BYZANTINE CHURCH HOSTS ERITREAN CATHOLICS
Bishop Campbell to Address ODU Commencement

Ohio Dominican University’s fall commencement exercise will take place at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 13. Approximately 200 students will have degrees conferred upon them as they join by ODU faculty, staff, alumni and friends in Alumni Hall.

The event will include the graduation of the first master of science in physician assistant studies program, the five-year PA program in central Ohio. The program, launched in 2013, offered its first new students to ODU’s campus each year.

Bishop Frederick Campbell will deliver the commencement address and receive the degree of doctor of humane letters honoris causa. Bishop Campbell may also present a commendation to higher education and his passion for the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual disciplines of students will be evident for generations to come. He is an enthusiastic advocate for ODU and its mission.

“We are honored that Bishop Campbell has agreed to join our campus community, our graduates, and their families for this unique time of celebration,” said Dr. Peter Campbell as the 11th bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus – Pro cessional Mass at 8 a.m. All are invited to participate in the procession to the church. The procession will include the “Happy Birthday” serenade to Mary that accompanies the Mass. The schedule for activities throughout the day is as follows:

2:30 a.m. – Bishop Campbell to Address ODU Commencement

Parishes throughout the Diocese of Columbus will celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with Masses and other events on the feast itself or other days between Sunday, Dec. 7, and Sunday, Dec. 14. The feast of Dec. 12, also called the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The feast is celebrated on Dec. 12, followed by reception in the Catholic Church. (subscriptions @colsdioc.org)

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PRECEPTIVE STEWARDSHIP

By Rick Jeric

Cathedral

Jarvis is a director of planning and development for the Columbus Diocese.

Wilderness Outreach Advent Hike

This year’s Wilderness Outreach Advent hike will take place Saturday, Dec. 7, at Tar Hollow State Park, 1696 Tar Hollow Road, Upper Dublin. The event will begin at 7:30 a.m. and will conclude at the shelterhouse, in the Ross Hollow campground. It will be a 20-mile, all-day hike or a 10-mile hike in either the morning or the afternoon.

Participants can choose between doing the hike in millican, all-day hike or the loop of the Logan Trail and conclude at the tower at around 11:30.

This event will also be open to the public.

Volunteers are needed to help secure the firewood and light the fire.

If you are interested in helping or participating, contact John Bradshaw (614) 679-6761 or john@wilderness outreach.org.

A very bright spot at Holy Rosary-St. John is the parish’s outreach the church in a variety of ways as all three organizations provide job fairs, recently sponsored a Meet the Candidate Night, and serves more than 1,000 people each year who would otherwise go hungry. Rose and John Moses have been volunteering to coordinate pantry activities for years. Rose Moses said, “I work with the pantry because it is very important to me that people would have to choose between food and heat or medicine.” Another group whose numbers have risen are those who previously donated, but, because of the economic downturn, have been forced to help themselves. “We have people who are to continue to live through the shelter, in the Ross Hollow campground. It will be a 20-mile, all-day hike or a 10-mile hike in either the morning or the afternoon.

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When many people think of Holy Rosary-St. John, they think of the organizations that grow out of the parish, like the St. John's Bistro Kitchen, Inc., which serves hot meals six days per week to those in need, not only from the surrounding community but from all around the city. It also serves the neighborhood in a major way when Thanksgiving and Christmas arrive each year, providing meals and Christmas presents. The Community Kitchen has lost some funding this year, but is relying for funds to replace it from the diocese, through the Community Outreach Fund. Rose and John Moses have been volunteering to coordinate pantry activities for years.

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Two parishes planning March for Life bus trips

Bus trips to the annual March for Life in Washington in January are up in Pickerington Catholic parishes and throughout the diocese.

St. Luke parishioner John Durbin, a career courier who is a St. Luke parishioner, was among those who traveled to the March for Life as a bus volunteer.

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During its celebration of the Feast of St. Charles Borromeo in November, the Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School honored two people for their contributions to the school and community.

Tom Horvath, a 1965 graduate of the school, received the Borromean Medal for distinguished service to St. Charles. He has been a member of the school’s advisory board and development committee and an active supporter of its West Campus campaign, donating land where a parking lot named for his West Campus campaign, donating advisory board and development committee and for distinguished service to St. Charles.

He received the Borromean Medal in November, Fyda, and Lara Fyda Filia, and granddaughter Vivia Filia.

