



DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

CATHOLIC TIMES

A journal of Catholic life in Ohio

JANUARY 8, 2012
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
VOLUME 61:14
WWW.CTONLINE.ORG



PILGRIMS SEEK CLOSER CONNECTION TO CHRIST

The Editor's Notebook

A Journey of Faith

By David Garick, Editor



This week, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. This annual event commemorates the journey of the Magi to seek the Christ Child. Many have described the Magi as the first pilgrims. They certainly qualify, given the large distance they traveled seeking out this spiritual experience. I would also include the Bethlehem shepherds among the first pilgrims. Granted, they did not travel very far. But nevertheless, they left their fields to seek out the child that the angel of the Lord told them about and experienced the awe of the incarnation.

Pilgrimages have played an important part of our faith experience ever since. This week, *Catholic Times* takes a look at how some central Ohio Catholics have deepened their faith through pilgrimage.

The primary characteristic of a pilgrimage is a journey to encounter Christ. Every one of us is a pilgrim in some sense. Every time we go to church to receive Holy Communion or to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, we are having a personal encounter with Christ. The journey may be short, but it is still a pilgrimage and should fill us with a sense of awe at the reality that we are physically in the presence of and in communion with God Almighty.

The challenge for all of us is to gain a deeper understanding of this spiritual encounter, to bring our humanity in closer harmony with the reality of Christ. For many Christians, that means placing themselves in physical places associated with Christ, with our Blessed Mother, and with the saints, who achieved spiritual union with Christ.

Often, we can get the benefits of pilgrimage by placing ourselves in another part of the Body of Christ, the Church. In every church, there is a unique spiritual experience. You meet the same

Christ, but you do so with a different group of believers who are sharing that communion with you. Every church has been created to glorify God and has different architectural and artistic features that have been designed to bring the worshiper into closer unity with Christ. You may experience that in a church across town or in another state or another continent, such as in our stories on Latin American churches on Page 7 or churches in the Swiss Alps on Page 12.

You may benefit from being in places where spiritual events have occurred, including visions of the Virgin Mary, such as in our story about a pilgrimage to Medjugorje on Page 10. Or you may be able to visit places associated with the saints, whether they are near, such as Maria Stein, Ohio (story on Page 3), or in the footsteps of St. Paul in Asia Minor (Page 18). And, of course, you may have the opportunity to travel to the Holy Land and seek out Christ in the very place where he was born, ministered, died, and rose again. You can read about local pilgrims who did that this year on Page 11.

The bottom line is that every one of us, as Christians, has a responsibility to be a pilgrim. We are called to seek out Christ, to deepen our spiritual communion with him and with His eternal Body on earth, the Church. Whether we do that nearby or on the other side of the world, we are still called to make that effort. Christ makes himself available to us. But we must accept the challenge to seek Him out and to experience the awe that the Magi and the shepherds felt as they knelt in the presence of God in a rough stable in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago.

Sister Patricia Dual professes perpetual vows



Sister Patricia Dual, OP (left), with Sister Margaret Ormond, OP, prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, at Sister Patricia's perpetual profession of vows on Dec. 10 at the sisters' motherhouse in Columbus. Photo courtesy Dominican Sisters of Peace

BY TIM PUET

Reporter, *Catholic Times*

Sister Patricia Dual, OP, says the experiences that led her toward becoming a Dominican Sister of Peace taught her that faith in God is a journey of perpetual growth.

"Being a sister is a difficult life, certainly a fulfilling and challenging one, and you learn that you never stop learning and growing," she said. "God is always stretching you, and you learn to trust him and to become more open to saying 'Yes' to him. Once you do that, your 'Yes' becomes like that of Mary's 'Yes' to becoming the mother of God. It opens up a whole new world."

Sister Patricia took the latest step on her faith journey on Dec. 10 in Columbus when she made her perpetual profession of vows during a Mass at her congregation's motherhouse in Columbus. It's a journey that has

taken her through marriage, motherhood, and estrangement from the Catholic Church to a lifetime pledged to serving God.

Her two sons, Chorya, 38, and Christopher, 29, and their families, including her new granddaughter, Christiana, were present for the Mass of profession. Father Denis Kigozi, pastor of Columbus St. Thomas Church, was the presider, with Father Scott Kramer, CPPS, pastor of Columbus St. James the Less Church, and Father Michael Trainor, OP, assisting. During the Mass, Sister Patricia pronounced her vows in front of the assembled religious and laypeople while grasping hands with Sister Margaret Ormond, OP, prioress of the congregation.

Sister Patricia has been pastoral associate at St. James since 2007 and will become part of a three-person vocational ministries team for her

See **JOURNEY**, Page 5

IN THE COMPANY OF SAINTS

A PILGRIMAGE TO MARIA STEIN

By David Garick

West central Ohio is well known as the Land of the Cross Tipped Churches. Many of the towns have the same name as the local Catholic parish – St. Anthony, St. Henry, St. Joseph, St. Peter, St. Rose, St. Sebastian, and St. Wendelin. This area is also home to the Marian Shrine of the Holy Relics, a beautiful chapel in the village of Maria Stein, which pilgrims visit to see its collection of more than 1,000 relics of holy men and women.

Father Michael Gribble, rector of Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral, recently led members of the cathedral's pastoral council on a pilgrimage to Maria Stein.

The village's history goes back a century-and-a-half. In 1844, six Precious Blood Sisters were sent to establish a community in the wilderness of Ohio. They established their convent in Mercer County and named it Maria Stein in honor of the Swiss convent that bears the same name. Maria Stein translates as "Mary of the Rock." The history of the Swiss shrine goes back to the 13th century, when a small boy helping his mother tend sheep fell over a steep cliff and into a cavern 120 feet below. When the distraught mother was able to climb down into the cavern, she found her son quietly gathering flowers for a wreath for someone. He said a beautiful lady, accompanied by angels, had caught him. She said she was the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven and asked that a shrine be built on that spot.

In 1872, a large number of sacred relics of saints were sent to the convent at Maria Stein for safekeeping because of unrest in Italy, where a number of churches were being plundered and robbed. This led to creation of the Shrine of the Holy Relics, and the collection of relics of the saints has continued ever since.

Today, the pilgrim to Maria Stein has an opportunity to pray in the midst of the second largest collection of relics in the United States. Just about every saint you have ever heard of is present in the shrine, including all 12 apostles. Every relic placed for veneration in the shrine has been authenticated, documented, and sealed. The relics range from tiny bone fragments sealed in small glass-covered disks about the size of a quarter up to full bones of some early saints and the entire body of St. Victoria, encased in a wax figure and placed below the shrine's Sacred Heart altar.

A visit to Maria Stein provides a unique opportunity to pray in the presence of many of the holiest men and women of the church throughout the centuries. The shrine exudes a sense of overwhelming holiness, as the communion of saints becomes very real in a physical way and strengthens our spiritual unity with those who have gone before us. The Council of Trent decreed, "The holy bodies of holy martyrs and other now living with Christ – which bodies were the living members of Christ and the temples of the Holy Spirit, -- and which are by Him



raised to eternal life and to be glorified, are to be venerated by the faithful, for through these (bodies) many benefits are bestowed on men by God."

The shrine is open for visitors Tuesday through Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Guided tours may be scheduled by appointment. Groups traveling to the shrine with a priest may arrange to have Mass in the adjacent chapel. Eucharistic Adoration is held in the chapel from 1 to 5 p.m. each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. There is also a heritage museum on the site, which is open from noon to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Persons or groups wishing to participate in more lengthy spiritual reflection may schedule a retreat at the adjacent Spiritual Center of Maria Stein. Retreat lodging and meals are available at very reasonable prices. For more information, call (419) 925-4532 or visit its website at www.mariasteinshrine.org.

For more information, call (419) 925-4532 or visit its website at www.mariasteinshrine.org.

Top left photo: The Marian Shrine of the Holy Relics, in the village of Maria Stein in Mercer County in west central Ohio. Precious Blood Sisters established a convent there in 1844 and the first relics were brought there in 1872.

Bottom left: Pilgrims pray at the shrine's Sacred Heart altar. The entire body of St. Victoria, encased in a wax figure, can be seen below the altar.

Right: The relics number more than 1,000 and are arranged in several glass cases

CT photos by David Garick



Front Page photo:

Pilgrims climb Mount Krizevac, which means "Mountain of the Cross," in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, a village where alleged apparitions of the Blessed Mother have taken place since 1981

Photo courtesy Carol Keene



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Postmaster: Send address changes to Catholic Times, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus, Ohio 43215. Please allow two to four weeks for change of address.

Bishop Frederick F. Campbell, D.D., Ph.D. ~ President & Publisher

David Garick ~ Editor (dgarick@colodioc.org)

Tim Puet ~ Reporter (tpuet@colodioc.org)

Alexandra Keves ~ Graphic Design Manager (akeves@colodioc.org)

Deacon Steve DeMers ~ Business Manager (sdemers@colodioc.org)

Jodie Sfreddo ~ Bookkeeper/Circulation Coordinator (jsfreddo@colodioc.org)

Mailing Address: 197 E. Gay St., Columbus OH 43215

Editorial Staff Telephone (614) 224-5195 FAX (614) 241-2518

Business Staff Telephone (614) 224-6530 FAX (614) 241-2518

PRACTICAL STEWARDSHIP

By Rick Jeric

Search



Did you wrap a special Christmas symbol and then unwrap it with joy at Christmas? Have you contemplated, meditated, and prayed about the true gift of love in Jesus Christ during the past two weeks? What a great way to re-establish our prayer life for the new year. As we discussed a couple of weeks ago, we are joyfully challenged to keep and maintain our daily prayer and focus on love, peace, kindness, and truly good deeds each and every day. That is exactly what living the Gospel means. We hear the Word, we pray for the Word, and now we must live the Word. We want to approach Ash Wednesday and Lent in just another month or so with a fresh outlook on prayer and active faith. There is no reason to wait for Lent. Continue to capitalize on the good strides we have made. Do not stop. Pray each day. Do good acts for the benefit of others, and start in your own family. Do them quietly and humbly. Most important, do them genuinely, lovingly, and sincerely. St. James is a great writer regarding good and faithful stewardship without even mentioning it by name. He challenges us to be "doers of the Word." Let us heed his words and live the love of Jesus Christ — not just think about it.

