming and evangelizing everyone, not rejecting them. Jesus said that he came to call sinners and the Catholic Church has always been a Church of sinners. Those with pro-abortion convictions apparently are comfortable in the Church and probably can't imagine themselves being anything but Catholic, even if they disagree with the Church's teachings. Americans especially have always been ferociously independent when it comes to religious beliefs.

The answer isn't to reject them or expel them, but to try to convert them to begin thinking with the Church. It seems apparent that the Church has failed to do that when such a large percentage of Catholics disagrees with its teachings. It's obvious that the Church must do much more than it has been doing to get its teachings across.

Only one American Catholic in three now attends Mass at least once a week, according to that CARA survey. Those who do, not surprisingly, are more likely to accept the teachings of the Church.

The Catholic Church has always been countercultural and today the culture is winning. Catholics are as susceptible to the influence of television and movies as any other Americans are—and that's considerable. It's what accounts for many Catholics' attitudes toward divorce and premarital sexual relations as well as the "life" issues.

The culture is winning the battle of people's attitudes toward abortion by being able to characterize those who are pro-life as "anti-choice." Even the CARA survey used the term "pro-choice" instead of "pro-abortion."

There are no easy answers. All of us, including and perhaps especially the laity, must redouble our efforts to teach the truth and hope that more Catholics will accept it. It's a scandal that our Church is so divided, but it would be like sticking our heads in the sand to deny it or not to recognize it.

— John F. Fink

Seeking the Face of the Lord

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.



Christmas is a bright star in a dark night

I remember a small white picket fence which Dad made to surround the Christmas cave and village under our Christmas tree. I've never seen one like it.

I remember that one year I made Christmas bells for our tree out of red metallic caps that came on our milk bottles. Mom, Dad and my brother were pretty kind to let me hang those bells on the tree!

I remember that Dad, my brother and I would go out to Grandpa's farm to find a cedar tree. Most of the time we did a good job of it, but not always.

Yet, a less than perfectly shaped tree or ugly milk cap bells didn't seem to make a difference. Christmas always seemed to have its own magic. For a brief time all seemed right with life, although there were radio reports about Pope Pius XII's Christmas plea for peace during World War II. For a brief moment, even in that message, there was hope.

There is more to the magic of Christmas than meets the eye. Unless one is hopelessly selfish, no matter how spiritually or materially poor we are, we can always find something of ourselves to give to others, and in that we find hope. The aura of Christmas creates an atmosphere that can bring the best out of us. We are moved to think and do more generously than usual. True, some may forget why there is "Christmas magic." Yet, in our moments of deeper thought, most of us remember very well why Christmas is a feast of uncharacteristic love.

Indeed, the best Christmas gift to ourselves might be to take some private time—in a favorite chair at home, or on a long solitary walk or in a comfortable place in Church—to think about the meaning of the Great Jubilee Christmas 2000. Take time alone to imagine the human ordeal of Mary and Joseph on their way from Nazareth to Bethlehem to enroll in the census ordered by Caesar. Imagine the poverty and physical inconvenience 2,000 years ago; consider the worry about pregnancy and safe delivery of a baby and no place to stay.

We get romantic about cribs and picket fences and even bottle cap bells, but it must have been anything but romantic! Our imagining leaves us with feelings of sympathy, admiration and gratitude mixed with disbelief.

The birth of Jesus Christ 2,000

years ago moves us to think about simplicity, humility and the need for faith. Perhaps romanticizing Christmas so much is our way of dealing with an awesome mystery and a perplexing paradox. The Creator becomes man, which is his own creation. The all powerful who is without sin becomes one of us to save us from sin. Almighty God becomes one of us in the earthiest poverty. No one need be a theologian to recognize that we are talking about incredible love that could only be God's. Surely we are moved to love God despite ourselves.

That is true for the most part. We must admit Christmas is a bright star in a dark night of the human family. We are awed by God's unconditional love because we see too little authentic love. Individualism and narcissism and the profit motive overshadow genuine love. Marriages come together and come apart too quickly, causing broken hearts for young and old alike. We argue about the right to have—or not to have—children as if they are negotiable property. There are heartbreaking numbers of lonely and poor people. Misguided energy goes into making promiscuous sex and drug abuse "safe." There are reasons why our human family is skeptical about unconditional love in 2000.

Yet "Christmas magic" tells us that the fire of authentic love is still alive in the heart of our human family. If we care to see, there are signs everywhere. The wondrous love of "God become-one-with-us" is etched deep in the hearts of all of us. We are bonded by the love of Jesus Christ into a family of faith. Our Church and the sacraments of the Church (especially Eucharist and reconciliation) are the Christ-given helps we have to be together in the authentic love of Jesus Christ. The love of Christ, the Son of God, is the magic of Christmas present in each of us, and bonds us as a family of God. Going to Church and receiving the sacraments of Christmas can be a beautiful "coming home" for all of us, especially those who have been away from our Church home. Better yet, let's make a habit of going aside to pray with Jesus, his mother, Mary, and foster father, Joseph. Won't you come home for Christmas and a blessed 2001?

May you and yours enjoy blessed Christmas "magic" and the hope of a richer love for 2001! †

Archbishop Buechlein's intention for vocations for December

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



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Buscando la Cara del Señor

Arzobispo Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.



La Navidad es una estrella brillante en una noche oscura

Recuerdo la pequeña cerca de estacas blancas que papá construyó para rodear la cueva y aldea navideña bajo nuestro árbol navideño. Nunca he visto una parecida.

Un año recuerdo haber hecho para nuestro árbol campanillas navideñas con las tapas metálicas rojas que venían en nuestras botellas de leche. ¡Mamá, papá y mi hermano fueron tan gentiles de dejarme colgar esas campanillas en el árbol!

Recuerdo que papá, mi hermano y yo íbamos a la granja del abuelito para encontrar un cedro. La mayoría del tiempo encontrábamos algo bueno, pero no siempre.

No obstante, un árbol sin forma perfecta o campanillas de feas tapas de botellas de leche no importaron. Parecía siempre que la Navidad tenía su propia magia. Por poco tiempo todo parecía bueno en la vida, aunque había informes en la radio acerca de la petición navideña de paz por parte del Papa Pius XII durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Por un breve instante, aun en este mensaje, había esperanza.

Hay más magia en la Navidad de lo que percibe. A menos que uno sea completamente egoísta, no importa qué tan pobres somos espiritual o materialmente, siempre podemos encontrar algo en nosotros para dar a los demás y en eso encontramos la esperanza. El aura de Navidad crea una atmósfera que saca lo mejor en nosotros. Estamos más motivados a pensar y ser más generosos de lo usual. Claro está que algunos pueden olvidar por qué hay "Magia navideña". Sin embargo, cuando pensamos profundamente, la mayoría recordamos muy bien la razón que la Navidad es una fiesta de amor poco característico.

De hecho, posiblemente el mejor regalo navideño a nosotros mismos es pasar tiempo privado en una silla preferida en casa, o en un largo paseo solidario o en un lugar cómodo en la Iglesia para pensar en el significado del Gran Jubileo de la Navidad 2000. Pase tiempo solo para reflexionar sobre las experiencias humanas de María y José en el camino de Nazaret hacia Belén para registrarse en el censo mandado por Cesar. Imagínese la pobreza e incomodidad física hace 2,000 años; considere la preocupación por el embarazo y el alumbramiento seguro de un bebé sin lugar para vivir.

¡Pensamos en el romanticismo de las cunas, las cercas de estacas y hasta las campanillas hechas de tapas de botellas, pero no debió ser nada romántico! Nuestra imaginación nos deja con sentimientos de simpatía, admiración y gratitud mezcladas con incredulidad.

El nacimiento de Jesucristo hace 2,000 años nos conmueve para pensar

en la simplicidad, la humildad y la necesidad de la fe. Puede ser que hacer la Navidad romántica es como tratamos el misterio imponente y la paradoja confusa. El Creador se hace hombre, el cual es su propia creación. El omnipotente quien no tiene pecado se convierte en uno de nosotros para salvarnos del pecado. Dios Todopoderoso se convierte en uno de nosotros en la pobreza terrestre. No hay que ser teólogo para entender de que estamos hablando del amor increíble que únicamente puede pertenecer a Dios. Ciertamente estamos movidos a amar a Dios, a pesar de nosotros.

Esto es cierto en su mayor parte. Deberíamos admitir que la Navidad es una estrella brillante en una noche oscura de la familia humana. Tenemos amor reverencial al amor incondicional de Dios porque vemos muy poco amor auténtico. El individualismo y el narcisismo el motivo de beneficios eclipsan el amor genuino. Se casa y se divorcia demasiado rápidamente, lo que rompe los corazones de tanto los jóvenes como los viejos. Discutimos sobre el derecho tener o no tener niños como si fuesen propiedad negociable. El número de personas solas y pobres es angustioso. La energía equivocada se usa para hacer el sexo libre y el abuso de drogas "seguros". Hay razones porque nuestra familia humana es escéptica sobre el amor incondicional en el año 2000.

Sin embargo, la "Magia navideña" nos dice que el fuego del amor auténtico todavía es vivo en el corazón de la familia humana. Si queremos mirar, hay señales por todas partes. El amor maravilloso de "Dios se convierte en uno de nosotros" es grabado profundamente en los corazones de todos nosotros. Somos vinculados por el amor de Jesucristo en una familia de fe. Nuestra Iglesia y los sacramentos de la Iglesia (sobre todo la Eucaristía y la reconciliación) son la ayuda dada por Cristo con que contamos para estar juntos en el amor auténtico de Jesucristo. El amor de Cristo, Hijo de Dios, es la magia del regalo navideño en cada uno de nosotros, y la misma nos vincula como una familia de Dios. Asistir a la Iglesia y recibir los sacramentos de la Navidad pueden ser un hermoso "regreso a casa" para todos nosotros, especialmente aquellos que han estado lejos de nuestra casa en la Iglesia. Aun mejor, acostumbremos a orar con Jesús, su madre, María, y padre adoptivo, José. ¿No regresará usted a casa para la Navidad y el año bendecido 2001?

¡Que ustedes y los suyos disfruten de una bendita "magia" de Navidad, y la esperanza de un amor más rico para el 2001! †

Traducido por: Language Training Center, Indianapolis

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en diciembre

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

Letters to the Editor

Teen views on abortion

Abortion: A choice that is becoming more and more common. Some people say it is OK; some say it isn't. What should you decide? Here is some information that could make up your mind on this issue.

Some people have said that the baby isn't alive until the actual birth. If it wasn't alive, then why would the mother have to watch what she ate, drank or smoked? And why would the baby have to get nutrients and oxygen off of the mother? And if the baby wasn't alive, then why would the baby move at the touch of a mother's cold hand or kick inside the womb?

Jeremiah 1:5 says; "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."

In my life ... so many things have changed my mind into my way of thinking that if I wrote them all down, they would be a million pages long! I know these stories personally and I hope they touch you in some way! I saw a picture on EWTN that was of a doctor performing an abortion. His hand is over the mother's stomach performing the abortion, and the baby's little hand is sticking out of the mother's incision grabbing onto the doctor's finger. After they showed this picture, I almost cried (which I almost never do), my mom was crying a little bit, and my dad was about to (I have almost never seen him cry).

I know that sounds cheesy, but seriously, if you saw that picture you would be sad too because after they showed the picture, they said that the doctor went ahead with the procedure! I seriously can't imagine how someone could do that!

My cousin was born a preemie at the same age as babies can be aborted. His head was the size of a lemon, and his body was about the length of my hand and weighed 1 pound 9 ounces. Today he is 2 years old and healthy. His mother says "He gets into everything!" Just think, he is alive now, and he could have been aborted.

Adoption is the alternative for abortion, as you all probably know. It looks alike and is spelled alike, but is absolutely and honorably different. ... [But] there aren't enough babies for all of the families that want to adopt because they are all being killed! If abortion was not legalized, they would have two kids and maybe more if they wanted.

In conclusion, when you or someone you know is thinking of having an abortion, think twice. Think about the baby and about those people who can't have children and are counting on adoption to have children.

Abstinence is a much better birth control than abortion. For one thing, it doesn't cost anything, and for another thing, it doesn't kill!

Thank you for reading this! I hope you consider this letter for your publication. I want people to know about this issue and change to the pro-life view.

Ashley Bailey, New Palestine

Response: Ashley reports that she is 14 years old. The photo she refers to in her third paragraph is actually a photo of life-saving surgery performed by Dr. Joseph Bruner of Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn. It has been called "Hand of Hope."

—WRB

Prisoner thankful for involvement

We are constantly reminded that Christ's return is imminent. Christ himself used various parables to explain that no one shall know the hour or day of his return. This letter is to inform your readers that on Friday, Dec. 8, 2000, Christ was at the Correctional Industrial Facility in Pendleton, Ind.

The men of the Catholic Bible Study here at the Correctional Industrial Facility

were treated to a Christmas party by the kind, compassionate, generous, caring members of your archdiocese who selflessly gave of their time, resources, and most touchingly—of themselves.

One of the volunteers, Lillian Jackson, noted that they "wished they could do more for us." How little does she realize that she and her fellow volunteers have done so very much for us! We have seen Christ manifest in the wonderful people who traveled along wintry roads to spend a few hours in fellowship with a group of all-but-forgotten men. Surely they could have found more gratification in an evening spent in the company of family and friends, yet they selflessly sacrificed to be here with us. In a time when kindness toward prisoners is decidedly unpopular, these volunteers heard and answered Jesus' call to visit those in prison.

In the nearly 10 years I have spent in prison, I have witnessed countless unfathomable events—none of them compare to the feelings I now examine as a direct result of breaking bread with the members of your archdiocese. How I admire you who are so fortunate to attend Mass with these wonderful souls, for in your search for Christ, you need only turn and look at the person seated next to you in your pew.

To the wonderful volunteers who assembled here on Friday evening, thank you for making this Christmas Christ-like for us. No words are adequate to describe your kindness or our gratitude. To the readers of this letter, you have blessing in your midst.

Tobias Vincent Konnersman, Pendleton

Fed up with capital punishment rhetoric

Reading your paper, *The Criterion*, week after week I'm becoming fed up with your rhetoric pertaining to capital punishment.

My Catholic Church should be put to shame for giving so much time and paper space and neglecting the monumental crime of abortion, 40 million babies killed in 27 years.

Bishops and the like harping on [the] execution of one, one millionth of the population.

You have a right to your opinion, but if you used all the power and money that our Church has at its disposal to stop abortion as it is and quit wasting your time on heinous criminals I believe the fruits of your labor would be well rewarded.

As I've said before about an editorial you published, as long as our judicial system as it is without, life without parole, there's no other alternative but capital punishment.

Let's get with it and get to the terrible crime of abortion!

William H. Oelker, West Harrison

P.S. [I am] a life-long Catholic educated in a Catholic school.

Response: We can assure you that you will continue to read articles and editorials in this newspaper that deal with Church teaching on *all* life issues, including abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, welfare, hunger, the plight of the poor, war, child and spousal abuse, the environment and capital punishment.

—WRB

Letter Policies

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). Frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months.

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



Rose giver

A boy dressed as Blessed Juan Diego gives roses to a girl during the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass on Dec. 12 at St. Mary Church in Indianapolis. Children often come dressed as Juan Diego—who witnessed apparitions by the Blessed Mother in Mexico in 1531—to commemorate the feast.

Photo by Jennifer Del Vecchio

Check It Out . . .

