Christmas joy comes from knowing God loves and saves us, pope says

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As Christmas approached, St. Peter’s Square was filled with balloons, singing and an incredible variety of Baby Jesus figurines — everything from plastic figures that would fit in a walnut shell to those that were larger-than-life sized.

For Pope Francis, the most important ingredient in the mix was joy.

Reciting the Angelus Dec. 11 and blessing the Baby Jesus statues children brought for their home or school Nativity scenes, the pope insisted that the true meaning of Christmas should bring Christians a deep and abiding sense of joy.

Unlike “superficial happiness” or even the giddiness shopping can bring, he said, “it is a joy that touches the depths of our being while we await Jesus, who already has come to bring salvation to the world, the promised Messiah, born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary.”

“God entered history to free us from slavery to sin; he pitched his tent among us to share our existence, heal our wounds, bandage our injuries and give us new life,” the pope said. “Joy is the fruit of this intervention of salvation and God’s love.”

The Christmas decorations and lights and the Nativity scenes being set up in homes all over the world are signs of that joy, Pope Francis said. They are a call “to welcome the Lord who always knocks at our door, the doors of our hearts, to draw near to us” and “to recognize his footsteps in those of our brothers and sisters passing by, especially the weakest and neediest.”

A boy displays his Baby Jesus figurine as Pope Francis leads the Angelus from the window of his apartment overlooking St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Dec. 11. In an annual tradition, Roman children brought their figurines of the baby Jesus to the Angelus.

Pope calls Coptic Pope Tawadros to express condolences after Cairo attack

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis phoned Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria Dec. 12, expressing his prayers and condolences for the previous day’s terrorist attack at the Cairo cathedral that left 25 people dead.

“We are united in the blood of our martyrs,” the pope told the Orthodox patriarch, according to a Vatican statement.

The patriarch thanked Pope Francis for his closeness at such a sad time and asked his continued prayers for the Copts and for peace in Egypt, the statement said.

On a December weekend bloodied by terrorist attacks in Egypt and Turkey, Pope Francis condemned the violence and urged people to hold fast to their faith and renew their commitment to upholding basic human values.

After reciting the Angelus Dec. 11, Pope Francis offered prayers for the “victims of savage terrorist attacks” in Egypt, which also wounded dozens, and Dec. 10 in Istanbul, which killed close to 40 people, mainly police.

“The places are different, but the violence is the same,” Pope Francis said. In response to the “death and destruction,” there is only one response: “faith in God and unity in human and civil values.”

The pope also told the crowd in St. Peter’s Square that each day in prayer he is close to the people of the besieged city of Aleppo, Syria.

“We must not forget that Aleppo is a city and that there are people there: families, children, elderly...
Preparing for Christmas with Mary and Joseph

IN TRUTH AND CHARITY
BISHOP KEVIN C. RHoades

As we approach Christmas, the Church invites us to reflect on Mary and Joseph and their courageous faith. I can think of no better models for us to welcome Our Savior than our Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph. Their example invites us to accept, with openness of spirit, Jesus who is Emmanuel, God-among-us.

This Sunday we celebrate the Fourth and Last Sunday of Advent. The Gospel this year is the account of the Angel’s Annunciation to Joseph. The Angel’s Annunciation to Mary was the Gospel for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Gospel we will hear again this Tuesday, December 20th. These two “Annunciations” are amazing announcements of the Incarnation delivered by heavenly messengers. They also involve the amazing responses, one spoken and the other unspoken, which express the obedient faith of Mary and Joseph to God’s will and plan for our salvation.

The angel appeared to Mary when she was awake and the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. In both Annunciations, the angel said: “Do not be afraid.” In the case of Mary, she was troubled by the greeting of the angel, not knowing what it meant. In the case of Joseph, he was in turmoil because of Mary’s pregnancy, having decided “to divorce her quietly” since he was “unwilling to expose her to shame.” They were both afraid and confused, but God’s revelation, which they accepted with obedient faith, filled them with peace. It was the revelation of the Incarnation, that the Son conceived by Mary is of the Holy Spirit.

The angel told Mary: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Holy Spirit will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.” The angel told Joseph: “It is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her.” The angel told both Mary and Joseph that the child should be named “Jesus,” a name which means “God saves.”

Mary is our exemplar and model of faith in her response to the message of the angel: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Though we have no spoken words of Saint Joseph at the Annunciation to him, the Gospel tells us that “when Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.” Both Mary and Joseph responded positively to the word of God. Saint John Paul II wrote that “Joseph is the first to share in the faith of the Mother of God, the first to be placed by God on the path of Mary’s pilgrimage of faith.” We are called to walk that pilgrimage of faith to welcome Our Savior! We are invited to walk with Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem in these final days of Advent. I invite you in your prayer during these noisy and busy days before Christmas. There is an aura of silence around Saint Joseph (the Gospels contain none of his spoken words). Yet, that silence speaks eloquently to us of the interior life of Joseph, who, like Mary, is a model of humility and prayer. If we desire to experience the true joy of Christmas, we can learn from Mary and Joseph the secret of silence and reflection on the great mystery of the Incarnation.

Mary and Joseph teach us that the true gift of Christmas is Jesus. The best gifts we can give to others at Christmas are not expensive presents. The best gift we can share is the love, joy, and peace of the Lord. We do so by our prayers for others, kind words and gestures, forgiveness, a welcoming home, and joyful witness. Material gifts have value too, when they are expressions of love and generosity. And let us not forget the poor in our gift-giving at Christmas! It is a wonderful custom in our diocese to take up a special collection for Catholic Charities at all our Christmas Masses, an opportunity to support the charitable works of the Church in our diocese, to share with our brothers and sisters in need.

I encourage you to prepare for Christmas by contemplating Mary and Joseph: “Mary, the woman full of grace who had the courage to entrust herself totally to the Word of God; and Joseph, the faithful and just man who chose to believe the Lord rather than listen to the voices of doubt and human pride. With them, let us walk together toward Bethlehem!” (Pope Francis).

May this final week of Advent be a prayerful time of joyful preparation for Christmas! Through the intercession of Mary and Joseph, may we be free of all worldliness and ready to welcome anew our Savior!
Mid-east Christians, especially those displaced, face mounting challenges

BY DALE GAVLAK

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As Christians in the Middle East look back on 2016, they wonder if there will be much to celebrate amid mounting challenges, particularly for those displaced by conflicts in Iraq and Syria.

“As much as we are pleased that our homelands from which thousands of Christians were forced to flee from the extremists have been retaken, we are very concerned about what lies ahead,” Father Emanuel Youkhana told Catholic News Service by phone. He referred to Iraq’s Christian towns of Qaraqosh, Batnayeek and Bartella, recently regained by the Iraqi military from Islamic State.

The archimandrite is a member of the Assyrian Church of the East and heads the Christian Aid Program Northern Iraq, CAPNI.

Father Youkhana and others have expressed concerns that Iraq’s Christians may once again be caught in the crossfire of sectarian and violent Islamic terrorism, this time by Shiite Muslims. If this happens, it will impede the Christians’ ability to return home.

Iraq’s majority Shiite population comprises the bulk of the country’s reconstituted national army, and as it liberates areas from extremist Sunni militants, Iraqi Christians have seen worrying Shiite slogans scrawled on places and property that have always been considered Christian,” Father Youkhana noted.

The Nineveh Plain, a region rich in oil and the breadbasket of Iraq, has drawn attacks from regional and local powers seeking to exert influence there. Christians are challenged by the widespread devastation Islamic State militant groups have wrought to the area that has been their ancestral homeland for the past 1,400 years.

