



DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

CATHOLIC TIMES

A journal of Catholic life in Ohio



JANUARY 6, 2013
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
VOLUME 62:13
WWW.CTONLINE.ORG



PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

The Editor's Notebook

The Pilgrim Way

By David Garick, Editor

I took a couple of weeks off from work here at the *Catholic Times* right after Thanksgiving. It was not a vacation in the traditional sense. I was not looking for rest and relaxation. No deck chair on a cruise ship in the Caribbean, or golf in a luxury resort. Yes, I traveled, but not to "get away from it all." This trip was to find something. For the first time in my life, I went on a pilgrimage.

The experience was refreshing -- not in the sense of letting go of the cares of day-to-day life, but refreshing in the sense of having God recharge my spiritual batteries. A vacation gives you a chance to catch your breath. A pilgrimage takes your breath away and puts the whole world into a new perspective.

At the beginning of Advent, my wife and I set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. You can read some of my reflections on that experience on Page 10 of this *Catholic Times*. Pilgrimages are not a new thing. People have journeyed to places of special spiritual significance for thousands of years. God calls on people to make pilgrimages. Going back to the time of the ancient Hebrews, the faithful were called to journey to Jerusalem on a regular basis -- no easy task when travel was limited to walking or the use of a camel or donkey. Just last Sunday, the gospel message spoke of the Holy Family making its annual Passover pilgrimage from Nazareth to Jerusalem. So Our Lord himself participated in pilgrimages.

When our pilgrimage group arrived in the Holy Land, we were greeted by our pilgrim leader, Father Peter Vasko, with this message: "You may think that you decided to make this trip. You did not. God ordained that you would be here

in this place on this day of this year before you were ever born. Just as Mary cooperated with God's will for her to give birth to Jesus, you have cooperated with God's will for you to be in this holy place. In calling you here, He wishes to impart one or more of three special gifts to you: to touch your heart in a special way, to heal you of something, or to lead your life in a particular direction. The most important part of a pilgrimage is to open your heart to hear how God is calling you, to receive the grace He is offering you, and to answer His call."

All of us should be open to hearing God's call and determine if he is asking us to make a pilgrimage. It may be to the Holy Land, as my wife and I just experienced. Or it may be another place of spiritual significance. In this issue, you will also read of the experience of pilgrims who journeyed to Rome and to Ireland in 2012. There are many other places where pilgrims find spiritual fulfillment, such as Lourdes in France, Fatima in Portugal, Santiago de Compostela in Spain, Guadalupe in Mexico and even nearby places such as the National Shrine of Elizabeth Ann Seton in Maryland, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré in Quebec, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, the site of recently approved Marian apparitions in Wisconsin.

Open your heart and ask yourself if this is the year that God is calling you to make a special connection with him in a special place...to become a pilgrim.



POPE SAYS FALSE IDEAS OF HUMAN NATURE THREATEN BASIS OF THE FAMILY

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

Pope Benedict XVI said the family in Western society is undergoing a "crisis that threatens it to its foundations," owing to false ideas of human nature that equate freedom with selfishness and present God-given sexual identities as a matter of individual choice, to the profound detriment of humanity dignity.

But the pope said that the Catholic Church, in its dialogue with states, secular society and other religions, can help restore a proper understanding of human nature as a basis for justice and peace.

The pope made his remarks on Dec. 21 in his annual Christmas address to officials of the Roman Curia, the Catholic Church's central administrative offices at the Vatican.

"The question of the family is not just about a particular social construct, but about man himself -- about what he is and what it takes to be authentically human," Pope Benedict said.

"Only in self-giving does man find himself," the pope said. "Only by letting himself be changed through suffering does he discover the breadth of his humanity."

As a consequence of an "increasingly widespread" refusal to make lifelong commitments to the family, the pope said, "man remains closed in on himself" and "essential elements of the experience of being human are lost."

Citing a study of same-sex marriage and parenting by Rabbi Gilles Bernheim, the chief rabbi of France, Pope Benedict deplored what he called a

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FEAST FOR BELIEVERS

Most Americans see Christmas as a religious celebration, marking the feast with faith-based customs.

95% CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS	78% TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON CHRIST'S BIRTH
82% VIEW IT AS A RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY	62% ATTEND CHURCH SERVICES

Source: 2010 USA Today/Gallup poll ©2012 CNS

DOMINICAN SISTERS OF ST. CATHERINE DE' RICCI MERGE WITH DOMINICAN SISTERS OF PEACE

On Saturday, Dec. 15, the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine de' Ricci officially became members of the Dominican Sisters of Peace (formerly the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs, who have served in central Ohio since 1830), the only pontifical congregation of Catholic religious sisters headquartered in Columbus.

During the ceremony, which was webcast live to the congregation's motherhouses throughout the nation and elsewhere, the de' Ricci sisters reaffirmed their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as Dominican Sisters of Peace and received Dominican Sisters of Peace symbols. A presentation of a "treasure box" by outgoing de' Ricci President Sister Anne Lythgoe, OP, to Dominican Sisters of Peace Prioress Sister Margaret Ormond, OP, symbolized the gifts the de' Ricci Sisters bring to the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

This merger came after an ex-

tensive process of exploration, discernment, and deep prayer that began in 2001. Approval for the merger was received from the Vatican's Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on July 25, 2012.

The Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine de' Ricci have 60 vowed sisters and 64 lay associates. The congregation began as a pontifical institute founded in 1880, in Albany, N.Y., to address the spiritual life and faith formation of women. From headquarters in Upper Darby, Pa., the sisters continued to carry out this call in operating two retreat centers and in serving in individual ministries as spiritual directors, counselors, parish faith formation directors, and more. As Dominican Sisters of Peace, they will continue in these ministries.

"We take this step out of a conviction that we have reached a moment when our critical resources of leadership and essential supportive structures can no longer sustain us

on our own," Sister Anne said. "At the same time, we believe that we possess gifts for ministry in the Church that can make a significant contribution to God's people as we place our mission in a larger context within the Dominican Order."

"The Dominican Sisters of Peace are humbled and honored by the decision of the de' Ricci Sisters to join with us in our mission of preaching the Gospel to the people in our times," Sister Margaret said. "These Sisters and associates bring so many gifts, and we are eager to share with them and to learn from them."

The Dominican Sisters of Peace is a pontifical institute founded in 2009 from the union of seven former Dominican congregations. With more than 600 sisters and 500 associates in 37 states and nine nations, they serve in many ministerial areas, including education, health care, spirituality, pastoral care, prison ministry, and ecology/care of creation. The congrega-



Sister Anne Lythgoe, OP (left), presents a symbolic "treasure box" to Sister Margaret Ormond, OP. Photo courtesy Dominican Sisters of Peace

tion's 27 founded institutions throughout the United States include three colleges/universities, four high schools, two grade schools, four health care centers, three literacy centers, five farms/ecology centers, five retreat/spirituality centers, and one low-

income housing project.

"Together, we will continue to embrace the preaching mission of the order as we embrace each other in this call to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Sister Margaret said. "May God bring to fruition the good work that has begun."

FALSE IDEAS, continued from Page 2

"new philosophy of sexuality," epitomized by the word "gender," which teaches that "sex is no longer a given element of nature," but a "social role we choose for ourselves."

"Man and woman as created realities, as the nature of the human being, no longer exist," he said. "Man calls his nature into question. From now on, he is merely spirit and will."

The consequences of this attitude, the pope suggested, have included unethical biomedical practices: "The manipulation of nature, which we deplore today where our environment is concerned, now becomes man's fundamental choice where he himself is concerned."

To reject the "preordained duality of man and woman"

is also to reject the family as a "reality established by creation," he said, with particularly degrading consequences for children: "The child has become an object to which people have a right and which they have a right to obtain."

Striking a more hopeful note, the pope said that the church can help secular society recover a true understanding of human nature.

"The church represents the memory of what it means to be human in the face of a civilization of forgetfulness," he said.

Rather than prescribe specific remedies for social problems, the church proposes certain "fundamental and non-negotiable" values as convincingly as possible, the pope said, "and

this then can stimulate political action."

Dialogue with non-Christian religions, though it begins with a pragmatic search for peaceful coexistence, inevitably develops into an "ethical quest" for fundamental common values, hence a "quest for the right way to live as a human being."

Properly understood as a search for the "oneness of the truth," such dialogue does not entail compromise of religious convictions, he said.

A Christian "can venture freely into the open sea of the truth without having to fear for his Christian identity," the pope said, since "Christ, who is the truth, has taken us by the hand."



Front Page photo: Father G. Michael Gribble, rector of Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral, carries the cross on the Via Dolorosa while on pilgrimage in Jerusalem.

CT photo by David Garick

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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.

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PRACTICAL STEWARDSHIP

By Rick Jeric

Exposition

Did you have a truly merry and joyful Christmas? I hope it was the best ever for you, your family, and your loved ones. For me, it was wonderful to have all the kids home and together. As they get older, I know this will get more difficult. My wife and I really cherish these times together, and when it is all done in the name of our Catholic Faith and in Jesus Christ, all the better. As social human beings, we enjoy celebrations, parties, and reasons to gather with family and friends. The religious and faith-filled gatherings are the special ones. Christmas is the very real action of the Incarnation. God loves us so much that He sends His only begotten Son to us, so that we may be saved from sin and from ourselves. God becomes a man. It is difficult to imagine and impossible to comprehend. But we have three eternally lasting things that put it all in perspective: Faith, Hope, and Love. We have faith, first and foremost because without it, we would have no reason to believe. We cannot imagine and we cannot comprehend, but we still have deep faith, and that is enough. Therein lies the beauty of our Catholic Faith, that we believe out of faith, without physical proof, and without demonstrated signs before our very eyes. We have hope, and without it our lives would merely be some sort of contrived virtual reality, with no hope of eternal life with our God. And we have love, and that God to whom we belong is pure love. God becomes man out of pure love for each of us; in turn, we give back that love to one another, as we journey back home to be with love.