What are you searching for? What things do you seek in this new year? It is a natural thing for us to resolve to make changes in our lives when a new year begins. They can be very ambitious or very simple. If we actually accomplish them and then sustain the positive results, we have really done it the right way. Unfortunately, sometimes we are not successful, and we simply fail. If you are like me, you might find yourself making the same resolutions year after year. But we do not give up. The search continues for success, health, peace, and an overall sense of contentment. Of course, these goals for which we search may remain just beyond our reach for a lifetime. Nevertheless, we know that we are on a long pilgrim journey to achieve those goals. We also know that the search goes on, with a great deal of help. Just as our search grows and matures, so does our relationship with Jesus Christ. Ultimately, this is what all our searching is really about. We search throughout all the rubble and distraction of this world to find the real love of God in Jesus. It is not unlike the great search we are now celebrating in the Epiphany. The three kings, or wise men, searched and followed the star, encountering twists and turns throughout the journey. At times, I am sure it must have seemed as if they would fail. But they did not give up or surrender. They kept their focus and maintained their faith in attaining their goal of finding the newborn king. What joy and bliss they must have felt and experienced when they were finally in His presence. The search had ended, but the journey continued. And so it must be with us. Our faith takes us on many a search throughout our lives. We find Jesus Christ in our joy, in nature, in the sacraments, in His Word, and in one another. Those moments of joy and bliss do not mean that our search has ended. It is another step toward having a greater impact on those whom we serve on this earth. It is another part of the successful search that ends with complete joy in eternal life.

Our practical challenge this week is to resolve to keep Jesus Christ as a very real part of our ongoing search. Keep your faith close to, and a part of, everything you do. Now, that is a resolution. Search for God in your spouse, your children, your friends, your co-workers, and in each stranger you encounter. If our search begins with the realization that we will find Jesus Christ in everyone we meet along the way, then our lives can change for the better, and for good. What a challenge this is. It is just so difficult to live each day with that mindset. But as our state motto tells us, "With God, all things are possible." Let us renew and refresh our search for Jesus Christ with a strong faith and resolve to succeed. May our epiphanies be many, and may the ultimate search end with great joy and bliss.

Jeric is director of development and planning for the Columbus Diocese.

Coshocton Sacred Heart helps with pet adoption



Students and staff of Coshocton Sacred Heart School collected \$150 and 100 pounds of pet food to help the local Four Paws agency assist families with the cost of adopting a dog or cat. In return, they received the privilege of a "dress down day." Pictured are (from left) teachers Erica Harrison and Andrea Bairas in the back row and students Mattison Harrison, Abby Zimomra, and Hannah Jacobs in front

Photo courtesy Sacred Heart School

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JOURNEY, continued from Page 2

congregation once a replacement for her at the Columbus parish is found and trained.

The Mass also included selections from the gospel choir of St. Thomas Church, with four Dominican sisters presenting the gifts in a celebratory manner, wearing African attire and performing a traditional dance to honor Sister Patricia's heritage. She is the first African American member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

Sister Patricia, 60, who grew up and lived in Norfolk, Va., before coming to Columbus as a candidate with the Dominicans in 2005, said that even though she is a lifelong Catholic, entering a religious community is something she never would have imagined doing during the first half of her life.

"I was married in 1973 and divorced in 1988, and my marriage was annulled in 1990. During my marriage, there were about 10 years when I stopped going to church altogether," she said. "After I started to become active in the church again, I sensed I was being called to something, but I wasn't sure an older, married woman, with children, could be a sister. Fortunately, God kept putting people in my life who helped me see that the things which were part of my life didn't need to stop me from answering his call."

Among the most important of those people were Msgr. Walter Barrett, Sister Pat Twohill, OP, and Sister Jacquelyn Laster, RSM.

"I met Msgr. Barrett around 1975, shortly after he had become a priest and was assigned to my parish in Norfolk," Sister Patricia said. "Until then, I had never met a sister or a priest who was black. He made me realize a religious life was something a black person could aspire to."

Her separation from the church came after she initially met Msgr. Barrett. He was given other assignments, but by the time Sister Patricia returned to active Catholicism, Msgr. Barrett had returned to her church as pastor. "While I was gone, the church had gone through many changes and spoke more to my culture," she said. "I felt I was home, and I got involved in parish and diocesan work. Msgr. Barrett and other priests helped plant seeds of service that made me begin to wonder what kind of calling I might have."

Sister Patricia began to expand her circle of friends to include sisters and other religious, became a lay associate of the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore, and started studying theology. Throughout her time in Norfolk, she also was working in various positions for Sentara Health Care, which employed her for 31 years in various positions.

She met Sister Pat when both were serving on the pastoral council of the Diocese of Richmond, Va. "By this time, I had learned that there were some women who had once been married and later became sisters, so I knew it was

possible," she said. "Sister Pat felt I had a calling to religious life and provided a great deal of encouragement. When I turned 50, she invited me to Columbus for a retreat. By that time, I had graduated from college with a bachelor's degree and wasn't sure whether to obtain my master's or go forward with pursuing a religious life.

"In 2002, a sister invited me to the National Black Sisters Conference in Charlotte, N.C. Sisters from several communities were there and I remember thinking 'I'm almost 52, with two kids, and maybe grandkids some day. What am I going to do?' Then a sister got up and said she was 54, with three kids and four grandkids, and was preparing to take her first vows. That was Sister Jackie Laster. I felt God was saying to me through her that this is what he wanted me to do, so I began planning to enter religious life."

Her friendship with Sister Pat led her to the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs in Columbus, who later merged with several other congregations to become the Dominican Sisters of Peace. She entered her novitiate years in 2006 and made her temporary profession of vows in 2008.

"Even though I was the only African American, I never felt different," she said of her formation period with the Dominicans. "I always have felt free to be myself and I've always been supported for who I am and how I express who I am."

During most of her time in Columbus, she has been at St. James the Less, where she has overseen the RCIA program, religious instruction for public school children, and the school and parish sacramental program, as well as coordinating liturgical ministries.

"She is full of life and the Holy Spirit, ready to share the story of her journey with those who come to her seeking to deepen their faith," Father Kramer said. "She has a contagious laugh that can light up a room and a knack for making people feel at ease."

Sister Patricia also has been involved with the diocesan Black Catholic Ministries program, serving as chair of the four-day revival it conducted in 2010. "She is quite the woman," said the program's executive director, Rachelle Martin. "She has laid down her life for Jesus and I admire her so much. I have gone to her for advice many times, and she has provided me with great advice. I thoroughly admire her for everything she has done and the great example she provides the African American Catholic community."

Sister Patricia said she's eager for the next step in her life, which will take her nationwide to conduct retreats, "come and see" weekends, and other events to help women discern whether they are called to the religious life. "God has carried me this far," she said. "I know that all I need do is open myself in service and God will provide all I need to do his will."



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The office of divine worship

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD



The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Monday, Jan. 9 this year) brings the liturgical season of Christmas to a close. By now, most of the drooping poinsettias have been removed from our sanctuaries and only a sturdy few still remain. Throughout our neighborhoods, the cut pine trees used to decorate our homes have already made it to the curb and have been picked up, to become wood chips for some park. Christmas carols no longer fill the stores and radio waves. Christmas movies have been put away by the TV networks for the next Christmas season. Stores have replaced their after-Christmas sales with diet and fitness products; some have already brought out their Valentine candy. However, for the Church, the liturgical season of Christmas ends this coming Monday with the celebration of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Since 1970, the celebration of the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord has taken place on the Sunday following the first Saturday in January instead of on Jan. 6. The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated on the Sunday that follows the celebration of Epiphany, except when Epiphany falls on Jan. 7 or 8, as it does this year. When Epiphany falls on either of these two dates, The Feast of the Baptism of

the Lord is transferred to the Monday following Epiphany. Whichever day The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated, it becomes the last day in the season of Christmas. The day that follows The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a day in the first week of Ordinary Time.

Christmas is an extended liturgical season of joy and celebration involving many different symbols and traditions, special music, and activities, which vary significantly among different nations and cultures. The season celebrates the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus, through the beginning of his public ministry. It is with his baptism in the Jordan River that his public ministry begins.

A question that is often asked is "Why did Jesus ask to be baptized by John?" The early Church Fathers pondered this question. Their answer was simple: "Christ is baptized, not to be made holy by the water, but to make the water holy, and by his cleansing to purify the waters which he touched." There is an image found in the book of Exodus in which the Israelites moved through the water of the Red Sea, leaving slavery and proceeding to the promised land. Baptism offers the movement from original sin through the waters of baptism to the promise of eternal life.

Baptism was not the only sacrament established that day. As Jesus stepped out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and the Father spoke, thus confirming his public ministry, a ministry we, too, share through our baptism and our confirmation. Through these sacraments (and the Eucharist), we are fully initiated into the mission of Christ, a mission that leads us to eternal life. After all, following in the steps of Jesus is not just about "being saved," it is about sharing in Christ's anointing to transform the world.

WEARING THE ROSARY; ATTENDING NON-CATHOLIC SERVICES



QUESTION & ANSWER

by: **FATHER KENNETH DOYLE**
Catholic News Service

Q. I am an eighth-grade teacher in a public school. I am devoted to the rosary and pray it daily. I have several Hispanic students who wear the rosary around their neck. I tell them that the rosary is meant to be prayed, not to be worn as jewelry. When I ask them about the prayers involved in the rosary, they have no idea what I'm talking about. So I ask them to take it off.

Am I wrong? (Georgia)

A. Canon No. 1171 is the church's guideline that relates most directly here. This provision of the church's Code of Canon Law states: "Sacred objects, which are designated for divine worship by dedication or blessing, are to be treated reverently and are not to be employed for profane or inappropriate use even if they are owned by private persons."

One might argue that the rosaries in question were probably never blessed, and, in truth, the canon was meant to apply more to objects for liturgical worship, such as chalices, than to rosaries. But I would contend that a rosary is a sacred object, whether blessed or not, and should not be used simply for ornamentation.

That having been said, I would caution against concluding that the students have no religious

motive, particularly since there is a long-standing custom among Latinos of wearing rosaries to show their faith in Jesus and in his mother, Mary. That the students don't seem to know the prayers that go with each bead doesn't necessarily prove that they do not have a religious purpose in wearing their rosaries.

What you might want to do, rather than making the students remove the rosaries, is to teach them.

Why not say to them, "I'm glad to see that you and I share the same faith in Jesus and love for Mary" (Of course, in a public school setting, you have the added hurdle of having to do this on your own time and not in a classroom setting).

A number of court cases have dealt with the issue of students wearing rosary beads. In recent months, a 12-year-old Nebraska girl was directed by public school authorities to remove the rosary around her neck because, they said, it could be construed as an identifying symbol for gangs. The American Civil Liberties Union entered the fray in support of the girl's First Amendment right to express her religious belief.

Q. After fulfilling our Sunday obligation, are Catholics permitted to attend a non-Catholic church service when invited by a

relative? (During the holiday season, this presents an annual dilemma for my wife and me.) (Newburgh, Ind.)

A. "Yes" is the clear answer, and, further, it is a good idea.

Catholics may attend and participate in common prayer experiences with non-Catholics (The one caution is that, in general, Catholics may not take Communion if it is offered as part of the non-Catholic service, as specified in Canon No. 844 of the church's Code of Canon Law).