The trail of death and destruction left by Islamic State was being fully revealed as the militants were flushed out. There were accounts that some Christians were tortured and crucified. Among the militants’ threatening words still visible on red walls of a plundered electrical shop: “By God, we will break your cross.”

The volume of destruction carried out by Islamic State militants throughout the Nineveh Plain is hindering its people from returning to their family properties. Infrastructure projects, including drinking water and electricity, has been badly damaged, and what can we then say about the paramount need for security,” Father Youkhana said.

He urged the international community to help Christians and other religious minorities to return home after their forced displacement by the Islamic State.

The militants invaded the

A Christian fighter displays a holy card in his vest Nov. 21 in Mosul, Iraq. As Christians in the Middle East look back on 2016, they wonder if there will be much to celebrate amid mounting challenges, particularly for those displaced by conflicts in Iraq and Syria.

Nineveh Plain in the summer of 2014, imposing an extremist and violent form of Sunni Islam and forcing tens of thousands of Iraqi Christians to flee for their lives. Many escaped with just the clothes on their backs, losing their homes, property and their livelihoods.

A number of displaced Christians venturing back to Qaraqosh told CNS that they could not live there again unless they get compensation and guarantees of protection from the international community. Houses have been burned, either to create a smoke-screen against coalition aircraft bombing Islamic State in support of Iraqi forces, or apparently out of spite, while beloved churches have been violently ransacked.

“It is worse than we expected,” said teacher Wismam Rafou Poli, trying to exercised the presence of the militants who occupied his house by emptying its entire contents onto the street to be burned.

“I cried when we entered the house,” his wife Zena said, comforting their young daughter, who was mourning her favorite doll, found filthy and ripped.

Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan told CNS he was horrified to see the terrible devastation and what he called “ghost towns” during a visit to northern Iraq in late November.

He celebrated the Eucharist “on an improvised altar” in the inchoated sanctuary of the vandalized Church of the Immaculate Conception in Qaraqosh for the few who could attend the liturgy.

“I just wanted to strengthen their faith in the redeemer’s altar and cross, although both were half broken behind us,” the patriarch said. “I reminded them that we Christians are the descendants of martyrs and confessors, with a long history dating back to the evangelization of the apostles.”

Patriarch Younan called for a “stable, law-abiding and strong government” to support the establishment of an executive, self-administrative province in the area under the central government in Baghdad.

Meanwhile, about 5 million Syrians have fled the nearly six-year-old conflict, seeking refuge mainly in Europe. But the European Union tightened its external borders this year, overwhelmed by the arrival of more than a million refugees and migrants in 2015.

Pope Francis made a dramatic gesture by taking 12 Syrian refugees back to Rome with him from his visit to Lesbos, Greece, in April to see the conditions and perils experienced by thousands of refugees fleeing across the Mediterranean. The Vatican also assisted other Syrian refugees arriving in Rome in mid-June.

While the Vatican is covering the living costs of about 21 refugees, the government has resettled by the Community of Saint Egidio, a lay Catholic community based in Rome.

The U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR, reported that the number of people fleeing war and persecution have soared four times over the past decade, to 24 people per minute or more than 65 million people forcibly displaced worldwide.

Franciscan Father Francesco Patrino, the new custos of the Holy Land, who is provincial minister of the Franciscans in almost all of the Middle East, told CNS in November Christians in Aleppo, Syria, believe the world is unconcerned about their situation.

Still despite these challenges, the custos said, “there are many, many signs of hope, but we need eyes to see the signs of hope. If we are blind, we cannot see signs of hope.”

Contributing to this story were Doreen Abi Raad in Beirut, Rhina Guidos in Washington and Cindy Wooden in Vatican City.

Three Franciscan Friars Minor take perpetual vows

John Martin

Three Franciscan Friars Minor prepare to take their solemn vows during Mass at St. Andrew Church, Fort Wayne. From left to right are Brother Mark Maria, Brother Joseph Maria and Brother Peter Marie.

On Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, hundreds of people gathered at St. Andrew Church in Fort Wayne for the Mass during which three men professed their solemn vows as Franciscan Friars Minor. After several years of discernment and temporary vows, Brother Mark Maria of Our Lady of Peace, and Brother Peter Marie of the Immaculate Heart of Mary professed perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, along with a fourth vow of consecration to Mary Immaculate, in the hands of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, the celebrant of the Mass.

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades reflected on the first word of the angel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation, the Gospel of the Mass. The first word of Gabriel to Mary was “rejoice;” in Greek, “chaire.” Gabriel said: “Rejoice, full of grace!” The bishop said that this invitation to joy, so often spoken by the Old Testament prophets when they announced the coming of the Messiah, was God’s invitation to Mary whom He called to be the mother of His Son. “On behalf of the people of Israel and of all humanity, Mary said ‘yes.’”

The bishop invited the three Franciscan brothers to hear in their hearts the word of the prophets and of the angel Gabriel to rejoice, also reminding them of the words of the angel to Mary: “Do not be afraid.”

The bishop said: “We experience fears and trials in our lives. We have crosses to bear. But these things should never extinguish our joy, the joy that comes from faith and trust in the Lord.”

He recalled the joy of St. Francis which, he said, “is the joy of the Gospel, the joy of following Jesus, and the joy of living the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience.”

The Franciscan Friars Minor were approved as a religious community by Bishop Rhoades in Harrisburg in 2009, just weeks before his appointment as Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, an apostolicSee more at our website on our page.
more than 1,000 men will gather at the Center in downtown South Bend on Feb. 18 for the Rekindle the Fire Diocesan Men’s Conference, the largest annual gathering of Catholic men in Indiana.

For the seventh year in a row, Catholic men of all ages from across the Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese and beyond will participate in a daylong event that includes inspiring talks from nationally renowned speakers. Featured this year are Patrick Madrid, from Catholic Answers and Doug Barry from EWTN, who is back by popular demand to speak about spiritual warfare. Catholic Evangelist/musician Chris Padgett will also be featured. Author, radio host and Catholic apologist, Padgett is the country’s leading defender of the Catholic faith. Host of the Patrick Madrid Show, he is also the author of such books as “Why Be Catholic?” and “How to Do Apologetics.” A lifelong Catholic, he earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and master’s degree in dogmatic theology from Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. He has conducted countless teaching seminars on Catholic themes across the world.

Doug Barry, a devoted husband and father of five, is the founder and director of the Catholic ministry RADIX. “Battle Ready” is a mission of RADIX that aims to help strengthen and encourage the soldiers of Christ to be aware of, prepared for and engaged in the spiritual fight in which men find themselves. Since 1992, he has traveled nationally and internationally to help spread and defend the Catholic faith. Barry is also co-host of EWTN’s “Life on the Rock.”

Storyteller and musician Chris Padgett is a husband and father of nine children who brings alive the message of God’s love and strength to “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature” in their daily lives. The faith-filled experience begins at 9 a.m. and includes an afternoon Mass celebrated by the Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The sacrament of reconciliation will be available throughout the day. Catholic vendors will also be present to sell religious goods.

For the seventh year in a row, St. Anthony’s Catholic Men’s Conference, the largest annual gathering of Catholic men in Indiana, is among the gathering of Catholic men in South Bend on Feb. 18 for the Rekindle the Fire Diocesan Men’s Conference, the largest annual gathering of Catholic men in Indiana.
Continued from Page 1

sick,” he said. “Unfortunately we have become used to the war and destruction, but we must not forget that Syria is a country full of history, culture and faith. We cannot allow this to be negated by war, which is a pile of abuse and falsity.”

Around the world, Christians reacted to the bombing at St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral complex with messages of condolences.