St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis has confirmed its **Christmas Mass schedule**. Due to the Indianapolis Colts football game at 4:15 p.m. on Christmas Eve, the Mass schedule is as follows: Sunday, Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m. Vigil Mass and 11:30 p.m. prelude to Midnight Mass, and Monday, Dec. 25, Midnight Mass and 9:30 a.m. morning Mass. By special arrangement with Indianapolis Downtown Inc., free parking for the Dec. 24 Christmas Vigil Mass at 5:30 p.m. will be available in the World of Wonders Parking Garage (access from Maryland Street or Illinois Street). Free parking also will be available at the Convention Center Garage (access from Capitol Avenue). Additional street parking will be made available in several lanes of Capitol Avenue between Maryland Street and the railroad overpass. Drivers are advised to follow the

directions of uniformed police officers on duty.

Single Catholic women, ages 19 to 40, who want to learn about religious life are invited to attend a **Benedictine Life Weekend** Jan. 5-7 at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand. The weekend will focus on the theme "Balance, Prayer, Work, Community and Leisure." Participants will have the opportunity to share in prayer and community life and meet other women considering religious life. The weekend gives women the chance to experience monastic life without the pressure of making a decision to enter a religious community. There is no charge for the program, which begins at 7 p.m. Jan. 5 and ends at 1 p.m. Jan. 7. For more information, call 800-738-9999.

Marian College's Department of

Nursing is offering a free information session on **parish nursing** from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Jan. 13 at the Allison Mansion on the campus of Marian College, located at 3200 Cold Spring Road in Indianapolis. Parish nurses practice health promotion and disease prevention within their faith community, where spirituality is the central focus. The information session will cover the role of the parish nurse, how to get started in the faith community and the functions of a nurse in the faith community. For more information and to register, call 317-955-6132.

A six-week **Divorce and Beyond Program** will be held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Jan. 22 at the Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis. The topics for discussion will be the process of divorce, self-image, stress, anger, blame, guilt and loneliness. The cost is \$30, which includes materials. Registration is required. For more information, call 317-236-1596 or 800-382-9836.

The **Archdiocesan Gospel Choir** has scheduled two rehearsals in preparation for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The rehearsals will be at 7 p.m. Jan. 2 and Jan. 8 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46th and Illinois streets, in Indianapolis. The choir is open to anyone who wants to sing Gospel music. There is a need for many more voices. The archdiocese's Martin Luther King Jr. Day prayer service will be at 2 p.m. Jan. 15 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

The **Choir of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis** will sing for the following special liturgies at SS. Peter and Paul

Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis:

- World Day for Consecrated Life, 2 p.m. Feb. 4.
- Chrism Mass, 7 p.m. April 10.
- Priesthood ordinations, 10 a.m. June 2.
- Golden Wedding Jubilee, 2 p.m. Sept. 23.

Rehearsals will take place on the two Tuesdays previous to each liturgy from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the cathedral. For more information, call 317-236-1483 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1483.

Indianapolis **Retrouvaille**, a program for troubled marriages and an alternative to divorce or misery in a marriage, will be offered Jan. 26, 27 and 28 at the Holiday Inn Select North at the Pyramids, 3850 De Pauw Blvd., in Indianapolis. For more information, call 317-236-1586 or 800-382-9836 or contact the Retrouvaille hot line at 317-738-1448.

A **bereavement support group series** of free meetings for adults who have experienced the death of a loved one will be held Jan. 16, 23 and 30 and Feb. 6, 13 and 20. There are two session times available, either 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers' Hospice Office, 438 S. Emerson Ave., in Greenwood. A series of free sessions for children who have experienced the death of a loved one, called Caterpillar Kids, will be offered from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Jan. 24 and 31 and Feb. 7, 14, 21 and 28 at Christ United Methodist Church, 8540 U.S. 31 S., in Indianapolis. Registration is required for the sessions. For more information, call 317-865-2092. †

VIPs . . .



Arthur and Mary Williamson of Indianapolis marked their 50th wedding anniversary Dec. 16. They were married

on that date in 1950 at St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis. They celebrated with a family dinner. They have two children: Mary Michele "Shelley" Miller and Todd Williamson. They also have two grandchildren. They are members of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.

Joseph Ortiz, an eighth-grade student at All Saints School, 75 N. Belleview Place in Indianapolis, is a recipient of the Mayor's 2000 Community Service Award. He received the award for his many volunteer activities that range from serving at Mass at St. Anthony Church to helping at the Hawthorne Community Center and at school. †

Christmas TV MASS for Shut-Ins

This beautiful 30-minute Mass will be produced from the Crypt Church at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The Most. Rev. Leonard Olivier, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., will preside. This Mass will feature the St. Jude children's choir from Rockville, Maryland.

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Helping those in need

Students at St. Louis School in Batesville work on packing items for the school's outreach program. The school adopted the Sue Duncan Children's Center in Chicago at the request of a former St. Louis School student who works there. The center provides a safe educational environment and instruction to overcome reading and math deficiencies. Students donated clothes, calculators, notebooks, art supplies and school supplies. They also raised \$230 for the center.

Submitted photo

SHELTER

continued from page 2

"They've helped me out here," she said. "They gave me a roof over my head. I'm thankful for that."

Sebree has used the medical and dental services provided to residents. And she has had her prescriptions refilled at no cost.

She took parenting classes at the Julian Center and had just finished nutrition and budgeting classes at the Holy Family Shelter.

"It's OK here," Sebree said. She doesn't mind the rules, like the 8 p.m. house curfew. Adults must be in their rooms by 11 p.m., children by 8:30 p.m.

She recognizes the need to have a schedule for meals at the shelter, with so many people to feed. Breakfast is served to the families at 7:30 a.m.; lunch at noon; and dinner at 5 p.m. But she can't wait to be on her own again, so her family can eat and do other things when they want to.

Laundry times are assigned by room. All residents are required to do chores, and Sebree doesn't mind that either.

"The chores are simple and you get to pick your own," she said. They also get extra points for extra work.

Residents who observe the rules receive \$200 toward a rent deposit for their own place when they leave the shelter. And they receive St. Vincent de Paul warehouse vouchers for the things they need to furnish a home or apartment.

Most Holy Family residents are older than Sebree, who is in her mid-20s.

"I've been through a lot," she said. The woman who adopted her when she was a baby died before Sebree was 20.

"A while back, I was in gangs on the mean streets of Oakland [California]," she said. "I thought I would die; I thought someone would die. I had to get away. I wanted so much better."

Sebree was pregnant with her son before she graduated with honors from high school at age 16.

She spent a year at Georgia Tech, majoring in business administration, with a criminal justice minor.

Sebree, who has been diagnosed with depression,

Cardinal Keeler urges pastors to tell cohabiting couples to live apart

BALTIMORE (CNS)—Concerned that "a new silence about sex has now replaced an earlier preoccupation with it," Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore has called on pastors to address the topic more directly and openly and to instruct cohabiting couples that they should live apart before marriage.

"In a misguided attempt to respect the sensitivity of the sexual sphere, it can happen that we even avoid treating this topic adequately in our preaching and catechesis," Cardinal Keeler said in a strongly worded pastoral statement on marriage, sexuality and chastity issued Dec. 11.

It was directed primarily at priests in the archdiocese but also at Catholic school and parish religion teachers.

He urged Catholic families, schools and parishes to provide the moral support for young people to be chaste in the face of ridicule and mockery they may suffer from their peers and society.

It takes "moral nerve and social support" to resist such pressures, he said. He pointed to the "extraordinary success" of the archdiocesan "True Love Waits" program as a guidepost for teen-agers.

Some 11,000 young people in the archdiocese have committed themselves in writing to refrain from sexual relations until they marry or confirm their commitment to chastity through vows in the consecrated life or through ordination.

"We are discovering that sex cannot be treated as a pastime or recreation or experiment," the cardinal said. "It has to do with love, security, family and life itself."

Although Catholic teaching on marriage and human sexuality is "sometimes caricatured as one-sided in its emphasis on sin, it is much more nuanced and positive than many people realize," he said.

"We must begin by making a positive case for sexuality as a created gift and a spiritual mystery," Cardinal Keeler added. "Only if people appreciate this will they view the moral guidelines we offer as helpful in the pursuit of human happiness and not as religious hang-ups."

In addressing the issue of homosexuality, Cardinal Keeler said homosexuals "are no less our brothers and sisters than others in the human family," but he reaffirmed the Church's teaching that homosexual acts are morally illicit.

Consequently, he said Catholics are obliged "to resist pressures to transform what our religious and moral tradition teaches and what the greater society believes about intimate homosexual relations and, ultimately, to transform social institutions and moral norms." †



Nicolette Sebree helps decorate the Christmas tree in the lounge of the Holy Family Shelter, a Catholic Social Services agency in Indianapolis. She lives at the shelter with her children, ages 2 and 8.

writes poetry to deal with her negative feelings. She shared a poem—"Words to Live By":

"As you travel through life, things get rough
But with God on your side, things aren't so tough.
I always pray to God and I ask him to stand by my side
As I look up in the heavens, there's tears in my eyes.
For I know God is the way, the truth and the light
And he'll be always in my heart and not far from sight."

Sebree said, "If you close your eyes, you can always get a vision of God."

The words of the hymn "You Are Worthy" give her comfort, too: "Alpha, Omega, beginning and end. My Savior, Messiah, Redeemer and Friend."

(For more information about Holy Family Shelter, call 317-635-7830.) †

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YEAR

continued from page 2

of all major religious traditions.

The Jubilee year made a major mark in the secular world as well, as the international movement to relieve the external debt of the world's most heavily indebted poor countries made 2000 the target year to achieve its goal.

Near year's end, a long-recalcitrant U.S. Congress made a major contribution to the effort by appropriating \$435 million to fully fund the U.S. share of the multilateral debt relief package for the next year.

As the debt relief campaign gained momentum, it also brought new attention to the immense human and economic devastation caused by AIDS in Africa, home to most of the world's heavily indebted poor countries.

Religious leaders—especially the pope, who began to call for Jubilee-year debt relief for poor countries back in 1994—were widely credited as a major force behind the success of that campaign.

A large number of U.S. Catholic dioceses and religious orders took the jubilee concept of debt forgiveness to heart for themselves as well, writing off part or all of

many of their loans to poor parishes and charitable agencies.

America got a new saint in 2000: St. Katharine Drexel, the Philadelphia heiress who founded the Blessed Sacrament Sisters. St. Katharine, who died in 1955 at age 96, used her \$20 million inheritance to found schools and missions for African-Americans and Native Americans. She was canonized Oct. 1.

Pope John Paul also canonized St. Mary Faustina Kowalska, originator of Divine Mercy devotion, 27 Mexican martyrs and 120 Chinese martyrs, many of whom were killed in the Boxer Rebellion. The Chinese canonizations drew sharp criticism from China's communist government.

Among those he beatified during the year were two of his predecessors, Popes John XXIII and Pius IX. Two more contrasting minds and personalities would be hard to imagine.

Pope Pius oversaw a centralizing of ecclesiastical authority, convened the First Vatican Council—which officially defined papal infallibility—and was noted for his condemnations of modern errors and emphasis on the opposition between the Church and the world. His 1859 decision to remove a baptized Jewish boy from his family to raise him Catholic still angers Jews.

Pope John got rid of many of the papacy's royal trappings and was noted for convening the Second Vatican Council and opening the Catholic Church to other Churches, other religions and the modern world, stressing dialogue and collaboration over condemnation.

In a little over 22 years as pontiff, Pope John Paul has declared 446 people saints—far more than the previous 16 popes combined, who from 1588 to 1978 declared 295 saints.

His growing health difficulties—stemming mainly from an advancing central nervous disorder that causes hand tremors, a shuffling gait, facial rigidity and slurred speech—led to increased speculation that after seeing the Church into the third millennium he might become the first pope since St. Celestine V in 1294 to end his papacy by resignation instead of death.

One unofficial Jubilee-year event that did not please Pope John Paul was the July 1-9 celebration in Rome of World Gay Pride 2000, capping many years of growing gay rights activism around the world. The pope called the holding of the observance in Rome an "affront" to the Church and the Jubilee year.

In October, the pope condemned legisla-

tion by the Dutch Parliament allowing homosexual partners to marry. In November, the Pontifical Council for the Family warned against legal recognition of non-marital unions as a threat to marriage and family. In December, Germany gave legal recognition to same-sex unions and the Finnish Parliament had similar legislation on its agenda.

In the United States, the Vermont Legislature made same-sex civil unions legally equivalent to marriage. Voters in Nevada and Nebraska overwhelmingly approved measures banning same-sex marriages.

A referendum in Maine banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was narrowly defeated. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts can exclude homosexual leaders.

Two longtime U.S. Catholic leaders in gay ministry, Salvatorian Father Robert Nugent and School Sister of Notre Dame Jeannine Gramick—who were banned from all gay ministry in 1999—were called to Rome and ordered to stop speaking publicly about the Vatican investigation that led to the 1999 ban.

Rapid developments in genetics also posed new challenges for Church teachings in 2000.

Completion of the Human Genome Project, a computerized mapping of the entire human genetic structure, gave rise to new hopes of cures for genetic diseases.

But it also sparked new interest in moral questions posed by genetic coding and manipulation—questions ranging from the morality of human cloning and genetic selection to issues of privacy and the dangers of employment and health insurance discrimination against those with higher genetic risks for certain diseases.

The pope and Catholic moral theologians condemned British and U.S. decisions to allow therapeutic procedures using embryonic stem cells, which involves destruction of embryos, instead of adult stem cells.

The growing use of genetically modified crops and livestock was highlighted in the United States with national recalls of food products that had been made in part with genetically modified corn not yet approved for human use.

At a biotechnology conference in Rome, a Vatican official, Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, praised the potential of such foods to help feed the world's hungry, but urged international controls and monitoring to guard against the risks posed by such changes.

On the world scene, the eruption of new Israeli-Palestinian fighting in the Middle East at the end of September threatened to reverse the hard-won gains of years of peace negotiations. In July, President Clinton had tried unsuccessfully to jumpstart the stalled peace process by bringing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat together for a summit at Camp David.

The people of Yugoslavia took a major step toward restoring peace in September by electing opposition leader Vojislav



Pilgrims make the sign of the cross as they pass through the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in August.

Kostunica as their new president, ousting President Slobodan Milosevic. In 1998, Milosevic had presided over the barbaric ethnic cleansing campaign in Kosovo that brought NATO to respond by bombing Yugoslavia into submission.

In Africa, Eritrea and Ethiopia were at war. Civil war and guerrilla struggles continued in several other countries, including Angola, Burundi, Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda, while protracted drought threatened the lives of millions in Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea and parts of Kenya and Sudan.

The U.S. bishops in November issued "Sudan's Cry for Peace," a statement seeking to draw public attention to 17 years of systematic—and increasing—destruction of the tribal peoples in southern Sudan by the Islamic military government. Sudanese Bishop Macram Max Gassis made several U.S. visits to raise awareness of the persecution of Christians there as Islamic fundamentalists engage in kidnapping, slavery and forced conversions.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom ranked China with Sudan among countries of the world where religious persecution is most severe. Despite pleadings from religious and human rights groups, the United States normalized trade relations with China.

Catholic missionaries were among victims of numerous anti-Christian attacks in parts of India and Indonesia, especially in Indonesia's Molucca Islands, where Islamic paramilitary groups were reportedly holding hundreds of Christians hostage, trying to force them to convert under threat of death.