The Vatican, in particular the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has strongly encouraged common prayer among Christians, especially psalms and hymns, and, if invited, a Catholic may read a lesson at a non-Catholic service, or even preach. Such attendance does not serve Catholics as a substitute for Sunday Mass, but you said that you had already satisfied the obligation of Sunday Eucharist.

The particular circumstance that you reference -- sharing prayer with family members, especially at holiday time -- is an ideal setting, as are joint Thanksgiving services or weddings and funerals of non-Catholics.

These experiences help Catholics to appreciate other faiths and the deep religious traditions that often come from common roots.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.

Destination Latin America: Promoting religious tourism

By **Ezra Fieser**
Catholic News Service

The oldest cathedral in the Americas sits just off a busy plaza in the colonial district of Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic.

However, it's the nearby bronze Christopher Columbus statue, Hard Rock Café, and cigar shops that draw the lines of tourists in the plaza.

"We came to see the colonial area. The churches are a nice part of that. But they're not the reason we came," said Maria Torres, who perused the shops that ring the plaza after snapping a photo of the statue.

Torres, a lifelong Catholic who was visiting from Spain, added, "The oldest in the Americas? I had no idea."

Catholic leaders here want to get the word out about the area's significance. A spokesman for the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo told Catholic News Service it is trying to bring attention to the area as a key site for 500 years of religious history.

Working with tourism officials, the archdiocese developed "religious route" itineraries, taking tourists past 16 churches, convents, monasteries, and hospitals that were the foundation of the development of Santo Domingo, the first city in the New World.

In August, it opened a museum dedicated to the area's religious history, culminating a years-long effort by Cardi-

nal Nicolas Lopez Rodriguez of Santo Domingo. The museum's opening coincided with the end of the 500-year anniversary of the founding of the diocese, it said.

Throughout Latin America, Catholic leaders and tourism officials are working to bring more attention to their religious places and events. More than five centuries since Columbus landed in the Caribbean and Catholicism began to spread through the hemisphere, the region is gaining recognition from international tourists.

"As a destination for faith-based tourism, we're seeing Latin America receive more attention than it has in the past," said Kevin Wright, director of growth markets at NTA, a Kentucky-based travel association. Years ago, Latin America was barely on the radar, but in what Wright called the "new era" of faith-based tourism, the region appeals to younger and more adventurous travelers.

"It offers a diversity of experiences," he said. "It's an emerging market."

The faith-based travel portion of the tourism market is worth an estimated \$18 billion a year around the globe. The most popular destinations for Catholic pilgrimages remain, by far, the Holy Land and Europe.

Although they receive far less attention than traditional destinations, significant Catholic sights -- such as the



The Cathedral of Santa Maria la Menor in Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic, was built from 1512 to 1540 and is the oldest cathedral in the Americas. CNS photo

Cathedral of Santa Maria la Menor in Santo Domingo -- are scattered throughout Latin America. They range from Mexico's Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe to breathtaking churches tucked into Andean valleys. Even the iconic symbol of Brazil's most celebrated city, Rio de Janeiro, is a Catholic monument: Christ the Redeemer, towering over the city below, was named one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007.

Within the region, religious travel has long been an important cultural activity. Holy Week, marked in many nations by elaborate, somber processions, remains the busiest travel week for most nations in the region. The Guatemalan colonial city Antigua -- population 45,000 -- sees about 300,000 visitors that week.

Other places, such as Las Lajas Sanctuary, a nearly 300-foot-tall basilica built into a ravine in southern Colombia, attract visitors year-round; many pilgrims to Las Lajas cross the border

from Ecuador on pilgrimage.

Las Lajas became the poster child of the Colombian government's effort to attract more religious tourists when it launched a "Roads of Faith" promotional campaign last year.

The campaign, which highlights events and places throughout the South American nation, was aimed at drawing tourists from Spain, Italy, and Latin America, said Ivan Mauricio Florez of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism.

The importance of promoting the destinations to tourists from around the world was highlighted in a message from the Pontifical Council for Migration and Travelers.

"It must be an objective priority of our pastoral care of tourism to show the true meaning of this cultural heritage, born from faith and for the glory of God," said the 2011 World Tourism Day mes-

See **LATIN AMERICA**, Page 14

The Early Interval

"A Spanish Twelfth Night Celebration"

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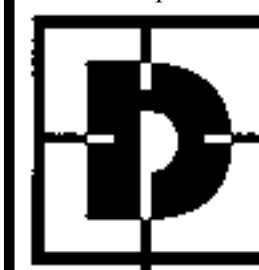
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UNCONDITIONAL PARENTAL LOVE

Once I met a woman who had worked for years in fashion and modeling. Unsurprisingly, she was strikingly attractive. She was accompanied by her teenage daughter, who, by contrast, was rather unremarkable to look at, maybe even a "plain Jane." After spending time with them, I began to sense that the mother, whose life had largely revolved around her appearance, seemed to look down on her daughter, perhaps unconsciously, because of her average appearance. Her daughter seemed aware of this lack of maternal acceptance, and seemed troubled and uncomfortable as she tried to compensate and please her mom in other ways.

The girl's situation was a strong reminder to me of how important it is for all children to experience unconditional acceptance from their parents if they are to grow and mature in a healthy way. Unconditional love profoundly and beautifully molds us as human beings.

A growing number of parents in our society, however, no longer seem to hold to this key notion of unconditionally accepting their own children. If parents are told by doctors that their children might be born with physical or mental disabilities, many parents today will reject them and even yield to the temptation to end their lives through direct abortion.

I was recently discussing the Special Olympics with the father of a boy who has Down syndrome, and he remarked that when he takes his son to the local chapter, there seem to be reduced numbers of new children participating each year. He wondered if this could be because of the expanded targeting of Down syndrome children through prenatal testing and abortion.

Most unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome, in fact, are never allowed to be born. Data from the United Kingdom indicate that between 1989 and 2006, approximately 92 percent of women chose to terminate a pregnancy with a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome. In the U.S., several published studies suggest the figure may be somewhere between 87 and 98 percent. A great many Down syndrome children, indeed, never see the light of day.

In the face of these harsh data, the importance of explicitly repudiating the eugenic mindset that has taken hold in our society cannot be overstated. No child is perfect, but every child is precious. We need to act as a people "set apart" in our attitude to the begetting of children who may be disabled. Historically, Catholics have always stood apart in this way.

Practically, this means overturning our culturally conditioned attitudes toward "imperfect" children



**MAKING SENSE
 Out of Bioethics**
 Father Tad Pacholczyk

and accepting every child without preconditions. We must push back against the almost ubiquitous pressure that counsels us to ensure that our children are born without defects.

Bioethicist Luke Gormally argues it this way: "In part, these pressures are the natural temptation to avoid the burdens of care for the handicapped. ... In part, however, they are the pressures of cultural attitudes, assimilated by many Christians, toward the child."

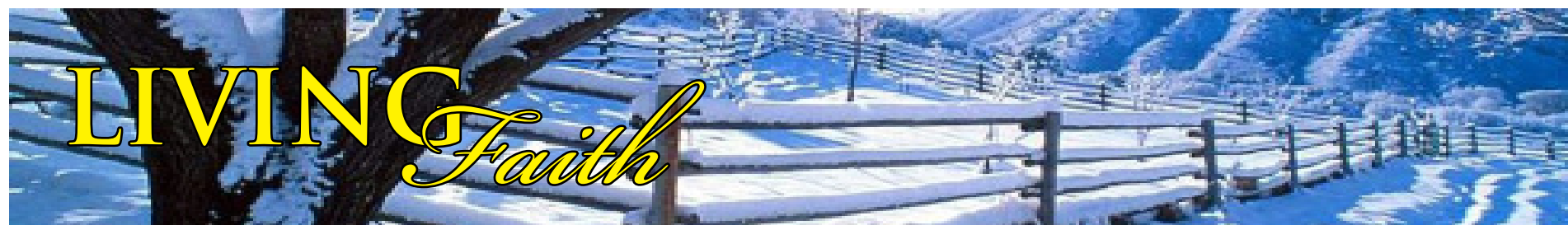
He continues: "For many, it has become merely quaint to think of each child as a unique gift of God; children are more like planned acquisitions in our culture, acquisitions which should fit into our expectations about how our lives should go, about the ease and enjoyments that should characterize our lifestyle. A child who might threaten our ease may, if he or she is viewed as an acquisition, be thought of as a replaceable acquisition. And, indeed, genetic counselors will tell parents you can terminate this pregnancy and try again for a 'normal child.'"

A husband and wife are called to give themselves to each other completely and unreservedly, and to accept each other unconditionally in the marital embrace. Every child of theirs, whether entering the world with a handicap or not, is an expression and fruit of themselves and their acceptance of each other. To reject their own progeny because of a disability is to reject each other on some level. To deny life to their own flesh and blood is also to reject an infinite gift from the Giver of gifts, and to arrogate to themselves a ruthless power over life. Meanwhile, the unconditional acceptance of a child as a gift of God flows from the true and unconditional acceptance of each other as husband and wife, even with all their spousal faults and defects.

As Gormally concludes, "Truly unreserved self-giving carries with it a commitment to unreserved acceptance of the fruit of that self-giving. The dignity of the child is only adequately recognized in the acceptance and cherishing of him just as he is."

We do well continually to realign our thinking so we can come to see how our children, whether "perfect" or not, are treasures, and never possessions; they are gifts, and never acquisitions. They are blessings to be safeguarded and nurtured in the embrace of unconditional parental acceptance.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, PhD, earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did postdoctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.



The Undignified Dwelling of Our Souls

I can't drink my Starbucks if the label on the cup is not perfectly lined up with the label on the sleeve. I would struggle to concentrate all day if I knew that my bed wasn't made. Everything in my office has a very specific place, and I can't leave work for the day without knowing that each thing is in its proper location. My room was once described as looking like a hotel all the time. From the outside, these things look extremely organized and put together. But the truth is I am a secret mess. If you were to look in the center console in my car, you'd find a collection of gum wrappers that could go in the Guinness Book of World Records. If you look under my bed, you'd find a stash of things from purses to swimsuits to posters I have from concerts and movies. If you look in my "mess drawer" at work, you'll find unused mugs and affirmation letters and random blank CDs (Note: it is with great humility that I share this with you).

Recently, I heard it said that the state of your room reflects the state of your heart. And as I reflected on this statement, I recognized its validity in my own life, specifically in my relationship with the Lord. When it comes to my faith life, the person that I present to people throughout the day and the heart I bring before the Lord is the put-together, poised, tidy version of myself. But this is not the reality. My interior is messy. My desires are disheveled; my prayer life is unkempt; my priorities are disordered; my affections are confused. My heart is cluttered. And the truth is that I am embarrassed to bring this mess to the Lord. I am scared to admit how truly unworthy of a dwelling place I am. And somewhere deep within me, I still fear that if the Lord really looked at all my infidelities and imperfections, he would no longer desire me.