In Washington, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, noted that St. Mark’s is not a stranger to the persecution of Christians.

“This weekend has witnessed the darkness of violence reach into many places, including Turkey, Somalia and the church building collapse in Nigeria. But the light still shines! Today let us offer a special prayer for all those facing persecution,” he said.

Egyptian Catholics were quick to condemn Sunday’s church attack.

“Our heart is with Patriarch Tawadros II ... and our brother church, and we wish for goodness in Egypt, and call on the heads of state to quickly bring those responsible to justice,” said official spokesman of Egypt’s Catholics, Father Rafie Greiche.

Father Greiche called the attack “a cowardly, terrorist act on a house of God,” adding that “the church in our country is suffering due to the murder and spilling of blood of innocents.”

His statements appeared on Egyptian TV.

Contributing to this story were Judith Sudilovsky in Jerusalem and James Martone in Washington.

A nun cries as she stands inside St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral Dec. 11 after an explosion inside the cathedral complex in Cairo. A bomb ripped through the complex, killing at least 25 people and wounding dozens, mostly women and children.

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**John Glenn, American ‘icon,’ astronaut, former U.S. senator, dies at 95**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (CNS) — Astronaut legend and decorated World War II pilot John H. Glenn, who served for 24 years in the U.S. Senate and inspired young people to pursue careers in science and engineering, died Dec. 8. He was 95. Born in Cambridge and raised in nearby New Concord, Glenn was propelled to fame after being one of seven military test pilots chosen as the country’s first astronauts. He was the third American in space and the first to orbit earth when he flew aboard the Mercury Friendship 7 capsule, traversing the globe three times in a flight that lasted just less than five hours on Feb. 20, 1962. Among those watching Glenn’s first space flight was St. John XXIII, who asked to be kept regularly informed about its progress. Glenn became the oldest man to fly in space when, at age 77 and still a senator, he blasted into orbit on the Space Shuttle on Oct. 29, 1998, after lobbying the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for two years that he could serve as a “guinea pig” for geriatric studies. While on the fourth day of the mission, Glenn reportedly told his fellow astronauts, “I pray every day. To look out at this kind of creation out here and not believe in God is, to me, impossible. It just strengthens my faith.”

**Vatican updates guidelines for educating priests**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church needs holy, healthy and humble priests and that requires prayers for vocations and the careful selection and training of candidates, said the Congregation for Clergy. Updating 1985 guidelines for preparing men for the Latin-rite priesthood and ensuring their continuing education, training and support, the Congregation for Clergy Dec. 7 released “The Gift of the Priestly Vocation,” a detailed set of guidelines and norms for priestly formation. The updated document draws heavily on St. John Paul II’s 1992 apostolic exhortation on priestly formation, as well as on the teaching of and norms issued by now-deceased Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis and by Vatican offices over the past three decades. The document insists that through courses in pastoral theology, the example of priests and practical experience, candidates for the priesthood learn that pastoral ministry involves “— as Pope Francis says — being ‘shepherds with the smell of the sheep,’ who live in their midst to bring the mercy of God to them.”

**Oakland Catholic community offers prayers, support for fire victims**

OAKLAND, Calif. (CNS) — The local Catholic community in Oakland — parishioners, priests, school students and Catholic Charities’ workers — have been offering prayers and support for victims of the Dec. 2 fire that erupted in an Oakland warehouse, killing 36. The fire started during a dance party at a warehouse that had been converted to artists’ studios and illegal living spaces, dubbed the “Ghost Ship.” The cause of the fire, reported to be the most lethal building fire in the U.S. in more than a decade, has not been determined. “I owe it to the community and those who perished in this fire, and those who survived the fire to be methodical, to be thorough and to take the amount of time it takes to be able to look at every piece of potential evidence,” said Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O’Malley, according to the Associated Press. Bishop Michael J. Barber of Oakland said in a Dec. 5 statement that his “prayers and thoughts are with all those who have died or are suffering from the tragic fire.”

**Ohio lawmakers send governor two bills restricting abortion**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (CNS) — The Ohio Legislature has sent two abortion bills to Gov. John Kasich for his signature. On Dec. 8, lawmakers passed a measure to ban abortions in the state after 20 weeks, or five months of pregnancy. On Dec. 6, they approved legislation that would ban abortions after a fetus has begun its 20th week of gestation, unless a doctor determines that the fetus isn’t viable outside the womb. The latest measure, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, or S.B. 127 — would eliminate the viability test and simply ban abortions past 20 weeks. The current exception for the woman’s health would still apply. “The bold pro-life action taken by the Ohio Legislature is reflective of the message the voters sent on Election Day, and that is a rejection of the status quo,” said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Washington-based Susan B. Anthony List. “Americans reject the status quo of abortion on demand, especially painful late-term abortions,” she said in a Dec. 8 statement. “Instead, voters across the country are embracing the humanity of the unborn child: its heartbeat around six weeks and the pain the child can feel at 20 weeks.”

**Posada Without Borders, in San Diego**

Erica Nellessen, left center, from Pasadena, Calif., sings with others at the U.S.-Mexico border fence in San Diego during the 23rd Posada Sin Fronteras (Posada Without Borders) Dec. 10. “Posada” commemorates Joseph and Mary’s search for shelter before Christ’s birth. The border event is held in honor of migrants and is celebrated simultaneously on both sides of the fence at a place called Friendship Park.

**Mary shows what good comes from wholehearted ‘yes’ to God, pope says**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Although she was just a humble young woman from a small town, Mary’s total “yes” to God was “the most important ‘yes’ of history,” and overturned Adam and Eve’s prideful “no,” which unleased sin into the world, Pope Francis said. “What generosity and trust in Mary, may each of us say this personal ‘yes’ to God today,” Pope Francis prayed Dec. 8 as he recited the Angelus prayer with visitors in Peter’s Square on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Even when they do not say “no” to God, human beings can be experts in saying, “yes, but ... ” to God, the pope said. “To avoid saying ‘no’ outright to God, we say, ‘Sorry, but I can’t.’ Not today, but maybe tomorrow. Tomorrow I will be better, tomorrow I will pray, I’ll do good tomorrow,” he said. But in responding that way, “we close the door to what is good and evil prof- its.” Nevertheless, Pope Francis said, God keeps trying to reach out and save us. And through the “yes” of Mary, he became human, “exactly like us except for one thing, that ‘no,’ that sin. This is why he chose Mary, the only crea- ture without sin, immaculate.”

**Black pro-life leaders hold rally outside Planned Parenthood in D.C.**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — African-Americans make up just under 13 percent of the U.S. population, but “they represent over 30 percent of all abortions,” said Alveda King, an evangelist and director of Civil Rights for the Unborn. King, who is the niece of slain civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., was one of several African-American leaders and other pro-life advocates from the District of Columbia, Md., and Northern Virginia who held a prayer rally Dec. 5 outside Planned Parenthood’s new facility in Washington. The nearly $20-mil- lion, 27,000-square-foot facil- ity, which opened in September, also is administrative headquar- ters for Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington. It is located in a semi-industrial area in the city’s Northeast quadrant. Planned Parenthood has built a profitable enterprise largely on aborting black babies,” said King, who is director of Priests for Life’s African-American outreach, recently renamed Civil Rights for the Unborn. “This is even more troubling when you consider that they receive over half a billion dollars a year from the federal government.”