In the Philippines, Muslim rebels on the island of Mindanao continued to kidnap and kill Christians in their fight for independence. Cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila was among the bishops and priests who called for the resignation of President Joseph Estrada as he faced impeachment on corruption charges.



Pope John Paul II prays at Jerusalem's Western Wall during his visit to the Holy Land in March. He became the first pope in history to pray at Judaism's most holy site.

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The Criterion

For Americans, Florida was constantly in the news from January to June with the painfully protracted case of Elian Gonzalez, the 6-year-old Cuban boy involved in a politics-laden custody battle between his Miami relatives and his father in Cuba.

Cuban expatriates used the conflict to highlight evils of the Castro regime in their native land, but some religious leaders, including Catholic bishops, used the occasion to restate their opposition to the continuing U.S. trade embargo against Cuba, which they argue hurts the people there, not the government.

In late October, Congress approved limited food and medicine sales to Cuba for the first time in 40 years and sharply curtailed a president's ability to impose or continue trade embargoes without congressional approval. Cardinal Bernard F. Law of Boston, long a leading opponent of the embargo, praised the congressional action.

Florida took the national limelight again throughout November and into December as Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore sought repeatedly, but in the end unsuccessfully, to overturn the tiny margin of the state-certified popular vote held by his Republican opponent, George W. Bush.

Before the election, both candidates courted the Catholic vote, which many analysts regarded as one of the key swing votes. Nationally, Gore won the Catholic vote by about 3 percent, much more than his margin in the popular vote. In Florida, according to exit polls, he lost the Catholic vote by a hefty eight-point margin.

Public policy issues of concern to the U.S. bishops in 2000 included the death penalty, partial-birth abortion, the introduction of the RU-486 abortion pill, crime and criminal justice, assisted suicide and the treatment of immigrants.

In a major statement on the criminal justice system, they criticized the nation's growing reliance on incarceration and rigid sentencing rules, arguing that a greater focus on education, prevention

and treatment could do more to reduce crime and rehabilitate criminals.

In an appendix to the statement, the bishops reiterated their strong opposition to the use of capital punishment in the United States. Many bishops individually sought clemency for those facing execution and the bishops of Indiana distributed a video opposing the death penalty to every parish in their state.

National calls for a moratorium on U.S. executions grew as the federal government prepared to execute Juan Raul Garza, the first federal prisoner facing execution since 1963. In July and again in December President Clinton postponed Garza's execution.

Congress again passed a Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act and President Clinton again vetoed it. Opponents of the practice were dealt a major blow in June when the U.S. Supreme Court declared a Nebraska law against partial-birth abortion unconstitutional. That decision provoked a brief but strongly worded statement by the bishops in November saying the high court has brought the nation's legal system "to the brink of endorsing infanticide."

In a ruling important for Catholic schools, the high court in June upheld the constitutionality of distributing federal funds evenhandedly to private schools, including religiously run schools, for computer and media resources. In November, however, voters in California and Michigan rejected proposals to offer school vouchers to parents of children in private schools. And in December, a federal appeals court ruled against an experimental school voucher program in Cleveland.

In the fall elections, Maine voters narrowly rejected a proposal to legalize physician-assisted suicide, again leaving Oregon as the only U.S. state accepting the practice. The federal Pain Relief Promotion Act, designed to improve end-of-life care and thwart legalized assisted suicide, remained blocked in the Senate more than a year after the House passed it.

In the Netherlands, where patient-requested euthanasia has been technically illegal but tolerated for many years, the lower house of Parliament approved a bill in late November that would formally legalize assisted suicide and euthanasia in certain cases. Vatican spokesman Joachin Navarro-Valls sharply condemned the action.

Other major Church events emerging from Rome in 2000 included publication of a declaration on Christ and the Church, *Dominus Iesus*, by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and issuance of a new General Instruction of the Roman Missal, by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

Dominus Iesus, issued Sept. 5, emphasized the unique role of Jesus Christ and the Church he founded for the salvation of all humanity. While it repeated standard Church teachings found in Vatican II, its negative treatment of other religions and lack of reference to advances in ecumenical and interreligious understanding since then



Texas Gov. George W. Bush and his wife, Laura, visit a Catholic School in Los Angeles while campaigning in September. The race for president between Bush and Vice President Al Gore was one of the closest in American history, with election results contested for weeks past voting day. Bush will become the 43rd president of the United States.

CNS photo

provoked criticism from a number of Catholic leaders as well as other Christian and non-Christian leaders.

A related document from the doctrinal congregation, which said the Catholic Church would not regard most Protestant Churches as "sister Churches" in the proper use of that term, also drew criticism.

The new instruction on the missal, the first revision in 25 years, set new rules or revised or clarified existing rules for priests, ministers and people celebrating Mass. It replaced a controversial strict rule on placement of tabernacles with more flexible regulations, but in other areas it established stricter rules than those in force since 1975. Many Church officials were upset about a lack of clarity as to when or how the changes were to take effect.

The worship congregation also made news when it called on the International Commission on English in the Liturgy to do all it could to halt further publication or distribution of its "doctrinally flawed" 1994 English version of the Psalms.

The bishops who form the ICEL board met in January and April to redraft its constitution in light of a series of Vatican demands to restructure the commission, restrict its activities and give Rome veto power over its personnel and consultants.

Despite negative reaction to *Dominus Iesus*, Catholic ecumenical and interreligious dialogue generally advanced in 2000.

One of the most notable areas of advance was in Catholic-Jewish relations. A first international Catholic-Jewish theological dialogue was held in June. In September, a group of prominent Jewish leaders issued a major statement urging Jews to reevaluate their attitudes towards Christians in light of significant changes in Christian attitudes toward Jews and Judaism.

A team of Catholic and Jewish historians jointly studied published Vatican records on the Vatican, Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust during World War II and issued its first report on the study.

In July, the often-troubled international Catholic-Orthodox dialogue held its first meeting since 1993, and its first ever in the Western Hemisphere, in Emmitsburg, Md. Despite lack of agreement on the status of

Eastern Catholic Churches, the group reaffirmed its commitment to continuing the dialogue.

Catholic-Anglican relations got a major boost in May when Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury, primate of the worldwide Anglican Communion, and Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, convened a meeting of Catholic and Anglican bishops from 14 countries to pray and brainstorm on how to move ahead on Church unity.

In May, the Vatican approved the U.S. bishops' U.S. application of general Church norms for Catholic higher education, and Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati headed a committee formed in June to work out final details on how bishops would grant, withhold or withdraw the ecclesiastical *mandatum*, or mandate, for Catholic theologians to teach.

The bishops also completed final stages of merging their twin national conferences into a single entity, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops—a decision expected to take effect in July 2001, provided the Vatican confirms their new statutes.

Among noted religious figures who died in 2000 was Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York. The cardinal, who turned 80 in January and was the oldest active U.S. bishop, died of cancer May 3. His funeral May 8 was televised live nationally. His successor is Archbishop Edward M. Egan, formerly of Bridgeport, Conn.

Cardinal James A. Hickey of Washington, who became the oldest active U.S. bishop when Cardinal O'Connor died, celebrated his 80th birthday in October and retired the following month.

His successor, Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, formerly of Newark, N.J., received the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights from President Clinton Dec. 6.

In March, Father Daniel Coughlin, Chicago archdiocesan vicar for priests, became the first Catholic to hold the post of House chaplain, ending a four-month quagmire replete with accusations of anti-Catholicism after the House majority leadership had rejected the original first Catholic nominee for that post. †



Christians gather in front of the FDA building in Washington to protest the approval of the abortion pill RU-486 for use in the United States.

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Book Reviews

New book introduces the doctors of the Church

The Doctors of the Church: An Introduction to the Church's Great Teachers

Volume One: Doctors of the First Millennium
Paperback, 262 pp., \$9.95

Volume Two: Doctors of the Second Millennium
Paperback, 256 pp., \$9.95

Two-volume set: \$16.95

by John F. Fink
Alba House

Reviewed by William R. Bruns

John F. Fink, editor emeritus of *The Criterion*, has recently written a two-volume book that provides a popular introduction to the 33 doctors of the Catholic Church. Fink immediately points out that these "doctors" are not physicians but teachers (from the Latin *docere*, meaning *to teach*).



Why are they considered the Church's greatest teachers? In his forward, Fink says that "the earliest doctors of the Church were writing at the same time as the Church began holding ecumenical councils to decide what were true doctrines and what were heresies. The

dogmas that the Catholic Church holds today were determined and defined by those councils, and the writings of the Doctors of the Church were largely responsible for the reasoning behind the councils' decisions."

Later doctors, such as Alphonsus de Liguori and Francis de Sales, rather than refuting heresies, found themselves formulating conceptions about morality or sharing their insights about the spiritual life.

In his book, Fink covers the doctors more or less chronologically, he says, "in order to place them in their historical context and because some of the Doctors worked with, or were influenced by, other Doctors of the same era."

Volume One deals with the 17 doctors who lived during the first millennium; Volume Two, with the 16 doctors of the second millennium.

Each chapter profiles one of the doctors and gives a representative selection of the doctor's writings. Most of the writings were chosen from readings contained in the Church's Office of Readings, a part of the Liturgy of the Hours.

In his introduction, Fink provides a "disclaimer" that the profiles are not full-blown biographies but are meant to be biographical summaries. Even so, he manages to fill these profiles with enough little-known and fascinating detail to keep the reader riveted. There's enough material here to launch a trivia game on the doctors of the Church.

For example, Fink tells readers that:

- A majority (17) of the doctors were named doctors

only in the last two centuries and these were all from Europe

- Three of the doctors are women (Ss. Teresa of Jesus [Ávila], Catherine of Siena and Thérèse of the Child Jesus [the Little Flower]).
- Ss. Teresa and Catherine were named doctors of the Church only in 1970; St. Thérèse, in 1997.
- St. Athanasius, as bishop of Alexandria in Egypt, was exiled from his see five times and spent 17 years in exile, six of them hiding among monks in the desert.
- St. Ephrem the Syrian, an outstanding catechist in the biblical school of Nisibis, his hometown, wrote more than 1,000 works in his lifetime, took popular melodies of his day and substituted texts dealing with orthodox doctrines, and trained a women's choir to sing hymns during public worship. A deacon, he once escaped being elected bishop by pretending to be insane!
- St. Martin of Tours was once a disciple of St. Hilary of Poitiers.
- In the fourth century, Jerusalem, the mother Church of Christianity, was not even the metropolitan diocese of the region. It had been upstaged by Caesarea.
- St. Basil the Great, known as the father of Eastern monasticism, grew up in a family of saints: one of his great-grandfathers died a martyr, his grandmother is St. Macrina the Elder, his father is St. Basil the Elder and his mother is St. Emmelia. His brother is St. Gregory of Nyssa, and one of his sisters is St. Macrina the Younger.
- St. John Chrysostom (a title that means *golden-mouth*) sometimes preached for as long as two hours.
- St. Ambrose, elected bishop of Milan when he was only a catechumen, praised the state and virtue of virginity so much that he had many consecrated virgins under his direction. (Fink adds that "mothers tried to keep their daughters from hearing his sermons"!)
- St. Augustine, probably the greatest doctor of the Church, is quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and in the Liturgy of the Hours more often than any other Church writer. Augustine wrote 113 books, 218 letters and more than 500 sermons.
- Only two popes—Leo I and Gregory I (each is called "the Great")—are among the doctors.
- St. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury in the 11th century, was not English but was born of French parents in Italy.
- St. Malachy, bishop of Armagh, Ireland, died in the arms of his friend, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who is known as the "Mellifluous Doctor."
- St. Anthony of Padua, the great "Italian" Franciscan saint, was actually Portuguese and was a member of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine before becoming a Franciscan.
- St. Francis de Sales, bishop of Geneva, wanted to found, along with St. Jane Francis de Chantal, an order of apostolic (not cloistered) women known as the Order of the Visitation. Rome forbade it, and the women were established as a cloistered order.

In addition to these and other historical tidbits, Fink's selection of representative excerpts from the writings of the doctors has been carried out with care and discrimination from Athanasius' famous *On the Incarnation* (where he speaks of the Incarnation as the "way in which the Word was to restore mankind to immortality) to John Damascene's *On the Orthodox Faith* (in which he defends the use of icons in worship) to Anselm's *Proslogion* (where he defines God as "a being than whom nothing greater can be conceived") to Thérèse's *The Story of a Soul* (in which she describes her vocation as "love").

True to form, Jack Fink has put together a work that will compel any reader even moderately interested in Church history to longer-than-planned sessions of nearly compulsive page-turning.

His books are highly recommended for students of Church history and doctrine.

(Available from Alba House, 2187 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, N.Y. 10314, 800-343-2522/Fax: 718-698-8390).

(Note: Readers of *The Criterion* will be treated to a taste of this two-volume book when Fink begins a series on the doctors of the Church in the Jan. 22 issue.) †

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CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT



The Savior is born!

There are still sheep in modern Bethlehem

By John F. Fink

Sheep and the "little town of Bethlehem" seem to go together.

When Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint David as king of Israel, David was out tending the sheep (1 Sm 16:11). When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, angels appeared to shepherds keeping the night watch over their flock (Lk 2:8). Today shepherds continue to lead sheep around the outskirts of Bethlehem.

Once, while I was studying at the Ecumenical Institute of Tantur, located at the border between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, I was out for my daily walk. As I turned a corner, I came face to face with about 100 sheep and goats coming toward me. I immediately did a "to the rear, march" since the sheep weren't going to stop. Sheep and shepherds were a common sight on the grounds of Tantur.

The land around Bethlehem is still ideal for sheep, but little else, since there is not much vegetation. There are still natural caves in the steep limestone hills where shepherds can take shelter during winter storms, the only time there is any rain. It was in one of those caves that Jesus was born.

Luke doesn't tell us precisely where the angels appeared to the shepherds, but tradition has placed Shepherds' Field about two miles east of Bethlehem, in the town of Beit Sahur. Today Beit Sahur is one of only three towns in Judea that still have a significant Christian population—the others are Bethlehem and Gilo. Many of the people who live there are Palestinian professional people—doctors, lawyers and professors at Bethlehem University.

Shepherds' Field is a logical place for the appearance of the angels to have taken place since it's above a bend in the Kidron Valley in an expanse that would make it easy for the shepherds to keep track of their sheep and goats. Here, too, is a large natural cave, its mouth opening eastward away from the prevailing west winds.

The Franciscans, who have custody of the Holy Land, have turned that cave into a chapel and pilgrims seem to prefer to have Mass there than in a more elaborate chapel nearby. The rustic altar is built of uncut natural stone and there's a crèche in the chapel.

The more elaborate chapel is circular. The altar is in the middle, below a large dome studded with hundreds of glass blocks that turn sunlight into all the colors of a rainbow. A mural of the Nativity is on the wall across from the main door and all around the base of the dome are large golden letters that spell out, "*Gloria in altissimis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*" ("Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will"), the words of the angels to the shepherds.

On this property, too, are the ruins of a Byzantine church and monastery that archaeologists date to the fourth century, indicating that Christians at that time thought of this as the site of the angels' appearance to the shepherds.

Here, too, pilgrims can see another biblical site: the Field of Boaz in the Book of Ruth. This field is where Ruth, who returned to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Naomi, gleaned the wheat and barley left by the reapers. Ruth, a woman from Moab (modern Jordan), married Boaz and became King David's great-grandmother. They were also, some 40 generations later, the ancestors of Joseph and Mary. It was because of that relationship that Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem for the census.