Jeremy Filia, daughter Deidre Fyda, son Walter Fyda, daughters Victoria Fyda, Sinead Filia; wife, Marcia; and sons, Eric and Jeffrey.

One of the new members is Donald A. Hempson III, of Columbus St. Patrick Church, shown shaking hands with Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, who presided at the ceremony. Hempson, a member of the faculty of the Catholic University of America, was invited to join the order because of his strong Catholic faith and his commitment to serving the poor and the sick.

The Order of Malta invested 49 Knights and Dames into its federal association on Saturday, Oct. 18 at St. Matthew’s Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The new members of the order are from 14 states and the District of Columbia.

NOTE: Below is a portion of a newspaper article. It contains a list of organizations that have received financial support. The names of the organizations and the amounts of money they received are not visible in the image.
The local Eritrean Catholic community hosted St. John Chrysostom parishioners for a meal after the liturgy. The Eritreans have been attending the Columbus church for the past five months.

**BY TIM SIETZ**

Reporter/Religious News

Catholics of Eritrean origin in the Columbus area have found a home. For the past five months, the local Eritrean Catholic community has been gathering every Sunday at St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church on Columbus' north side. The Eritreans attend the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday, then gather afterward for songs and prayers, including the rosary and a Marian litany, and frequently a meal.

For the past two decades, they had been attending Mass at St. Anthony Church, also in north Columbus. A representative of the Eritrean community, Dr. Michael Haile, said she “decided to change worship sites was made for reasons of liturgical tradition and more frequent availability.”

“Catholics in Eritrea are part of the Ethiopian Catholic Church. The structure of its services is much more similar to Byzantine Catholic liturgies than to the Roman Catholic ‘liturgy,’” she said. “There are few Eritrean priests in the United States and we aren’t able to have one come to Columbus very often, so we have beenbeloved with the Byzantine community and feel comfortable with them, and are grateful to their pastor, Father Robert Stash, for welcoming us to his church. ‘For us, this time will always be thankful to St. Anthony’s for allowing us to use the facillities there for so long,’ he said. ‘St. Anthony’s has become busier over the years with liturgies and activities and with those of the Catholic community from Ghana, so it’s just been hard to schedule many things on we were going, we were limited in what we could do.’”

The Byzantine church is a smaller church, it gives us more flexibility, it’s more of an intimate liturgy every Sunday. That’s important to us, we don’t want large waves of tradition and want to pray together as often as we can,” Haile said.

“The presence of the Byzantine is not limited to the church building, but to the community College, said there about 3,500 Eritreans in central Ohio, including about 150 Catholics, with a similar number of Eritrean Catholics living in the Cincinnati and Dayton areas and coming to Columbus at least occasionally. He said the local Eritrean Byzantine Catholic community has a leadership group which meets every two weeks and a youth group which has regular gatherings including Bible study and prayer fellowship. The group sponsors the community’s adults for a Thanksgiving dinner on Saturday, Nov. 29.

Eritrea was part of Ethiopia until gaining its independence in 1961. Its population of about five million is split into several subgroups. Most of them speak a Semitic language now used primarily in church services. It is considered one of the four Semitic languages, along with Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic, the language the Jesus.

Haile said the local Eritrean community generally brings in a priest to conduct services to conduct liturgies three times a year – around Christmas, Easter, and Aug. 15, the Feast of the Assumption – and for special events such as weddings, funerals, or funerals.

The next such liturgy is scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 10, at 10 a.m. “Our presence is growing stronger in the community – how this unity and love was given to us. The reminder of the beauty of our Catholic Church, we all can admit that we do not always feel ‘true’ reality of Christ, who gives Himself to us all as a whole in Christ. It is so easy to believe that the conflict we see in the reality of the Church, all we can admit that we do not always feel ‘true’ reality, however that day, we did. It was pointed out to me later that day that in our little church in Columbus, Ohio, Catholics from all five patriarchates were most likely present: Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. What a beautiful and awe-inspiring thing! In a world that suffers so much from division and conflict, an example of unity and love was given to us. ‘It is so easy to believe that the conflict we see in the reality of the Church, all we can admit that we do not always feel ‘true’ reality, however that day, we did. It was pointed out to me later that day that in our little church in Columbus, Ohio, Catholics from all five patriarchates were most likely present: Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. What a beautiful and awe-inspiring thing! In a world that suffers so much from division and conflict, an example of unity and love was given to us. ‘It is so easy to believe that the conflict we see in the reality of the Church, all we can admit that we do not always feel ‘true’ reality, however that day, we did. It was pointed out to me later that day that in our little church in Columbus, Ohio, Catholics from all five patriarchates were most likely present: Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. What a beautiful and awe-inspiring thing! In a world that suffers so much from division and conflict, an example of unity and love was given to us. ‘It is so easy to believe that the conflict we see in the reality of the Church, all we can admit that we do not always feel ‘true’ reality, however that day, we did. It was pointed out to me later that day that in our little church in Columbus, Ohio, Catholics from all five patriarchates were most likely present: Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. What a beautiful and awe-inspiring thing! In a world that suffers so much from division and conflict, an example of unity and love was given to us.