**Bishop Murphy of Rockville Centre retires; Bishop Barres named successor**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Francis has accepted the resigna- tion of Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y., and appointed as his successor Bishop John O. Barres of Allentown, Pa. Bishop Barres, 56, has headed the Diocese of Allentown since 2001, is 76. Canon law requires bishops to turn in their resigna- tion at the age of 75. The resigna- tion of Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y., and the nomination of Bishop John O. Barres of Allentown, Pa., as his successor were announced Dec. 9 in Washington by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States. The process of installation will be celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Agnes in Rockville Centre Jan. 31. Until then, Bishop Murphy will serve as apostolic administrator of the diocese. “It is my deep con- viction that he will be a bishop for all,” said Pope Francis. Bishop Murphy said of his suc- cessor in a statement. “He has shared with me his love of youth and his care for the elderly. His keen sense of parish life has and a special expertise in education. He has a deep love for the poor.”
Apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe recalled with Masses, festivities

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

Across the diocese, remembrances of the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe took place in fervent and festive form Dec. 10-12 despite a winter-weather challenge. St. Robert Bellarmine, North Manchester, and St. Dominic, Bremen, were among the many Hispanic parishes where the sounds of worship, traditional Mexican “Mañanitas” song and drumming rang out.

St. Robert Bellarmine has celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe as a parish community since 2012. Today it’s a popular tradition that has expanded to include a number of events. One of the reasons is the expanding Hispanic population within the parish.

“The celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe has become bigger as our Hispanic community grows,” St. Robert’s Pastoral Associate Isabella Duran-Price said.

Spanish Mass and a mariachi band appearance have remained staples since the first celebration. Last year, folkloric dance and a communal rosary were added.

This year St. Robert kicked off its celebration at 5 p.m. on the feast day, Monday, Dec. 12. A Spanish Mass was celebrated at 6 p.m., and a live mariachi band played from 7-10 p.m. The evening culminated with a fireworks display.

“This is such a meaningful celebration for everyone, not only because it means a lot to the Mexican parishioners, but also to the rest of the community,” Duran-Price reflected. “It is one of the most stunning visitations of our dear mother in the world. She is not only the patroness of Mexico, but the patroness of the New Evangelization, as the popes have said. She is our dear mother, always looking out for her most humble and suffering children.”

St. Dominic celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with an afternoon potluck on Sunday, Dec. 11, in the parish’s St. Isidore Hall, and a 6 p.m. Spanish Mass the following day.

Approximately one-third of St. Dominic’s parish community is Hispanic, and several members of this Hispanic segment immigrated to the United States from small towns in Mexico.

According to a parish representative, the opportunity to celebrate a feast day that is so very important to the country of Mexico, where the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe occurred, means a lot to those members of the parish of Mexican descent.

“They wish to continue celebrating Our Lady of Guadalupe with music, dancing, food and fellowship, just as they have through the years.”

The traditional image of Our Lady of Guadalupe as she appeared to the Indian and Catholic convert St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin was displayed at St. Robert Bellarmine Parish, North Manchester, and stood witness to the weekend celebration of her feast day.

Eighth-grade students students of Holy Family School and parish perform a reenactment of Our Lady of Guadalupe's apparition at a Mass and celebration Monday, Dec. 12.
2017 diocesan directories arrive

FORT WAYNE — The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend 2017 Directory is now available for purchase from the Office of Communications. Orders can be placed online at www.diocesefwsb.org/directory. The directories may also be purchased at the Cathedral Bookstore, downtown Fort Wayne or at the St. John Paul II Center, Mishawaka. For more information or to request an order form, call Geoff Frank at 260-422-4611.

Earthworks programs will continue

DONALDSON — During the last several months, Earthworks has been going through major transitions and actively planning for the future. Earthworks is an environmental education ministry located at The Center at Donaldson. Its mission is to teach, demonstrate and promote the interconnectedness of all creation. Earthworks is an advocate for environmental education and serves as a resource for local communities that seek to live in harmony with nature. In collaboration with the Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center, it will continue to offer children’s summer day camps for children 6 to 10 years old. Dates identified for the 2017 weekly summer day camps are June 12 to July 28. Registration will begin in April. In addition, Earthworks will continue to offer Earthworks programs to meet the needs of the individual groups it serves. It will also offer new customized programs to meet the needs of the individual groups it serves. Earthworks’ office is now located in Lindenwood at P.O. Box 1, Donaldson, IN 46513. Cheri Ringer, Coordinator of Earthcare Education, can be contacted at earthworks@poorhandmaids.org or 574-933-1746, or for more information see Earthworks’ website at www.earthworksonline.org.

Building Bridges of Faith program now online

FORT WAYNE — The Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne, 5200 Old Mill Road, held an opening program for the photographic exhibition, “Building Bridges of Faith: Photographs of Papal Visits to the Holy Land, 1964-2014.” Rabbi Yehiel Poupko spoke on “The Advancement of the Roman Catholic Church’s Relations with the Jewish People under the Stewardship of John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis.” Special guests included Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend; Sister Elise Kriss, president and CEO, University of Saint Francis; and Tay Milner, deputy consul general of Israel to the Midwest.

The exhibit runs through Dec. 15. The program, including speakers, is now available online at http://fwjf.org/Events/BuildingBridgesofFaith.aspx.

Knights and community come together to make Christmas brighter

BY DENISE FEDEROW

Visit to the Knights of Columbus hall on East Lexington St. in Elkhart Friday night, Dec. 9, was as busy a place as one might imagine. Santa’s workshop to be this time of year. Hundreds of volunteers from all over Elkhart County had come to work a well-oiled assembly line, where boxes were filled with food for families in need.

This is the 32nd year that the Knights of Columbus has provided Christmas baskets for people in Elkhart, Goshen, Middlebury, Bristol, Nappanee and Wakarusa, covering the county.

The Knights of Columbus Council 1045 includes members from St. Vincent de Paul and St. Thomas the Apostle Churches in Elkhart. Knights from St. John the Evangelist in Goshen also joined in.

Phil Kile, 4th Degree member of the Knights, said this year the effort yielded 300 “baskets” — which meant the busy volunteers filled 1,000 boxes, because each family or individual received two boxes of food. The Knights do all of their own fundraising and purchase a lot of the food, but they also received donations of canned and dry foods. Bimbo’s Bakery in Elkhart donated 5-pound hams and bread.

In past years the Knights rented warehouse space to assemble the baskets, but empty warehouse space is hard to find since the economy improved. So the Knights adjust their operations inside of the very limited space in their hall, and staggered times for volunteers to come in.

According to Kile, a lot of families come to volunteer because parents want their children to have a charitable service experience. Several area school sports teams were also working together to fill the boxes.

“It’s become kind of a social event for some of them,” Kile said.

Joe Tinervia, trustee for the Knights, said the effort started with just 12 families, years ago, and up until about three years ago they delivered all the boxes. Now, the different groups who provide the names of the needy come to pick the boxes up and deliver them. Kile said they baskets are also provided for senior citizens at the Council of Aging.

Young people who were busy working, like Maddie Cross from Goshen High School’s softball team, said she liked “volunteering in the community to help others.” Mathew Early, a St. Thomas student, said he was there to help others in the community who “don’t have a meal this Christmas.”

Parochial Vicar Father Zachary Barry of St. Vincent de Paul Church, Elkhart, blessed the baskets at the beginning of the work night.

St. Thomas the Apostle students and Girl Scouts Olivia Fullhart, center, and Ciara Wood were happy to help fill boxes with food items to help make others’ Christmas a little brighter this year. Shown with the girls is Jackie Fullhart, scout leader and Olivia’s mom. The Knights of Columbus of Elkhart have sponsored the food-gifting event for 32 years.