Luke 2:7 says "She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger." Luke continues the story and tells us



The Great Surrender
 Megan Thompson

that when the shepherds came to adore Jesus in the manger, they left "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen." Obviously, they were worshiping God for the fact that "a savior has been born ... who is the Messiah and Lord." But I think that they also left with the image of Jesus, lying in the manger, pierced into their minds and hearts. And what an audacious image this is. Jesus Christ became man to dwell in a manger. A trough for animals to eat from. The most undignified, filthy resting place imaginable. And it is in this image that we find hope.

The word "Advent," derived from the Latin, means "coming." But in one of his messages for this Advent season, Pope Benedict says that this word more profoundly means that "God is here. He has not withdrawn from the world. He has not deserted us." St. Gregory of Nyssa says that Jesus Christ became flesh because "sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; dead, to rise again...Did (these things) not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and

unhappy a state?" These words speak to us of a God who is not afraid of our messes. He is not disgusted by our disheveled, unkempt, disordered interior. He is not afraid of those places in our lives in which he is least dignified and least adored. The same Jesus Christ who dwelt in the undignified, filthy manger actually desires to dwell in the messes of our souls-to bring healing, to shine light, to set us free.

As I reflect on my own life, I humbly acknowledge that the Lord has every right to withdraw from me. For the countless times that I have abandoned and deserted him, he has every right to do the same to me. But in this season, we can once again find hope in the fact that HE HASN'T. He has not withdrawn from us. He has not deserted us. He is here. The filth of the manger could not diminish Christ's glory, could not stop him from his mission, could not keep him from coming to dwell on earth. And with praise and exultation, we acknowledge that the filth of our lives and the wreckage in our hearts does not diminish his glory, does not stop him from desiring the salvation of our souls, does not keep him from dwelling within us.

Jesus Christ, we thank you for the audacity of your choice to dwell within our messes. Take up residence in us, O Perfect Savior, that we might become a more purified, sanctified dwelling place for you.

Megan Thompson is youth minister at Gahanna St. Matthew Church. She posts her thoughts online at <http://surrendertohislove.blogspot.com>.

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PILGRIMS FIND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL IN MEDJUGORJE

Pilgrims from the Diocese of Columbus pray on Apparition Hill. The blue cross marks the site of Mary's first reported appearance 30 years ago

Miki Musa, a friend of one of the Medjugorje visionaries, leads Ohio and Michigan pilgrims through the history of Medjugorje, St. James Church, the reported apparitions, and the faith life of the village



By Carol Keene

Medjugorje is not for tourists; Medjugorje is for pilgrims. Well-intentioned tourists have visited, and leave as pilgrims. It is inevitable. It is a holy place.

Medjugorje is a village of fewer than 1,000 families situated in the Herzegovina region of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkans (the former Yugoslavia). There exists no simple path on which one can travel there; its name means "between the mountains." Yet, millions have visited this holy site since news that alleged apparitions of the Blessed Mother were taking place there began in 1981. The path within one's heart becomes the origin of a journey to explore, witness, and, upon arrival home, ponder Medjugorje.

Medjugorje is truly holy, with its history of endurance of foreign occupation while maintaining Catholic faith and tradition – a faith that permeates every inch of it today. Thirty years ago, the villagers were sustenance farmers, tending tobacco fields and vineyards in their very rocky terrain. Today, they continue to tend vineyards, but they also run simple, family-owned hotels, filled with hospitality and the smells of home-cooked foods, in which millions of pilgrims have stayed

and continue to stay.

In June 1981, six children from the village claimed they had been visited by the Mother of God. They said Mary had messages for them and for the world. Since then, the messages and regular visits from the Blessed Mother are reported to have continued. Both the curious and the faithful continually visit, pray, seek the sacraments, and realize a peace that cannot be captured in words, but captivates the heart and soul.

Mass is celebrated several times daily in a variety of languages, with many concelebrant priests. The Mass in Croatian (the local language) is so crowded that it spills outside the parish church of St. James (regardless of the weather) to hundreds of park benches, where one can hear Mass via speakers. Confessionals are numerous and are tagged with the language of the priest inside. The lines are long and the wait for Reconciliation can be an hour or more. At 5 p.m. each day, the church overflows for the recitation of the rosary in Croatian. Frequently, decades of the rosary also are recited in a variety of other languages; the languages overlap. The devotion of the local residents is exemplary and contagious. The rosary prayers

flow from the hearts through the lips of all. They sing as music to the soul.

In contrast to the many languages of the Mass and rosary flooding the air, daily Eucharistic Adoration calls all to a depth of prayer in which the heart and soul touch as they seek a closer union with our Lord. The park benches fill, large screens expose the Blessed Sacrament as projected (via live video) from inside the church, the church is packed, and silence prevails.

This Medjugorje pilgrim traveled with husband, Dan, spiritual director, Father Antonio Carvalho (administrator pro tem at Columbus Holy Name Church) and a group from Michigan and the Diocese of Columbus in late October and early November of 2011. Having visited Europe many times, I should have been experientially prepared. In prayerful preparation, though, I realized I should empty myself so as to be filled as God, not me, chose. Having no expectations led me to spiritual experience and growth beyond words, an experience from which daily fruits have appeared. Each pilgrim story is unique, while woven with the common thread of God's love and its manifestation in his/her life.

Medjugorje comes home with pilgrims and is shared.

All aspects of Medjugorje, with reverence for our Blessed Mother, point the faithful to her son, our Lord Jesus, to His Father, to the Holy Spirit. The overflowing church testifies to the devotion of the people of Medjugorje. The faithful are both visitors and villagers who come day after day, evening after evening. They travel from home, climb Cross Mountain and Apparition Hill, stand for hours in the cold night awaiting the dawn when the Blessed Mother will appear to a visionary, seek the sacraments, and adore the Lord. All are pilgrims, following the lead of our Blessed Mother to her holy Son.

Carol Keene recently retired as associate director of the diocesan Communications Office.

St. James, the parish church of Medjugorje, was completed and blessed in the 1960s. The construction of a church with a capacity of 2,000 for such a small village was questioned until pilgrims began to visit in 1981 and filled the church

Photos courtesy Carol Keene



Father Antonio Carvalho, administrator pro tem of Columbus Holy Name Church, celebrates a Mass in English at St. James Church in Medjugorje



A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

By Sister Joan Supel, OP

It was a lifelong dream – to visit the places where God intervened in human history and became incarnate. It was a lifelong dream to one day walk on the earth in the places where Jesus walked, taught us how to live, brought about the reign of God, and gave his very life for us and for our freedom.

This dream was fulfilled last October when I had the opportunity to join 36 parishioners from Westerville St. Paul Church on a journey to the Holy Land. It was an incredible immersion into the mysteries of our salvation as together we visited the places so familiar to us from the Bible and from our Catholic tradition; places such as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee, the River Jordan, Bethany, and Capernaum.

We were blessed to have a local tour guide lead us from place to place with informative commentaries to accompany the various sites. Also, the presence of Father Dan Drury, parochial vicar at St. Paul Church, (pictured carrying the cross at the right of the photo above), and his friend Father Patrick Barvick enabled us to celebrate the Eucharist on the Mount of the Beatitudes. This was one of the highlights for me. I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit there and imagined Jesus looking at the people assembled there near the lake. Jesus saw the poor and said, "Blessed are you ..."; he saw those mourning the loss of a loved one and said, "Blessed are you ..."; he saw the peacemakers and said, "Blessed are you. ..." I felt at that moment that he sees us pilgrims here and invites us into the embrace of His love. It was a graced moment of encounter.

Another highlight was walking the Via Dolorosa, the traditional pathway Jesus followed carrying the cross from Pontius Pilate's judgment hall (the Praetorium) where he was condemned to death, to Calvary where he was crucified. As we walked this pathway, we took turns carrying the cross. Our group became very quiet as we contemplated the events of the Stations of the Cross. Beholding each one "taking up the cross," I was reminded that each one in his or her own way says "Yes" to participating in the sufferings of Christ. Also, each one is the recipient of the freedom earned for us through Christ in his passion, death, and resurrection.

Another graced moment of encounter for me happened while standing on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Rising high above Jerusalem, this place offers a magnificent view of the city, with its golden Dome of the Rock glimmering in the sunlight. I recalled that it could have been here that Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem. Perhaps the walls of division among the three Abrahamic religions that exist today would lead Jesus to weep again. I felt a touch of sadness here in this place where one hopes for peace in the world; the physical walls evident here suggest that we must continue to pray for and work for peace. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," says the psalmist, and says the pilgrim.

Returning home and hearing the Scriptures proclaimed again, there is a new light shed on the great mysteries of our faith. And a dream of a lifetime is fulfilled.

Sister Joan is the pastoral minister at Reynoldsburg St. Pius X Church.



Catholic Travel

EXPLORING THE SWISS ALPS

BY AARON LEVENTHAL

The Alps are picture-postcard perfect. Formed 100 million years ago by a collision of African, European, and Asian plates, these rugged mountains, with their lush, green valleys, towering pines, and deep alpine lakes set the Alps apart as a unique world-class attraction. This past September, my wife, Beth, and I explored the Alps primarily by rail and were captivated by their extraordinary natural scenic beauty, picturesque historic villages, and sophisticated cities.

It is best to put aside at least a week to explore the Swiss Alps. Switzerland is a very small nation (half the size of South Carolina), but it feels much larger, since most of it is vertical. Northern Switzerland is Germanic and traditionally conservative; however, most of the Alps is in the south, in the French and Italian cantons (similar to counties), which are more open and diverse.

The itinerary below is based on journal entries during the trip, which, after traveling from Zurich to Lugano, followed a relatively straight course from the Italian Alps west to Lake Geneva, a distance of about 400 miles.

Top photo: Cathedral St. Pierre is a 12th-century Catholic church that was converted to a Protestant sanctuary during the Reformation

To the left: Travel writer Aaron Leventhal at the Matterhorn, the world's most recognizable mountain, in Zermatt, Switzerland

Photos by Aaron and Beth Leventhal

The Swiss Air flight from New York's JFK airport to Zurich takes about eight hours. The airline's food, service, and spacious seating are excellent. At the airport, board a train to Zurich's main station and transfer to travel south through the Alps to Lugano, a resort city of 50,000 along Lake Lugano in the Italian-speaking, distinctly Catholic Swiss canton of Ticino. Long ruled by Milan, Ticino is surrounded by Italy and is culturally and linguistically separate from the rest of Switzerland.