This Sunday, Jan. 6, is the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord. This is a very important day for us as Catholics. We celebrate and mark the time when Jesus Christ made Himself known to everyone -- Jews and Gentiles alike -- as the Messiah, the Savior of the world. We all were represented by the Magi, or three wise men, or astrologers from the East, or however you wish to consider them. Whether the visit came in Bethlehem at the birth of Jesus, or if it came at home in Nazareth some years later, the joyous point is that Jesus came to save us all, no matter who we are or where we come from. A synonym for Epiphany is "exposition." I like this term, because Jesus actually exposed Himself freely to the world at hand, and for all of us today, and for all future generations forever. The Magi helped this exposition by their presence, their homage, and their gifts. Our brothers and sisters in the Eastern Rites of Catholicism celebrate Christmas at the Epiphany. How can all of mankind adequately thank the Christ Child -- God made man -- with gifts? We know exactly what God asks and desires: love one another. As we ponder the exposition of Jesus Christ to us and the world, let us contemplate and meditate upon exposing ourselves. We know who and what we are. We are sinners, but we are all basically good and loving people. May we expose ourselves as such this Epiphany. By our actions, may we expose the love of God to all the world.

Our challenge this week is to think about very practical ways in which we can expose our faith. We are in the midst of the Year of Faith. What have we done so far? Prayer has increased and been enriched, I am sure. Now take the next step and live your faith as an exposition for all. Start with your family, friends, and co-workers. The grace and the love of the Year of Faith will spread only if we show it. Be a part of the Magi, bearing gifts of Faith, Hope, and Love. Do not sit idly by like their camels, resting and waiting to be told what to do next.

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



EAGLE PROJECT HELPS CHILDREN OF MARY



Nick Ficocelli of Boy Scout Troop 826 in Reynoldsburg built a dock for a pond at the Children of Mary retreat center in Licking County as his Eagle Scout project. The sisters, who frequently host retreats, have been hoping for some time to have the dock built so retreat participants will have the chance to go off by themselves and reflect on events of the day. The sisters also like to fish, as do many of their guests. The shore around the pond does not provide comfortable or easy access to the water, and the dock will help greatly with that. Ficocelli obtained funds for the project by raising \$2,200 at a bake sale at his home parish, Reynoldsburg St. Pius X. That was twice as much as he needed, so he was able to buy the sisters a paddle boat and give them a \$300 check with the extra money. Work on the dock was completed in one day, thanks to help provided by other Scouts and their parents. The pond had been drained earlier so its bottom could be dredged by George Layton, a handyman who has been of considerable assistance to the Children of Mary. Now that the dock is built, it can be filled again. Ficocelli is pictured with (from left) Mother Margaret Mary, Sister Agnes Immaculae, Sister Mary Teresa, Sister Philomena Maria, Sister Dvorah, and Sister Maryianne of the Children of Mary, and Father John Boettcher of the Pontifical College Josephinum, who was visiting the community on the day the dock was built.

Photo courtesy Ficocelli family

TRINITY BROWNIES AT MOHUN CENTER



Members of Brownie Troop 2381, all third-grade students at Columbus Trinity Elementary School, sang Christmas carols for the retired priests and nuns living at the Mohun Health Care Center. Pictured are (from left) Abby Iannitto, Nicole Bond, Nora Hackman, Abigail O'Toole, and Bella Gournio, with parents Abby Iannitto and Nick Iannitto, troop leader.

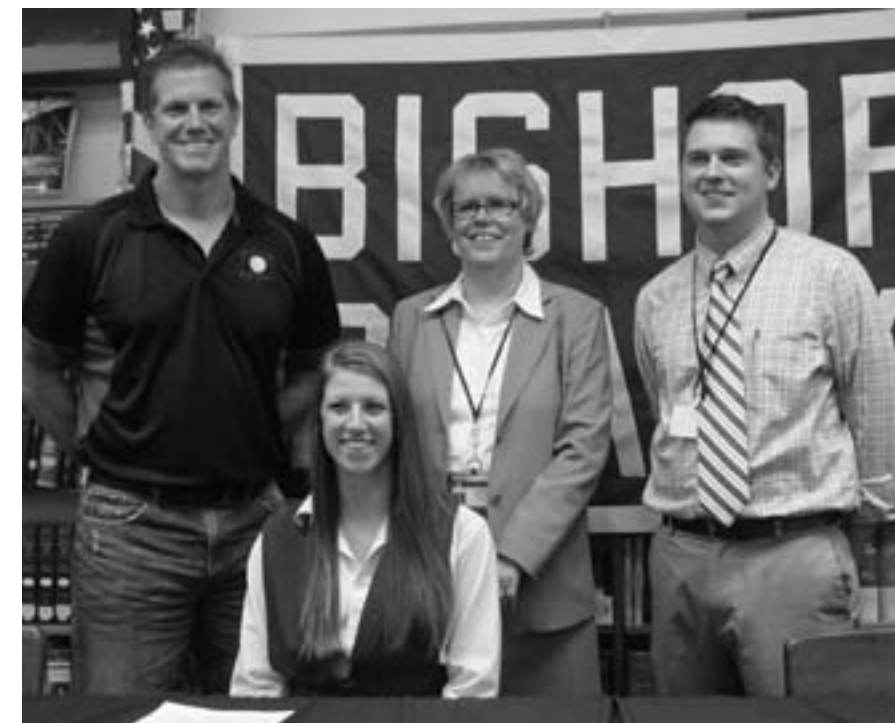
Photo courtesy Iannitto family

BISHOP READY STUDENTS SIGN LETTER OF INTENT

Columbus Bishop Ready High School seniors Karley Kusan and Ross Etgen signed letters of intent to continue their athletic careers in college. Kusan will play volleyball at the University of Akron. She is shown with (standing from left) Mike Kusan, her father, who is Ready's volleyball coach;



Celene Seamen, the school's principal; and Michael Rossetti, Ready athletic director. Etgen, shown with his parents, Thomas and Beverley, will play baseball at Walsh University. Photos courtesy Bishop Ready High School



St. Brigid of Kildare Students Learn the True Meaning of CAREing

Students at Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare School are taking part in a program known as CARE (Creating A Respectful Environment). Participants include 40 families from the school who meet quarterly in a family-style format to discuss a prepared lesson and participate in team building activities. The meetings are led by eighth-grade students, supported by staff members and parent volunteers.

Before Christmas, CARE groups met to create gifts for the children of the Run the Race Club. The club, started by the Brian Muha Memorial Foundation, Inc., seeks to help young inner-city people develop morally and intellectually, gathering at-risk children together for free after-school and Saturday programs that offer stories, crafts, games, sports, tutoring, and snacks.

One of the programs that these children look forward to each year is Christmas

in Dublin, hosted by the St. Brigid youth group and led by Pam Heil, parish youth minister. Each child is able to select gifts for his or her loved ones and receives a stocking stuffed with goodies.

CARE students, some of whom are pictured here, wrote notes to the children and decorated name tags for their stockings, made bookmarks, and bagged toothbrushes and toothpaste donated by St. Brigid parishioners.

In preparation for the CARE meeting and Christmas in Dublin, the Service Club of St. Brigid School, consisting of fifth through seventh graders, began meeting weekly this fall to prepare additional items for the stockings. Items they made included fleece pillows, bath towel-body wash sets, and candy cane trees. Sixth-grade Girl Scouts also contributed candy cane trees.



"Mary the Mother of God, The Model for Women" Retreat

The Catholic Laywomen's Retreat League will sponsor a silent retreat for women from Friday to Saturday, March 1 to 3, at St. Therese's Retreat Center, 5277 E. Broad St., Columbus.

The retreat master will be Father Dan Dury, and the theme will be "Mary the Mother of God, The Model for Women." Father Dury will offer a look at different events in the life of Mary and use her responses to shape our own. In particular, he will explore Mary's role as

mother and wife.

Father Dury, a Columbus native, earned a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy from the Pontifical College Josephinum and master's degrees in church history and divinity from Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Md. His first assignment was at Westerville St. Paul Church, where he served as parochial vicar. He is serving in the same capacity at the Perry County Consortium of Catholic Parishes.

The retreat fee is \$125, which includes

a private room for two nights, and six meals. Registration will be from 5:30 to 6 p.m. Friday, and silence will begin after dinner. In addition to Masses on Saturday and Sunday, there will be all-night adoration in the chapel on Saturday and opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The traditional Catholic practices of Stations of the Cross and the Rosary will enhance the sense of deep spirituality, but those attending should feel free to participate in whatever the Holy Spirit

draws them to. Quiet time for private prayer and meditation will be built into the schedule, adding to the depth of the experience.

To request a registration form or for more information, contact Sharon Gehrlach, Catholic Laywomen's Retreat League secretary, at retreatleague@gmail.com or call her at (614) 882-1946. Assistance with the fee is available for those who need it. The deadline for registration is Tuesday, Jan. 15. Space is limited.

Pronounced as man and wife; no fan of sign of peace

Q I recently attended the wedding of a young man and his bride who are both practicing Catholics. At the end of the ceremony, the congregation was confused when the priest (newly ordained) did not pronounce the couple as “man and wife” and introduce them as such to the attendees.

It was all very awkward, and no one seemed to know what to do. Finally, the organist began the recessional music and the bride and groom exited. When asked later why he did not introduce the couple, the priest said that it was not a part of the marriage rite of the church.

Weddings should be such joyous occasions, but this put a damper on it. I think that the priest’s rigid adherence to ritual could well have alienated people from the Catholic Church. What is your feeling? (Jefferson City, Mo.)

A . Sometimes at Protestant weddings -- and often in television and movie weddings -- a minister at the end of the ceremony pronounces and presents the couple as man and wife. That is not -- and, to my knowledge, never has been -- part of the Catholic marriage rite.

In fact, for a priest to use that declaration would reflect bad theology. In the Catholic view, marriage is unique among the sacraments in that, in marriage, the priest does not administer the sacrament. He is there simply as the witness.

The ministers of the sacrament of marriage are the couple, by virtue of their exchange of vows. The priest then blesses that commitment and prays for the newly married couple. So a Catholic priest would have no right “pronouncing” the couple as man and wife. They have done that already, on their own.

What surprises me, honestly, is not so much your



QUESTION & ANSWER
by: **FATHER KENNETH DOYLE**
Catholic News Service

question but your concluding observations -- that the priest’s failure to “pronounce” dampened people’s joy and may have alienated some of them from the church. Over 46 years, I’ve probably done 600 or 700 weddings and have never been told that.

Q . My wife is relatively new to the Catholic Church and absolutely abhors the exchanging of the sign of peace. I remember when this was not a part of the Mass. It seems to have been an accretion that crept into the liturgy during the “feel-good” 1970s, and I agree with my wife that it is quite unnecessary.