Holy Hour offered for children

On the Solemnity of Christ the King, Father Daniel Whelan offered a children’s holy hour at St. Felix Catholic Center in Huntington. About 100 people attended, including many children. Father Whelan gathered the children around the monstrance for prayer and songs, and they prostrated themselves before the Lord. The Holy Hour was sponsored by St. Mary Catholic Church in Huntington.

Provided by Father Daniel Whelan
A small faith community with a big heart

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

A driver on the back roads of Hudson, Ind., in time will come across a tiny, white church. The somehow-comforting, rural surroundings are fitting for this intimate faith community known as St. Mary of the Angels Oratory.

According to Mary Bartlett, the oratory’s secretary and bookkeeper, “We are a close community partly because of our numbers and partly because we are ... as long as I have been attending St. Mary’s, a very welcoming community.”

Bartlett first started attending Mass at the church as a young girl and has worked at St. Mary’s in some capacity since 2001.

She has witnessed firsthand some of the church’s history. Built by the Franciscans, the church’s design very much aligns with the order’s simplistic nature. Bartlett believes this outlook exudes “beauty in its simplicity.”

The first Mass was celebrated in 1949. Since then the church has gone through a lot of change, but maintains a loyal membership.

“We have approximately 50 families in the parish and, in the summer months ... our numbers triple each weekend, as we welcome those who vacation or live at the lakes in the warmer months,” Bartlett said.

The St. Mary’s community joined that of St. Michael the Archangel, Waterloo, in 2006, when Bishop John D’Arcy decided that St. Mary’s would be administrated by St. Michael’s due to a shortage of clergy.

Shortly thereafter, St. Mary’s was officially declared an oratory, a place of prayer typically reserved for Holy Days or special occasions.

The bishop did allow the community to continue to have Mass outside of Holy Days and special occasions, if they could find a priest to do it. That they did: Dedicated retired priests in the area have made it possible for St. Mary’s to continue to celebrate regular Masses.

Bishop D’Arcy eventually granted St. Mary’s permission to function administratively as an independent unit. Today, even though no pastor is on site, the community continues to operate with its own administrative team, under the direction of administrator Father David Carkenord, the pastor of St. Michael’s. It collaborates with St. Michael’s in other aspects as well.

Currently, St. Mary’s offers Mass on Saturdays at 5 p.m., administrated by St. Michael’s and Sundays at 9 a.m.

Members of St. Mary’s can get involved in the church’s rosary group. “Our numbers vary each month, but we pray for the sick of the parish and their families and let them know we care with cards,” said secretary and bookkeeper Mary Bartlett.

St. Mary of the Angels Oratory can be found at 5965 S. 1025E in Hudson.

St. Mary of the Angels Oratory celebrates Mass regularly and enjoys some of the other benefits of parish life. It collaborates with St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Waterloo.

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

In MY diocese

Steuben County

FATHER DAVID CARKENORD

St. Mary of the Angels Oratory

5965 S. 1025E

Hudson, IN 46747

260-837-7115

Mass Times:
Saturday: 5 p.m.
Sunday: 9 a.m.

Reconciliation:
Half-hour before Mass

0x0

Steuben County

Members of St. Mary’s can get involved in the church’s rosary group. “Our numbers vary each month, but we pray for the sick of the parish and their families and let them know we care with cards,” said secretary and bookkeeper Mary Bartlett.

and Sundays at 9 a.m.

Members of St. Mary’s actively give back to their local community.

“We support various organizations in the area who serve the needy, such as the food banks, with our tithing and the little jar at the back of church. Other organizations are Elijah House in LaGrange, St. Martin’s Soup Kitchen in Garrett, Faith Community Free Clinic in Angola, Friendship Pantry in Kendallville and many, many more,” Bartlett explained.

In addition to activities offered through St. Michael’s, members of St. Mary’s can also get involved in the church’s rosary group.

“We have an active Ladies Rosary Club that meets once a month. Our numbers vary each month, but we pray for the sick of the parish and their families and let them know we care with cards,” Bartlett said. The rosary is said each first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. in honor of Our Lady of Fatima.
St. Anthony of Padua and St. Paul Chapel: Reaching out

BY MARILYN KARPINSKI

The parish of St. Anthony of Padua, Angola, is a vibrant and active community of believers with a history of witness in the surrounding area.

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in Angola and St. Paul Catholic Chapel in Clear Lake Township, just outside Angola, are two Catholic churches in Steuben County whose members consider themselves a single Catholic community. Steuben County prides itself on its 101 lakes. Being a resort destination has repercussions, though, and residents and county officials alike attest to the increase in population during the summer months, when “lakers” partake of the natural beauty of the area. The situation is equally evident for the Catholic Church in Steuben County, where an increase in summer attendees means extra Masses, extra opportunities for sacraments and extra outreach in different forms. Some of the summer attendees are familiar faces who have had cottages on the lakes for many years: others are new to the area, or just passing through. Either way, they receive a welcome at St. Anthony’s and St. Paul’s.

In addition to Masses at the two churches, from Memorial Day to Labor Day an outdoor Saturday evening Mass at Manapogo Campground is celebrated amidst lawn chairs, blankets and campfires.

75 years at Clear Lake

As the world went to war in 1939 and 1940, American involvement seemed unavoidable. With that came gasoline rationing, and the Catholics of Steuben County worried these hardships would make it difficult or impossible for people in the northern part of the county to get to Sunday Mass. Especially, it was feared, summer residents might lose their connection with a parish. In response, several families in Clear Lake Township, together with the Franciscan Friars of Angola, decided to open out an outreach on the lakeshores. In the spirit of the mission bands that the Franciscans were known for, they purchased an old school house and opened a mission chapel. Dedicated to St. Paul the Missionary Apostle, St. Paul’s Catholic Chapel in Clear Lake has continued this spirit of outreach for 75 years. The community has grown to several hundred permanent residents and many more summer residents. The Catholic community of St. Paul’s runs itself as a quasi-parish, with its own faith formation program, pastoral and finance councils, clubs, groups and associations.

St. Anthony’s — more than brick and mortar

In 2010, parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua realized their dream of replacing their temporary church, a pole barn built in 1939, with a permanent structure. While the walls of the new church were no more than metal studs, and the floor leveled dirt, a service was held in the roughed-in structure. Parishioners brought stones decorated by their families to be placed within the frame the contractor had erected for pouring the concrete for the altar platform. Some marked the lives of loved ones who had passed, while others bore prayers and dreams for the future, but each held special meaning to the parishioner placing the stone. The messages on them were more poignant by the fact that they would be encased in concrete to support the altar upon which every Mass for generations to come would be celebrated.

The Holy Spirit was the architect

Throughout the fundraising and building process, parishioners, through a parish prayer recited at each Mass, called on the Holy Spirit to be their architect. He answered. Fundraising experts projected $1.7 million would be a realistic fundraising goal, given the demographics of the parish. This was far short of the $4.3 million needed to complete the project. Rather than scrap the plans, parishioners called on the Holy Spirit and the full amount was raised. Only three years after completion, all debt was retired.

When incorrect materials were delivered, the parishioners found the ones delivered in error were more appropriate than those ordered. When a shipping strike threatened the delivery of a large glass art piece for above the altar in time for the dedication, parishioners once again put their faith in the Holy Spirit. The piece arrived at 6 p.m. on Friday, and workers labored through the night to install it in time for the Saturday evening dedication. A window fragment from the original church building of 1932 was also incorporated into the new rose windows of the church, which have become the symbols of the community.

The Franciscan friars and the spirit of Assisi

The Catholics of Angola have, for decades, been accustomed to the presence of friars living on church grounds and participating in the life of the community. Today, four friars live in the St. Anthony of Padua Friary next door.