From the 10th century, Lugano was a medieval war zone until joining the Swiss Confederation in the 19th century. Stroll through its narrow historic streets and plazas with stops at Museo Cantonale di Arte, the Ticino regional collection, and for dinner at La Tinera, a local favorite, with Ticinese cuisine served in an old wine cellar. Set aside time to take the cable car (funicular) to the top of San Salvatore for a spectacular view of the city, lake, and Alps.

The Church of St. Mary of the Angels was constructed in 1499 near Piazza della Riforma in Lugano as a Franciscan monastery. There are several Bernardino Luini masterpieces here, including "The Last Supper," "Madonna with Infant Jesus," and "Passion and Crucifixion."

The next day, leisurely cruise around Lake Lugano, stopping first at the village of Gandria at the foot of Mount Bre. The 13th century village, perched on a steep mountainside, is noted for the church of San Vigilio, built in 1463. It is adorned by a large

oil painting by the Torricelli brothers of a bishop from Trento, Italy, who was martyred when stoned to death by pagan shepherds. Locanda Gandriesi, an intimate restaurant with terrace dining overlooking the lake, is popular with the locals and visitors.

Across the lake is Morcote, often referred to as the "Pearl of Lake Lugano" for its pristine beauty, old patrician homes, and historic churches and gardens. Santo Maria del Sasso is an exquisite church built in a Renaissance-Baroque style in 1470. There are 404 steps up a winding stairway along the mountainside to the church. Parco Scherrer is a splendid subtropical garden filled with artistic works and colorful flora. Stay in Morcote at Della Posta (www.hotelmorcote.com), a 14th century lakefront villa converted into an intimate eight-room inn, with its Albergo Ristorante specializing in pizza, fresh fish, and Mediterranean cuisine. It is about a 20-minute bus ride or one-hour walk along the lake to Lugano's historic district.

Next stop on the Alps adventure is Zermatt, home to the Matterhorn, the world's most recognizable mountain peak. There are several train routes to reach Zermatt from Lugano, the most scenic being the five-hour route through Locarno north to Interlocken and then south through Brig to Zermatt -- a spectacular journey, never to be forgotten. Zermatt is a small village that annually attracts millions of tourists who come to gaze at the

See ALPS, Page 13

ALPS, continued from Page 12

pointy, craggy peak that stands out in the midst of towering glaciers.

Put aside a full day to ascend the mountains by cable car and ski lift to one of four viewpoints. The ride is pricey, but there is a 50 percent discount with the Swiss Pass. Rothorn, at 10,180 feet, is not the highest point, but has the most classic view of the Matterhorn. Gornegrat is the most popular station, since it's the closest to the Matterhorn. There are excellent restaurants and many hiking trails down the mountains for the hardy.

In Zermatt, stroll through its historic neighborhood with streets lined with chalets, many on stone stilts. The Matterhorn Museum, which includes exhibits and historic movies, tells the fascinating story of 19th-century Zermatt, before railroads and ski lifts, and of the courageous climbers who reached the Matterhorn's summit or died trying. Many mountaineers who lost their lives on the Matterhorn are buried in the Catholic cemetery, which has a memorial commemorating the courage of the mountain guides.

Stay at Hotel Tannenhof (www.rhone.ch/tannenhof), which has an excellent Matterhorn view and full breakfast at reasonable rates and is owned and operated by a family of three generations of mountain guides. Dine at Helvetia Restaurant, a cozy bistro serving traditional Swiss dishes, including cheese fondue

and wild game.

Continuing west, take a short train ride to the Swiss Riviera and the French Alps. Montreux, a chic resort city along Lake Geneva (Lac Lemman) is an ideal base to explore a number of world-class attractions. Stay at Tralala Hotel (www.tralalahotel.ch), converted from a 400-year-old mansion on a hilltop. Rooms are decorated with posters of famous musicians that call to mind the city's famous Montreux Jazz Festival, held annually in July. The hotel is a good value, with a bus stop conveniently located across the street.

On the first morning, visit Chateau de Chillon, a 12th-century castle built on a rocky island at the north end of the lake. The fortress, with its royal furnishings, carved fireplaces and ceilings, tapestries, courtyards, and coat-of-arms hall, has captivated writers and artists since its 19th-century restoration. Here, Lord Byron was inspired to write his famous poem, "The Prisoner of Chillon." Take the self-guided English audio tour for a memorable experience. In the late afternoon, take the train for a 15-minute ride to Vevey, a lovely, historic village filled with art galleries, boutiques, cafés, and bookshops near the waterfront.

The next day, take the Wine Train to the Vineyards of Lavaux, a magical place designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The 10,000 hillside

terraces stretch for 30 miles along Lake Geneva, facing the towering Alps. More than 700 years ago, monks from nearby monasteries cleared the rocks and trees and cultivated and crushed the grapes for sacramental wine.

In Chexbres, Eric Permand is volunteer coordinator of Lavaux Panoramic, a delightful wine trolley that takes visitors through the vineyards, with wine tastings along the way. He says that today, 1,000 wine growers produce grapes for about a dozen large producers. The majority of the grapes are Pinot Noir, Gamay, and a fruity, sparkling dessert wine called Chasselas, a variety indigenous to the region. He points out that the grapes of Lavaux are unique because the monks discovered that the grapes receive two sunshines a day - one from the sky and the second off the glistening lake.

Walk along paths through the vineyards from Chexbres to the villages of St. Saphorin and Rivaz and stop at Auberge Derivaz, with a terrace overlooking Lake Geneva, for a classic French lunch of cheeses, oven-baked bread, salads with local produce, and, of course, a bottle of Chasselas.

The final stop is Geneva, a short train ride from Montreux. It is the capital of the canton of Geneva, which dates back 2,500 years to the Celts and Romans. Today, the breathtaking cosmopolitan port city is



Chateau de Chillon, a 12th-century castle on a rocky island at the north end of Lake Geneva in Montreux

French in language and character, with 95 percent of its border shared with France. Though relatively small (population 400,000), Geneva has all the sophistication and culture of a major metropolis. Known as the "City of Peace," Geneva is the site of the International Red Cross and European United Nations Organization.

Stay two nights at Hotel Central (www.hotelcentral.ch), conveniently located at Old Town and within a five-minute walk to the lakefront. It's well-priced and includes an in-room breakfast of coffee and croissants. If your time is limited, begin the visit by strolling through Old Town, with its narrow cobblestone streets and exquisite 15th- and 16th-century architecture. Top attractions include the floral clock in Jardin Anglais; Jet d' Eau, the world's highest foun-

tain; Reformation Wall; and the Patek Philippe Museum, dedicated to the history of watches. On the south side of the city is Carouge, a Mediterranean-style "Greenwich Village" noted for its art galleries, craft shops, and Bohemian lifestyle. Rues Basses, Geneva's main shopping streets, run along the Left Bank, with glitzy boutiques such as Louis Vuitton and Piaget, antique shops, galleries, and department stores.

St. Peter's, or Cathedral St. Pierre, originally was built in 1160 as a Catholic church on the highest hill in the Old Town on fourth-century Roman foundations. During the Reformation, it was converted to a Protestant church, the columns were stabilized, and the priceless paintings and frescoes were removed so the entire interior could be

See ALPS, Page 20

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Catholic Times • March 31, 2012



The Vineyards of Lavaux on the terraced hillsides along Lake Geneva in the French Alps

The Epiphany of the Lord (Cycle B)

The Magi: familiar, yet mysterious characters



Father
Lawrence L. Hummer

Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:2-3a,5-6
Matthew 2:1-12

Some things never grow old. The Magi are as much a part of the Christmas season as the Christ. And yet, we know as little about the Magi now as when these mysterious characters first made their way into Matthew's Gospel in the 80s of the first century.

They are called Magi (literally, *magoi* in Greek). From Magi, we recognize the English words "magic" and "magicians," which led people over the centuries to think that they had magical powers. Even traditions like leaving shoes outside one's bedroom were meant to suggest that the Magi had paid a visit during the night when children slept. I wonder if people still keep that custom. As a child, I certainly enjoyed the surprise, just when we thought Christmas was over.

LATIN AMERICA, continued from Page 7

sage. "We cannot allow ourselves to view the tourist visit as simply a step in pre-evangelization but, on the contrary, we must see it as a platform to realize the clear and explicit announcement of Jesus Christ."

A pilgrimage to a holy site can be a powerful experience, said Father Robert Higgins of the Diocese of Charleston, S.C., who will serve as spiritual di-

rector for a five-day pilgrimage to Mexico City this month. "Mass is Mass, and that doesn't change from place to place. But when you're saying it at the site of a holy ground, a holy place, it gives the sense of connection leading back 2,000 years," said Father Higgins, who has made several pilgrimages and visited Mexico more than 100 times. The

begin or end the Liturgy of the day with the hymn "We Three Kings." Crib scenes have kings, usually in Oriental garb, bearing gifts for "the newborn king of the Jews." However, the text of Matthew still calls them "magi," and now the New American Bible Revised New Testament quite rightly leaves them as "magi." Attentive readers will note that before the revision, they were called "astrologers" because of popular belief and "We saw his star at its rising." The star probably arises under the influence of Numbers 24:17.

The New Revised Standard Version calls them "wise men," and, of course, that makes it into verse three of the hymn "The First Nowell": "And by the light of that same star, three wise men came from country far. ..." Of course, that line also repeats the idea of "three," as in "We Three Kings" above. In the course

of Christian antiquity, there have been as few as two and as many as 12 members of the mysterious magi. So not only do we not know who they were (astrologers? wise men? magicians?), we also do not know how many there were.

They became three because of the gifts they brought: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But no good story can resist being tampered with, so later interpreters of the story surmised the gifts symbolized his divinity, his kingship, and his eventual death.

The real answers to most of the questions come from reading the Isaiah passage together, with Psalm 72, the responsorial psalm for this feast. Matthew clearly had these resources available to him when writing the Gospel, and it would be a mistake to try to interpret the story without doing the same thing.

By reading both Old Testament passages, we see clearly where the belief arose that they were foreign kings. Isaiah mentions that caravans of camels from Midian and Ephah, and all from Sheba, shall come bearing gold and frankincense. Psalm 72 says that

the kings of Tarshish, Arabia, and Seba shall come forth bearing tribute to Israel's king. So this clarifies for us how the magi came to be thought of as kings.

The places mentioned were primarily Arabia, Persia, and eastern Syria. But they were pictured in Isaiah's vision as coming to Jerusalem with their tribute. Indeed, the psalmist envisions a time when "all kings shall pay him homage, and all nations shall serve" the Lord.

The section from Ephesians is important because it identifies Paul as a steward of God's grace, which Paul reveals. It is no less than that Gentiles are now "co-heirs" with the holy apostles and prophets, members of the sane body, and "co-partners" in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Because Matthew's Gospel was directed primarily to Jewish Christians, this opening to the Gentiles was something noteworthy. This is what has led some commentators to think that Matthew added the story of the Magi to the original Gospel.