My wife is on the shy side and prefers not to have to shake hands with the person who happens to be next to her in the pew. At most, she would nod but feels that this would be rude. Are there any options? (If you ran a petition drive to eliminate the sign of peace, I’ll bet that it would be greeted with 95 percent approval from Catholics.) (Louisville, Ky.)

A . Far from being a new invention of the 1970s, the restoration of the sign of peace was actually a return to a practice common in the earliest days of the church. In those times, Christians, in a reminder of the charity that linked the eucharistic community, exchanged a greeting at the offertory -- that timing chosen from the suggestion

of Jesus (Matthew 5:23-24) that one reconcile with others before presenting gifts at the altar.

By the late fourth century, the exchange of peace had been placed instead right after the Our Father, since Christians were committed to live in harmony with those with whom they were about to share the Eucharist. The greeting of peace faded gradually into disuse over the centuries and was restored to the Mass during the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council.

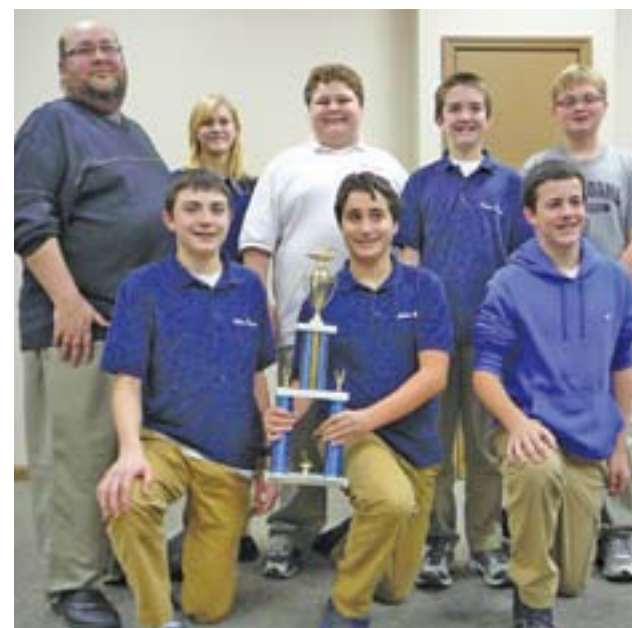
Technically, the sign of peace is optional. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* prescribes in No. 154 that it be shared “when appropriate.” But other sections of the general instruction (in No. 82 and No. 239) imply that it is customarily used. (During a flu epidemic, for example, the exchange of peace could reasonably be suspended.)

The greeting ought to be exchanged in a quiet and dignified manner, and Pope Benedict XVI reminded Catholics in 2006 that restraint was needed lest the gesture distract from the reverence appropriate to the reception of holy Communion. (Marathons during which congregants roam the church widely in search of hugs would seem to run counter to that caution.)

The particular type of greeting is not prescribed worldwide, but left to be tailored by national conferences of bishops to the customs and culture of the place. In the U.S., a handshake is common, while an embrace or kiss is often used for family or close friends. Some simply nod or wave, which is surely acceptable. (Eye contact, though, would seem to be at least a minimum requirement.)

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

PORTSMOUTH STUDENTS WIN QUIZ BOWL



Portsmouth Notre Dame’s junior high and middle school teams both won Scioto County’s Quiz Bowl academic competition in November. Members of the junior high team (left photo) are (from left): first row, Drew Smith, Jacob Blau, and Truman Hash; second row, coach Michael Haskins, Tawanna Cooper, Matthew Haskins, Joseph Beckett, and Spencer Wilcox. Middle school team members are (from left) first row, Ethan Jones, Rohit Kateria, and Faith Harting; second row, Hannah Milani, Olivia Grace Smith, Emma Madden, Katie Paterson, Maria Benitez, and Simon Harting; third row, coach Amanda Jones, Danny Riegler, Caden Wilcox, Xavier Shepherd, Emily Jones, and assistant coach Raj Kataria.

Photo courtesy Notre Dame Schools



SMARTPHONES DOWN: A REAL PILGRIMAGE TAKES TIME, REFLECTION

By **CINDY WOODEN**
Catholic News Service

Father Caesar Atuire is not naive enough to ask his pilgrims to leave their smartphones at home.

However, Father Atuire, the chief executive officer of a Vatican-related pilgrimage agency, does ask his pilgrims to at least look at the holy sites -- perhaps even say a prayer -- before clicking and capturing the moment in a photo, text message, Tweet, or Facebook post.

Father Atuire, a Ghanaian-born priest of the Diocese of Rome, personally leads at least three of the pilgrimages he oversees each year for Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, which organizes spiritual travel from Rome for 40,000 to 50,000 people each year and assists about 700,000 pilgrims visiting the Eternal City annually.

More and more, he said, helping travelers become pilgrims means overcoming a fixation with images that completely overshadows experiencing

the reality of setting off on a journey, meeting new people, exploring different cultures, and entering into prayer.

People at audiences and Masses with Pope Benedict XVI see the pope through their camera lenses, cell-phones, and iPads. The same thing happens at Christian holy sites around the world, he said.

“What I insist with our pilgrims is (that they) live the experience and, if the experience is so powerful, then try to immortalize it with an image, but don’t start off with the image,” he said.

Other modern obstacles to an authentic pilgrim experience are Facebook or other social networks and the general ease of communicating with others anywhere in the world.

Father Atuire talks about “being present, but absent.” He said, “I can be here with you, but all that I’m doing is geared toward telling people elsewhere what I’m doing right now. That’s a kind of absenteeism that’s becoming very pronounced, even in our pilgrimages.”





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The third big risk is speed, he said.

“It takes 90 minutes to fly from Rome to Lourdes,” and as soon as the plane lands, he said people are calling home “asking the kids to take the laundry out of the machine. And I say, ‘Wait a minute, you still aren’t here.’”

People’s minds, hearts, and souls need time to move from thoughts of work, home, or school, Father Atuire said, so his agency offers catechesis on the planes. In addition, guides conduct a brief meeting each morning to remind people of where they are and what they’re about to do.

All people need a break from the daily grind now and then, he said. They need to get in touch again with their families, with nature, with themselves, and with God.

If people aren’t traveling for work, they usually either are “running away from something or searching for something,” the priest said.

The key difference between leisure travel and a pilgrimage is the search for a spiritual encounter, and throughout history, certain shrines and sites have become known as places with “a density of God’s presence,” he said.

For the priest, who travels often, the three places that top his list for “spiritual density” are the chapel of Christ’s tomb in Jerusalem’s Church of the Holy Sepulcher; the grotto where Mary appeared to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, France; and the Sea of Galilee in the silence of the early morning or late evening.

“I don’t think you can do anything but pray” in those places, he said.

“Religious experience has a corporal dimension,” Father Atuire said. “When people are in search of a deep religious experience, the body somehow needs to be involved,” so setting off from home and going on a pilgrimage is quite natural, not only for Christians, but also for members of most other major religions.

“Christian pilgrimage is all about encounters,” beginning with encountering other seekers and believers, but also being encouraged by them or learning from them how to move closer to the encounter with God, he said.

Unfortunately, though, too many people today focus so much on getting to the holy places that they lose sight of the fact that a pilgrimage is a journey.



“The road is the pilgrimage and it prepares you for the encounter,” Father Atuire said.

While a pilgrimage is a purposeful break from one’s normal routine, it’s not a break from rules and good manners, he said.

“A pilgrimage is putting order into your life, going back to put real order in your life -- order in terms of your relationships with other persons, order in terms of your relationship with God,” he said. “Sin is disorder, and a pilgrimage is an opportunity to recover that harmony that has been lost through everyday life. That’s why it’s a deeply religious experience.”

Although often immersed in the nitty-gritty of chartering planes and buses, booking hotels, and writing homilies for his pilgrims, Father Atuire does have a dream file, and it already includes a detailed itinerary. He just needs to find the time, the resources, and the pilgrims.

One day, he said, he’d love to take a group to the Marian shrine at Kibeho, Rwanda, where young people reported apparitions of Mary in the 1980s. The local bishop has recognized the apparitions as authentic.

“It’s a region of Africa that is struggling to find peace, stability, and growth” following the genocide of the 1990s, Father Atuire said. He would like to bring a group of pilgrims with him to “look into Our Lady’s message and see what signs of hope we can find there.”

Photo: A pilgrim takes a picture on his smartphone as Pope Benedict XVI leads his weekly audience at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, on Aug. 22, 2012.

CNS photo/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters

TABOOS AND TATTOOS



On TV these days, we're seeing more and more programs about "body art" and tattoo design. Despite the apparent widespread acceptance of the practice, there are several problems with tattooing that go beyond the sanitary issues, disease transmission, and unclean inking needles that can be found in second-rate tattoo parlors.

Tattoos, as some who have gotten them have recognized, have negative associations. An article in The Dallas Morning News a few years ago chronicled the story of a young man named Jesus Mendoza, who was "going to great lengths to remove the six tattoos that hint at his erstwhile gang involvement. ... He feels branded. 'It's the stereotyping,' he said. 'The question is: What do you think when you see a young Hispanic male with tattoos? You're going to think gangs. And I think that, too, now.'"

Similar branding concerns were raised in a recent column by David Whitley about San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, whose arms and back are full of tattoos. "NFL quarterback is the ultimate position of influence and responsibility," he wrote. "He is the CEO of a high-profile organization, and you don't want your CEO to look like he just got paroled."

That branding communicates a message that can make life more difficult for those who have tattoos. It should come as no surprise that employers often associate tattooed workers with "reduced productivity" and may show a preference for un-tattooed employees in hiring or promotions.

Even for the vast majority of tattoo recipients who have no connection with gangs or an indolent lifestyle, a psychological issue is raised by the way they seem to serve as marks of vanity. Placing tattoos in positions where they can hardly be missed — on the neck, the forearms, or even the face — can play into a disordered desire to be flamboyant, disruptive, and self-seeking with our bodily image. One young woman, tattooed with the image of a fairy having "stylized butterfly wings, in a spray of pussy willow" expressed her sentiments this way: "I am a shameless exhibitionist and truly love having unique marks on my body."

These questions about vanity lead to similar concerns about modesty. Modesty in its essential meaning involves the decision to not draw undue attention to ourselves. Tattoos and body piercings most definitely draw attention, and often may be desired for precisely these immodest reasons. We ought to dress modestly, in part, to prevent others from being attracted to us out of a mere "focus on body parts." One aspect of dressing modestly is

to make sure everything needing to be covered is, in fact, adequately covered. Placing tattoos in unusual positions on the body may tempt us to dress immodestly so as to assure that the tattoo is visible and exposed for general viewing, in the same way that elective breast augmentation may tempt some women to lower their necklines.