The Franciscans founded a Midwest province in the 1920s under the patronage of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Consolation. Their headquarters is in Southern Indiana at a place called Mount Saint Francis, in Floyd County. They took the name of the new province from the pilgrimage shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio, which the friars care for. In 1931, the Conventual Franciscans came to Angola. They were the care of St. Rita’s parish, founded in 1926. The first friar-pastor was Clem Orth. The friars established the province novitiate in Angola and for many years, every friar of OLC Province spent time in Angola. The bishop changed the name of the parish to St.
Anthony of Padua, a great Franciscan saint, to honor them. After 15 years of Mass in rented buildings, the Franciscans helped build a new church in 1940. It still stands as the Knights of Columbus meeting space and is called Maximilian Kolbe Hall, after another great conventual saint. The friars also helped build St. Paul’s chapel, a new pastor’s residence (since torn down), a second St. Anthony’s church in 1959 and, finally, a third St. Anthony’s church in 2010.

**Evangelization through outdoor drama**

The outdoors has always been a big part of the life of St. Anthony and St. Paul parishes. The Manapogo Campground Mass is just one example.

In 2013 parishioners of St. Anthony were looking for a way to make the true meaning of Christmas more visible. They decided to present a “live, drive-thru Nativity” where people of the community, from the comfort of their cars, could experience the Christmas story told through four biblical scenes: Mary and Joseph at the inn, the angel appearing to shepherds in the field, the Wise Men traveling to Bethlehem, and the manger. Parishioners in costume — with live animals, including a camel — grace each scene. The road through the scenes is outlined with over 500 luminaria, and each scene includes a corresponding Bible verse. A related caroll is broadcast. Over 100 parishioners volunteer their services to make the event possible and while many cars stop to offer a donation, they are told donations are not accepted. The Drive-Thru Nativity is the parish’s Christmas gift to the community. This year’s event took place Sunday, Dec. 11 on the parish grounds at 700 W. Maumee Street.

In the spirit of the great Passion plays, the Hispanic Ministry at St. Anthony’s produces a living Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. This drama, too, involves almost 100 people. Attendees walk each of the stations with Christ, from His presentation to Pilot to His crucifixion. The “live crucifixion” is a vivid reminder of the Passion of our Lord. The accompanying narrative is offered in both Spanish and English.

At St. Paul’s, besides the annual “Mass in the Grass” and other outdoor events, this summer a new children’s Bible school was introduced, with accompanying narrative is offered in both Spanish and English. The St. Paul Chapel school was introduced, with emphasis on enjoying God’s nature and learning to love what He has wrought. There are also annual boat rides, bicycle rides and more. The outdoors seems to be an important part of the parish spirit: no wonder, then, that even the Human Life and Dignity Group seeks to emphasize the care of God’s creation in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

**Best wishes for this holiday season and for a wonderful New Year.**

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**What is the Catholic Community Foundation?**

The Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana consists of 137 endowments collectively invested to fund the various ministries and services of the Church throughout the diocese.

**Making a Gift to the Catholic Community Foundation**

There are currently no endowments in the Catholic Community Foundation for schools and ministries in Steuben County, and there are many ways to create an endowment besides a cash gift. Talk to a financial advisor to determine what would be best for a particular situation.

To find out more, contact the Secretariat for Stewardship and Development by email at plannedgiving@diocesefswsb.org.

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Dr. Gianna Beretta Molla, physician and saint

We are encouraged by our religious leaders to study and emulate the saints to receive inspiration and guidance in our daily lives. I would like to share the story of a physician, mother and saint that our local Catholic Church regularly prays to, Dr. Gianna Beretta Molla.

Born in Italy in 1921 to a large Catholic family, she was the 10th of 13 children. She studied at the University of Pavia, where she received her medical degree. She began to practice medicine, concentrating on obstetrics and gynecology. She was told that there was no chance of a successful pregnancy. The doctors recommended an abortion to save her life. She refused any treatment that might harm her unborn child. Instead, she decided to take the risk of having only the fibroid removed and continue the pregnancy. Her baby was born healthy on April 21, 1963, and named Gianna Emanuela. Over the next week, she suffered unbearable pain from complications related to the delivery. She was in seven days after she gave birth, repeatedly exclamining, “Jesus, I love you!”

Dr. Gianna Molla’s first adjudicated miracle, required for beatification, occurred at a hospital in Brazil that was founded by her brother. He was a missionary priest, Father Alberto Beretta. In 1971, a stillborn infant at this hospital and subsequently developed a life-threatening vaginal abscess that spread to the lungs. The hospital did not have the expertise on staff for the needed surgery and recommended transfer to another hospital. A nurse by the name of Sister Bernardina joined with two nurses in prayer, asking Dr. Gianna Molla to intercede before they embarked on this long and dangerous transfer. The patient was immediately healed.

Dr. Gianna’s beatification occurred on her Mother’s Day, May 9, 2004, the Year of the Family. Pope John Paul II presented her as a model for all mothers, saying, “A woman of exceptional love, an outstanding wife and mother, she gave witness in her daily life to the demanding values of the Gospel. By holding up this woman as an example of Christian perfection, we would like to extol all those high-spirited mothers who give themselves completely to their family, who suffer in giving birth, who are prepared for every labor and every kind of sacrifice, so that the best they have can be given to others.”

In 1997, at the second International Celebration of the Family, Gianna Molla, a physician as well, gave testimony to her mother. “Dear Mom, thank you for having given me life two times: when you conceived me and when you permitted me to be born…” My life seeks to be the natural continuation of your life, of your joy of living, of your enthusiasm, and its finds its full meaning in the engagement and dedication to whoever lives in suffering. Dear mom, intercede always for all mothers and all families who turn to you and entrust themselves to you.”

The second official miracle also occurred in Brazil, in 2003. A young lady was 16 weeks pregnant and decided to have an abortion. She was told that there was no chance of a successful pregnancy. The doctors recommended an abortion to save her life, since infection was inevitable. She and her husband refused to accept this and asked their bishop, who had married them, for guidance. They all prayed to Blessed Gianna Molla, asking for a miracle. Despite the absence of amniotic fluid, the baby continued to grow in the womb and on May 31, 2000, was born healthy. The baby was appropriately named Gianna Maria. Their obstetrician clutched the book so tightly that it was a great success. The little boy loved the book, studied each page and carefully lifted the train from the magic carpet.

There is still time to reach out to our God

For Isaiah the definition of a good king, of course, was that the monarch genuinely led the people to God by inspiring them to live according to the commandments of God. Regardless of any other duty, confirming the covenant and requiring submission to its terms were the essential responsibilities of the kings. Nothing else mattered.

Although Ahaz was not spectacular in his role, God still used him as an instrument to bring the people back to fidelity to the covenant. Ahaz served God’s purpose in order to save the people from their own sins by fathering a son. When the king’s spouse, a young woman, conceived, Isaiah saw in the event a sign of God’s caring for the people. What the lackluster Ahaz could not accomplish would be achieved by the son. Thus, the coming of the new prince was cause for rejoicing.

As its second reading on this weekend, the church selects a section from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. No Christian today would think of challenging Paul’s status as an Apostle. When Paul was alive, however, his credentials were hardly so universally acknowledged. He himself wrote of sowers who vested themselves with the cloak of being Apostles, and who led the faithful astray. Here, Paul stresses that he indeed is an Apostle, because the Lord called him.