Father Lawrence Hummer, pastor at Chillicothe St. Mary, can be reached at hummerl@stmarychillicothe.com.

most-visited Catholic holy places in the Americas, but Father Higgins said there is still a sense of simplicity in Latin American holy places that is not found in Europe.

"You still find beautiful structures with all the gold and marble, but in Latin America, it's in a more muted fashion," he said. "There is a level of simplicity and humility you find there."

The Weekday Bible Readings

MONDAY
Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7 or Acts 10:34-38
Psalm 29:1a,2,3ac-4,3b,9b-10
Mark 1:7-11

TUESDAY
1 Samuel 1:9-20
1 Samuel 2:1,4-8 (Ps)
Mark 1:21-28

WEDNESDAY
1 Samuel 3:1-10,19-20
Psalm 40:2-5,7-10
Mark 1:29-39

THURSDAY
1 Samuel 4:1-11
Psalm 44:10-11,14-15,25-26
Mark 1:40-45

FRIDAY
1 Samuel 8:4-7,10-22a
Psalm 89:16-19
Mark 2:1-12

SATURDAY
1 Samuel 9:1-4,17-19;10:1a
Psalm 19:8-10,15
Mark 2:13-17

Diocesan Weekly Radio and
Television Mass Schedule
Week of January 8, 2012

Sunday Mass
10:30 a.m. Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio (820 AM), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com.
Mass with the Passionist Fathers at 7:30 a.m. on WWHO-TV (the CW), Channel 53, Columbus. Check local cable system for WWHO's cable channel listing.
Mass from Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, Birmingham, Ala., at 8 a.m. on EWTN (Time Warner Channel 385, Insight Channel 382, or WOW Channel 378) (Encores at noon, 7 p.m., and midnight).
Mass from Kenton Immaculate Conception Church at 10 a.m. on Time Warner Cable Channel 6 (Hardin County).
Mass from Portsmouth St. Mary Church at noon on Time Warner Channel 24 in Scioto County.

Daily Mass
8 a.m., Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Birmingham, Ala. (Encores at noon, 7 p.m. and midnight) See EWTN above; and on I-Lifetv (Channel 113 in Ada, Logan, Millersburg, Murray City and Washington C.H.; Channel 125 in Marion, Newark, Newcomerstown and New Philadelphia; and Channel 207 in Zanesville); Noon, St. Gabriel Radio (820 AM), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com.

We pray Week I, Seasonal Proper of the Liturgy of the Hours

Christmas, the infinite, and the finite

The title of Father Edward Oakes' new book, "Infinity Dwindled to Infancy," nicely captures the imaginative challenge posed at Christmas: the mystery of the infinite God become finite man. In truth, however, the challenge to our imaginations has less to do with the how of what the Divine Office calls this *admirabile commercium* (marvelous exchange) than with the why.

Posit an all-powerful and infinite God, and most of us wouldn't have too much trouble with the idea that such a God could do anything, including coming into the finite world he created. The real question is why such a God would want to do such a thing: to submit his divinity to the limits of our humanity, and then to go farther—to die

as a tortured criminal at the hands of his own creatures. Here is the "scandal" of Christianity. For the answer faith gives to the question of why is salvific love: a love so great that it required not an argument, but a demonstration.

Eastern Christian theology helps us understand the full dimensions of the why of the Incarnation through its concept of *theosis*, or divinization: God becomes man so that we might become like God—so that we can live comfortably with God forever. Here, then, is the *admirabile commercium*: God "exchanges" his divinity for our humanity, thus enabling us to "exchange" our weakness for his divine glory—the glory of which the angels sing to the shepherds of Bethlehem. The years St. Paul spent in the desert, pon-



THE CATHOLIC
DIFFERENCE
George Weigel

dering just how the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, which had been revealed to him on the road to Damascus, fulfilled God's election of Israel, led the Apostle to the Gentiles to be the first to formulate this "exchange": "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

The Fathers of the Church took up the theme and developed the idea

that, in the "exchange," men and women were empowered to become godlike. Thus, St. Gregory Nazianzen: "Let us seek to be like Christ, because Christ also became like us: to become gods through him since he himself, through us, became a man. He took the worst upon himself to make us a gift of the best." If the language of "becoming gods" strikes our ears as odd, that may be because we have not quite plumbed the radical depths of the divine love: for in the Incarnation, "God so loved the world"

(John 3:16) that he doubled down on the divine humility, dwindling himself into infancy so that we could share, really and truly, in the divine life.

The indictment of Christianity that began in the 18th century and metastasized in the 19th was that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus kept humanity infantile, such that only by throwing the God of the Bible over the side could humanity ever achieve maturity and liberation. This was, of course, a complete inversion of the truth: the Christian faith, proclaimed by the Second Letter of Peter, is that God, by the Incarnation, has made us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). And in doing so, the divine humility, manifest as love, brings us into the fullness of human maturation and

the fullness of true freedom. Thus, Pope St. Leo the Great, in the Christmas homily the Church reads in the Office of Readings for Christmas Day, could admonish his Roman congregation in 440: "Realize, O Christian, your dignity. Once made a partaker in the divine nature, do not return to your former baseness by a life unworthy of that dignity."

Christmas faith inspires righteous living, not by fear, but by love: the love that expresses itself in history in the humility of the Incarnation and the Holy Birth -- the love that speaks of the glory of God, "wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12).

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

Villa Madonna Academy President

Villa Madonna Academy (VMA), a K through 12 Catholic school located in Villa Hills, KY, five miles south of Cincinnati, is seeking applications for the position of President to begin no later than July 1, 2012. The Academy educates more than five hundred students on a picturesque campus of 200 acres overlooking the Ohio River. Both the elementary and the high school are Blue Ribbon recipients, educating students of high academic ability in small class sizes with an emphasis on Benedictine values.

VMA is owned by the Benedictine Sisters, utilizing a limited jurisdictional board of directors. The president is the chief executive officer, responsible for mission, vision and the advancement and business affairs of the school, reporting directly to the VMA Board of Directors.

The President must be able to articulate a clear vision for VMA and foster a collegial and collaborative culture that capitalizes on the richness of the VMA community and furthers its commitment to academic excellence. Candidates should have a record of successful organizational leadership, with a strong academic and development background. Candidates may visit the VMA website at: www.villamadonna.net for additional information about VMA and its Benedictine Values and history.

Applications should be submitted no later than January 31, 2012 to: searchcommittee@villamadonna.net or to: Josh Ruth, c/o VMA, 2500 Amsterdam Rd., Villa Hills, KY 41017

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Pray for our dead

ARMSTRONG, Rita J., 71, Dec. 25
Pope John XXIII Church, Canal Winchester

BERRY, James "Steve," 59, Dec. 16
Church of the Resurrection, New Albany

BIANCONE (CUSIN), Irene, Dec. 30
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

BURKE, Raymond F., 90, Dec. 30
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

DECKER (COMPTON), Dorothy C., 86, Dec. 24
St. Mary Church, Groveport

DeLUCA, Augusta, 103, Dec. 30
St. Catharine Church, Columbus

DePIETRO, Velma, Dec. 24
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

EVANS, Frances L., 88, Dec. 27
Holy Family Church, Columbus

FORD, Paul G., 82, Dec. 24
Christ the King Church, Columbus

GALBRAITH, Regina, 88, Dec. 26
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

GAYBUD, Mary C., 88, Dec. 21
Our Lady of Peace Church, Columbus

GEISZLER, William J., 89, Dec. 22
St. James the Less Church, Columbus

HAVENS, Matthew D., 59, Dec. 25
St. Cecilia Church, Columbus

KELCH, Rose M., 90, Dec. 26
St. Anthony Church, Columbus

KOCH, Kathryn, Dec. 24
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus

LAPOS, Irene, 83, Dec. 28
St. Elizabeth Church, Columbus

LEONARD, Thomas J., 82, Dec. 26
St. Brendan Church, Hilliard

LESKO, Jane, 88, Dec. 20
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

Joan C. McDevitt

Funeral Mass for Joan C. McDevitt, 77, of Lewis Center, who died Tuesday, Dec. 27, was held Tuesday, Jan. 3, at Columbus St. Elizabeth Church. Burial was at Kingwood Memorial Park, Lewis Center.

She was born Dec. 20, 1934, in Jamaica, N.Y., to the late Stephen and Josephine Sylva, and worked

McGOVERN, Dennis J., 66, of Pickerington, Dec. 20
St. Mary Church, Conneaut

McNALLY, Richard E., 79, Dec. 27
Christ the King Church, Columbus

MELO, Carmen E., 100, Dec. 26
St. Mary Church, Groveport

MERRIMAN, Howard O., 78, Dec. 25
St. Peter Church, Columbus

METNES, Arthur C., 90, Dec. 23
St. Elizabeth Seton Church, Pickerington

OVERMEYER, Ethelreda, 88, Dec. 19
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Mount Vernon

PANICO, Anthony A., 88, Dec. 28
St. John the Baptist Church, Columbus

PORKINSKI, Marjorie, 79, Jan. 1
St. Mary Church, Portsmouth

RAINONE (POTENZA), Ann, 87, Dec. 23
St. Ladislav Church, Columbus

SALSER, L. Edward Jr., 81, Dec. 21
St. Agatha Church, Columbus

SKINNER, Vicki, 69, Dec. 29
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Grove City

SPRAGUE, Army Sgt. Gerald M. "Mike," 51, Dec. 24
St. Mark Church, Lancaster

VERNAU, Donald H., 80, Dec. 14
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

WEBER, Herman E., 87, Dec. 30
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

WENTZEL, Sharon L., 63, Dec. 22
St. Mary Church, Columbus

WHITE, Gertrude, 84, Dec. 22
Sacred Heart Church, Columbus

WINTEMBERG, Louis, 83, Dec. 28
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, Pickerington

for many years in the Columbus Public Schools administrative offices.

Survivors include her husband of 57 years, Deacon Frank McDevitt; sons, Gregory (Julia), Ed, Kevin (Cheryl) and Michael (Amber); daughter, Christine (Jim) Smits; brother, Raymond; and 12 grandchildren.

2012 "Bosco Bash" Youth Rally January 28

The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry of the Diocese of Columbus will host the fifth annual Bosco Bash for sixth- to eighth-grade students from 4 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, at the Church of the

Resurrection, 6300 E. Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany.

The bash's theme will be "All Things New." It will feature keynote speaker Lee Roessler, a musical artist who will perform during the event. The rally celebrates the feast of St. John Bosco, the patron saint of youth and founder of the Salesian religious community, and strives to animate the faith lives of participants.

Advance registration is

required to attend, and all interested middle-school teens should register through their parish youth ministry leader. Cost is \$20 for registration, dinner, and a rally T-shirt.