We all received that day, and to my Eritrean brothers and sisters, I want to thank you for that reminder and I express my gratitude to our God that keeps us all in this ‘one, holy, Catholic, apostolic’ Church. Father Musie Tesfaye, OCist, has come to Columbus for the Jan. 10 liturgy. He said Father Tesfyakhon and his counterpart, Father Welts Woldekeremien, OCist, have come to Columbus frequently a meal. The presence of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There was no doubt who this was all about.

There were hymns during and after the liturgy, along with drumming and dancing, to honor Our Lord and to provide one place to gather to worship, rather than being dispersed in the church’s universal outreach and of Jesus’ disciples to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

Eritrean Catholic liturgies use a language known as Ge’ez, which has fallen out of use for the most part and like Latin and the Byzantine language, is considered one of the four Semitic languages, along with Arabic, Hebrew, and Amharic, the language the Jesus.

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Mount Carmel Honor with Award

The Niagara Foundation honored the Mount Carmel Health System with their community service award during the foundation’s peace and dialogue awards program.

The foundation, based in Chicago, recognizes people and organizations who have distinguished themselves in their professions, community, and service to the poor, the sick, and the elderly. In Ohio and seven other Midwest states, Mount Carmel was nominated for the award by a family of a patient who was cared for in the hospital’s palliative care unit at Mount Carmel East Hospital.

Chief executive officer of Mount Carmel Health, chief executive officer of Mount Carmel Health, accepted the award and was joined at the ceremony by members of the Mount Carmel hospice and palliative care team.

“I am honored to receive this award on behalf of Mount Carmel’s caregivers, physicians, and volunteers and their contribution to the exceptional people-oriented care delivered at Mount Carmel,” I want to especially recognize our hospice and palliative care team whose incredible compassion for our patients earned Mount Carmel a nomination for this award,” he said during the awards ceremony.

Mount Carmel East Hospital accepts the award, presented by Saint Anthony School's Home and School Association and School Advisory Committee.

School students (from left) Jenise Barron, Delilah Pinkerton, Lillian Dillah, Haille Waadde, Monica Flores, and Autumn Pedazo stand around a table which was set in the school cafeteria to honor veterans. The table setting has become an annual event at the school and is based on the book “America’s White Table” by Margot Theis Raven. This table, a place where no one is to sit, provides the opportunity for conversations about the sacrifice of the soldier’s heart as he answers the call to duty, a lemon slice shows the bitterness of captivity, salt on the plate represents the tears of families waiting for loved ones to return, an empty chair is for the missing soldiers, a blank envelope for the sorrow of being captive, an overturned glass for the meal that won’t be made and have made. The table setting is filled with symbolism and respect for veterans, particularly those still missing. The white tablecloth represents the purity of the soldier’s heart as he answers the call to duty, a lemon slice shows the bitterness of captivity, salt on the plate represents the tears of families waiting for loved ones to return, an empty chair is for the missing soldiers, a blank envelope for the sorrow of being captive, an overturned glass for the meal that won’t be made, a white tablecloth for peace, and a red rose is a roses with a red ribbon for the hope that all our missing will return someday. Photo courtesy Bishop Flaget School.

YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATOR

St. Peter Catholic Church is seeking a Youth Ministry Coordinator for its high school-age parishioners (Grades 9 – 12). This is a part-time position (29 hours per week). The Youth Ministry Coordinator may eventually be asked to assume other responsibilities, at which time he or she would be offered full-time employment. The hourly rate of pay for the part-time position is $18.00 per hour.