St. Matthew’s Gospel is the source of this reading. This reading recalls the miraculous conception of Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God, but also the son of Mary, always a virgin. He entered human history directly as a result of God’s love for humanity, fulfilling God’s promises to give the fullness of life to the people who were faithful. The Incarnation, as theologians call the mystery of the Son of God’s birth as a human, is beyond human comprehension. Not even Joseph, holy as he was, could understand it. God’s ways are not our ways.

Reflection

Only one week remains in Advent, and given the frenzy usually connected with preparing for Christmas in our society, these remaining days of Advent are apt to be quite busy.

Nevertheless, one week will be enough for any of us to use the opportunity of Advent to cleanse ourselves of attachments to sin and instead make our souls worthy of receiving the Lord. Christmas can be deeply personal for us, for if we have made ourselves worthy, Jesus will come to us personally on this great feast.

The church encourages us, therefore, to accept its Advent invitation to come to God. If we have not successfully observed Advent, then the church urges us to continue doing so until Christmas. If we have allowed Advent to slip by, the church calls us to use the time left.

God wants us to love Him as we love him. Again and again, God has reached out to people to empower them in coming to Him.

Dr. Gianna Beretta Molla, physician and saint

He sent a son to Ahaz, that the nation might have a good king. He sent Jesus to us. Jesus sent us the Apostles. He sent Paul.

God loves us so much. He never leaves alone or without guidance. He provides for us in ways we cannot understand. Even in one week, we can reach out to God, if we so wish. Time remains.

READINGS

Sunday: Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-6 Rom 1:11-17, 24-25a
Monday: Jps 132:7-24 Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6b, 16-17:1 Lk 1:26-38
Wednesday: Sg 2:8-14 Ps 33:2-3, 5-6b, 11-12, 20-21 Lk 1:39-45
Thursday: 1 Sm 12:24-28 (Ps 1 Sm 21), 4-8 Lk 14:56-57
Saturday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-3, 27, 29 Lk 15:67-79

Respond to God’s gifts with love, not guilt

L ast month I went on a weeklong silent retreat to address a nagging concern. I have been struggling with how I could be enjoying my life when there are profound deprivations and unspeakable suffering.

Catholic Relief Services serves people who do not have enough nutrition, sometimes no decent shelter nor water, very little medical care, and, often times, crippling insecurity from violent conflicts and lost livelihood.

From these interactions I get home to hot showers, cook with spices that cost more than these individuals’ daily incomes, have appointments with doctors, enjoy vacations, plan home improvements — and you can imagine the rest. For these, I feel I should apologize that I am not giving my all to God or His people.

My spiritual director focused me on the aspect of gift. What is a gift? Why do we give gifts? What do we hope for from the recipients?

Recently I had to choose a present for a little boy of 2. Reaching into fond memories of how much our son enjoyed “Thomas the Tank Engine” at that age, I selected a Thomas book that included a mat of train tracks and little replicas of Thomas and his coterie of engine friends.

It was a great success. The little boy loved the book, studied each page and carefully lifted the trains from the magic carpet. It was a gift that would be used and enjoyed.

As I reflect on this experience, I am reminded of how much we value and welcome this gift. Gift would be used and enjoyed.
The persecution of professor Esolen

Professor Anthony Esolen is a bright jewel in the crown of Catholic higher education in the United States, a scholar whose brilliant translation of, and commentary on, Dante’s Divine Comedy is appreciated far beyond the boundaries of Catholic literary and intellectual life. Tony Esolen is also a wonderful human, a scintillating spiritual writer and a teacher who takes character formation as seriously as intellectual formation, because he wants his students to be virtuous and happy, not just smart and employable. If I were drafting a university-level dream team of instructors for my grandchildren, Tony Esolen would be a very high, first-round pick.

So why is professor Esolen being persecuted at the school where he has taught for 25 years, Providence College? Because he spoke his mind plainly on questions of great consequence for the future of Catholic higher learning and got the PC Stormtroopers into an uproar. To make matters worse, the college’s administration has shown more sympathy to those determined to bully Esolen into silence than to one of Providence’s star professors.

The offenses? Two articles that professor Esolen wrote which proposed that diversity (which the professor welcomed) be located within a biblical vision of the unity of all humanity in God; a vision that would, he suggested, deepen Providence College’s Catholic identity and distinguish it from competitors. Absent that purification of identity and distinction it from the liberal-education culture and our politics.

As for that erosion, recent data from the World Values Survey tells us that only 50 percent of recent college graduates don’t know the length of American military to take over when the government is incompetent or failing to do its job. Those numbers might seem appalling. But what should we expect when other survey data tells us that something like 50 percent of those same millennials think which was rooted in democracy. Esolen stands firmly in that great Catholic tradition of liberal-education culture. A college whose leadership is committed to that tradition, and to Catholic leadership in the reform of an increasingly incoherent and authoritarian American intellectual and educational culture, would celebrate Tony Esolen’s contributions. It certainly wouldn’t coddle his persecutors.

Dr. David Kaminsky is a board-certified cardiologist and member of The Jerome Lejeune Guild of Northeast Indiana.

DOCTOR

Continued from Page 12

was so amazed and inspired that he converted to Catholicism. In 2004 Dr. Gianna Molla was canonized a saint by Pope John Paul II. Not only were her children present, but so was her 92-year-old husband.

Dr. David Kaminsky is a board-certified cardiologist and member of The Jerome Lejeune Guild of Northeast Indiana.

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Continued from Page 12

did He ask for guilt, but for trust, persistence, recognition of the gift, gratitude and a new way of being.

Christmas is the season of gifts. For all our preoccupation with shopping and giving, we may have underinvested in our preparation of ourselves as receivers of the divine gift. God Himself comes into our world to live our lives and frailties, to teach us how to be truly human and to be with us on our journeys.

Our response is not hard nor particularly complicated. We are to pay attention, as we should be offended by this, that or the other idea or text. Well, Tony Esolen provided no trigger warning, only robust and bracing arguments. Certain students and faculty at Providence College reacted with fits of rage, more befitting a day care center than an institution of higher education: which, of course, perfectly illustrated one point Esolen made in his articles.

This is sad beyond words. I’ve long been happy to point parents, students and donors to Providence College as a school that takes the classic liberal arts tradition seriously, and does so with a distinctively Catholic flavor. It will be much harder to do that in the future unless the college administration reverses its present course, calls the faculty and students who have been brutalizing professor Esolen to order and reaffirms Providence College’s commitment to genuine academic freedom and to a Catholic vision of the human person that challenges the tribalism and identity politics eroding our culture and our politics.

For all our preoccupations with great and changing us in the knowledge that so many in their age who knows that America’s colleges and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Caroleyn Y. Woo is the president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services in the United States.

IT CAME ABOUT

BLYRAMREHTOM
EEMAHSAVEPOO
TGHUSBANDEDK
RNNOSAANROEW
OAHLKDDEPVL
TEJOEDECHLIE
HHONHRICOEUE
ETSAADIVADCN
DFEEUDNUOFNA
POPREFHETROM
GPHBGDDDLIHCM
AWOHEROFEBDE

Based on readings: Is 7: 10-14; Rom 1: 1-7; Mt 1: 18-24 and Is 52: 7-10; Heb 1: 1-6; Jn 1: 1-18

ACROSS
1 Oils
5 North American country
8 25, 2016
11 Prayer ending
12 Scottish nickname
13 Halo
14 Axel
15 Brooch
16 Resurrection from the
17 Fizzy
19 He persecuted
21 Colony insect
22 Bear
24 Symbol of St. Simon
27 Tassel
28 Philippine dish with marinated meat
29 Paul’s Letter to the
33 Poland city
34 Projection
35 Moist
36 Kitten’s cry
37 Water retention
39 Constructor
42 Middle East dweller
43 Opp. of old
45 Erode

DOWN
1 Passes at the bull
2 Capital of Jordan
3 Test the Lord
4 Break a rig
5 Sports official
6 Holy ones
7 Pimpled
8 Past deadline
9 Epoch
10 Bounder
11 Hoopla
18 James the
20 Vehicle path
21 Ship initials
24 The virgin shall bear
25 Type of brake system
26 Chinese cooking pan
27 Son of
29 The Lord’s
30 Revolutions a minute
31 Miners’ goal
32 Cut grass
33 Ruby
35 Clean a fish
36 Royal House of
39 Donkey
40 White vegetable
41 Multi-colored rock
42 Lord has a mighty right one
43 Commitment
45 Compass point
46 Stretch to make do
47 Assist
49 Compass point

13

December 18, 2016

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

The CrossWord

The season of gifts. For all our preoccupation with shopping and giving, we may have underinvested in our preparation of ourselves as receivers of the divine gift. God Himself comes into our world to live our lives and frailties, to teach us how to be truly human and to be with us on our journeys.