Tattoos, chosen as a permanent change to one's own body, may also suggest issues with psychological self-acceptance. One young woman wanting to get a tattoo expressed her desire to look "edgier," after concluding that she was just too "squeaky-clean" looking.

The simple beauty of the human body constitutes a real good, and that basic goodness ought to be reasonably safeguarded. Permanent, radical changes to the human body can indeed signal an unwillingness to accept its fundamental goodness, and in certain cases of very radical tattooing and body piercing, one can even discern a subtle form of self-rejection and self-mutilation.

There is a spiritual dimension involved as well. Russell Grigaitis, who now regrets getting several tattoos in his 20's, argues in a National Catholic Register interview, "God created the body. A tattoo is like putting graffiti on a work of art." He compares it with trying to improve a painting by Michelangelo.

Some argue that there can be good spiritual reasons for getting tattoos. For example, people have gotten crosses or an image of Jesus tattooed as a sign of permanent commitment to Christ, or a ring or a spouse's name tattooed as a sign of their marital commitment. Yet isn't a personal commitment to Christ or to one's spouse more effectively manifested through the realities of inner virtue and a life of outward generosity than by a tattoo?

It's unsurprising that many who got tattoos in their younger days have grown to regret it later. Pop musician Robbie Williams remarked, "I wish it was like an Etch-a-Sketch where I can wipe them all out. It would be nice to have a pure, clean body again." The American Academy of Dermatology reported in 2007 that "tattoo regret" is now quite common in the United States. Tattoo removal is a costly and difficult procedure, and can leave translucent areas on the skin that never go away. The most effective remedy, of course, is to not seek tattoos in the first place.

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.

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Born on Mary's Feast



It was cold and clear. I was pregnant-to-bursting, wearing a shiny red shirt that looked festive, but wasn't warm.

Our parish was having a rare midnight Mass in honor of the Jan. 1 feast of Mary, Mother of God, and I wasn't missing it. My husband, perhaps knowing better than to argue with me, agreed.

I was lector that night, and though there was not the fanfare of the Christmas midnight Mass, it was still a challenge not to start sobbing. I found myself overcome.

I wrote it off as a combination of pregnancy hormones and my usual penchant for being overcome at Mass.

A few hours later, I woke up to go to the bathroom. There was nothing unusual about this until I noticed the dripping.

"Bob!"
He groaned. He rolled over. He snored and didn't respond.
"BOB!"

He sat up, but he wasn't happy about it.
"I think my water broke."
That got his attention.

But lacking a pool of liquid, he wasn't convinced. I wasn't sure if I was feeling contractions or dinner, so we just went back to sleep.

I'll spare you the play-by-play, but six hours later, well into the morning of Jan. 1, we were getting to know our first child, the daughter who was born on Mary's feast.

That daughter turns eight this year, and she knows there's something special about her birthday. It marks a new year, for one thing, and is a national holiday.

Honoring St. Vincent de Paul Volunteers

During the year, volunteers from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul live the Gospel by feeding the hungry, distributing clothing to the needy, providing transportation to the homebound, and offering answers to those who have nowhere else to turn.

Bishop Frederick Campbell recently presided over a Mass at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral to honor those volunteers. A dinner followed, provided by the cathedral's St. Vincent de Paul conference.

Bill Sparks, president of the diocesan St. Vincent de Paul Council, said more than 50 volunteers from the society serve 400 people with sack lunches weekly at St. Lawrence Haven in downtown Columbus.

Another 50 serve more than 100 people weekly at the society's clothing distribution center, about 25 people deliver meals on Saturday morning to the elderly and homebound, and a team of 15 organizes the Walk for the Poor, the society's largest fund raiser of the year.

That number doesn't include the hundreds of volunteers who work in the society's parish conferences to help area needs.

Bishop Campbell said the Diocese of Columbus has one of the largest groups of St. Vincent de Paul volunteers in the nation -- larger than its counterparts

in the Chicago and Los Angeles archdioceses.

Rosemary Winnenberg, 93, of Columbus St. Anthony Church, has been a St. Vincent de Paul volunteer for more than 35 years, attending the Walk for the Poor until this year.

She said her favorite part of volunteering is visiting and providing comfort to sick people.

Mike Habing of Westerville St. Paul Church said he likes "the spirit" of home visits. He joined eight years ago when his parish started a conference and 150 people showed up for its first meeting.

"I began to take seriously 'what you do for the least,'" Habing said. His next challenge is to get a youth conference started in the parish.

Stephanie Fidler of the cathedral SVDP conference joined the Catholic Church two years ago and immediately joined the society. She said she was inspired by St. Francis of Assisi.

She serves food once a month at Bryden House on the east side of Columbus, an apartment complex for low-income elderly and disabled people.

Sparks said Fidler also led a challenge for area conferences this past summer to provide fans for people who had no air conditioning.

The whole world seems to be celebrating, and there's no shortage of parties.

We go to Mass to celebrate her birthday, and that's special, too.

But, for me, the most special aspect of her birthday is being linked to Mary in such an intimate way. For me, my daughter's birthday is a reminder that even I can be a mother. It's a cheer from my heavenly mother, encouragement of the strongest kind.

"You can do it, Sarah," I imagine her saying to me. "Even though you never thought you could, you can."

She smiles at me and we admire the baby-turned-preschooler. She turns back and looks over her shoulder, and I follow her gaze.

There He is, and I smile wider.
Once again, Mary has led me to her Son.

I can only say "Thank you," this year and every year, as I try my best to imitate her "Yes."

Sarah Reinhard is the author of A Catholic Mother's Companion to Pregnancy and online at SnoringScholar.com.



Diocesan St. Vincent de Paul Council President Bill Sparks and bishop Frederick Campbell. Photo by Mark Marshall

He said the Mass and dinner provide an opportunity for volunteers from the 62 St. Vincent de Paul conferences in the diocese to meet and share ideas. "It creates a sense that they are part of something bigger," he said.



The Holy Steps. These are the steps Jesus walked after the Last Supper on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane and after his betrayal, back to face trial before the Sanhedrin.



The Rock of Agony. The place where Jesus prayed "that this cup might pass from me, but not my will but yours be done," located inside the Church of All Nations in the Garden of Gethsemane. Pilgrims placed rosaries and other special items on the Rock while Mass was being said.



Mass in Bethlehem. Priests of the pilgrimage offer Mass in the cave used at the time of the birth of Christ by shepherds tending their flocks outside Bethlehem.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: An Encounter with the Divine

Story and Photos By DAVID GARICK
Editor, Catholic Times

Advent of 2012 took on an entirely new perspective for me. After a year of planning and preparation, my wife and I joined a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Scripture now has an entirely new depth of meaning because I have walked in the footsteps of our Lord, I have heard his call, and I am acting on it.

Our pilgrimage was put together by the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land and was led by Father Peter Vasko, OFM, president of the foundation, who has served in the Holy Land for more than 25 years. Also on this pilgrimage from the Diocese of Columbus were Father G. Michael Gribble, rector of St. Joseph Cathedral, and Rick and Kathy Gummer of Newark St. Francis de Sales Church. There were 38 pilgrims in our group, including four priests, two deacons, and a Sister of Mercy. We became very close during the 10 days of our journey, yet every one of us experienced a unique encounter with God during this trip.

In participating in a pilgrimage, I think it is very important to open one's heart to encounter God on his own terms. A pilgrimage takes us out of our normal environment and places us in a spot where God can make a special connection with us. I had certain expectations about how important it would be for me to be in special places such as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and Calvary in Jerusalem. They were indeed special. I also was very touched by having the opportunity to renew my wedding vows with my wife at Cana. It was thrilling to get the chance to serve as lector and read scripture during an outdoor Mass on the Mount of the Beatitudes. But the overriding message that I received in this pilgrimage was the manner in which God encountered man in several places we visited, as noted in Scripture, and how man responded. From that, I have a better grip on how God addresses me and how I must respond. I would like to share some of those reflections in this article.

THE ANNUNCIATION

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name

was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you! ... behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

We visited the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth early in our journey. It is striking that Mary, a seemingly ordinary young woman, living in very rough conditions in a tiny village in Galilee, was called by God to play the greatest role ever entrusted to a human being ... to be the Mother of God. When you go down into the simple grotto that served as her home and see the other archeological remnants of that ancient village, you can feel the intimate connection that linked Mary with the divine and grasp that it only happened because she heard the call from the angel of the Lord and acted on it with her positive and trusting assent.

THE VISITATION

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

The events at Nazareth are closely linked to this event which took place a few months later at Ein Karem. Ein Karem is a small village located in what was called the "hill country," a remote area which at the time of Jesus' birth was well west of Jerusalem. Today, Jerusalem has grown to the point where Ein Karem is a suburb. It would have been a major journey for the pregnant Mary to visit Ein Karem, a trip that probably took five days on foot. Pilgrims still get a small taste of that journey as they make their way on foot up the steep climb to the Church of the Visitation. The view of the hill country from that point is still impressive, as is the silence that leads one to contemplate what occurred here. Again, God connects with

man by making it clear to Elizabeth that her cousin Mary is indeed blessed with the opportunity to bear the very Son of God. And God calls her as-yet-unborn son, John the Baptist, with the mission to herald the arrival of the Messiah. John responds with joy while still in the womb. And Mary also expresses her joy at the mission that lies before her.

SHEPHERD'S FIELD, BETHLEHEM

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

As special as it was to touch the spot where Christ was born in the grotto below the Church of the Nativity, I was even more spiritually energized a short distance away at Shepherd's Field. It was very meaningful to stand on that hillside and imagine the world where those lowly shepherds lived and worked. In the midst of that is a cave, now located inside a church. In the first century, that

cave housed shepherds and their flocks. It may well be the one where the angels announced the birth of Christ. We had Mass in that spot. Elsewhere in that church are three frescoes painted on the walls. One shows the shepherds filled with fear and awe at the appearance of the angels. The second is the familiar scene of the shepherds gathered around Mary, Joseph, and the Christ child. It is a scene of pure serenity and adoration. The third shows the shepherds returning to their fields with abounding joy. I was taken by the sense of the shepherds receiving a call from the Lord, answering that call, despite their fears, and acting with total joy as the very first evangelists, carrying the Good News to all who would hear it.