Minimally, an applicant must:

• Be a practicing Roman Catholic with knowledge of the faith and living in accordance with the moral precepts of the Church.
• Be fully competent with safe environment child protection policies in effect and required.
• Be at least 25 years of age.
• Have a 4-year college degree. Exceptionally qualified applicants with lower degree, Bachelor's degree, Master’s degree, and other such dual-licensure majors.
• Be “a natural people,” energetic, and hard-working.
• Be a team player and able to “find outside the box.”
• Be an individual committed to and with strong recruiting and marketing abilities.
• Have computer graphics, writing, and editing skills.
• Have leadership strengths.
• Have experience in Youth Ministry.

The Youth Ministry Program is a department within the Parish School of Religion (PSR). The Youth Minister Coordinator reports to the Director of PSR. A focus on the family as a necessary context for affirming youth in their Catholic faith is a foundational principle at St. Peter. The Youth Ministry Program is a catechizing one, with a focus on teaching the core content of the Catholic faith. The study of Sacred Scripture, the Church, the sacraments, and the principles of Christian morality characterize the catechesis of adolescents. The purpose of the Youth Program is to form the young to faith, knowledge, and wisdom.

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MOUNT CARMEL HOSPICE HAS SERVED 30,000 PATIENTS

For nearly 30 years, Mount Carmel Hospice and Palliative Care has provided comprehensive end-of-life care to members of the central Ohio community. The hospice team reached a milestone on Nov. 21 when it served its 30,000th patient.

“The thirty-thousand patients impacted by our care are truly humbling,” said Lori Yosick, Mount Carmel Health executive director for hospice and palliative care. “I am very proud of the work our team has done and continues to do to see how people with advanced and terminal illness have quality and compassion whatever time they have left.”

November is traditionally observed as National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, with a goal of creating awareness about hospice and palliative care services and how they help patients and families manage the effects of chronic and life-limiting illnesses.

A hospice team consists of physicians, nurses, chaplains, aides, volunteers, social workers, and staff who provide emotional, physical, and spiritual support, but most importantly focuses on providing quality-of-life care.

“Hospice is an important part of the continuum of care, and more people are seeking information on their options. They want to know what hospice is and is not,” said Yosick. “The families impacted by the 30,000 patients we have served continue to be our ambassadors.”

Mount Carmel Hospice and Palliative Care is a not-for-profit hospice and palliative care service affiliated with Mount Carmel Health System. The award winning organization is accredited by The Joint Commission and has been designated as a Level 4 partner by the Hospice Veterans Partnership through the U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs Program. For more information on Mount Carmel Hospice and Palliative Care, contact (614) 735-2000 or visit www.mount carmelhealth.com/hospice.

ST. BRIGID BLUE RIBBON CELEBRATION

Students at Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare School had a special day to celebrate being chosen as a Blue Ribbon school by the U.S. Department of Education. Students were able to dress in blue clothing, received posters and were given a surprise party in the gym, where they danced the “Blue Ribbon Shuffle.”

Magi Joseph Hendrickson, St. Brigids of Kilders Church pastor, Kathleen O’Rally, school principal, and Cindy Lombardino, vice principal, traveled to Washington to accept the award. They attended teaching and learning sessions and round-table discussions at which Blue Ribbon honorees shared their strategies and successful experiences.

One of the sessions included remarks from Magi. Hendrickson on the funding model designed for the school, where others have the cost-based tuition model that the school has found to be independent and sustainable for the long term. He also discussed the school’s academic repositioning strategy, designed to combat rising tuition costs.

The award celebration concluded with a parish Sunday Mass of Thanksgiving, fol lowed by a ceremony in the church and a reception and open house at the school. The ceremony included remarks from U.S. Rep. Pat Tiberi, state Sen. Jim Hughes, and representatives from the school’s Home and School Association and School Advisory Committee.

St. Anthony Saint Project

Students of Anya McNam’s fifth-grade class at St. Anthony School who studied the lives of some of their favorite saints are presenting their projects with their projects.

Photo courtesy St. Anthony School.

CATHEDRAL LESSONS AND CAROLS FOR ADVENT

The Colossians St. Joseph Cathedral Choir and Cathedral Brass will present their annual program of music for Advent and Christmas at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14 at the cathedral, 212 E. Broad St. Scripture readings and organ music will tell the story of the Christ child, from the foretelling by the prophets to the visit of the Magi. The audience also will have the opportunity to join the choir, brass, and organ in singing traditional carols of the season.