Bethlehem has another shrine of great importance—primarily to Jews but also to Christians. It's the Tomb of Rachel, the wife of the patriarch Jacob. Rachel is the only one of the biblical matriarchs and patriarchs not buried in Machpela Cave in Hebron. She died while giving birth to Benjamin: "Thus Rachel died; and she was buried on the road to Ephrath [that is, Bethlehem]. Jacob set up a memorial stone on her grave, and the same monument marks Rachel's grave to this day" (Gn 35: 19-20).

Today the Israelis have built a strong fortress around this tomb and it is protected at all times by soldiers because this is the place in Bethlehem for demonstrations by Palestinian youth. The tomb is popular among pregnant Jewish women who pray for a safe delivery. There are separate entrances for men and women, and the area for women is larger than that for men. However, when I was there, no women were present. The only thing in the tomb



Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus are depicted in a Nativity scene featured in a stained glass window in a Catholic Church in northern Indiana. The feast of the Holy Family is Dec. 31.

is a large elevated casket covered by a decorated cloth.

The most important site in Bethlehem, of course, is the Church of the Nativity, built over the site where Jesus was born. It is owned by the Greek Orthodox, with a section for the Armenians. Since I've written extensively about that church in previous Christmas supplements, and it's impossible to do so briefly, I won't do so this year. Needless to say, this is the most popular site in the entire Holy Land during the Christmas season.

Attached to the Church of the Nativity is the Catholic Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria, built by the Franciscans in 1881 over a cave where St. Jerome lived

while he was translating the Bible into Latin. St. Jerome's cave is another popular place for pilgrims to say Mass.

The patriarch of Jerusalem says the Christmas Midnight Mass in St. Catherine's Church.

Bethlehem will always be a fascinating city. It remains the best place for pilgrims and tourists to buy souvenirs, especially for religious objects made from olive wood and mother of pearl. The merchants have suffered in recent years, though, because of the unrest in the Holy Land. Bethlehem is too frequently closed to tourists.

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



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Helping others makes holiday meaningful

By Janaan Manternach
Catholic News Service

Christmas is not a joyous season for everyone. Some people experience depression and anxiety. Holiday sadness affects children as well as adults.

However, in many families it's a time so packed with activities that significant feelings other than the happy ones are overlooked. There's an expectancy in the season that seemingly demands joy in everyone.

Here are a few ways to ease holiday doldrums:

- Focus on Jesus as the Prince of Peace and pray for calm and inner peace by meditating on the Sunday Gospel readings or other Scripture passages. As a mantra, pray the name "Jesus."
- In nearly every community, shelters for the homeless include children as well as adults. Volunteer, individually or as a family, at one of these shelters. Lavish the residents with time, concern and gifts.
- Have a Christmas prayer party and dinner in which each guest comes with a description of an inner need wrapped as a gift. Unwrap these "gifts," share them, lift them up in prayer and promise to support each other.
- Help an elderly person or older couple decorate their home or apartment for the holiday. This activity requires the promise to put the decorations away in a few weeks.
- Talk one-on-one with each of your family members for a few moments every day.
- Read Scripture together. This provides a chance to wonder anew at the mystery of the first Christmas.

(Janaan Manternach is a veteran catechist and free-lance writer in Arlington, Va.) †

Hispanic Catholics celebrate Christmas with music, plays

By Arcadia Lopez

Catholic News Service

When I saw Mamma take out the kerosene lantern from the cardboard box where she kept it, I knew Christmas was coming soon.

That made me feel like singing and skipping with joy. Maybe this year I'd receive the gift I wanted most!

With a clean rag, Mama dusted the lantern, removed the smoke marks from the glass tube and filled the tank with kerosene. Then she hung it from a big nail on our front door.

As she did, she told us, her children, "We'll light the lantern tonight to brighten Mary's and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. Then we'll walk to church and enjoy *Las Posadas*."

After dinner, Mama, my younger sister and brother and I walked to church. We prayed the rosary and then watched what Mama called *Las Posadas*.

I didn't expect to receive what I wanted most in church. A statue showing Mary on a donkey and Joseph leading the donkey was set on a platform. Four men, each holding one of the four posts, lifted it shoulder high and started to carry it. The singers lined up behind the men carrying the platform. All started the procession down the center aisle toward the choir loft, where the organ was located and the other singers were gathered.

Once in front of the choir, the singers on the aisle sang, asking for lodging for Mary and Joseph.

The choir singers sang that there was no room in the inn for Joseph and Mary.

The other singers responded, singing about how much the pilgrims needed to rest.

"No room in the inn," insisted the choir singers.

What magic to tell the story in song!

The procession turned to the side aisle to return to the front. There the men set down the platform and its statue. The singers disbanded.

The end came too soon for me. Mama reassured me, "*Las Posadas* will continue for eight more evenings."

We attended *Las Posadas* all but one night.

That evening, Mama took us to Alamo Plaza to see the huge Christmas tree with hundreds of bright lights. Santa Claus appeared, all smiles, and started giving children bags of candy and small toys. My bag had peppermint sticks and a small rubber ball and jacks. But that was not what I wanted most.

The days before Christmas always brought me joy and excitement. One surprise was the *Pastorela* that Tacha, a neighbor, provided for the people in the *vecindad*.

Tacha had a beautiful *nacimiento*, a Nativity scene,



CNS photo

Singers tell the Christmas story in song during a *Las Posadas* celebration.

which she exhibited in her home. This time she decided to bring it outside. She placed it on the wall of one of the small apartments in the back.

When I saw it outdoors, I was delighted. Tacha crinkled brown paper to look like the hills of Bethlehem. Blue paper and silver stars made the sky. On the hills she put little paper houses, temples, trees and toy sheep. Then came the stable and the clay figures.

"What a wonderful picture it all makes," I thought.

Suddenly several men, dressed in bright shiny colors—red, blue, green, yellow and pink—approached the Nativity scene. One man dressed in black, with a flowing black cape and a torch in his hand, walked behind the others. A girl dressed in bright yellow joined the group. They were the shepherds invited by Tacha to perform *La Pastorela*.

La Pastorela showed how the shepherds wanted to go to see the infant Christ and how they were obstructed and delayed by Lucifer, the man with the black cape and the burning torch. The shepherds prevailed and reached Bethlehem.

That night, I dreamed of Christmas trees, bright lights,

fairies and dancing toys. In my dreams I saw what I wanted most!

We looked forward to the Carmelites' Christmas program. The dance of the Toy Soldiers, the Christmas songs and recitations delighted us. Finally, Santa Claus appeared with a big bag of presents and passed them out to everyone.

"Maybe this time," I prayed, "I'll get what I want most!"

When I got my present, I tore off the wrapping paper and there she was! A big doll with dark brown hair and dressed in a pretty white dress. I had never had a doll like this one. Her face was beautiful, pearly and rosy. Her hands were pretty, too. Never had I had a real doll, just paper and rag dolls that I made myself.

I cradled her in my arms and started to skip home. My brother caught up with me and took a look at the doll and said, "She's cross-eyed."

I answered, "I don't see that. I love her, and she is what I wanted most!"

(Arcadia Lopez is a free-lance writer in San Antonio, Texas.) †

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Readers share favorite Christmas memories

Santa boots are fun Christmas symbols

By Anna Margaret O'Sullivan

Every family has Christmas customs it particularly cherishes. In the long ago days when our children were small, one of Franklin's and mine was the setting out of red papier-mache Santa Claus boots on Christmas Eve.

In the Christmas season of 1943, I bought a red boot about a foot tall, full of old-fashioned chocolate creams. When the candy was gone, the boot was too cute to throw away. I used it as our baby daughter's Christmas "container," and Santa duly remembered Frances with gifts suitable for a 7-month-old baby.

It became a new Christmas custom. When Kit was born three years later, I scouted around for another boot full of chocolates, and found one, but it was a size smaller. I also found squat, fat boots that St. Nicholas would have been proud to wear, but only about half the size of the original. The taller, more slender models disappeared from candy and gift counters.

As our family increased, the younger members had to be content with these smaller, but equally jolly, symbols of Christmas. Since tall boots were no longer available, we took the smaller ones to our hearts, set them out for Santa, and carefully packed them away for use

during the next Christmas season. We called the candy canes, hard candy, apples, oranges and small toys that went into them "Boot Loot."

In spite of our care, papier-mache is not a durable substance. Though I repainted the boots every other year, then yearly, with bright red enamel paint, they cracked and eventually broke.

Most of the boots had to be replaced with homemade, bright-colored Christmas stockings, each sporting an embroidered name on the leg or cuff. I still have mine from those olden days, labeled "Mama," and Franklin's, labeled "Daddy." Many years after Franklin's death, one of our grandsons delighted in borrowing his stocking to put out for Santa.

The little boots that survived the wear and tear of time decorated windowsills and the fireplace mantel with the spicy sprigs of evergreens, bitter-sweet or holly.

Even now, with great-grandchildren to add joy to Christmas, should I see a foot-tall Santa boot full of old-fashioned chocolate creams, I would buy it—quickly!—for old time's sake. One never really grows up when it comes to Christmas!

Automatically, when I jot down ideas for gifts to look for each Christmas, I title my list "Boot Loot." It calls back a host of unforgettable memories.

(Anna Margaret O'Sullivan is a member of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin.) †



Holiday tradition

Decorating a Christmas tree during Advent is a treasured family tradition for people of many cultures.

Uncle John made Christmas special

By Debbie Hartman

I hadn't thought about this for quite some time, but I hope this story will touch many hearts.

Christmas of 1978 was very special because of my uncle, John Wissner. He was the favorite uncle of all the kids in our family. We were his "children," as he never had any of his own. He was always so generous—buying us neat presents and taking us on vacations. He was so much fun to be with, and always worked hard to ensure fun for everyone in the family.

Sadly, John began having health problems in the summer of 1978. That fall, he was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. He went through a series of radiation treatments, but we all feared it would be to no avail.

John came home from St. Francis Hospital in Beech Grove shortly before Christmas. Except for his bald head, he looked terrific, and was his usual cheerful, fun-loving self. He looked forward to the holiday so much, and had more fun than anyone. Dec. 25 was also his birthday! He always joked about getting twice as many presents as everybody else!

Our family always got together on Christmas Eve at Grandpa Hartman's house—a long-standing tradition. This year, we also gathered on Christmas Day at my aunt and uncle's house for dinner. Normally, we all had other plans for Christmas Day—but not that year.

No one discussed it, as far as I know,

but I truly believe that everybody promised themselves that we would all do our best to make what we suspected would be John's last Christmas the best that it could possibly be. It would be our thanks to him for being so good to all of us throughout the years.

And so it was. I can't remember any specific events, but I do recall lots of laughter. Everyone was in a terrific mood, and we all laughed a lot. Pictures taken that day showed a lot of smiling faces. John was happier than anybody. I'm still amazed at that even today.

I especially remember enjoying homemade ice cream. Someone suggested making a freezer of it, and that was greeted with universal approval. My cousin, Beth, and I volunteered to mix up the ice cream. The two of us vowed that we'd make the best freezer of ice cream ever—because it was for John. We loved him so much, and he loved us. It was a gift of love because John had introduced us to homemade ice cream. What a treat it was—and still is today.

To this day, I never eat this special treat without thinking of John. I'm so happy we had such a perfect holiday that year.

We lost John the following autumn—on Oct. 31, 1979. He was 73. I'll never forget that special Christmas, or this special man.

(Debbie Hartman is a member of St. Mark Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Christmas Eve inspires memories

By Rosie Strack

I have many beautiful Christmas memories, but the one that always stands out in my mind is one Christmas Eve in the late 1940s.

My sister, Louise, and I were going to sing with the Holy Name Parish choir for midnight Mass, and even now I can recall my happiness and peace during the few hours before the liturgy.

Our boyfriends, who had been lifelong buddies themselves, and who later became our husbands, were going to accompany us to Mass at the Catholic church in Beech Grove.

I have always felt that Christmas is not only magical for children, but also for lovers.

That particular year, we helped Dad cut down a very big spruce tree from our front yard to be used as our Christmas tree. It took up one whole corner of the living room, and we trimmed it in mostly blue lights.

We always placed our nativity set under our tree. It was truly a beautiful sight, and I vividly recall resting before Mass on our davenport, looking at the tree and nativity set, and listening to Christmas hymns on our record player.

The closeness I felt with my family—I also had two other sisters—and with my future husband and the Christ Child have lingered all these years.

It was just one of those very special times. It could be that one of the other reasons I remember that particular year, and that particular tree, was because my poor mother was still finding pine needles in the house almost until the day we put up our next Christmas tree the following year!

(Rosie Strack is a member of Holy Name Parish in Beech Grove.) †

Ice storm starts family tradition

By Jillian Vandermarks

This year, my oldest stepson turns 18. For the first time, I realized that this year may be the last traditional Christmas for our family for a while. Next year, he will be at college and, depending on where he goes, may not be able to afford to come home for the holiday break.

Our Christmas tradition started as a gift from God in the form of bad weather. It was our first holiday season as a family, and we had anticipated the boys being with their mother on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. Then Gary and I would pick them up and take them to their grandmother's house, where we would open their presents with Grandma and their Aunt Cindy.

The only downside to this was that we

would not have a time when it was just our family.

That first year, the boys were staying with us on the night of Dec. 22, and their mom was going to pick them up on the morning of Dec. 23. But when we woke up that day, there had been an ice storm in Brown County, where their mom lives, so she was unable to come to our house until the morning of Dec. 24.

Gary and I decided to take advantage of this time and have our own Christmas celebration with them on the morning of Dec. 24.

The next day, we got up and there were stockings for everyone, presents to be opened, and Gary made Christmas pancakes. After we opened presents and ate, we all played the board games the boys received as gifts.

Our tradition has developed where we celebrate Christmas Eve morning with them as a family, then their mom takes them home that night. We pick them up to go to Grandma's house on Christmas Day.

The only change we have made was that after Gary and I converted to Catholicism, we now attend Mass at St. Agnes Church in Nashville when we pick them up on Christmas Day.

I have found out over the years how important these traditions are because they give the children and the family a sense of continuity. We are very blessed that God gave us this gift of a tradition by way of an ice storm.

(Jillian Vandermarks is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Family thanks God for prayer answered

By Sally Bruce

I am the 10th daughter in my family. I have no brothers. On Christmas Eve in 1942, only Gladys, Eileen and I still lived at home. Gladys, who was 16 at the time, went with her boyfriend to get her Christmas present.

My dad was in the hospital with a fever, and one of my older sisters was also there having her second baby.

I can remember my mother telling Gladys, "Don't stay long. You have to pin-curl your hair before church."

About 10 p.m., a neighbor knocked on our door and said Gladys had been hurt in a terrible accident. We didn't even own a car or telephone, so he took my mother to the hospital. Eileen and I sat by the coal stove to stay warm and keep it fueled.

Christmas was the next day. We didn't have much, just an orange or apple since we were very poor.

Gladys lost her right leg as a result of injuries suffered in the car accident. The doctor said she was lucky to be alive.

God and our prayers saved her life.

(Sally Bruce is a member of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington.) †



Savior's birth

The heavenly host with the angel of the Good News praised God for the incarnation of the Son of God with a new hymn: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Lk 2:14).

Christmas Eve Mass is lifetime memory

By Alma L. Hofmann

I still have memories of attending Christmas Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church in Enochsburg when I was 5 years old, some 90 years ago.

There was no electricity at that time, but the altars were aglow with all sizes of lighted candles, instead of poinsettias, during the Christmas liturgy.

The organ upstairs was hand-pumped, and the choir consisted of my mother, uncle and aunts. With their soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices, they sang the familiar Christmas songs, "Gloria" and "Credo" with gusto.