For more information about the event and presenters, visit www.colstdioc.org/Offices/OfficeofYouthandYoungAdultMinistry/YouthMinistry.aspx or contact Sean Robinson at (614) 241-2565 or srobinso@cleducation.org.



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Sponsored by the K of C at St Joan of Arc

JANUARY

5, THURSDAY

20s Group Meeting at Columbus St. Patrick
7 p.m., St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., Columbus. Weekly meeting of parish's new 20s Group. All young adults invited. Begins with Holy Hour, followed at 8 by program. **614-406-9516**

6, FRIDAY

St. Cecilia Adoration of Blessed Sacrament
St. Cecilia Church, 434 Norton Road, Columbus. Begins after 8:15 a.m. Mass; continues to 5 p.m. Saturday.
Monthly Adoration of Blessed Sacrament
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, 5225 Refugee Road, Columbus. Begins after 9 a.m. Mass; continues through 6 p.m. Holy Hour.
Bishop Celebrates All-School Mass at Watterson
10:15 a.m., Bishop Watterson High School, 99 E. Cooke Road, Columbus. Bishop Frederick Campbell celebrates all-school Mass. **614-268-8671**
St. John Chrysostom First Friday Sale
4 to 6 p.m., St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church, 5858 Cleveland Ave., Columbus. First Friday sale of pirogi, stuffed cabbage, noodles, and baked goods. **614-882-7578**

7, SATURDAY

Life and Mercy Mass in Plain City
9 a.m. Mass, St. Joseph Church, 140 West Ave., Plain City. Saturday Life and Mercy Mass, followed by rosary and confession. **614-565-8654**
Mary's Little Children Prayer Group
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, 5225 Refugee Road, Columbus. 8:30 a.m., confessions, 9 a.m., Mass, followed by Fatima prayers and Rosary (Shepherds of Christ format); 10 a.m., meeting. **614-861-4888**

8, SUNDAY

St. Christopher Adult Religious Education
10 to 11:15 a.m., St. Christopher Parish Center, 1420 Grandview Ave., Columbus. Discussion of book "Outcasts United" by Warren St. John. **614-488-9971**
Exposition at Church of the Resurrection
Our Lady of the Resurrection Chapel, Church of the Resurrection, 6300 E. Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, beginning with procession into chapel following 11 a.m. Mass and continuing to 5 p.m. **614-933-9318**

'Happenings' submissions

Notices for items of Catholic interest must be received at least 12 days before expected publication date. We will print them as space permits. Items not received before this deadline may not be published. Listings cannot be taken by phone. Mail to: The Catholic Times Happenings, 197 East Gay St., Columbus, OH 43215 Fax to: 614-241-2518 E-mail as text to tpuet@colstdioc.org

Urban Plunge Mass and Reception

5:15 p.m., St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St., Columbus. Mass for University of Notre Dame students taking part in annual Urban Plunge coordinated by diocesan Office for Social Concerns, followed by reception with students for Notre Dame alumni at the Catholic Center, 197 E. Gay St. **614-241-2540**

Bishop Celebrates All-School Mass at Watterson
10:15 a.m., Bishop Watterson High School, 99 E. Cooke Road, Columbus. Bishop Frederick Campbell celebrates all-school Mass. **614-268-8671**

Ecumenical German Epiphany Service
7 p.m., Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2001 Northwest Blvd., Columbus. Choruses of the Germania Gesang und sport Verein present ecumenical German service for the Feast of the Epiphany, including readings and reflections by Father William Arnold, pastor of Columbus Holy Spirit Church, and Pastor Stephen Wachtman of the host church. **740-927-8268**

All-Night Exposition at Our Lady of Victory
Our Lady of Victory Church, 1559 Roxbury Road, Columbus. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 8 p.m. until Mass at 8 a.m. Saturday, sponsored by church's Knights of Columbus council and Columbus Serra Club.

7, SATURDAY

Life and Mercy Mass in Plain City
9 a.m. Mass, St. Joseph Church, 140 West Ave., Plain City. Saturday Life and Mercy Mass, followed by rosary and confession. **614-565-8654**
Mary's Little Children Prayer Group
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, 5225 Refugee Road, Columbus. 8:30 a.m., confessions, 9 a.m., Mass, followed by Fatima prayers and Rosary (Shepherds of Christ format); 10 a.m., meeting. **614-861-4888**

7-8, SATURDAY-SUNDAY

'Amahl and the Night Visitors' at St. Charles
8 p.m. Saturday, 6 p.m. Sunday, Walter Commons, St. Charles Preparatory School, 2010 E. Broad St., Columbus. Opera Project Columbus presents Gian Carlo Menotti's opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors," conducted by Alessandro Siciliani. **614-397-4950**

8, SUNDAY

Exposition at Church of the Resurrection
Our Lady of the Resurrection Chapel, Church of the Resurrection, 6300 E. Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, beginning with procession into chapel following 11 a.m. Mass and continuing to 5 p.m. **614-933-9318**

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9, MONDAY

Calix Society Meeting at Columbus St. Patrick
6:30 p.m., St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., Columbus. Monthly meeting of the Calix Society, an association of Catholic alcoholics affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. Business meeting followed by 7 p.m. Mass and full meeting after Mass. **614-406-2939**

Bethesda Post-Abortion Healing Ministry
6:30 p.m., support group meeting, 2744 Dover Road, (Christ the King Church campus), Columbus. **614-718-0277, 614-309-2651, 614-309-0157**

Our Lady of Peace Men's Bible Study
7 p.m., Our Lady of Peace Church, 20 E. Dominion Blvd., Columbus. Bible study of Sunday Scripture readings. **614-459-2766**

10, TUESDAY

Prayer Group Meeting at St. Mark
7 p.m., St. Raymond Room, St. Mark Center, 324 Gay St., Lancaster. Light of Life Prayer Group meeting. **740-653-4919**

'Encourage' Support Group Meeting
7 p.m. Meeting of a new Columbus-area Catholic organization providing solace, support, and counsel for parents and relatives of those with a same-sex attraction. **614-372-5249**

'Landings' Meeting at Newman Center
7 p.m., St. Thomas More Newman Center, 64 W. Lane Ave., Columbus. First meeting of eight-week "Landings" program for returning and inactive Catholics. **614-291-4674, extension 100**

'Catholicism' Series at St. Pius X
7 to 8:30 p.m., St. Pius X Church, 1051 Waggoner Road, Reynoldsburg. Video of "Amazed and Afraid: The Revelation of God Become Man," Part 1 of Father Robert Barron's "Catholicism" series, followed by discussion. **614-866-2859**

Cathedral Choir Concert at Musicians Conference
7:30 p.m., St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St., Columbus. Cathedral choir presents concert as part of the Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians, featuring Frank Martin's "Messe" for double choir. **614-241-2526**

11, WEDNESDAY

Bishop Campbell Attends Musicians Conference
10 a.m., The Catholic Foundation, 257 E. Broad St., Columbus. Bishop Frederick Campbell attends presentation for the Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians. **614-241-2526**

Turning Leaves and Tea Leaves
2 to 3:30 p.m., Martin de Porres Center, 2330 Airport Drive, Columbus. Turning Leaves and Tea Leaves book club with Dominican Sisters Marialein Anzenberger and Colleen Gallagher. **614-416-1910**

Organist David Briggs at Cathedral
7:30 p.m., St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St., Columbus. Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians presents a concert by British organist David Briggs. **614-241-2526**

12, THURSDAY

Kindergarten Coffee at St. Michael
9:30 to 11 a.m. and 7 to 8:30 p.m., St. Michael School, 64 E. Selby Blvd., Worthington. "Kindergarten coffee" information program for parents of prospective kindergarten students. **614-885-3149**

Bishop Campbell Celebrates Mass for Musicians
6:15 p.m., St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St., Columbus. Bishop Frederick Campbell celebrates Mass for the Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians. **614-241-2526**

20s Group Meeting at Columbus St. Patrick
7 p.m., St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., Columbus. Weekly meeting of parish's new 20s Group. All young adults invited. Begins with Holy Hour, followed at 8 by program. **614-406-9516**

13, FRIDAY

Theology of the Body Talk at St. John Neumann
7 p.m., St. John Neumann Church, 9633 East State Route 37, Sunbury. An introduction to Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body with Bill Donaghy of the Theology of the Body Institute. For anyone 17 and older. **740-965-1358**

14, SATURDAY

Life and Mercy Mass in Plain City
9 a.m. Mass, St. Joseph Church, 140 West Ave., Plain City. Saturday Life and Mercy Mass, followed by rosary and confession. **614-565-8654**

NFP Information Session at Columbus St. Patrick
10 a.m., St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave., Columbus. Information session for Natural Family Planning. Pre-registration required; \$10. **614-309-4347**

Fund Raising Event for Youth Retreat Scholarships
6:15 p.m., St. Catharine School, 500 S. Gould Road, Columbus. A night of food, reflection, and spiritual entertainment for the Christina Ann Allwein Catholic Retreat Fund, providing scholarships for diocesan young people to attend youth conferences, camps, and retreats. Begins with hors d'oeuvres, followed by dinner at 7 and Chaplet of Divine Mercy and program at 8:15. Individual reservations \$100. **614-235-6109**

15, SUNDAY

St. Christopher Adult Religious Education
10 to 11:15 a.m., St. Christopher Parish Center, 1420 Grandview Ave., Columbus. Presentation by Mark Huddy, diocesan social concerns director. **614-488-9971**

Praise Mass at Seton Parish
11:15 a.m., St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, 600 Hill Road N., Pickerington. Praise Mass with contemporary music by parish's small musical groups. **614-833-0482**

St. Padre Pio Secular Franciscans
2 to 5 p.m., St. Matthew Church, 807 Havens Corners Road, Gahanna. Rosary and ongoing formation followed by social time, general meeting, Liturgy of the Hours, and initial formation with visitors. **614-282-4676**

Spanish Mass at Columbus St. Peter
7 p.m., St. Peter Church, 6899 Smoky Row Road, Columbus. Mass in Spanish. **706-761-4054**

16, MONDAY

The Lamb Catholic Worker Prayer Group
7 p.m., St. Thomas Church, 2692 E. 5th Ave., Columbus. Meeting of The Lamb Catholic Worker Charismatic Prayer Group. **614-832-9525**

17, TUESDAY

Bishop Campbell Celebrates Mass at Fisher Catholic
10 a.m., Fisher Catholic High School, 1803 Granville Pike, Lancaster. Bishop Frederick Campbell celebrates all-school Mass. **740-654-1231**

Serra Club of North Columbus Meeting at Josephinum
Noon, Jessing Center, Pontifical College Josephinum, 7625 N. High St., Columbus. Serra Club of North Columbus meeting, with Bishop James Griffin speaking. Reservations required.