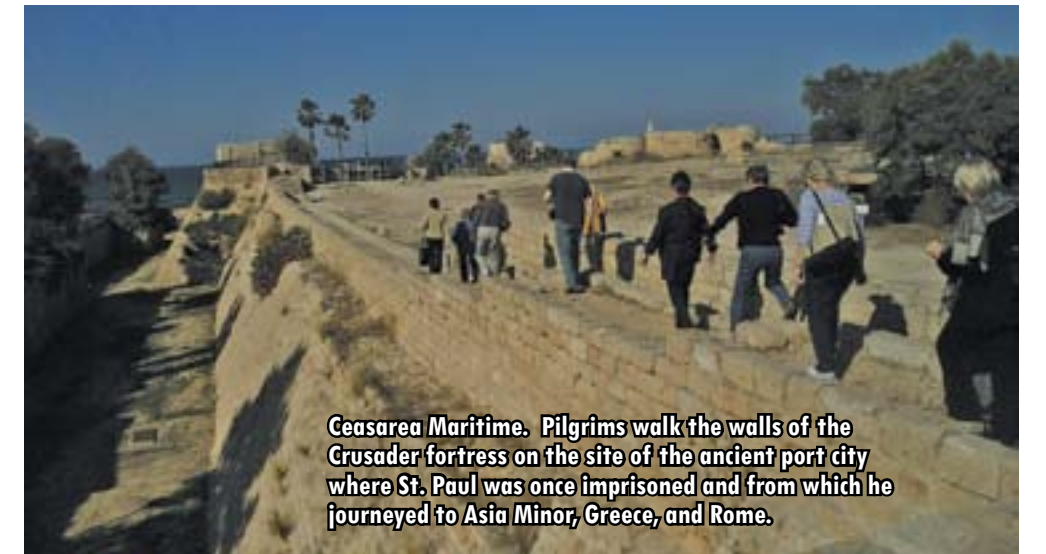
THE TRANSFIGURATION

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, and James, and John, and brought them up into a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them; and his garments became glistening, exceeding white, ... And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. ... And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

After Jesus' many ministries and miracles in the area around the northern part of Galilee, he realizes that the time has come



Calvary. Pilgrims venerate the very spot where Christ was crucified. It is now located within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



Cesarea Maritime. Pilgrims walk the walls of the Crusader fortress on the site of the ancient port city where St. Paul was once imprisoned and from which he journeyed to Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome.

for the final chapter of his earthly ministry, and that will be to the south ... in Jerusalem. Mount Tabor is located southwest of the Sea of Galilee, and it is regarded as the place where the transfiguration occurred. It is a significant mountain which offers a dramatic panorama of the Holy Land. There is nothing on top of that mountain that dates from the events of that day - just a church built centuries later on the spot where it occurred. But the specialness of that place lies not in its archeology, but in its spirituality. This is the spot where Jesus, the man, had his final preparation for his ultimate act of sacrifice and triumph. We think of Jesus as God. We often forget that he was also man. As man, he had to receive that final call to his destiny from his father and receive the special grace to live out his destiny. The power of God came down upon that remote mountaintop and energized Christ for the task ahead and allowed his closest disciples to see a portion of his glory, to prepare them for the extraordinary events that would soon unfold. Today, that mountain still pulses with that spiritual power. One cannot

leave that peak without feeling a greater sense of connection of God and the power to act on the task that God has called on you to perform.

THE HOLY SEPULCHER

"Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay."

On the final day of our pilgrimage, we had the special privilege of a private Mass inside the very tomb of Christ. We walked from our hotel in the predawn darkness through the streets of the Old City of Jerusalem to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. There, we crowded together shoulder to shoulder inside the tiny tomb. Father Gribble then said Mass, and we received our Lord in the very spot where he was resurrected. We were called to be in the place where he lay. We were called to receive him, in that place, to be one with God himself. And wherever Mass is celebrated, we relive that glorious spiritual union.

We were called. We answered the call.



The Mount of Olives. This is the place where Jesus looked out on the city of Jerusalem and wept for the destruction that would follow his crucifixion.



Holy Land Christians: The Living Stones of our Faith Heritage

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land includes more than visiting the sites mentioned in scripture and worshipping in historic churches. No trip to the Holy Land is complete without touching the "living stones" of our Christian heritage ... the modern Christians living in Israel and Palestine.

These are the direct descendants of the original disciples, the followers who at the time of his ascension Christ commanded to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." They continue to live in places such as Nazareth, Tiberias, Jaffa, Ramallah, Jericho, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem. Life has never been easy for Christians in the Holy Land. They have always been a minority. They have faced many wars and occupations. But they have persevered.

Today, times are especially difficult for members of the Christian community in the Holy Land. They are caught in the middle of the strife between Jewish and Muslim forces over control of this historic piece of land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Jews distrust them because they are not Jewish and are Palestinians. So, even though Palestinian Christians have never participated in terrorism, they are caught up in Israel's security measures to prevent terror attacks. Muslims distrust them because they have not joined in the armed struggle against the Jewish state of Israel.

When the United Nations partitioned the Holy Land into a Jewish and an Arab state in 1947, Christians made up about 20 percent of the population of what is now Israel and Palestine. To-

day, that has shrunk to 150,000 Christians out of a population of 10 million -- less than 2 percent.

Part of that shift is related to high immigration of Jews into Israel and high birth rates among the local Muslim population. But of greater concern is the emigration of Christians out of the Holy Land because of threats of violence, loss of freedom, confiscation of land, and a lack of economic opportunity. The security wall erected by Israel following the first Intifada of the 1980s has cut off Christians in the West Bank communities such as Bethlehem from jobs, education, health care, and families in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel and even other parts of the West Bank and Gaza.

To meet the Christians still living in the Holy Land is to witness believers holding on to their faith in the most difficult of situations. If nothing is done, Christianity will become extinct in the very place of its birth. The holy sites will become just museums without thriving communities of Christians carrying on the faith in the land with Jesus walked.

Efforts are under way to aid the Christian community. Programs are helping to provide education, medical assistance, job opportunities, and housing for Christians in Bethlehem and elsewhere in the Palestinian territories. The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, which has custody of most of the holy sites and leads many pilgrimages, has taken the lead in providing much of the assistance. Our brothers and sisters in Christ living in the Holy Land need to know that they are not forgotten. We show that to them by praying for them



on a daily basis, by spending time with them when we visit the Holy Land, and by providing financial aid to help them become self-sufficient and to build new lives for themselves in the land of their forefathers.

To make an online donation, go to <http://ffhl.org/donations.aspx> or mail in your donation to: Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, P.O. Box 29086, Washington, D.C. 20017-9086.

Photos (clockwise from top left): Palestinian Christians Nabil Handal, 55 (left) and Jamal

Salman, 73, walk near the Israeli-erected barrier that divides their olive groves near Bethlehem, West Bank. The Israeli government, which will not allow them to cross the barrier, has declared them absentee landowners. The growing Israeli settlement Har Homa is seen in the background.

Sister Noel Jaar, SSJ, teaches 10th-graders French on Oct. 23 at the girls school run by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Bethlehem, West Bank. Many parents struggle to send their children to Catholic schools in the Palestinian territories. (CNS photos/Debbie Hill)

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Area Knights of Columbus Donate \$3,200 to Diocesan Television Mass

The Columbus Chapter of the Knights of the Columbus recently contributed more than \$3,200 in support of the Columbus Diocese's television Mass program. George A. Jones, director of the diocesan communications office, received a check from W. Lee Brock, the Knights' television Mass chairman, and Kevin Miller, K of C state advocate, on Nov. 19, during a reception at the diocesan office building which recognized the Knights' contribution to religious education.

"The Knights have always been enthusiastic supporters of this program," Jones said. "We thank them for their ongoing assistance and for all of their contributions in support of our diocese and its parishes."

Contributing councils were Fr. William J. Spickerman Council 671, Marion; Lancaster Council 1016; Logan Council 2299; Santa Maria Council 2898, Columbus; Marian Council 3864, Whitehall; Perpetual Help Council 4603, Grove City; Father Hohman Council 5253, Reynoldsburg; Westerville Council 5776; St. Jude Council 5801, Gahanna; St.



From left: W. Lee Brock of the Knights of Columbus; George Jones, diocesan communications director; and Kevin Miller, state advocate for the Knights.

Joan of Arc Council 10765, Powell; New Albany Council 10941; St. Elizabeth Council 11193, Columbus; St. Brendan Council 11208, Hilliard; St. Andrew Council 11275, Columbus; St. Agatha Council 11311, Columbus; St. Michael Council 11445, Worthington; Our Lady of Mount Carmel Council 13379, Buckeye Lake; and Our Lady of Peace Council 14282, Columbus.

The diocesan communications office has sponsored weekly telecasts of the Sunday Mass since the 1950s, providing Mass to those who may be unable to participate with their parish communities. The Mass is telecast over-the-air and on cable systems throughout the diocese by WWHO-TV, Columbus, and WHIZ-TV, Zanesville. Check your local TV listings for broadcast times.

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'Myths and Misconceptions of End of Life Decisions'

The Catholic Foundation has scheduled the fifth event in its Conversations series, this time focusing on the "Myths and Misconceptions of End of Life Decisions." This free event will take place Wednesday, Jan. 23, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Foundation offices at 257 E. Broad St., Columbus.

A time of serious sickness is naturally distressing for the one who is ill, as well as for close family and friends. Making sound moral decisions in the face of such circumstances may be especially difficult when we consider the emotional strains that occur when a loved one undergoes great suffering. In this conversation, participants will engage with a panel of experts who will discuss the teachings of the magisterium as it pertains to end of life decisions, such as medical treatment, living wills, organ donation, palliative care, extraordinary means, and more.

This panel consists of pro-life speakers, including Mark Huddy, director of the diocesan Office for Social Concerns and episcopal moderator for Catholic charities and social concerns. He will provide an overview of Catholic teaching as it pertains to end of life decisions.

Father Mark Hammond, pastor of Mount Vernon St. Vincent de Paul Church, will sit on the panel to discuss Vatican-approved decisions, explain the differences between ordinary and extraordinary means of prolonging life, and share real-life experiences. Dr. Marian Schuda will contribute her experiences as a Catholic doctor and an expert in the fields of advanced cardiac life support and advanced trauma life support. Attorneys Matthew Faehnle and Peggy Wolock will sit on the panel as pro-life lawyers who can discuss the legal perspective of living wills and organ donation.