I especially remember the statue of the Christ Child with outstretched arms lying on real straw from a farmer's straw stacks in the church Nativity scene.

Happy 2,000th birthday, Jesus!

(Alma L. Hofmann lives at St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove.) †

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Christmas memories center on faith and family

Midnight Mass ends much later than during childhood

By Jeanne Macy

My fondest Christmas memories revolved around midnight Mass. My mother always insisted on an afternoon nap in order to stay up so late, and my sisters, brothers and I did so without a fight!

Mother never cooked on Christmas Eve—a break before the storm of homemade ravioli, meatballs and pastries that she would prepare the next day. Instead, we ordered pizza or chicken.

There was always a movie with a Christmas theme, like *White Christmas*, that we would watch on television while snacking on Christmas cookies and other treats. This passed time and usually lasted most of the evening. By 11 p.m., we were on our way to church to get a good seat! Mass always followed the 11:30 p.m. Christmas carols sung by the church choir.

I'll never forget one year when my mother hand-sewed matching green festive skirts for my sister and I to wear when we sang with the junior choir!

After Mass, friends and neighbors that we had seen at church were invited over to our house to toast a new Christmas day.

Mother made sure that Santa wouldn't come until we were asleep, which wasn't until 3 a.m. some years!

My mother's legacy is remembered so much by traditions like this. Now as a mother of a 3-year-old and a 1-year-old, I find midnight Mass to be quite a challenging hour, so 5 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve works great for us now!

(Jeanne Macy is a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Parents' love and faith brought happiness to family

By Cathy Maloney

As we approach Christmas 2000, I think of my parents (now deceased) with warm memories and once again realize how truly blessed I was to be born into and raised in such a fine Christian family.

I was taught from early on that our Catholic faith wasn't something we simply talked about, but that it was meant to be a way of life and practiced every day.

I was reminded to be an example because I had two uncles who were priests (and later a cousin).

My parents never discussed the anti-Catholic sentiment in the southern Indiana town where we lived, but I knew it existed. My mother only talked about the cross burnings on

the hills surrounding the town once. Perhaps she was wondering if I remembered them. I didn't.

My father was a man of honesty, character and integrity. I got the impression that the townsfolk agreed. His word was as good as a written contract any day. He was also a man of self-discipline. Every Lent his beer and cigarettes went out the door until Easter arrived! He didn't cheat!

I also recall that attendance at Sunday Mass wasn't an option. It didn't matter if we traveled. He would take the family to South Bend once a year to see the University of Notre Dame football team play, and wherever we stayed it was Sunday Mass for the whole family as usual. No exceptions were ever made.

I recall one incident vividly. On Sundays my dad always went into the living room to read the Sunday paper. He always sat in the same chair. This Sunday was different. He was sitting on the sofa, with no newspaper around him. His head was bowed down. I could tell he was lost in thought and deeply troubled. I went in the living room anyway and sat across from him.

There was a brief silence, and then he looked up as if to acknowledge my presence. He turned to me and said, "Today it's abortion, tomorrow euthanasia, you just watch."

The Supreme Court ruling on *Roe vs. Wade*, which legalized abortion, had just been announced.

My dad was a quiet man, a man of few words. I got his message loud and clear. And I felt his pain. I will never forget that moment.

I will never know all that my parents tried to do to change things. I do know that I came home one day and my mother was writing letters. Their good deeds were done out of the public eye.

One thing I really admired about my parents was their mutual respect for one another. Neither one spoke unkindly or gossiped or slandered the other at home or out in public. Neither one corrected the other in front of their children. Their policy was to correct each other in private, if necessary.

My parents were so together on things that we three children could never figure out who was really doing the talking or making the rules.

During the Vietnam War, my mother's nephew was shot down in combat over Vietnam and taken prisoner for more than five years. Every evening at dinner or when the meal was completed, my father led the family in prayer for him and for his safe return home. My father never wavered in his commitment to pray for him, and he finally did make it home.

I admired my parents' love of God, their love and respect for one another as husband and wife, and their love of children and family. They reached out to others in small, quiet ways. Their relationship wasn't just a marriage. It was grounded in the sacrament of marriage in the fullest sense. In our family, it was Christmas 365 days a year—a celebration of love.

I know that I came to know the love of God the Father because of my own father's love and example on earth. If my dad could provide the spiritual and physical needs of

the family and all that goes between, how much more so could our heavenly father provide. My dad brought me to God the Father some years ago, and I am grateful.

(Cathy Maloney is a member of St. Mark Parish in Indianapolis.) †



New York tradition

An 80-foot-high spruce tree was lit with nearly 30,000 bulbs on Nov. 29 at Rockefeller Center in New York City. Thousands of people attend the tree-lighting ceremony each year.

Homeless boy 'meets' Jesus at Thanksgiving party

By Mary Ann Wyand

I received a special and unexpected Christmas gift this year that I will remember each Advent and Lent.

My job as a reporter and photographer for *The Criterion* enables me to visit many parishes throughout the year. Last month, at St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis, I was reporting on the youth group's Thanksgiving dinner for homeless people held in the new Parish Life Center.

A 5-year-old homeless boy seemed fascinated by a large crucifix on the wall in the hallway. He left the party several times to go out in the hall and look at it. Finally, he asked shyly, "Who is that?"

Feeling inadequate, I blinked back tears and tried to briefly explain the story of Christ.

Can you remember when you first learned about Jesus?

(Mary Ann Wyand is a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Christmas carol is special memory from grade school

By Gwen Weber

It was the Christmas season in 1947. Children everywhere were practicing for Christmas performances, and that included the seventh-grade students at Indianapolis Public School No. 12.

That year, Ruth Robinson, our art and music teacher, introduced us to the beautiful Christmas carol titled "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." It was so nice to be learning a new song. I remember concentrating on the words, and wanting peace on earth for everyone, as I looked out the window and watched the softly falling snow.

Little did Miss Robinson—who later became Ruth Jenkins—realize then that a Christmas memory was being planted that holiday season. I lost contact with her when I left grammar school.

However, 53 Christmas seasons have now passed, and each year at Christmas time when I hear that carol I recall with fond memory the touch of beauty Miss Robinson added to my lifetime of Christmas memories.

(Gwen Weber is a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.) †

'The Crib' brings back happy childhood memories

By Mary Huser Stewart

I have always been grateful that I was lucky enough to be part of a big family. And Christmas is that time of year when some of the very happiest memories come flooding back so vividly to me.

It's always hectic growing up in a house where 12 people live, and our home was no exception.

Our dad worked long hours at his tool and die shop to provide us "with our daily bread." Our mom had the endless job of being a mother to 10 children. Together, they monitored our activities, which, of course, increased over the holidays.

Christmas meant shopping trips to the Ben Franklin store in Beech Grove, and maybe even a bus ride downtown with our Grandma Huesing to shop at Woolworth's or G.C. Murphy's. Life was so simple back then!

My favorite Christmas memory is anything that had to do with "The Crib." We never called it the manger scene, or the Nativity scene. It was always "The Crib."

The stable was made out of plywood with plastic windows, and constructed by my dad and Grandpa Huser. All of the statues were a Christmas gift to my parents from my grandparents more than 51 years ago.

We were always so excited to see "The Crib." Whenever possible, we would all kneel down as a family and pray the rosary. We would always say our bedtime prayers there together before everyone went to their rooms. So many times I would awake in the middle of the night and walk into that little dining room to stand before "The Crib." The quiet solitude and inner peace I felt there is something I will never forget.

About 10 years ago, that crib became mine. I don't really remember whether I asked for it, or if it was given to me because I was the oldest. I do know that now my children and grandchildren seem to enjoy that one significant presence of peace, faith and family tradition with each Christmas season.

And even now, when I can't sleep in the middle of the night, I find myself in front of the beloved crib. My worries and concerns seem to evaporate as I look at the peaceful Baby Jesus in his humble surroundings.

The scent of the straw in the manger, and on the stable floor, takes me right back to that little Cape Cod house on 16th Street in Beech Grove, where 10 children grew up surrounded by love and a deep sense of faith and family.

(Mary Huser Stewart is a member of Holy Name Parish in Beech Grove.) †

Nativity reminds us that we all are Christ's stable

By Mary Jo Keegan

Among the most cherished Christmas customs celebrated by my family is our first visit each Advent to the crib at the parish church where our extended family has worshiped for five generations.



Each year, I fondly recall Christmas of 1940, standing in front of the crib with my grandfather, John Devney, whom we lovingly called "Dev," and with the authority of a first-grader telling him just why those particular people and certain animals were part of our manger scene.

I wished then that I could walk around that stable. Its sheer size and the height of the statues remain awesome to me still. But it's the stars twinkling in the "sky" that have continued to captivate me. It seems that one star is brighter and truly blinks as its glow lights the manger bed, as if to draw us closer to this replica of the Holy Infant's birthplace.

This crib has been part of Christmas since 1935, when it was assembled by stagehands from the Indianapolis Theatrical Company. During our grade school and high school years at our parish schools, on a variable day in Advent the crib just seemed to be in place in the church.

In those days, the Baby Jesus was placed in the manger, but in the last 20 or so years the manger remains empty until after midnight Mass, when the figure of the Newborn King is held high and carried in a simple procession among the people he has come to save.

The faith of the assembly is so visible as their eyes follow the Christ Child to the crib and watch as our pastor takes the figure of Baby Jesus and tenderly places the infant in the manger bed.

And the stars seem to grow brighter as they shine on the Light of the World, and that holy night in Bethlehem comes again to downtown Indianapolis at St. John the Evangelist Church.

I've been to Bethlehem and knelt in adoration at the site of our Savior's birth, and been consumed by the reality of it. But it's here, in A.D. 2000, right in the heart of the city, where I've learned how to keep Christmas.

Each person is a stable, and each person's heart is the manger bed for the Prince of Peace, who promises us he will never leave us.

(Mary Jo Keegan is a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.) †

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Readers share special Christmas stories

Family joke involves old aluminum tree

By Diane Beasley

In the 1960s, my mother had an aluminum Christmas tree with turquoise balls. Shining on this tree was a revolving color wheel.

For a little history about mother's decorating, she was very fond of turquoise! All of the walls were painted turquoise. Her dishes were turquoise. The living room carpet was turquoise and olive tweed. The living room drapes were turquoise and olive print. She had two curly plastic turquoise peacock pictures on the living room wall. Turquoise plastic flowers were in the bathroom. Even the aluminum cookware was turquoise!

Do my sister, Vicki, and I like turquoise? Absolutely not! Neither of us would purchase anything turquoise—until last year.

While shopping at an antique store, I found an 18-inch aluminum Christmas tree. There were no turquoise balls available, so I purchased Styrofoam balls and painted them turquoise.

This tree went back and forth between Vicki and I several times before Christmas Day. The decorations changed every time it changed hands.

Lo and behold, a friend had a four-foot aluminum tree in its original box in her basement. It was there when she moved into her house 30 years ago, and she never got rid of it.

We then started exchanging both trees!

In the meantime, I found some turquoise tree ornaments during another

antique shopping spree.

This tree appeared on my front porch on May 29! Vicki and one of her friends sang "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" at midnight!

The tree has been in our attic since last spring. However, I have found a color wheel for this year's presentation. I am sure Vicki is practically sweating blood for fear of when it will appear at her house again!

This may not be your traditional Christmas custom, but it is becoming quite a fun thing for us.

(Diane Beasley is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Grandson's birth on Christmas was joyful

By Jean Allen

One of my favorite Christmas memories is when my grandson, Corey, was born on Dec. 25, 1988.

Twelve years later, he is a caring and loving boy. I tell him often that God has a special plan for him, for he allowed him to be born on Jesus' birthday.

Corey always thinks of others and likes to help people.

His other grandmother died when Corey was 5, but Corey has fond memories of her. And I'm sure she is smiling down on him!

Corey is a special grandson, and the year of his birth is a good Christmas memory.

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

Soldier recalls Mass in French village

By Paul Buckler

On Christmas Day in 1944, I was in the small village of Hoerd, France, with my Army unit, the 42nd Infantry Division, serving my country in World War II.

There were heavy patrols on both sides—German and American—and many roadblocks there.

I asked my commanding officer if I could go to Mass at the church in the village. He surprised me and said yes.

Two of my Army friends and I went to the church. About one-fourth of the top of

the church was shelled out, and it was snowing fairly hard down through the opening. We went to Mass with our rifles strapped over our backs.

This little church was packed with civilians and a few soldiers.

To this day, I am grateful for the chance to go to Mass under those conditions.

In July of 1998, I traveled to France with members of my family and we visited this church. The church was in good repair.

That Christmas during World War II was one I shall never forget.

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



Polish Nativity

Men carry an elaborate Nativity scene into the old town square of Krakow in Poland during Advent last year. Polish residents build Nativity sets of paper, material, foil and boxes, and display their work in the square each Christmas season.

CNS photo from Reuters

Karen L. Curtice-Rose

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At the heart of Christmas is a profound paradox

By Lawrence S. Cunningham

Recently, in class, my students and I read St. Athanasius' wonderful little treatise on the Incarnation. Written in the fourth century, it is considered a classic of Catholic theology.

What is striking about Athanasius' approach is that he begins with the story of creation and only then moves to the Incarnation.

There is, of course, sound thinking behind this strategy. For the world comes into being through the power of God's Word, according to the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis. And St. John, in his Gospel's Prologue, says that God's Word became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14).

In other words, for St. John the Incarnation was "re-creation." John's Prologue is a profound theological meditation on Christ's significance as Word of God incarnate.

One cannot help but think of that link between creation and incarnation as a kind of key for understanding the power of the Christmas liturgy. Even now, I look back at the many times that, as a child and an adolescent, I attended midnight Mass with my family. The late hour, the crisp new surplices we altar servers wore, the evergreens' pungent smell, the lovely red of the flowers and the beauty of the crèche scene combined into a feeling of mystery, awe and, above all, beauty and hope.

Midnight Mass just seemed right. But why should that be? Why is it that for an average person Christmas seems more vivid even than Easter, which is the most solemn of the Church's liturgical feasts?

Part of the answer must be in the fact that Christmas celebrates a child's birth. Who has not looked at a new baby without thinking of the renewal of humanity, the promise of the future and the sheer innocence of someone who has not yet experienced the evils of the world?

At the birth of Jesus, we instinctively think of new hope and new promise. That sense of hope, however, grows more profound when we say, in faith, that this is Emmanuel ("God with us").

At the heart of Christmas, then, is a profound paradox: The helpless child in the manger is also the one through whom the world was made and who shows us God's face.

When St. Francis celebrated Christmas in a stable in 1223 (the origin of the custom of the crèche), he wanted

to experience both the absolute poverty of Christ and his hidden divinity.

St. Bonaventure, in his life of St. Francis, tells us that Francis preached at that Mass about the "Poor King." That title catches it exactly: Christ is ruler, but he rules in the poverty of his birth.

There is a temptation to sentimentalize the little child of Bethlehem in popular art and in the carols we sing. But the same Isaiah who saw the coming of Emmanuel is the prophet who speaks of the "Suffering Servant." That paradox is also part of the story.

Icon makers of the Christian East capture this fuller story brilliantly. They depict the Nativity scene not as happening in a stable, as is common in Western art, but in front of an open cave. By such a location, they speak both of the birth of Christ and the empty tomb when Jesus, 33 years later, will be raised into new life as the resurrected Lord.