Photo courtesy St. Bridget of Kildare School.

Flaglet Students Honor Veterans

Chillicothe Bishop Flaget School students (from left) Nathaniel Stone, Megan Baker, Will Myers, Jowel Bowling, and Vincent Randazzo. They were among 24 students taken by teachers Anissa Harr and Michelle Bakar to the ceremony. The students had honorary seats on the stage and were able to play games that were developed by SSD students. The competition featured 60 students from different schools who broke up into groups of ten. Each group was given 30 minutes to write a game from scratch and incorporate free time requirements in the design. Fifteen minutes into the start, another scenario was randomly given to each group. The winner was chosen by the SSD students.

Photo courtesy Notre Dame High School.
Second Sunday of Advent (Cycle B)

Voices of preparation in both Isaiah and Mark

First Reading
Isaiah 2:1-5, 11-12
Amplified Bible

Second Reading
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Amplified Bible

The Weekday Bible Readings

Christmas Message: Advent 4th Sunday

Wednesday
Genesis 15:1-12, 18-21
Psalm 104:1-6
Matthew 4:12-17

Thursday
Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 95:1-3
Psalm 133:1-3

Friday
Zechariah 4:6-11
Psalm 127:1-2, 3-4
Psalm 121:1-2, 5-8

Saturday
1 Peter 2:10-12
Psalm 23:1-3, 4-5
Psalm 116:1-2, 10-15

Do you know Advent and Christmas begin, and what significance that plays in our faith? However, it is important to remember that our connection to the Lord - the Epiphany, as the Wise Men head back east and an angel tells Joseph and Mary they must escape Herod’s murderous agendas. The Holy Family flees to North Africa, specifically Egypt, and rests there until it is safe to return.

In the modern world, many Africans look to their continent as a lasting home for Christian traditions under attack. Several nations in Africa, especially Islamic countries, have long-standing anti-Christian sentiments. There is often the lack of funding and facilities to educate the many young Catholics in Africa.

In the Western world, we are often seduced by money, lust, and power. You don’t have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that when faith is far down the list of important matters, it eventually falls off altogether. So, please consider what it means to people as they become smarter, they lose their faith. Yet, the Catholic Church in Africa has surpassed 100 million. We see some largely secularized Americans, Canadians, and Europeans joining Catholicism to bring some kind of purpose to their listless lives, but in Africa, we actually see Muslims converting to Catholicism.

I recently met an African bishop who became Catholic as a young adult. As a priest, he witnessed threats of violence against fellow villagers, being taken into the Catholic Church. One of those converts was his own father, who had disowned him after he became a priest. When the Faith stands for something, it always wins and survives the most fiery of trials; when it tries to go along to get along, as in some parts of Europe, it dwindles to irrelevance.

This same bishop told me that in the rural parts of Africa, in the midst of this pandemic, he solicits mothers to Mass, singing and in a joyful mood on Sunday mornings, to the tune of ‘Jesus, I trust in You’ harmonized to the tune of ‘What Child is This?’. There is often the lack of funding and facilities to educate the many young Catholics in Africa.

The Catholic Church has also experienced a significant increase in membership. Most importantly, this increase comes largely from Africa. Yet despite the difficulties it faces, the Church seems to speak with one voice. There were only a few million Catholics in Africa in 1900. Fast forward 100-plus years and that number has surpassed 100 million. We see some largely secularized Americans, Canadians, and Europeans joining Catholicism to bring some kind of purpose to their listless lives, but in Africa, we actually see Muslims converting to Catholicism.

The Tide is Turning Toward Catholicism

David Hartline

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HAPPENINGS

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM BISHOP GREGORY HIGH SCHOOL (2662 Cleveland Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43213)
ANNIVERSARY VESPERS AND CANDIDATE COOKIE SALE Sunday, Dec. 13, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 14, 6-8 p.m.

DIOCESAN SCHOOLS ON AP HONOR ROLL

The Catholic Diocese of Columbus was acknowledged for three of its schools being honored on the AP Honor Roll. This recognition is given to high schools that have a significant number of students earning AP scores of 3 or higher on AP exams. These scores can help students advance their college credit and may be used to determine eligibility for scholarships.

AP scores of 3 or higher on AP exams are awarded to students who successfully complete AP courses in various subject areas. These scores are used by colleges and universities to determine college credit, advanced placement, and sometimes even placement into honors or advanced courses.