The Catholic Foundation invites all who are interested to participate in this event. Contact Julie Naporano at (614) 443-8893 or JNaporano@catholic-foundation.org to reserve a seat. Space is limited.

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Father
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Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:2-3a,5-6

Matthew 2:1-12

Paul's words to the Ephesians provide a summary of this feast: "that the Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and co-partners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." The Isaiah reading and Matthew's Gospel selection illustrate Paul's point.

Isaiah anticipated a time when non-Jews (Gentiles) would join with Jews in worship of the Lord as God. Isaiah knew this was an unfulfilled vision, but he saw this beginning to happen when Jerusalem's sons and daughters began to return from the Babylonian Exile in 538 BC. The parade of characters coming to Jerusalem, bringing with them the wealth of the nations, was impressive: caravans of camels, dromedaries (one-humped camels) from Midian (south and east of Jerusalem in modern Saudi Arabia), Sheba's people bringing gold and frankincense. All of them were coming to Jerusalem "proclaiming the praises of the Lord."

This "ecumenical" vision did not last long, and Gentiles were soon enough excluded from easy relations with Jews. By the time of Ezra/ Nehemiah, relations with "the nations" had cooled altogether. Intermarriages were forbidden and people in such marriages were supposed to divorce. By the time of the New Testament, Gentiles were still considered sinners and outcasts until Paul began to welcome them into the Church. Peter did so only sporadically.

Matthew's Gospel is written 20 years after Paul's death. Even though Paul had warmly received Gentiles, Matthew remained decidedly cool toward them. For example, Jesus instructs the Twelve: "Do not go into Gentile territory or into any Samaritan town. Go

only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5-6). Jesus also says to the Canaanite woman: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:24).

So what are we to make of the Gentile Magi coming to pay homage to the "newborn King of the Jews?" It is fairly certain that Matthew's infancy narrative (chapters one and two) was written after the original Gospel. This visit by the Magi represents an opening to the Gentile world that had been limited within the rest of Matthew's Gospel.

We note that they are called "Magi," with no other designation. We cannot limit them to "three," as the popular Christmas carols do. That number arose in popular imaginations because of the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh: one "magus" for each gift. In the course of Christian folklore, there have been as few as two and as many as a dozen members of this mysterious group mentioned.

Other striking details of this story are clearly and thoroughly vetted in the magnificent book written by the late Father Raymond Brown, "The Birth of the Messiah," first published in 1977. I have never seen a better treatment of the infancy narratives than this volume. A later volume, minus some of the numerous footnotes and otherwise academic trivia, was titled "An Adult Christ at Christmas" and was published in 1978. Recently, Pope Benedict published his reflections on the infancy narratives in a lengthy little booklet.

Of all the Christmas tableaux, probably none is more enjoyable than these "Magi from the east." They provided Matthew a vehicle for including the Gentiles in the offer of salvation. They also provide a brilliant illustration of Christ's final command to the Eleven as he is about to depart: "Go therefore, and teach all nations. ..." The Magi fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that the nations would come "bearing gifts and proclaiming the praises of God." They also anticipate the end of the Gospel, when the disciples expand their efforts to go to the ends of the earth.

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

St. John Neumann completes parish Marian consecration

Sunbury St. John Neumann parishioners turned to Jesus through Mary in a big way. On Oct. 20, the parish welcomed Father Michael Gaitley, MIC, director of the Association of Marian Helpers. Father Gaitley led a daylong retreat, sharing his message of the consecration of Jesus through Mary, then met with the youth of the parish on Oct. 21.

More than 300 adults and 50 young people received a copy of Father Gaitley's book "33 Days to Morning Glory: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat in Preparation for the Marian Consecration," and began a parishwide consecration on Nov. 15.

Many participants joined with small prayer groups to share this experience and help each other, while others took

this journey on their own.

Most participants in the program recited the words of consecration after Mass on Dec. 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The parish offered support throughout the 33 days with information on its website, including a countdown clock to Dec. 8, and six parishioners contributed to a blog.

Father Gaitley's book includes the stories of St. Louis de Montfort, St. Maximilian Kolbe, Blessed Mother Teresa, and Blessed Pope John Paul II. There is a two-page reading for each of the 33 days that brings the reader closer to the Marian consecration, in easy-to-understand language.

The Weekday Bible Readings

MONDAY
1 John 3:22-4:6
Psalm 2:7-8,10-12a
Matthew 4:12-17,23-25

TUESDAY
1 John 4:7-10
Psalm 72:1-4,7-8
Mark 6:34-44

WEDNESDAY
1 John 4:11-18
Psalm 72:1-2,10,12-13
Mark 6:45-52

THURSDAY
1 John 4:19-5:4
Psalm 72:1-2,14,15bc,17
Luke 4:14-22a

FRIDAY
1 John 5:5-13
Psalm 147:12-15,19-20
Luke 5:12-16

SATURDAY
1 John 5:14-21
Psalm 149:1-6a,9b
John 3:22-30

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION MASS SCHEDULE WEEK OF JANUARY 6, 2013

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 a.m. on WHIZ-TV, Channel 18, Zanesville, and 7:30 a.m. on WWHO-TV (the CW), Channel 53, Columbus. Check local cable systems for WHIZ's and WWHO's cable channel listings.

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); 8 p.m., St. Gabriel Radio (820 AM), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com.

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

Epiphany: An Outreach to the World

Epiphany is Christ's first outreach to the world's Gentiles. Even though he was merely an infant, God chose the Epiphany to literally bring light to the world's darkness. There is so much symbolism in this event that books have been written about it.

Until recently, too many people believed the whole idea of a wandering star was just a nice story. However, the computer age has helped confirm what those astrologically inclined to the east saw in the sky. Indeed, it was an unheard-of conjunction of planets that signified a monumental event.

The Feast of the Epiphany has been celebrated since before Christianity was legal in the Roman Empire (which occurred in 312 AD). However, the manger scenes are rather new, and while we can only conjecture what the real manger scene looked like, no one doubts that the Christ child was certainly born into meager surroundings.

But what does the Epiphany mean to us 2,000 years later? As it was then, today Christ is a brilliant light in an ever dark and sinister world. Not only do we have individuals who deny Christ and mock the presence of God, but we even have believers who



THE TIDE IS TURNING
TOWARD CATHOLICISM
David Hartline

have fallen away and somehow find it liberating to free themselves from God and faith. What an ignorant decision to make – one with everlasting consequences. Our job is to show Christ's light to a world that so desperately needs to see it.

The Wise Men took it on faith that they were supposed to travel long distances to see who this child is and what might be expected of him. Undoubtedly, they were shocked to see the Christ child in such humble surroundings. The stable where the Savior of the World was lying was hardly the palace they were expecting. What a metaphor for life.

Too many in the world today treat their lives, bodies, and possessions as if there were no consequences for their actions. They want to live in palaces whether they can afford it or not, never thinking that

a palace awaits them if they make it to heaven. Too many people want all kinds of answers to faith and what the Church teaches on a variety of subjects, yet in other areas, such as politics, sociology, and human development, they fanatically display the same blind faith which they mock in religious believers.

We have to be the light that engages them in discussion whenever possible, using few words, as St. Francis of Assisi prescribed, but showing them through our actions. Turn on your television or radio and if you didn't know better, you might think that Christmas is over. In actuality, the commercial part of the season may be over, but the true Christmas season lasts a little while longer. You will see your parish church decorated until after the Epiphany. Sadly, too many people only give the Birth of Christ a passing thought; their worry centers around shopping and reciprocal gift-giving. If we do nothing more than show the Christmas spirit and educate all those who listen on the true meaning of Christmas, we have done a good deed.

Hartline is the author of The Tide is Turning Toward Catholicism and a former teacher and administrator for the diocese.

Susan Maxwell Honored

The Muskingum Valley chapter of the American Red Cross honored Susan Maxwell, a mathematics teacher at Zanesville Bishop Rosecrans High School, as one of its hometown heroes at a breakfast on Friday, Nov. 30.

Maxwell was chosen as the chapter's education hero for 2012. She was one of 12 individuals and 21 Muskingum County sheriff's deputies receiving hero awards at the seventh annual breakfast. Each hero received a glass trophy, a certificate, and a coffee mug. The heroes' pictures were displayed on billboards throughout December.

Maxwell has taught at Rosecrans for more than 30 years and has been ad-

viser for many student organizations, currently including the National Honor Society and the Quiz Team. She also is chair of the school's accreditation and marketing committees, assists with student service projects at the Eastside Ministry, and is a member of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and of Zanesville St. Thomas Aquinas Church, and treasurer of the Muskingum Valley Right to Life Society.

Maxwell, her husband and four children, two of whom have become teachers, are Rosecrans graduates. She received a bachelor's degree from Ohio University.

ANNUAL MARDI GRAS GALA



The biggest Mardi Gras event in the diocese is set for Saturday, Feb. 9, as Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral kicks off the Lenten season with a grand event and dinner at the Athletic Club of Columbus, 136 E. Broad St.

The evening includes live entertainment and great food with a New Orleans flavor, silent and live auctions, and great socializing.

This year's honoree is Cia McQuaide, superintendent of diocesan Catholic schools.

The proceeds provide support for

students to attend Catholic schools and aid to religious education programs.

For more information or to make reservations, contact Kimbely Mattox at kmattox64@hotmail.com or call (614) 203-2222.

2013 COUPLES RETREAT

Sts. Peter and Paul Retreat Center, 2734 Seminary Road S.E., Newark, is sponsoring a retreat for couples on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 8 and 9.

It will begin at 7:30 p.m. Friday and conclude after a 5 p.m. dinner the following day. Breakfast and lunch on Saturday also are included in the \$120 cost.

Couples are invited to spend some quiet time together in the warmth

of the retreat house in the wooded countryside of Licking County and to spend time with other couples listening to talks designed to be uplifting to those married and living out their sacrament in these ever-changing times. Sister Maxine Shonk, OP, will be directing the retreat.

Anyone interested in attending is asked to call the center at (740) 928-4246 or send an email to info@stspeterandpaulretreatcenter.org.