The Mary who gave birth at Bethlehem and who would stand at the foot of the cross is the same Mary who will be with the apostles at the birth of the Church (Acts 1:14).

There is, then, a powerful symmetry about the Word of God through whom creation comes to be, through whom re-creation is brought about and who remains with us in the Church, which springs from the Word of God. When we think of Christmas, we need to hold all these profound mysteries in place.

In a small quatrain that St. John of the Cross wrote as a Christmas refrain, he caught the "awe-full" mystery of the Word become flesh in these powerful lines:

"The Virgin, heavy
"With the Word of God,
"Comes down the road.
"If only you give her shelter!"

(Lawrence Cunningham teaches theology at the University of Notre Dame.) †

Christmas holds the key to human history

By David Gibson

Christmas is important; it holds the key to human history, Pope John Paul II said in a message titled "The Mystery of the Incarnation" (1998).

Jesus' birth directs our attention not only to the past, but to the future. It makes an important claim about the larger meaning of Christmas.

In saying that "the whole of human history ... stands in reference" to Jesus,



CNS illustration by Juan Hyme

Icon makers of the Christian East depict the Nativity scene not as happening in a stable, but in front of an open cave. By such a location, they speak both of the birth of Christ and the empty tomb when Jesus, 33 years later, will be raised into new life as the resurrected Lord.

the pope introduces a topic that could provide for a lifetime of reflection and meditation for us. Who is Jesus as a person, and how does his personhood shape the future?

We focus intensely at this time of year on events of the distant past. But Christmas also invigorates us, enabling us to face the future with hope.

"The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is not an event which can be consigned to the past," the pope explained. "The whole of

human history in fact stands in reference to him: Our own time and the future of the world are illumined by his presence."

In no way is "the journey of believers toward the third millennium ... weighed down by the weariness which the burden of 2,000 years of history could bring with it," the pope said. "Rather, Christians feel invigorated in the knowledge that they bring to the world the true light, Christ."

(David Gibson edits Faith Alive!) †

Discussion Point

Jesus is a companion for life

This Week's Question

In 20 words or less, explain who Jesus is for you.

"Jesus is my consoler when I'm troubled, my companion when I'm lonely and my listener when I need to talk." (Betty Allen, Delphi, Ind.)

"Jesus is my best friend!" (Clark Z. Conway Jr., Evansville, Ind.)

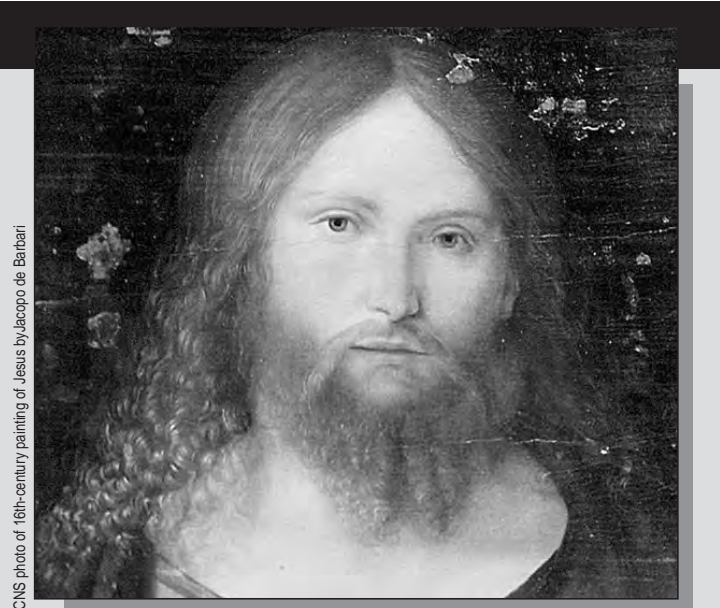
"Not left or right, conservative or liberal; not centrist, not far or near, yet all. Jesus is ineffable." (Leonard O'Nan, Hendersonville, Ky.)

"Jesus is a companion for life who promises forgiveness, his Father's love and asks that we be faithful to him." (Father Joseph Cahill, North Vassalboro, Maine)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Do you think of yourself as having a vocation? Why or why not? What makes your role in life a vocation?

To respond for possible publication, write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



CNS photo of 16th-century painting of Jesus by Jacopo de' Barbari

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Thoughts from saints about the Incarnation

For my Christmas column, let me call on a few of my friends for their thoughts about the wonder of the Incarnation:



St. Hippolytus (died 236): "When the Word was hidden within God himself he was invisible to the created world, but God made him visible. First God gave utterance to his voice, engendering light from light, and then he sent his own mind into the world as its Lord. Visible before to God alone and not to the world, God made him visible so that the world could be saved by seeing him. This mind that entered our world was made known as the Son of God. All things came into being through him; but he alone is begotten by the Father."

St. Augustine (354-430): "Awake, mankind! For your sake God became man. You would have suffered eternal death had he not been born in time.

Never would you have been freed from sinful flesh had he not taken on himself the likeness of sinful flesh. You would have suffered everlasting unhappiness had it not been for this mercy. You would never have returned to life had he not shared your death. You would have been lost if he had not hastened to your aid."

St. Leo the Great (400-461): "In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its creator. He came to overthrow the devil, the origin of death, in that very nature by which he had overthrown mankind. When the angels on high are so exultant at this marvelous work of God's goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men and women?"

St. Maximus the Confessor (died 662): "The Word of God, born once in the flesh (such is his kindness and his goodness), is always willing to be born spiritually in those who desire him. In

them he is born as an infant as he fashions himself in them by means of their virtues. He reveals himself to the extent that he knows someone is capable of receiving him."

St. Bernard (1090-1153): "The fullness of time brought with it the fullness of divinity. God's Son came in the flesh so that mortal men could see and recognize God's kindness. When God reveals his humanity, his goodness cannot possibly remain hidden. To show his kindness what more could he do beyond taking my human form? My humanity, I say, not Adam's—that is, not such as he had before his fall."

St. Augustine again: "Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal creator of all things, became our Savior by being born of a mother. Of his own will he was born for us in time so that he could lead us to his Father's eternity. God became man so that man might become God. The Lord of the angels became man today so that man could eat the bread of angels." †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

The gift that keeps on giving comes from God

We've all heard about the "gift that keeps on giving." In fact, we may have heard too much about it.



We've been told that this gift is available through an annuity for our kids, or a subscription to a series of concerts or plays. It's bulbs to plant in the fall and enjoy next spring.

Maybe it's a donation to a charity or investment in a growth stock.

However the gift is touted, it's meant to appeal to our sense of thrift or, maybe, guilt. If we spend this money, we'll get more and more satisfaction per dollar and even earn "Brownie points" for generosity.

We'll kill several birds with one stone by presenting someone we need to remember with a gift, something they can enjoy or profit from well into the future, at a modest cost to ourselves. Maybe we'll help the grandkids with their educations this way, or impress the boss, or let Aunt Tillie know we think of her fondly all year long.

Christmas is the biggest gift-exchanging frenzy of the year. Birthdays and Valentine's Day, wedding anniversaries

and graduations pale by comparison. At Christmas time, as we all know too well, even the secularists and atheists among us feel compelled to give presents to everyone they know, from the mailman to their hairdresser.

Non-Christians seem a bit fuzzy as to why this is, but they pitch right in with Santa Claus and frequent raids on the shopping mall. Like everyone else, they make lists and check them twice and wrap, wrap, wrap. Even those who celebrate Hanukkah around the same time of year are often pressed by the prevalent culture to wrap up a little gift for the kids, one for each night of the celebration.

Thus, Christmas in our society means a hubbub of activity centered on giving and receiving presents. Which is not exactly a bad thing, since thoughtfulness and generosity can never be overrated. But the question remains, why, in fact, do we all do this?

Of course, the "reason for the season," the ultimate in gifts that keep on giving, is the birth of Christ. He is the incarnation of all that is good, the arbiter of our salvation and the path to eternal joy with God. Instead of the feeble secular reasons we hear, we know we give each other gifts in memory of this greatest gift, which God presents us at Christmas.

with agile legs deftly tapping out tunes of tender rhythm and romance—
or sturdy Pioneer, steadily trudging to the drumbeats of control—
or Holy Woman, whose chants confirm unchangeable links to life and love—
or Mother, crooning sweet lullabies to those who will grow into their own imperfect shells, hoping for others to hold them against listening hearts.

Of course, "Shell Life" doesn't explain how my idea for Sheena of the Jungle was as a missionary in disguise (comic book character blended with Catholic schooling)—or that, as a child, I had no idea Salome was a Biblical character who asked for the head of John the Baptist—or that I based my exotic dance ambition on a Western movie, "Salome and Where She Danced," featuring Yvonne DeCarlo—or that, although I took tap lessons, I guessed early that my short legs would never stretch into any as

If we can remove ourselves from the holiday ruckus, we'll soon realize that Christmas is indeed the gift that keeps on giving because it begins right now and continues forever. From the moment Christ appears, we're free at last, thank God almighty.

We're free at last to experience the excitement, kindness, generosity, hope and whatever else is good about our Christmas celebrations during each hour of every day, all year long. We don't need to wait for next December or in the case of commerce, for next September, in order to feel the Christmas spirit we all enjoy.

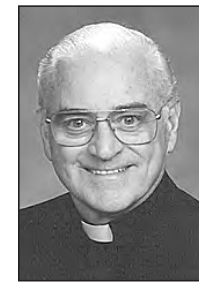
We're free to slow down and appreciate the needs and merits of each person we meet. We're free to empathize sincerely with others, and to support them, physically, emotionally or spiritually. We're free to express love in every aspect of our lives, and to receive it humbly in return.

We're free because God's gift of Christ relieves us of our human anxiety, our sinfulness. All we're required to do in return is believe in his promise. Is that a deal, or what?

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

Spirituality for Today/Fr. John Catoir

What are they saying about Christmas?



It must have been difficult for Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem. The journey demanded great trust. The immediate future was unknown to them. They knew there would be crowds and the likelihood of not finding adequate housing. It was a risky journey.

How often in life have we been on a journey where we had to trust God's providence? There are times when we all must embark on a journey full of possible pitfalls. God's mysterious calling touches every life.

Pope John Paul II wrote the following on this point: "Do not be afraid to commit your life for others. Do not shy away from problems. Do not try to compromise. It is time to assume your responsibilities, to become involved, not to run away."

Jesus meant it when he said that his "grace is sufficient for you, for strength is made perfect in weakness." No one is too weak to be an instrument of God's love, or joy or peace. The weaker you are, the better disposed you will be to rely on God's strength, and isn't that the crucial point?

"Joseph went from Nazareth into Judea ... to register together with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child" (Lk 2:4-5). They traveled more than 200 miles, he on foot and she heavy with child riding on a donkey. Walking into the

No one is too weak to be an instrument of God's love, or joy or peace. The weaker you are the better disposed you will be to rely on God's strength, and isn't that the crucial point?

unknown future, they plodded along. Mary traveled this long distance in some discomfort no doubt, keeping her heart focused on the miracle of life within her.

"When the fullness of time arrived, God sent his Son ... that he might redeem those under the law" (Gal 4:4). We can look upon him in our imagination, lying beside his mother. "Draw near to him, and offer him the gifts you bear in your heart" (Pope John Paul II).

Pour out gifts of love and thanksgiving to this infant king. "Jesus is the joy of the earth. He is the physician of every human infirmity. He is personified in every person who suffers, arousing compassion and generous love. Jesus is therefore present always and everywhere" (Pope Paul VI).

Jesus speaks to us: "Whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. I have come as a light into the world, so no one who believes in me is left in the dark" (Jn 12:45).

"Would it not be beautiful if Christmas were to generate the inner Christ within us: a habit of meditation, a living memorial of faith, now acquired and confirmed? We must live our lives in union with Christ's life" (Pope Paul VI).

"Be happy, rejoice in Christ's love, and live from his strength. True, you cannot always be healthy or successful, however you can always be with Christ and find strength at his side" (John Paul II).

The peaceable kingdom has already begun in the hearts of the faithful. It is possible, therefore, to share this knowledge of Christ's peace and love with those who are lost and lonely. "Go, therefore, and be messengers of joy" (Pope John Paul II).

Tell them that "the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the good news is proclaimed to the poor" (Mt 11:5).

(Father John Catoir is a CNS columnist.) †

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

Nostalgia prompts attention to Incarnation

Every year about this time, knowing that Christmas is near and a new year will



begin, I ponder the past—and not just the last 12 months. Maybe the influx of Christmas cards and holiday nostalgia prompt this.

Not long ago, someone wondered about a nostalgic poem I wrote for a

Papier-Mache Press book, *I Am Becoming the Woman I've Wanted*. I was asked: "How did you choose characters for 'Shell Life'?" I explained how each persona reflects some of my own early perceptions of women's roles. Here's the poem:

Shell Life

This is my imperfect shell: hold it to your heart to hear the hidden hymns of me as Sheena, harmonizing in the jungle heat with more beastly sounds—or me as Salome, jangling with jewels midst gossamer veils of seduction—or Ginger Rogers,

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 24, 2000

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

This weekend observes the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and Sunday of this weekend is Christmas Eve. The Scripture readings for the Vigil of Christmas are available, however these comments will address the readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent.



The first reading for this final Advent

Sunday is from the Book of Micah, one of the so-called "Minor" Prophets.

Micah lived eight centuries before Christ and was Isaiah's contemporary. His home was in a village about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. He wrote when the general observance of religion, and of religious principle, was at low ebb. As did the other prophets, Micah believed that this laxity in religion was the cause of all the troubles being experienced by God's people. Along with the other prophets, he also thought that unless the people returned to fidelity to God, they would pay a mighty price. It was not as if God was vengeful, but that they would create a dreadful situation for themselves.

In this reading, Micah obliquely recognizes the limitations of the people. They are humans. They can be misled. They can count on their own abilities when, in fact, they are not sufficient.

God, however, has not left the people at the mercy of their inadequacies. He will send a leader, a guide, a Redeemer, to them.

This Redeemer will come from the same geographical origin as did the great King David—Bethlehem, the small town in Judah. The Redeemer will come from

David's line. He will be a true and loving leader, a king but also a shepherd. He will rule in the very name of God.

For the second reading this weekend, the Church turns to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

This epistle is strong in its Hebrew imagery. Important in the Jewish religion in the first two-thirds of the first century A.D. was the liturgy of the temple. All Jews knew of it, even if they had not experienced it.

The epistle calls for more than ritual. It asks for a commitment of will. The true believer must say with all conviction and honesty that the intention behind the outward acts of worship is to do the will of God, to acknowledge God's supremacy.

St. Luke's Gospel is the source of the third reading.

Of the four Gospels, and of the three Synoptic Gospels, only Luke and Matthew furnish in any detail a glimpse into the events immediately before, during and after the birth of the Lord.

This Gospel selection recalls not the birth of Jesus but the visit by Mary, expectant with Jesus, to her cousin Elizabeth and her cousin's husband Zechariah. Elizabeth also is expecting. The very presence of Mary and of the unborn Savior causes Elizabeth's unborn child to stir. The presence of the Incarnation was so powerful that even the devout in its physical proximity responded.

Mary's visit was neither to pass time nor to tend Elizabeth. Actually, Mary departs before Elizabeth's delivery.

Rather, Mary made the difficult trip to visit Elizabeth so that both could rejoice in God's glory and praise God for the Redemption that soon was to be. Elizabeth is presented as a very faithful believer. She understands that the movement of her unborn child is no merely physical coincidence. During Mary's visit, a momentous recognition of the majesty of Redemption has occurred.

Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 25

The Nativity of the Lord
Christmas—Midnight

Isaiah 9:1-6
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13
Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14
Christmas—Dawn

Isaiah 62:11-12
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12
Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:15-20

Christmas—Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98:1-6
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18
or John 1:1-5, 9-14

Tuesday, Dec. 26

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

Wednesday, Dec. 27

John, apostle and evangelist
1 John 1:1-4
Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
John 20:2-8

Thursday, Dec. 28

The Holy Innocents, martyrs
1 John 1:5-2:2
Psalm 124:2-5, 7b-8
Matthew 2:13-18

(continued on page 25)

Background

The Church this weekend celebrates the last Sunday of Advent, and also it uses the occasion for the fourth time to call us to communion with God. On Christmas, just a day away, we symbolically will commemorate the birth of the Son of God as the son of Mary, as the Savior.

This weekend, the summons is both frank and deeply reassuring. Micah reminded us of our need for God. To comfort us, the prophet also assured us

that a great and wonderful representative of God would overcome our limitations. This representative would be born in Bethlehem of Judah.

However, the Savior will not thunder into our hearts against our will. We must prepare ourselves. As Hebrews urged, we must be sincere and humble.

If we hold these virtues, then God will be with us. Furthermore, our humility and trust will enable us to see God, realize the presence of God with us, and in this find peace, hope and joy. †

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

Sunday is day for rest, worship and reflection

QI am a 16-year-old who is being taught in my high school CCD class that shopping on Sunday is a mortal sin. My



family used to shop almost every weekend, usually on Sunday, and we always looked forward to it. It was a recreational activity.

But our priest says it is a mortal sin because we make the stores stay open on Sundays so they get business. I

never heard this before. Is it true? If shopping on Sundays is a sin, then what is the difference in going to a golf course, an amusement park or a theater?

Where are we supposed to draw the line between "doing business" and "doing recreational activities"? (Illinois)

AChristian prohibitions against certain activities, especially "servile work," on Sundays go back to the times of agricultural and feudal societies. It is not necessary to go into those problems here, because the Catholic Church's attitude and rules about Sunday observance now exist on a wholly different level.

We are obliged to participate at Mass on Sundays, of course. Beyond that, the obligations we are to observe are explicitly intended as aids to keeping a spirit of reverent reflection, worship and rest.

Vatican Council II, calling Sunday the original Christian feast day, urges that its observance should always be proposed and taught "so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work" (Constitution on the Liturgy, 106).

The Code of Canon Law, the official legal guide for Catholic daily life, says much the same. "[The faithful] should avoid any work or business which might stand in the way of the worship which should be given to God, the joy proper to the Lord's day or the needed relaxation of mind and body" (1247).

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* repeats those thoughts, adding that we should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would prohibit them from observing the Lord's Day. Situations require some people to work on Sunday, but everyone should take care to have sufficient time for leisure (2185-2187).

For reasons indicated in these sources, keeping the Lord's Day holy is an important part of our Catholic life. And we obviously do have some obligation, for everyone's benefit, to help establish a reasonable Christian understanding and observance of Sunday rest.

Clearly, however, there is nothing in these Catholic rules that would in any way automatically prohibit shopping on that day, certainly not under threat of mortal sin.

Perhaps you misunderstood what the priest said. The rationale you relate for calling Sunday shopping mortally sinful is surely odd and, I believe, extremely hard to defend.

As you tell it, the shopper's sin would be a serious one of undermining the fabric of Christian society or of enabling and closely cooperating with the serious sin of others, the stores and their employees.

Among other things, that would mean establishing first that those others are sinning seriously, at least objectively, by working on Sunday, and second that your cooperation in shopping is so closely connected that you also sin seriously. This would be difficult to prove.

It doesn't, as they say, take a rocket scientist to understand simply and prudently the vision and guidelines contained in the words I quoted from the council and from canon law.

Of course, the significant population growth in our society of Muslim, Buddhist and a multitude of other religious and ethnic groups, not to mention Jewish people, adds a variety of other moral dimensions to the subject, which also could affect our decisions. †

My Journey to God

Who Is It We Adore?

Christmas 2000
O come all ye faithful
The call is out
Give glory to God
Walk to Bethlehem
Listen and behold the birth of the child
Are we listening
Who is it we adore

Christmas 2000
A new century
Another chance
Rebirthing our world
Will we ever learn the ways of nonviolence
Who is it we adore

Christmas 2000
Racism, sexism, personal and corporate greed
Killings, leaders abusing power
Walking to Bethlehem is difficult
Who is it we adore

Christmas 2000
Will we ever reach Bethlehem
Obstacles galore
Guns, war, obscene military spending
Countries ravaged by sanctions
Exploitation of the poor
A world bent on nuclear annihilation
Can we turn it around
The call is out
Who is it we adore

Christmas 2000
This God of love sends signs and wonders
The star shines bright
All roads lead to Bethlehem
The call is out
O come all ye faithful
Walk the ways of peace
Who is it we adore

Christmas 2000
Lurching toward Bethlehem
Called to be faithful, hopeful
Goodness still abounds
Grace exists in the struggle
Will we incarnate the world
Who is it we adore

Christmas 2000
Give thanks, honor and glory
Sing out for justice
Forgive, share, love—be peace
Live the questions, be transformed
A holy people, we are empowered by God's love
We are chosen, the world is in our hands
The call is out
Listen for the song
Glory to God in the highest
and peace to all people on earth.

By Joe Zelenka

(Joe Zelenka is a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis.)

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From the Archives

First church in Madison named for St. Michael the Archangel

The former St. Michael the Archangel Church in Madison was dedicated by Father Michael E. Shawe on Sunday, Dec. 22, 1839—161 years ago today. (His name is familiar to many people because an archdiocesan school—Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison—is named in his honor.)

This historic postcard of the church was sent to the archdiocesan Archives by St. Rose of Lima parishioner Jean Cox of Franklin, who earned a county fair ribbon last summer for her painting of this scene.

Historical information that Cox included with the postcard notes that Irish immigrants who labored on the railroad at Madison hauled scrap stone blasted from the railroad right-of-way to the east end of Third Street, where they built the city's first Catholic Church. It also is one of the oldest Catholic churches in the Northwest Territory.

Parishioner Francis Costigan designed the Gothic-style church, which was completed in 1839 on land donated by John McIntyre. Since towers on churches are

traditionally located on the front, above or near the main entrance, one history reports that a papal dispensation was necessary to build the steeple at the rear of the church in 1864. First-floor windows were designed as pointed arches and constructed of leaded stained glass. The church interior featured a curved open-book design. Later additions included Angelus bells in 1895, a white Carrera marble altar in 1910 and "a rare and exquisite Emmaus stained-glass window" behind the altar.

Archdiocesan archivist Janet Newland said records indicate that St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Madison was founded on July 18, 1837. Father Michael E. Shawe was the first resident pastor. St. Michael School opened on Sept. 26, 1843.

As the Catholic population grew in Madison, St. Mary Parish was formed from St. Michael Parish in 1851. Mostly German Catholics attended that parish. In 1853, St. Patrick Parish was founded in Madison.



In 1954, St. Michael School and St. Mary School were merged "to solve educational problems." In 1965, a new grade school was built that opened on Nov. 11, 1966, as Pope John XXIII School.

In 1993, all three parishes in Madison—St. Michael, St. Mary and St. Patrick—as well as St. Anthony Parish in China, were closed and the new Prince

of Peace Parish was formed in Madison to serve southeastern Indiana Catholics in the historic and scenic community along the Ohio River.

(This week's "From the Archives" concludes The Criterion's two-year feature of historical photographs related to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.) †

Catholic-led effort against death penalty gets attention at U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (CNS)—A campaign led by the lay Catholic community of Sant'Egidio for a worldwide moratorium on the death penalty got the personal endorsement of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan Dec. 18.

Annan said "only sovereign states have the power to grant your petition," but added, "I pray that they will do so."

The secretary-general accepted a symbolic presentation of 3.2 million signatures that had been gathered from 145 countries in a two-year campaign.

Sant'Egidio gathered 2.7 million of the signatures, Amnesty International collected 300,000, mostly from Europe, and a Moratorium 2000 project led by St. Joseph of Medaille Sister Helen Prejean secured 200,000 from the Americas.

Annan said that "many persons of wisdom and integrity" believed "the right to life can be forfeited by those who take life," and members of the United Nations were "deeply divided" on the issue.

But he noted that in 1989 the U.N. General Assembly provided for renunciation of the death penalty in an optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Since then, 43 countries have ratified the document and seven others have signed it.

"The forfeiture of life is too absolute, too irreversible, for one human being to inflict it on another, even when backed by legal process," Annan said. "I believe that future generations, throughout the world, will come to agree." †

This Ad Is Camera Ready!

St. Francis
1844
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Neg

The Active List

The Criterion welcomes announcements of archdiocesan Church and parish open-to-the-public activities for "The Active List." Please be brief—listing date, location, event, sponsor, cost and time. Include a phone number for verification. No announcements will be taken by telephone. Notices must be in our office by 10 a.m. Monday the week of (Friday) publication: The Criterion; The Active List; 1400 N. Meridian St. (hand deliver); P.O. Box 1717; Indianapolis, IN 46206 (mail); 317-236-1593 (fax); mklein@archindy.org (e-mail).

December 23

Chapel, St. Augustine Home for the Aged, 2345 W. 86th St., **Indianapolis**. Eucharistic liturgy celebrated in memory of Arthur Sullivan and William Kennedy Jr., 5 p.m.

December 24

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**. Catholic Choir will sing Christmas Eve Mass, 4:30 p.m.

January 2

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46th and Illinois streets, **Indianapolis**. Archdiocesan Gospel Choir, rehearsals in preparation for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, 7 p.m.

January 8

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46th and Illinois streets, **Indianapolis**. Archdiocesan

Gospel Choir, rehearsals in preparation for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, 7 p.m.

January 14

Mary's Schoenstatt, **Rexville**, (located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South, 12 miles south of Versailles). "The Schoenstatt Love Compartment," 2:30 p.m., followed by Mass, 3:30 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel. Information: 812-689-3551.

January 15

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., **Indianapolis**. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. 2 p.m.

Recurring

Daily

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St.,

Greenwood. Perpetual adoration.

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**. Tridentine (Latin) Mass, Mon.-Fri., noon; Wed., Fri., 5:30 p.m. Information: 317-636-4478.

Weekly

Sundays

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**. Tridentine Mass, 10 a.m.

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., **Indianapolis**. Mass in Vietnamese, 2 p.m.

St. Anthony of Padua Church, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., **Clarksville**. "Be Not Afraid" holy hour, 6 p.m.

Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30-9 p.m.; rosary for world peace, 8 p.m.

St. Gabriel Church, 6000 W. 34th St., **Indianapolis**. Spanish Mass, 5 p.m.

Mondays

Our Lady of the Greenwood Chapel, 335 S. Meridian St., **Greenwood**. Prayer group, 7:30 p.m.

St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 523 S. Merrill St., **Fortville**. Rosary, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesdays

St. Joseph Church, 2605 St. Joe Rd. W., **Sellersburg**.

Shepherds of Christ rosary, prayers after 7 p.m. Mass.

Holy Name Parish, 89 N. 17th St., **Beech Grove**. Prayer group, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

St. Anne Parish, **Hamburg**. "The Faith Explained," by Father Greg Bramlage, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 812-934-5854.

Wednesdays

Divine Mercy Chapel, 3354 W. 30th St. (behind St. Michael Church), **Indianapolis**. Marian prayers for priests, 3-4 p.m. Information: 317-271-8016.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Chapel, 335 S. Meridian St., **Greenwood**. Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy, 7 p.m.

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., **Indianapolis**. Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, Catholic Social Services program, 6-8 p.m. Information: 317-236-1538.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 5692 Central Ave., **Indianapolis**. Marion Movement of Priests prayer cenacle, 1 p.m. Information: 317-257-2266.

Thursdays

St. Lawrence Chapel, 6944 E. 46th St., **Indianapolis**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mass.

St. Mary Church, 415 E. Eighth St., **New Albany**. Shepherds of Christ prayers for lay and reli-



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gious vocations, 7 p.m.

St. Malachy Church, 326 N. Green St., **Brownsburg**. Liturgy of the Hours, 7 p.m. Information: 317-852-3195.

Christ the King Chapel, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Marian prayers for priests, 5:30-6:30 a.m.

Fatima K of C, 1040 N. Post Road, **Indianapolis**. Euchre, 7 p.m. Information: 317-638-8416.

Sacred Heart Parish Hall, 1125 S. Meridian St., **Indianapolis**. Adult religious education, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-638-5551.

Fridays

St. Susanna Church, 1210 E. Main St., **Plainfield**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

St. Lawrence Chapel, 6944 E. 46th St., **Indianapolis**. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Benediction and Mass.

Affiliated Women's Services, Inc., 2215 Distributors Dr., **Indianapolis**. Pro-life rosary, 10 a.m.

Christ the King Chapel, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis**. Marian prayers for priests, 5:30-6:30 a.m.

Saturdays

Clinic for Women, E. 38th St. and Parker Ave., **Indianapolis**. Pro-life rosary, 9:30 a.m.

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., **Indianapolis**.

Tridentine Mass, 9 a.m.

St. Patrick Church, 950 Prospect St., **Indianapolis**. Mass in English, 4 p.m.

Monthly

First Sundays

St. Paul Church, 218 Scheller Ave., **Sellersburg**. Prayer group, 7-8:15 p.m. Information: 812-246-4555.

Fatima K of C, 1040 N. Post Road, **Indianapolis**. Euchre, 1 p.m. Information: 317-638-8416.

First Mondays

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., **Indianapolis**. Guardian Angel Guild board meeting, 9:30 a.m.

First Tuesdays

Divine Mercy Chapel, 3354 W. 30th St., **Indianapolis**. Confession, 6:45 p.m.; Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30 p.m.

St. Joseph Church, 2605 St. Joe Rd. W., **Sellersburg**. Holy hour for religious vocations, Benediction and exposition of Blessed Sacrament after 7 p.m. Mass.

First Fridays

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1752 Scheller Lane, **New Albany**. Adoration, concluding with confessions at 6 p.m. Benediction at 6:45 p.m.

Holy Guardian Angels Church, 405 U.S. 52, **Cedar Grove**. Eucharistic adoration after 8 a.m. Mass-5 p.m.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of Blessed Sacrament, prayer service, 7:30 p.m.

Sacred Heart Church, 1530 Union St., **Indianapolis**. Exposition of Blessed Sacrament after 8 a.m. Mass-noon communion service.

St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1723 "I" St., **Bedford**. Exposition of Blessed Sacrament, after 8:30 a.m. Mass-9 p.m.; reconciliation, 4-6 p.m.

St. Joseph Church, 113 S. 5th St., **Terre Haute**. Eucharistic adoration, after 9 a.m. Mass 5 p.m.; rosary, noon.

St. Mary Church, 415 E. Eighth St., **New Albany**. Eucharistic adoration, reconciliation, after 9 p.m. Mass-midnight.

Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr.,

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Christmas Mass Schedule

Sunday, Dec. 24: 4:30 p.m. English Sung Mass with children's procession in authentic Italian costumes.

Midnight Masses: English Sung Mass at Holy Rosary.

The traditional Latin High Mass will be at Marian College chapel, 3200 Cold Springs Road.

Monday, Dec. 25: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. Traditional Latin High Mass at Holy Rosary.