Our response is not hard nor particularly complicated. We are to pay attention, as we should be offended by this, that or the other idea or text. Well, Tony Esolen provided no trigger warning, only robust and bracing arguments. Certain students and faculty at Providence College reacted with fits of rage, more befitting a day care center than an institution of higher education: which, of course, perfectly illustrated one point Esolen made in his articles.

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Showing love for our fellow man during Advent

BY EMMA WARD

Someone recently described Advent to me as being a time of preparation for the coming of Christ, but also as a time for allowing Jesus to come into our hearts in a very intimate way. Rather than the penitential, somber reflection of suffering during Lent, this approach to Advent is a very broad focus on spiritual life. One can take many different routes to better allow Jesus into one’s life, but there are several basic steps all must take to properly prepare for the coming of Christ, both during Advent and at the end of our lives.

There is a reason why many churches are magnificently constructed and why numerous great artists depict scenes from the Bible; God does deserve all the finest the world can offer, but the Lord is beauty itself. This reality is one that can be reflected upon. God is the creator of the universe: All has order, and the things that He created were good and, therefore, beautiful. Yet, God is the greatest of all. God, who created beauty, is beauty Himself. All things created by God have a part of Him within, which is something all can ponder.

A great justice that can be done as preparation during Advent would be to recognize the beauty of God in all things good, especially in the good and beautiful parts of the people we sometimes think have the most ugly interiors. An example is seeing that a person, even though he or she has a tendency to be uncharitable, is truly trying to deal with a very hard family life and trying to find solutions to their problems. Understanding that sometimes the person straying from the truth is truly trying to find themselves and figure out what truth is: This is a good and beautiful intention, yet often I think we do not see the human person for the entire depth that we are. People were created good and beautiful, in God’s image. We all have a right and duty to see God in others and treat ourselves well, too. That is a part of what makes us human.

One of the main actions that directly inhibit us from seeing God in others is gossip. Gossip is extremely judgmental, simply because what is seen of the victim is only one side of them. We have no right to tear others down for actions performed under circumstances that may have been extremely stressful for them. To counter this habit of gossip, a priest once advised me to thank God for the many gifts He had given me, especially the gifts that challenge me the most. After several minutes of calling to mind rather small gifts from God, and not being fully engaged, I found myself falling into a mental gossip of my own. I was astounded by myself and decided that I needed to change. I prayed in thanksgiving for all those people whose words or actions I had incorrectly judged, and I have never felt so close to God before. I felt in true communion with the church, and I felt at peace with myself and with God. It was amazing to experience that grace.

This Advent, I encourage others to open their hearts and walk the path of justice and treat our fellow men for who they really are, which is fragile and beautiful children who longs to hold their Father’s hand and share an intimate bond of love. Let us seek God’s beauty in all that is good and be thankful for the challenges with which Advent presents us.

Emma Ward is a junior at Bishop Luers High School.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. View more Catholic events and submit yours at www.diocesefwsb.org/bulletin. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

Bishop Dwenger plans trivia night
FORT WAYNE — Bishop Dwenger High School will host a trivia night on Saturday, Jan. 21, at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are $10 per person in advance or $15 per person at the door. Additional information, registration and sponsorship opportunities can be found at www.bishopdwenger.com/trivialnight or call Molly Schreck at 260-496-4775.

Divorced/Seperated Catholic support group
FORT WAYNE — St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1502 E. Wallen Rd., will continue “The Catholic’s Divorce Survival Guide” on Thursday, Jan. 5, with the session “Handling Money Wisely,” from 7-9 p.m. in the parish library. Additional information can be found at www.chr.org for information.

German Christmas concert
FORT WAYNE — The Wayne Männerchor/Damenchor will offer traditional German music of the season “Handling Money Wisely,” Christmas concert planned Sunday, Dec. 18, at 4 p.m. in the new Chapel of Saint Francis of Assisi at the school. The Bishop Luers choirs and musicians will offer a reading and Christmas prayers in the form of music. The service is expected to last one hour. The annual Christmas Concert will be Thursday, Dec. 15, at 6:50 p.m., where the bands and choirs will perform music of the season.

Cupertino Classic scheduled
FORT WAYNE — The third annual Cupertino Classic will be Tuesday, Dec. 27, at Bishop Luers High School, 533 E. Paulding Rd., at 6:30 p.m. The friendly basketball competition between priests and seminarians of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is family friendly and admission is free. For information will be posted on the Facebook page www.facebook.com/CupertinoClassic.

March for Life
FORT WAYNE — Fort Wayne March for Life is an annual pro-life rally held near the anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion in Roe v. Wade. The rally will begin at noon at the University of St. Francis Performing Arts Center, followed by the march at 1 p.m. Peter Heck will be the guest speaker.

Christmas concert planned
FORT WAYNE — St. Peter Church, 518 E Dewald St., will have a Christmas concert Thursday, Dec. 29, at 7 p.m. in the church. Admission is free.

Bishop Luers to offer Christmas prayer in music
FORT WAYNE — Bishop Luers High School will offer Christmas Prayer in Music on Sunday, Dec. 18, at 4 p.m. in the new Chapel of Saint Francis of Assisi at the school. The Bishop Luers choirs and musicians will offer a reading and Christmas prayers in the form of music. The service is expected to last one hour. The annual Christmas Concert will be Thursday, Dec. 15, at 6:50 p.m., where the bands and choirs will perform music of the season.

The Fort Wayne March for Life is an annual pro-life rally held near the anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion in Roe v. Wade. The rally will begin at noon at the University of St. Francis Performing Arts Center, followed by the march at 1 p.m. Peter Heck will be the guest speaker.
The Christmas story goes well beyond that beautiful moment of the Nativity. From the Annunciation to the Flight into Egypt, it is a story of obedience to God’s will and the self-sacrificial love of family. For Catholic Charities, Christmas is our call to aid the vulnerable, the homeless, and the refugee. So in this holy season, we renew our commitment of service and offer our heartfelt thanks to all who make our work possible.

From all of us, we wish you a Blessed Christmas and Prosperous New Year,
Gloria Whitcraft, CEO

ccfwsb.org

PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING OUR MISSION:

Donate by using the “Catholic Charities” church envelope, included with your weekly parish envelopes.
Visit our office in Fort Wayne, South Bend, or Auburn to make your cash, check or charge donation in person.
Call us at (260) 422-5625 to donate over the phone.
Visit ccfwsb.org and click on the “Donate Now” button.
Mail check or money orders made out to “Catholic Charities” to:
Catholic Charities | P.O. Box 10630 | Fort Wayne, IN 46853