Saint Michael School of Worthington
Open House & Kindergarten Coffee

Thursday, January 10th, 2013
Saint Michael Church — Marian Hall
5750 N High St. • (614) 885-3149

Morning Session: 9:30 - 11:00 AM
Evening Session: 7:00 - 8:30 PM
Refreshment and Childcare Provided

Guided School Tour with Saint Michael Students & Parents
Q & A with St. Mary Michael OP, School Principal
Meet Fr. Anthony Dinovo, Pastor • Meet and Speak to Kindergarten Staff
Presentation on Curriculum & After School Care Program

Please Join Us!!

to register online, go to stmichael.cdeducation.org

Pray for our dead

ANDERSON, Patricia A., 85, Dec. 27
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

ARNOLD, Larry, 74, Dec. 10
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

ASMO, Armond J., 91, Dec. 30
St. John the Baptist Church, Columbus

BECK, Rosalie G., 83, Dec. 20
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

BUTZ, Jeffrey A., 31, Dec. 22
St. John Neumann Church, Sunbury

CALDERON, Azucena C. "Susan," 91, Dec. 17
St. Paul Church, Westerville

CHRISTIAN, Betty, 89, Dec. 29
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

CLAYTON, John O., 77, Dec. 26
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Columbus

CLEAVES, Annabelle, 94, Dec. 14
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Mount Vernon

COOPER, Johnny E., 46, Dec. 26
Holy Rosary-St. John Church, Columbus

D'ASCANIO, Eda M., 96, Dec. 18
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

DAVIS, Pauline A., 92, Dec. 19
St. Timothy Church, Columbus

DAVIS, Phillis, 83, Dec. 4
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

FINN, James E., 57, Dec. 24
St. Brigid of Kildare Church, Dublin

GARDINA, Laura B., 85, Dec. 10
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Mount Vernon

GELPI, Andre J., 81, Dec. 17
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus

HALTER, Lawrence H. Jr., 75, Dec. 19
St. Pius X Church, Reynoldsburg

HOOD, Mary T., 90, Dec. 21
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

HOYER, John L., 85, Dec. 24
St. Paul Church, Westerville

HUDOCK, Rose M., 90, Dec. 29
St. Francis of Assisi Church, Columbus

HUDOCK, William J., 91, Dec. 24
St. Francis of Assisi Church, Columbus

ISABEL, Beverly A., 92, Dec. 26
St. Catharine Church, Columbus

JOHNSON, Judith K., 74, Dec. 21
St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville

KING, Rita J., 84, Dec. 25
St. James the Less Church, Columbus

KINNEER, Mary A., 80, Dec. 22
Sacred Heart Church, Coshocton

KONHEIM, Jane S., 64, Dec. 20
St. Paul Church, Westerville

KOZLOWSKI, Maria, 89, Dec. 2
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

KRUTKO, James T., 80, Dec. 21
St. Matthew Church, Gahanna

KUHNS, Mary E., 89, Dec. 23
St. Matthew Church, Gahanna

LANCIA, Teresa M., 91, Dec. 16
St. Margaret of Cortona Church, Columbus

MARKS, Charles, 74, Dec. 14
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

McCANN, Mary J., 90, Dec. 16
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Mount Vernon

NABERGALL, Lois P., 88, Dec. 27
St. Pius X Church, Reynoldsburg

NOWAK, Greg, 64, Dec. 24
Sacred Heart Church, Coshocton

OLSON, Mary K., 87, Dec. 22
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

ORIS, Mary K., 71, Dec. 26
St. Mary Church, Columbus

RATCLIFF, Marjorie A., 78, Dec. 17
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

RE, Francis A., 81, Dec. 24
St. Philip Church, Columbus

REED, Deborah, 51, Dec. 17
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Mount Vernon

ROBERTS, Mary E., 88, Dec. 27
St. Mary Church, Delaware

ROUSSEAU, Anthony F., 87, Dec. 24
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

SALVATORE, Rita M., 61, Dec. 19
St. Patrick Church, Columbus

SAVOIA, Margherite, 94, Dec. 20
Our Lady of Victory Church, Columbus

SCHULTZ, Judith A., 71, Dec. 28
St. Paul Church, Westerville

SIEBOLD, Robert J., 94, Dec. 23
St. Matthias Church, Columbus

SMOKOVICH, Walter, 86, Dec. 15
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

STRATTON, Margaret M., 95, Dec. 19
Immaculate Conception Church, Dennison

TRAN, Sen T., 78, Dec. 22
Ss. Augustine and Gabriel Church, Columbus

WALD, Robert J., 81, Dec. 23
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Grove City

WATKINS, Nancy, 66, Dec. 16
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

WEDDELL, Julia P., 94, Dec. 22
Ss. Simon and Jude Church, West Jefferson

WESTERHEIDE, Loretta S., 78, Dec. 15
St. Vincent de Paul Church, Mount Vernon

WILAMOSKY, Frank J., 76, Dec. 21
St. Pius X Church, Reynoldsburg

YOUMANS, Joseph, 93, Dec. 1
Sacred Heart Church, New Philadelphia

FUND HONORS PHYSICIAN

A memorial tribute honoring Dr. Joseph M. Gallen, an obstetrician and gynecologist who delivered more than 10,000 babies at St. Ann’s Hospital, has been initiated at the Mount Carmel Foundation.

The perpetual fund will honor the career achievements of Gallen, his wife, Janet, and Gallen’s father, a physician who was appointed by Bishop James Hartley in 1920 as the first chief of staff at St. Ann’s Infant Asylum.

Proceeds from the Gallen Fund will support Mount Carmel’s “Welcome

Home” mother and infant home visitation program, which is offered free to families delivering a child at a Mount Carmel hospital.

Chairing the fund’s steering committee is Nancy (Plank) Kelley of Columbus Holy Spirit Church, assisted by Dr. Phil Shubert, director of maternal-feternal medicine for the Mount Carmel Health System.

For more information about the fund, contact Doug Stein, president of the Mount Carmel Foundation, at dstein@mchs.com or call (614) 546-4500, extension 7.

**TUNE IN TO PATRICK MADRID'S
NEW DAILY RADIO SHOW!**

**RIGHT HERE
RIGHT NOW
WITH PATRICK MADRID**

**MONDAY-FRIDAY
4PM - 5PM**

ST. GABRIEL
CATHOLIC RADIO
AM 820

"THE FASTEST HOUR IN CATHOLIC RADIO!"

H A P P E N I N G S

CLASSIFIED

**SINGING BUCKEYES OPEN HOUSE
TUESDAY, JAN 8TH, 7 PM
Advent Lutheran Church
3660 Kenny Road, Upper Arlington**

Open house for men interested in joining Singing Buckeyes men's a cappella chorus
614-861-6568
www.singingbuckeyes.com

**SPAGHETTI DINNER
St. Joan of Arc Parish
10700 Liberty Road, Powell**

Saturday, Jan. 12, 2013 • 4-8 PM
Adults \$8; Children 10 & under: \$4 All you can eat meal includes: Spaghetti, Meatballs (2), Salad, Bread, Drinks (Wine/Beer sold separately)
Sponsored by the K of C at St Joan of Arc

JANUARY

3, 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**

All fund-raising events (festivals, bazaars, spaghetti dinners, fish fries, bake sales, pizza/sub sales, candy sales, etc.) will be placed in the "Fund-Raising Guide." An entry into the Guide will be \$18.50 for the first six lines, and \$2.65 for each additional line. For more information, call Deacon Steve DeMers at 614-224-6530 or 800-511-0584.

'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@colsdioic.org

4, 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.
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**
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.
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.

5, SATURDAY
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**
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**
Filipino Mass at Holy Cross
7:30 p.m., Holy Cross Church, 204 S. 5th St., Columbus. Mass in the Tagalog language for members of the Filipino Catholic community. **614-224-3416**

5-6, SATURDAY-SUNDAY
Nativity Exhibit at Jubilee Museum
11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, Holy Family Jubilee Museum, 57 S. Grubb St., Columbus. "Mangers at the Museum" exhibit of nearly 100 Nativity sets, including the largest set of Fontanini figures in the United States. Also open weekdays by appointment. and Dec. 29 and 30 and Jan. 5 and 6 at Saturday and Sunday times. **614-461-6204**

6, SUNDAY
St. Christopher Adult Religious Education
10 to 11:15 a.m., St. Christopher Parish Center, 1420 Grandview Ave., Columbus. "Happy Epiphany!" with Scripture scholar Angela Burge. **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**

St. Joan of Arc 25th Anniversary Mass
12:30 p.m., St. Joan of Arc Church, 10700 Liberty Road, Powell. Bishop Frederick Campbell celebrates parish's 25th Anniversary Mass. **614-761-0905**

APeX Ministries at St. Paul
6 to 8 p.m., St. Peter Room, St. Paul Church, 313 N. State St., Westerville. "Christian vaudeville" presentation including juggling, storytelling, and audience participation by APeX Ministries for high school students. RSVP requested. Groups attending are asked to bring beverages. **614-882-2109**

'Catholicism' at St. Andrew
6:45 p.m., St. Andrew Church, 1899 McCoy Road, Colum-

bus. Part 5 of Father Robert Barron's "Catholicism" video series, followed by small-group discussion. **614-451-4290**
Spanish Mass at Columbus St. Peter
7 p.m., St. Peter Church, 6899 Smoky Row Road, Columbus. Mass in Spanish. **706-761-4054**
Compline at Cathedral
9 p.m., St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St., Columbus. Chanting of Compline. **614-241-2526**

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

8, TUESDAY
'EnCourage' Support Group Mass and Meeting
6 p.m. Mass, followed by 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**

Catholic War Veterans Monthly Meeting
7 p.m., Red Room, St. Peter Church, 6899 Smoky Row Road, Columbus. Catholic War Veterans Post 1936 meeting. For those who served three months, were honorably discharged or are on active duty. **614-221-7601**

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**

9, WEDNESDAY
'Catholicism' at St. Andrew
9:30 a.m., St. Andrew Church, 1899 McCoy Road, Columbus. Part 5 of Father Robert Barron's "Catholicism" video series, followed by small-group discussion. **614-451-4290**
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**

10, THURSDAY
Kindergarten Open House at St. Michael
9:30 to 11 a.m. and 7 to 8:30 p.m., Marian Hall, St. Michael Church, 5750 N. High St., Columbus. Open house for parents of prospective St. Michael School kindergarten students. Refreshments, child care provided. **614-885-3149**
St. John's Hermitage Evangelization Award Dinner
6 to 8 p.m., St. Charles Preparatory School, 2010 E. Broad St., Columbus. Inaugural Evangelization Ambassador Award Dinner, honoring Bishop Frederick Campbell, sponsored by St. John's Hermitage, a proposed sanctuary for exclusive use of priests. Guest speaker: Father W. Shawn McKnight, STD, executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' secretariat of clergy, consecrated life, and vocations. **614-743-9619**
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**