Opportunities for individual confessions:

Saturday, Dec. 23: 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 24: 8 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. and 9:25 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.

Confessions are also heard prior to each weekday Mass. Call for schedule.

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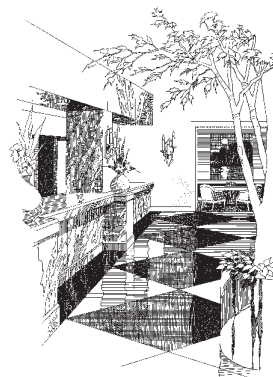
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Daily Readings, continued from page 21

Friday, Dec. 29
 Thomas Becket, bishop and martyr
 1 John 2:3-11
 Psalm 96:1-3, 5b-6
 Luke 2:22-35

Saturday, Dec. 30
 1 John 2:12-17
 Psalm 96:7-10
 Luke 2:36-40

Sunday, Dec. 31
 The Holy Family
 Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
 Psalm 128:1-5
 Colossians 3:12-21
 or Colossians 3:12-17
 Luke 2:41-52

Monday, Jan. 1
 The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God
 Numbers 6:22-27
 Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 2:16-21

Tuesday, Jan. 2
 Basil the Great, bishop and doctor of the Church
 Gregory Nazianzen, bishop and doctor of the Church
 1 John 2:22-28
 Psalm 98:1-4
 John 1:19-28

Wednesday, Jan. 3
 1 John 2:29-3:6
 Psalm 98:1-3, 6
 John 1:29-34

Thursday, Jan. 4
 Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious
 1 John 3:7-10
 Psalm 98:1, 7-9
 John 1:35-42

Friday, Jan. 5
 John Neumann, bishop
 1 John 3:11-21
 Psalm 100:1-5
 John 1:43-51

Saturday, Jan. 6
 1 John 5:5-13
 Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20
 Mark 1:7-11
 or Luke 3:23-38
 or Luke 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38

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

Monday, Jan. 8
 The Baptism of the Lord
 Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
 or Acts 10:34-38
 Psalm 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10
 Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Tuesday, Jan. 9
 Hebrews 2:5-12
 Psalm 8:2a, 5-9
 Mark 1:21b-28

Wednesday, Jan. 10
 Hebrews 2:14-18
 Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9
 Mark 1:29-39

Thursday, Jan. 11
 Hebrews 3:7-14
 Psalm 95:6-11
 Mark 1:40-45

Friday, Jan. 12
 Hebrews 4:1-5, 11
 Psalm 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8
 Mark 2:1-12

Saturday, Jan. 13
 Hilary, bishop and doctor
 Hebrews 4:12-16
 Psalm 19:8-10, 15
 Mark 2:13-17

Sunday, Jan. 14
 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
 Isaiah 62:1-5
 Psalm 96:1-3, 7-10
 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
 John 2:1-11

Monday, Jan. 15
 Hebrews 5:1-10
 Psalm 110:1-4
 Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday, Jan. 16
 Hebrews 6:10-20
 Psalm 111:1-2, 4-5, 9, 10c
 Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday, Jan. 17
 Anthony, abbot
 Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17
 Psalm 110:1-4
 Mark 3:1-6

Thursday, Jan. 18
 Hebrews 7:25-8:6
 Psalm 40:7-10, 17
 Mark 3:7-12

Friday, Jan. 19
 Hebrews 8:6-13
 Psalm 85:8, 10-14
 Mark 3:13-19

Saturday, Jan. 20
 Fabian, pope and martyr
 Sebastian, martyr
 Hebrews 9:2-3, 11-14
 Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9
 Mark 3:20-21

Sunday, Jan. 21
 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
 Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10
 Psalm 19:8-10, 15
 1 Corinthians 12:12-30
 or 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27
 Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21



Be a part of our first bridal issue for 2001!

Announcements of Weddings



To be published in the February 9, 2001, issue of The Criterion

If you are planning your wedding between January 30 and July 1, 2001, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement on the form below.

Pictures

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

Deadline

All announcements with photos must be received by Friday, January 19, 2001, 10 a.m. (No photos will be accepted after this date). All announcements without photos must be received by the same date.



— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to:
 BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Greg Otolski, 1400 North Meridian, Indianapolis, IN 46202
 Deadline with photos: Friday, January 19, 2001, 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

BRIDE First Middle Last Daytime Phone

Mailing Address City State Zip Code

Bride's Parents

City State

BRIDEGROOM First Middle Last

Bridegroom's Parents

City State

Wedding Date Church City State

Signature of person furnishing information Relationship Daytime Phone

Photo Enclosed No Picture

Rest in peace

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

BOCK, Ruth Ellen (Everett), 76, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Nov. 18. Mother of Nancy Ritch, Cathy Zaiser, Carl and Paul Bock. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of two.

BOYD, Mary L., 82, St. Thomas More, Mooresville, Dec. 3. Mother of Shirley Davis. Grandmother of three.

BRECKLER, Gabriel Francis, infant, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Son of Francine and Victor Breckler. Brother of Michael Breckler. Grandson of Helen and Francis Dalfonso and Catherine Breckler. Great-grandson of Margaret Justus.

BYNUM, Marie (Sherrod), 74, St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis, Dec. 8. Wife of Alvin Bynum. Mother of Lynn Bynum and Lisa Walter. Sister of Kathleen Barnes and Henryn Mayo.

CASPER, Charles R., 86, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute, Dec. 7. Father of Cathy Manson, Charles Jr. and Walter Casper. Brother of Ellen Lewis,

Joseph and Ray Casper. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.

CAUCHI, Joseph Jude, 57, St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis, Dec. 13. Husband of Joanne (Raedle) Cauchi. Father of Elizabeth Sohrab and Paul Cauchi. Brother of Lucy Cauchi and Catherine Mauch. Grandfather of three.

ERDMANN, Loretta, 66, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Dec. 9. Mother of Delores Lawrence, Donna, Gregory and Jeffery Erdmann. Sister of John and Richard Herod. Grandmother of seven.

FEY, Barbara J., 73, St. Mary, Rushville, Dec. 12. Mother of Cheryl Miller, Cynthia Walters, Michael and Patrick Fey. Sister of Joellen Ford and Gene Graff. Grandmother of eight.

FINK, Raymond E., Jr., 68, St. Elizabeth, Cambridge City, Dec. 11. Husband of Phyllis Fink. Father of Linda Patterson. Brother of Dorothy Hicks, Corena Marshall, Mary Moore, Larry, Otho, Paul and William Fink. Grandfather of one.

FOUGEROUSSE, Mary I., 85, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 10. Mother of Rita Martin, Mary Schmoll, Jessica, Martha, Bernard, Edward, Joseph, Nichols and Philip Fougereousse. Sister of Ellen Kluesner and Rita Short. Grandmother of 13. Great-grandmother of six.

HENRY, Lorie Helen, 85, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Wife of Carlisle R. Henry.

Mother of Janice Young, Joe and Phil Henry. Sister of Florence Spaulding and Leroy "Speedy" Fillenwarth. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of five.

HOHLT, Barbara (Eubank) (Markle), 63, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 10. Mother of Gary, John and Vic Markle. Sister of Elma Elsbury and Edward Eubank. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of one.

JEDAMZIK, Karen M., 46, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Nov. 28. Wife of Robert K. Jedamzik. Mother of Shannon and Ryan Curran. Stepmother of Zach Jedamzik. Daughter of Helen (Mirucki) Bott. Sister of Susan Bohnert, Carol d'Ambrosio and Kenneth Bott.

JOYNER, Ida L., 100, Holy Angels, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Aunt of several.

MABEE, Margaret L., 85, Little Flower, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Mother of Nancy Meyer-Brown, Mary Bunn, Sharon Mabee-Ward, Kathy and Joseph Mabee. Grandmother of nine.

MATUSZAK, Kathleen, 50, Holy Cross, Indianapolis, Nov. 5. Mother of Rose Springer. Daughter of Winifred and Chester Matuszak.

MILLION, Rose Mary, 75, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd's Knobs, Dec. 7. Mother of Jane Humphrey.

MISIAK, John P., 96, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 13. Father of Betty Bruss, Johanne Davis and Beverly Stiers. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of nine.

OSSORIO, Antonio C., 72, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis,

Dec. 5. Husband of Rita D'Auria Ossorio. Brother of Theresa Rocco, Maria, Margherita and Aemando Ossorio.

PAYTON, Charles A. "Mac." 70, Little Flower, Indianapolis, Dec. 14. Husband of Irma Jean (Wheeling) Payton. Father of Diane Mills, Janet Newman, Laurie Pushor, Nancy Simanek, Dale and Mark Payton. Brother of Sandra Near. Grandfather of nine.

PRANGER, Kathryn (McHugh), 88, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Mother of Kathleen Rosdil. Grandmother of two.

SHICKERT, William Russell, 49, St. Paul, Sellersburg, Nov. 29. Husband of Jacqueline (Johnson) Shickert. Father of Kaitlyn, Russell and Scott Shickert. Son of Mr. and Mrs. William Shickert. Brother of Carol Mato, Debra Wick and Richard Shickert. Grandfather of three.

SMITH, David Bernard, 83, St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute, Dec. 8. Father of Mary Sandra Armstrong and David Smith. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of eight.

SMITH, Scarlet Marie (Hohmann), 49, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 16. Mother of Damon and Ian Smith. Daughter of Alfred Hohmann. Sister of Lisa Ehr Gott, Barbara Guy, Angela Hawkins, and Linda and Michael Hohmann.

STERRETT, Thomas Edward, 73, Holy Name, Beech Grove, Dec. 16. Husband

of Rose (Rolfsen) Sterrett. Father of Linda Storey-Lentz, Anthony, Robert and Thomas Sterrett. Brother of Roseanne Drummond. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 11.

TOUCHTON, Joseph C., 82, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute, Dec. 2. Husband of Betty Touchton. Father of Charles Ellis, Frank Spittler, Joseph and Lowell Touchton. Brother of Betty Hall. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of 11.

UHLENHAKE, Irene J., 69, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Mother of Jane Oxley, Daniel, Joseph, Mark and Robert Uhlenhake. Sister of Mary Ann Mahoney, Donna Strominger, Dave, Gene, Jerry and Paul Metzger. Grandmother of 12.

VALANT, Larry, 61, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 27. Father of Jacque McGuire, Jill Wamsley, Julie and Jack Valant. Brother of Kathy Hanneman and John Valant. Grandfather of six.

VANNICE, Nicola Ann (Nauber), 54, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, Nov. 30. Wife of L.G. "Jack" Vannice. Mother of Andy, Charlie, Jack and Nathan Vannice. Daughter of Anita and Frank Nauber. Sister of Noel Nauber.

WALSH, J.C., 92, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Father of Charlotte Ellison and Mickey Smith. Brother of Margaret Weikauf. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of 14. Great-great-grandfather of

seven.
WERNER, Michael L., 39, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 7. Husband of Deborah (Suttman) Werner. Father of Lindsey, Christopher and Joshua Werner. Son of Dorothy (Martin) and Robert Werner. Brother of Martha Feller, Melinda Harmeyer, Marlene Kirschner, Mildred Koehne, Marie and Marjorie Werner. Grandson of Clara Werner.

WERNKE, Stella Bernice, 79, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 15. Wife of Michael J. Wernke. Mother of Barbara Ricke, Patricia Sagester, Paula, Benjamin and Michael Wernke. Sister of Gertrude Laws-Bohman, Ruthie Wissell, Arthur and Richard Flodder. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of six.

WILSON, Francis P. O'Neill, 76, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 7. Mother of Linda Foster, Bruce, Michael, Patricia and Steven Wilson. Brother of Joan Reed. Grandmother of 10.

WINTZ, Francis A., 88, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 14. Husband of Ruth (Westmeyer) Wintz. Father of Mary Herschberger, James and William Wintz. Brother of Ruth Kramer, Mary Grace Tebbe and Clarence Wintz. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of two.

ZEUNIK, Theodore Joseph, Sr., 71, St. Michael, Indianapolis, Dec. 6. Husband of Betty (Brooks) Zeunik. Father of Mary Kay Rust, Elaine Woodward and Theodore Zeunik Jr. Grandfather of six. †

The Active List, continued from page 24

Indianapolis. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 7:15 a.m. Mass-5:30 p.m. Benediction and service.

St. Peter Church, 1207 East Rd., **Brookville.** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 8 a.m. Communion service-1 p.m.

First Saturdays
St. Nicholas Church, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Dr., **Sunman.** Mass, praise and worship, 8 a.m.; then SACRED gathering in the school.

Little Flower Chapel, 4720 E. 13th St., **Indianapolis.** Apostolate of Fatima holy hour, 2 p.m.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., **Greenwood.** Devotions and sacrament of reconciliation, after 8 a.m. Mass.

Holy Angels Church, 740 W.

28th St., **Indianapolis.** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 11 a.m.-noon.

St. Mary Church, 415 E. Eighth St., **New Albany.** Eucharistic adoration and confessions after 9 p.m. Mass.

Second Mondays
Mount St. Francis. Holy hour for vocations to priesthood and religious life, 7 p.m.

Second Tuesdays
St. Pius X Parish, 7200 Sarto Dr., **Indianapolis.** Separated and Divorced Catholics support group, 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-578-8254.

Second Thursdays
Focolare Movement, Komro home, **Indianapolis.** Gathering, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-257-1073.

St. Luke Church, 7575 Holliday Dr. E., **Indianapolis.** Holy hour for priestly and religious vocations, 7 p.m.

Second Saturdays
Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, Holy Family Chapel, 1400 N. Meridian St., **Indianapolis.** Eucharistic Holy Hour for Life, 1-2 p.m., faith sharing and Scripture reflection, 2-3 p.m. Information: Servants of the Gospel of Life Sister Diane Carollo, 317-236-1521 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1521.

Third Sundays
Mary's Schoenstatt, **Rexville** (located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South, 12 miles south of Versailles). Holy Hour, 2:30 p.m.; Mass, 3:30 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel. Information: 812-689-3551. E-mail: eburwink@seidata.com.

Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., **Indianapolis.** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 2 p.m.-7 a.m. (Monday); rosary, 8 p.m. Open until midnight.

Third Mondays
St. Matthew Parish, 4100 E. 56th St., **Indianapolis.** Young Widowed Group (by archdiocesan Office for Youth and Family Ministries), 7:30 p.m. Child care available. Information: 317-236-1586.

Third Wednesdays
St. Jude Church, 5353 McFarland Rd., **Indianapolis.** Rosary, 6:15 p.m. Information: 317-783-1445.

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., **Indianapolis.** Catholic Widowed Organization, 7-9:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-1102.

Holy Family Parish, Main St., **Oldenburg.** Support group for the widowed, 7 p.m. Information: 812-934-2524.

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 Troy Ave., **Indianapolis.** Mass, 2 p.m.

Third Thursdays
Our Lady of Peace Mausoleum Chapel, 9001 Haverstick Rd., **Indianapolis.** Mass, 2 p.m.

St. Elizabeth's, 2500 Churchman Ave., **Indianapolis.** Daughters of Isabella, Madonna Circle meeting, noon, dessert and beverages served. Information: 317-849-5840.

Third Fridays
St. Francis Hall Chapel, Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Rd., **Indianapolis.** Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Central Indiana, Mass and healing service, 7 p.m.

Third Saturdays
St. Andrew Church, 4052 E. 38th St., **Indianapolis.** Mass for Life by archdiocesan Office of Pro-Life Activities, 8:30 a.m.; walk to Clinic for Women, 2951 E. 38th St., rosary; return to church for Benediction. †

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