AP scores are a measure of college-level achievement and are considered by many institutions as a strong indicator of a student's academic preparedness.

AP courses and exams are offered by the Advanced Placement Program, a non-profit organization administered by the College Board. The program is designed to provide high school students with the opportunity to take college-level courses and exams while still in high school.

These high schools are:

- Columbus Latin School
- Dublin Scioto High School
- Worthington Christian High School

The AP Honor Roll recognizes the achievements of students and their schools for their commitment to providing a high-quality education that prepares students for college and career success.

Catholic Men's Luncheon Club Meeting

Monsignor Ed Confer, Columbus Parish. This is the first Sunday of the month and features a variety of events to provide a fellowship opportunity for men.

Holy Hour of Reparation at Columbus Sacred Heart Church

St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad St., Columbus. Please join us for Holy Hour, a time of prayer and devotion.

HOLY HOUR OF REPARATION

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First Friday Sale of pirogi, stuffed cabbage, noodles, and other baked goods.

Theme: “Cain and Abel, Am I My Brother’s Keeper?”

Sacred Art Exhibition at Holy Family Jubilee Museum

6-FEB. 8, SATURDAY-SUNDAY

Advent Concert at Delaware St. Mary

7 p.m., St. Mary’s Church, 1325 Gallia St., Portsmouth.

LISTINGS FOR YOU

For items of Catholic interest that have not been published in print, they may be published in this column. Listed events or notices may not be published.

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The annual Nativity exhibit at the University of Dayton’s Marian Library will showcase two significant new gifts to its collection and will turn to children to highlight the original, educational purpose of manger scenes.

“The Manger: And Now the World” runs through Sunday, Jan. 25, at Roesch Library, and will feature four displays of more than 200 Nativity scenes, also called creches, drawn from the extensive collection of the Marian Library.

The exhibit will also showcase entries from Catholic schoolchildren in the library’s first creche creation contest, as a reminder that an important part of the Nativity tradition involves teaching children about the birth of Christ.

The first-floor exhibit will highlight more than 100 Nativity scenes from around the world, including many from the newly acquired collection of Judy and Bob Davis, a California couple who gathered them during many years of worldwide travel, taking them to nations such as Fiji, Bulgaria, and Kyrgyzstan.

Another new exhibit is an extensive French Provencal village of 150 clay figures known as santons, a gift from the estate of Father John LaCasse, who died in 2011, had amassed the collection for 25 years.

The handmade santons, literally “little saints,” range from seven inches to a foot in height and are detailed representations of the people of a French village, who come to the manger bearing gifts to honor the birth of Christ.

According to Father Johann Roten, SM, Marian Library director of research and special projects, the santons include the poorest people of the village, bringing just one apple or even stolen firewood, as well as other villagers with the products of their occupations: fish, bread, vegetables, cheese, baskets, wine, even lavender, cut from the lavender fields of southern France.

“The village represents the whole world, and how the Christ child gathered the whole world together,” Father Roten said. “The santons tradition is very detailed, and all of the figures correspond to specific names and specific stories.”

“The lady with the firewood is Mary Gold, who goes into the woods to steal the firewood to give to Jesus. The card players behind the stable aren’t too concerned, but will eventually leave the table to go to the manger,” he said.

Father Roten is especially taken with a figure of the man on top of a rooftop jumping for joy.

“He’s the simpleton of the village, but he’s also called ‘the exalted one’ because he’s the first one who realizes that there is something very special going on in the stable below,” he said.

As part of its mission, the library also offers free Nativity lesson plans prepared by education majors from the university’s school of education and health sciences. Suitable for home-school lessons, church schools, and families, the lesson plans for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade can be downloaded on the exhibit website.

The exhibit is the university’s gift to the community during the Christmas season, displaying items from the Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute. The Marian Library holds the world’s largest collection of printed materials and other artifacts devoted to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and includes nearly 3,000 creches, as well as Marian art from around the world.

Exhibit hours vary. All exhibits will be closed Monday, Dec. 8; Wednesday through Sunday, Dec. 24 to 28; Thursday through Sunday, Jan. 1 to 4; and Monday, Jan. 19.

For information on exhibits, hours, directions, and parking, visit http://udayton.edu/libraries/manger or call (937) 229-4214.
By Francis X. Rocca  
*Catholic News Service*

A day after hearing Turkish leaders demand that the West show more respect for Islam, Pope Francis prayed alongside a Muslim cleric inside Istanbul’s most famous mosque.