12, 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**

13, SUNDAY
Blood Drive at Christ the King
9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Christ the King Church, 2777 E. Livingston Ave., Columbus. American Red Cross blood drive, including free breakfast from Knights of Columbus with every donation until noon. **614-237-0726**
St. Christopher Adult Religious Education
10 to 11:15 a.m., St. Christopher Parish Center, 1420 Grandview Ave., Columbus. Discussion of a popular movie that will be chosen to illuminate a reading from a Mass of the season, led by parishioner Elaine Schuttinger. **614-488-9971**

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

14, 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. First of three monthly presentations by Father Thomas Blau, pastor of St. Patrick's, on "The Spiritual Care and Feeding of the Human Being." Subject: "Reaching God: The Power of Grace." Business meeting followed by 7 p.m. Mass and Father Blau's talk 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**

15, TUESDAY
Serra Club of North Columbus Meeting
Noon, Jessing Center, Pontifical College Josephinum, 7625 N. High St., Columbus. Serra Club of North Columbus meeting. Speaker: Father Jeff Rimelspach, pastor, Columbus St. Margaret of Cortona Church. Reservations required.
Rosary for Life at St. Joan of Arc
Following 6:15 p.m. Mass, St. Joan of Arc Church, 10700 Liberty Road, Powell. Recital of Rosary for Life, sponsored by church's respect life committee.
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**

16, WEDNESDAY
Bishop Celebrates All-School Mass at St. Agatha
8:30 a.m., St. Agatha School, 1860 Northam Road, Columbus. Bishop Frederick Campbell celebrates all-school Mass. **614-488-6149**
Bishop Visits Our Lady of Bethlehem
6:30 p.m., Our Lady of Bethlehem School and Childcare, 4567 Olentangy River Road, Columbus. Bishop Frederick Campbell blesses school's new infant and toddler care area. **614-459-8285**

17, 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**

PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY: A NOVICE'S REFLECTION

By Father William Hritsko

I was a novice as a chaplain on a pilgrimage to Italy. I've led pilgrimages in the United States, but this would be different. The experience was wonderful – busy and fast-paced, but wonderful.

We (three parishioners joined me) began on Sept. 8, the birthday of Our Lady, in Rome and hit the ground running, visiting two major basilicas – St. Paul's Outside the Walls and St. John Lateran – just after landing and all before checking into the hotel and dinner! This was an indication of the pace to come. These edifices to the glory of God were magnificent! One of the pilgrims took my photo at the 2000 Jubilee Holy Door because I was "the holiest one among them." I laughed and replied that I was "no holier than they and we are all called to the same holiness," but had my picture taken anyway.

Tuesday was Mass at the basilica of St. Mary Major. "My" pilgrims (50 or so) asked me to lead music for the Mass with my mandolin. What a privilege to sing for the pilgrims in the basilica! People were stopping as they passed, as I was singing an Italian hymn in honor of Our Lady. What a blessing to think that the praises I offered to God and Our Lady touched people's hearts from around the world. God is good!

Wednesday was our public audience with the Holy Father in Pope Paul

VI Hall – along with 6,000 other pilgrims from around the world. There were several music groups on "performance" pilgrimages that spontaneously offered selections as we waited. When Pope Benedict arrived, the adulation was deafening! He initially appeared tired, but as the audience progressed, he seemed to gain strength from the well wishes and prayers.

When the "pilgrims from Sacred Heart Church in Coshocton, Ohio" were announced – the reader pronounced the city correctly! – the four of us stood and whooped a greeting to His Holiness, as other groups had done, as he gave his acknowledgment. I think I made as much sound as the groups with 100-plus people in them. Those who know me would agree. But it was the Holy Father, after all.

When Pope Benedict offered his pontifical blessing on the pilgrims, our families and holy items, I raised the proof copy of our parish directory honoring the 115th anniversary of Sacred Heart Church, intending the blessing for the whole parish family. I also took the directory to every shrine, church, and holy place of the pilgrimage, intending the blessings to be for all the parish.

Thursday, at the basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, I celebrated the marriage validation in one of the monastery chapels (with approvals) of two parishioners on the pilgrimage. The tour guide



Father William Hritsko celebrates the validation of the marriage of Becky and Chip Henson in the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi. (Photo courtesy Chip Henson)

arranged for a bridal bouquet and a reception in Bologna as part of our evening meal – including a wedding cake and spumante toast – all with just two days' notice. The owner of the restaurant came out crying, greeting the couple with the cake. She loved weddings – even those of strangers!

I still haven't processed all that happened, as is often the way with times offered to God. Graces and insights

keep coming. If you ever get to go, I recommend requesting a specific itinerary of the churches and places you will visit. Study up on them before you go. Maybe take a copy with you and keep a journal of the trip. Then when you see the places, you can better focus on the devotion, dedication, talent, and struggles that went to create them.

Father William Hritsko is pastor of Coshocton Sacred Heart Church.



Left: Father Hritsko, pastor of Coshocton Sacred Heart Church, plays the mandolin on a bridge over the Grand Canal in Venice. Right: Pictured at a cafe outside the Vatican walls are (from left) Father Hritsko and Sacred Heart parishioners Chip Henson, Becky Henson, and Tom McNeally. (Photos courtesy Mark Izzo)

NEWS IN PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Pope Benedict XVI waves as he blesses the crowd during his Christmas message "urbi et orbi" (to the city of Rome 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



Father Carl Subler, an Army chaplain from the Diocese of Columbus, celebrates Mass for soldiers at a forward operating base in Zabul province, Afghanistan. One of the top concerns of the U.S. Archdiocese for Military Services has been for soldiers deployed in Afghanistan.

CNS photo/courtesy of U.S. Department of Defense



A Christian pilgrim touches the star in the grotto of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem on Dec. 13. The church is the oldest in the Holy Land still used for regular worship. The silver star -- parts of which have been worn smooth by the veneration of pilgrims -- marks the site of Christ's birth. CNS photo/Debbie Hill

An Irish Pilgrimage

By **FATHER PATRICK TONER**

There are many ways to experience Ireland. It is an island of many beautiful and inspiring sights, such as the Giant's Causeway, the Cliffs of Moher, the Ring of Kerry, and more. Ireland is noted for its poets and writers, so an Irish pub crawl in Dublin will introduce you to some you may not know. Ireland is a mythic place, with tales of kings and heroes related to rock and hill. But my favorite description of Ireland is that it is a land of saints and scholars.

The northern part of Ireland is filled with places connected to St. Patrick. After arriving in Dublin, head north to Downpatrick on the Mourne coast. Downpatrick claims to be the burial site of St. Patrick and St. Brigid. We celebrated Mass in the nearby Catholic church before heading to Belfast for the night. It is a short drive to Armagh, the metropolitan see for Ireland, whose cathedral claims Patrick as its first bishop. The cathedral was built much later. When Patrick was preaching, most of Ireland was rural, and there would not have been many towns.

Continuing west into Donegal, you go deep into St. Patrick territory. One of my favorite stops is Ballintubber Abbey, which is undergoing restoration. The grounds feature outdoor Stations of the Cross in the Irish style and a dramatic rosary walk. Stopping for Mass, or at least a presentation on the history of the abbey, is worth the extra time. It was the only abbey that continued to have Mass celebrated during the penal times of the 18th and early 19th centuries. There is a "holy well" associated with Patrick, and the beginning of a pilgrim way to Croagh Patrick.

Before going over to Croagh Patrick, the mountain where Patrick chased the snakes out of Ireland, make a detour to Lough Derg, the red lake. Lough Derg is known as St. Patrick's Purgatory. During the summer, it offers a three-day experience of the Irish penitential variety. If you've read the first part of

Left: The ruins of the Irish monastery at Glendalough, where priests were trained from the seventh through the 14th centuries. Right: A well dedicated to St. Brigid in County Kildare, Ireland, at a site where pagans are said to have once worshipped.



Left: A sculpture depicting the apparition of the Blessed Virgin at Knock, Ireland, in 1879. Right: A cross at Slane, where St. Patrick lit the Paschal fire and had a confrontation with the king of Ireland and his druids.



Photos courtesy Father Patrick Toner

Thomas Cahill's "How the Irish Saved Civilization," in which he describes early monastic life, then you are ready for three days of fasting, praying, and staying awake. In May, a one-day version is offered that is worth the time.

Croagh Patrick offers the opportunity to climb a shale-covered passage to the top. The trip is marked by way stations, with prayers at each one. Pilgrims are expected to fast from midnight for the climb. Water is permitted. Mass is offered at the summit at various times. This is not for the faint-hearted or those with bad knees.

You are also near Knock, where the Blessed Mother appeared. A sculpture on the wall of the village church depicts the appearance. The area has been converted to a Mass chapel. A large modern shrine church and a penitential hall have

been added for the pilgrims.

If you are driving, check your guidebook for information on "Mass rocks." These are secluded areas where Mass was offered during the penal times. You can find them all around Ireland. Plan to take a picnic lunch if the weather is promising.

A side trip worth taking is to the Craggaunowen project. It is a historical park reflecting dwelling and life in pre-historic Ireland. It houses the boat that Tim Severin built to duplicate St. Brendan's voyage to America in the ninth century. There are many accounts of the life of St. Brendan. Bring a brief one to get an appreciation for this holy monk, or buy a copy of the account of Severin's re-enactment.

Crossing the country back toward Dublin and skipping the Ring of Kerry, Blarney Castle, Waterford, and many

other sights worth seeing, our pilgrimage heads for Slane, where Patrick lit the Paschal fire and had a confrontation with the king and his druids. You'll find a lovely high cross and a round tower worth seeing. From there, we slip down to Kildare and visit St. Brigid's church and St. Brigid's Well. The well is another good place for a picnic lunch and a reading from the life of St. Brigid.

Of course, you will want to visit the ruins of some of the monasteries. Glendalough is the most famous and most visited. It is worth taking a whole day and walking the grounds. There are still active monasteries in Ireland, and one of them would be a great place to finish your pilgrimage.

Father Toner is pastor of Plain City St. Joseph Church.