To have obituaries published, e-mail to tpuet@colstdioc.org

A PILGRIM JOURNEY TO BIBLICAL LANDS

By Father Timothy Hayes

When most people think of traveling to the *Land of the Bible*, they have in mind the *Holy Land*; that is, the territories of Israel and Jordan and Egypt. A reading of the New Testament with a look toward the lands mentioned there, however, quickly leads to an understanding that *the Lands of the Bible* are more than the Holy Land itself.

In October 2011, 14 central Ohio pilgrims took a journey to Turkey and Greece to visit the lands that we hear about in the Acts of the Apostles, the Book of Revelation, and the Letters of St. Paul. This pilgrimage was planned as a preparation for the celebration of the golden jubilee year of Columbus St. Timothy Church. It was led by the church's pastor, Father Timothy Hayes, and Father Paul Hrezo of the Diocese of Steubenville, director of spiritual formation at the Pontifical College Josephinum in the college level program. Thus, it was a journey *in*

the Footsteps of St. Timothy and St. Paul, with Father Timothy and Father Paul.

The first lesson of the pilgrimage was *how small the world is*. As the pilgrims departed, the world was attending to news of the exotic animals set loose in Muskingum County. So when we were asked where we came from, everyone knew of central Ohio. As we arrived in western Turkey, along the Mediterranean coast, eastern Turkey experienced an earthquake, and many of our families and friends were very concerned for our safety. Facebook and e-mail messages, as well as phone calls, let our loved ones know we were safe.

When we reached Greece, the western world was hearing about the unrest present there because of the current economic situation of the European Union. We were unaffected, since tourism and travel are so important to the economy of the places we were visiting. Prayers for us on our pilgrim journey were



Father Timothy Hayes (left) and Father Paul Hrezo say an outdoor Mass at Troas in Turkey, where St. Paul had a vision telling him to leave Asia and go to Europe. Photos courtesy of Father Timothy Hayes



Father Paul Hrezo (left) and Father Timothy Hayes at an amphitheater in Ephesus, Turkey, where St. Paul preached and the apostle John and the Virgin Mary are said to have lived

extended to the people and the nations we visited because the news of these lands became important to those who followed our journey from afar.

Our first stop was in Istanbul, where we became acclimated to the secular nation of Turkey. The Blue Mosque, the Topkapi Museum, and Hagia Sophia, an ancient church that became a mosque and is now a museum, offered us much to consider. Seeing the magnificent mosaics and the testimony of the faith of people through the ages touched us profoundly. Praying the Nicene Creed with the awareness that it came from this very land reminded us of our debt to the Fathers who compiled this expression of Christian Faith. We felt a unity that transcends time.

In 2008-2009, Pope Benedict XVI declared a *Year of St. Paul*. This observance served as an impetus to highlight the apostle's visits to many places on his missionary journeys. From Ephesus to Athens, we met Paul everywhere. Highlights of the spiritual encounter with St. Paul were outdoor Masses at Troas in Turkey and old Corinth in Greece.

Amid the ruins of ancient buildings, we had a powerful sense of the fact that our Faith was the fruit of the lives of the Apostle Paul and his companions, including St. Timothy, who traveled with him to many of the places we visited. It was at Troas that Paul had a vision telling him to leave Asia and go to Macedonia in Europe to proclaim the Gospel. We were returning to say that his mission was a success. Standing beside the very road Paul walked upon down to the sea, we could imagine his joy and trepidation as he followed the Spirit's lead.

The search for St. Timothy was a bit more difficult than that for St. Paul. No particular location boasted of Timothy's presence. Ancient sources testify that Ephesus was assigned to him as bishop by St. Paul and that he experienced martyrdom there as he tried to preach to the Ephesians, who were caught up in their worship of Artemis



Pilgrims at the house in Ephesus which is believed to have been the home of the Virgin Mary and the apostle John

on the feast of Katagonia. The likely place for this event was the same theater mentioned in Acts of the Apostles (Acts 19), where Paul and his companions were in danger of their lives following a riot by the local silversmiths, whose business was suffering due to Paul's preaching of *The Way*. In the latter part of the first century, Timothy tried to address the crowd to turn them away from their pagan revelry, and was clubbed to death (Eventually, his relics were taken to Constantinople, and then, by the Crusaders, to Termoli in Italy).

Ephesus was truly a place of discovery. *The House of Mary*, nestled in the hills, gave us the opportunity to pray for all those whose intentions we carried with us in the awareness that this land was once home to many of the New Testament's figures. Our Blessed Mother, in the years after the suffering, death, and Resurrection of her Son, witnessed the lively faith of the growing Church in this land. It was a place that had everything she knew in her homeland, except the desert: the hills, the sea, and beautiful green landscapes were reminiscent of many sites in the Holy Land. The Beloved Disciple's presence was also felt here and on the island of Patmos, where John experienced the vision that is recorded in the Book of Revelation. We recognized how many of our Scriptures were associated with Ephesus: Paul's letters to the Ephesians and to Timothy, and possibly others, the Gospel of Luke, and many stories found in the Acts of the Apostles.

Travel to Greece was by ship, with stops at Patmos, Rhodes,

Crete (paying our respects to Titus, who shares Timothy's feast day, Jan. 26), and beautiful Santorini. Each island had a story of Faith and a reminder that the Gospel grew through the preaching of those who believed to those whose hearts were open to the new message of Truth. The pilgrim journey took us onward to the mainland, with stops at Corinth and Athens.

We saw with our own eyes the ancient testimony in stone of the public generosity of Erastus the aedile in Corinth, who was a companion to Paul and Timothy, mentioned several places in the New Testament (Acts 19, Romans 16, and II Timothy 4). We walked the very stones of the Aeropagus (Mars Hill), where St. Paul preached in view of the Parthenon to the Athenians willing to listen to him (Acts 17).

As we traveled, we met other pilgrims and tourists, and we learned from our guides and our hosts in the various locations where we stayed that we are not alone in our concerns. The welcome we received was warm and friendly. Diversity of faith and nationality was no barrier to a sharing of our common questions and fears about the state of the world.

To the pilgrims, it was clear that we were led by the Holy Spirit at each stage of the journey. Especially at the outdoor Masses, we felt a unity with God and those who have gone before us in the ways of faith. We have returned with a renewed awareness of our own responsibility to live and share the Truth of our salvation in Christ.

NEWS IN PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



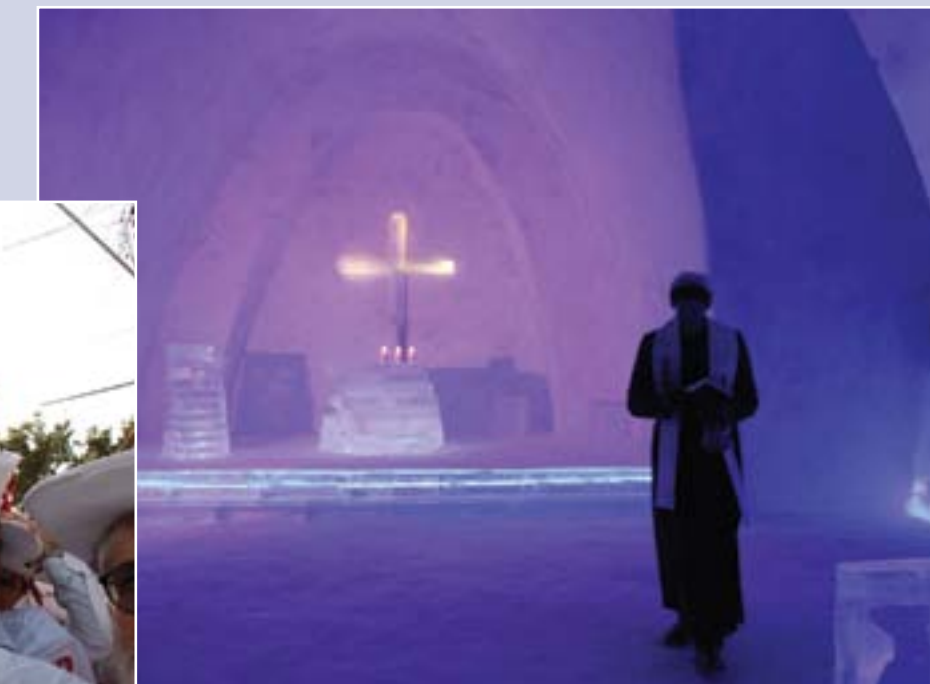
Pope Benedict XVI delivers his Christmas message "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 25

CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters



Catholics carry a statue of St. Benedict, who is also known in Brazil as the "black saint," during the annual procession in Braganca on Dec. 26. The tradition began in the 18th century when a group of black slaves were allowed by their owners to form the Fraternity of St. Benedict and decided to dance through the streets as an expression of their gratitude

CNS photo/Paulo Santos, Reuters



A Catholic priest walks inside a church made of snow on Dec. 28 in the Bavarian village of Mitterfirmiansreut, near the German-Czech border. The snow church is likely to become a tourist attraction until the beginning of spring

CNS photo/Petr Josek, Reuters

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painted gray. However, there remain 300 column carvings from the 12th century. Today, the church on special occasions is open for communion with other denominations.

Eglise Saint-Germaine (St. Germaine Church) is the only Catholic church remaining in the Old Town. Its lineage can be traced to 400 AD, and its steeple dates to the 14th century. For several hundred years during the upheavals of the Reformation, it served as a Protestant church and as a warehouse, foundry, and meeting hall until Napoleonic troops returned it to a Catholic church in 1803. Today, it is noted for its summer classical music concerts. Mass is celebrated on Sundays at 10 a.m., and it is the only other time that St. Germaine, at 9 Rue des Granges, is open to the public.

Money-saving tips: Be prepared for sticker shock. The Swiss franc is more valuable now than the euro, and prices are high.

Purchase a Swiss Pass. They are expensive, but ultimately will save

you a lot of money for unlimited travel on trains, buses, boats, ski lifts, cable cars (funiculars), and museum admissions.

All of the hotels and inns mentioned in this feature are three-star, which offer excellent accommodations that are moderately priced by Swiss standards.

Getting There: Swiss Air has daily flights from JFK to and from Zurich and Geneva.

Call (1-877) 359-7947 or go to www.swiss.com.

For More Information: Switzerland Tourism, (1-800) 794-7795, www.myswitzerland.com. Columbus-based travel writer Aaron Leventhal has a small group travel company offering trips in 2012 to the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival in May and Charleston's Spoleto Festival USA in June. For detailed itineraries and more information, log on to www.leventhal-travel.com or call Aaron at (614) 506-9666.

Children of St. Mathias School celebrate Christmas



The Kindergarten, first and Second graders at St. Mathias School mark the nativity of Our Lord with this special display at the church. Photo by Laura Hartman.

**“Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near”**

Isaiah 55:6




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