At the Blue Mosque, Istanbul’s grand mufti Rahmi Yaran led Pope Francis to the mosque’s “mihrab,” a niche indicating the direction to the holy city of Mecca. He explained that the name is related to that of Jesus’ mother, Mary, who is revered by Muslims.

As the grand mufti continued speaking, the pope fell silent and remained so for several minutes, with head bowed, eyes closed, and hands clasped in front of him. A Vatican statement later described this as a “moment of silent adoration.”

The Sultan Ahmed Mosque, an early 17th-century structure, is known as the Blue Mosque for the predominant color of the 21,000 tiles decorating its interior.

The pope’s Nov. 29 visit had been scheduled for later in the morning, but was moved out of concern that it would interfere with noon prayers.

The event recalled the last papal visit to Turkey, in 2006, when Pope Benedict XVI’s prayer in the same mosque went far to ease an international furor over his speech in Regensburg, Germany, which had quoted a medieval description saying the teachings of Islam’s prophet Muhammad were “evil and inhuman.”

For Pope Francis, the prayer was the latest dramatic sign of a desire for closer relations with Islam. Such gestures also include his washing the feet of two Muslims during a Holy Thursday liturgy in 2013, and his invitation to Muslim and Jewish leaders to pray for peace in the Vatican Gardens the following year.

After the pope’s arrival in Turkey on Nov. 28, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan raised the issue of prejudice and intolerance against Muslims in other countries, saying that “Islamophobia is a serious and rapidly rising problem in the West,” and lamenting that “attempts to identify Islam with terrorism hurt millions.”

Later, during a visit to the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs, its president, Mehmet Gormez, decried what he called the “dissemination of terror scenarios by the global media through anti-Muslim expressions, which is a form of racism and which has now turned into a crime of hatred.”

After visiting the Blue Mosque, Pope Francis walked to the nearby Hagia Sophia, a sixth-century basilica which was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest in 1453, then turned into a museum in the 20th century. The interior decoration today includes gigantic calligraphy of Quranic verses, as well as medieval mosaics of Jesus and Mary. As the pope toured the museum, it was filled with the sound of the noon call to prayer from the minaret of a nearby mosque.

In the afternoon, Pope Francis celebrated Mass at Istanbul’s 19th-century Catholic cathedral, which ordinarily holds fewer than 600 people, but was filled to overflowing for the Mass. It was the first event during his visit to Turkey -- a country whose population is less than 0.2 percent Christian -- that recalled the enthusiastic crowds who ordinarily greet him on his travels.

The congregation included Catholics of the Armenian, Syriac, Chaldean, and Latin rites and prayers in several languages, including Turkish, Aramaic, and English. The varied music included African drumming.

Pope Francis’ homily, which acknowledged the presence of several Orthodox and Protestant leaders, focused on the challenge of Christian unity, which he distinguished from mere uniformity.

“When we try to create unity through our own human designs, we end up with uniformity and homogenization. If we let ourselves be led by the Spirit, however, richness, variety, and diversity will never create conflict, because the Spirit spur us to experience variety in the communion of the church,” he said.

The pope’s last public event of the day was an evening prayer service with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the patriarchal Church of St. George.

The service was a kind of prelude to a liturgy planned for the next day in the same church.

Like his predecessors Blessed Paul VI, St. John Paul II, and retired Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis timed his visit to Turkey to include Nov. 30, the feast of St. Andrew, patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, in what is today Istanbul. As it was for the earlier popes, his primary reason for visiting was to strengthen ties with the ecumenical patriarch, who is considered first among equals by Orthodox bishops.

A 1964 meeting between Blessed Paul and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras opened the modern period of ecumenical dialogue by lifting mutual excom- munications that started the East-West schism in 1054.

Pope Francis already had a strong relationship with Patriarch Bartholomew, having met with him both at the Vatican and in Jerusalem. At the prayer service, the pope and the patriarch prayed the Our Father together in Latin, then each offered a separate blessing, in Latin and Greek respectively.

In a brief address, Patriarch Bartholomew noted that the church contains relics of St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom. The relics were taken by crusaders during the 1204 sack of Constantinople and returned eight centuries later by St. John Paul II.

“They are holy fathers, on whose teaching our common faith of the first millennium was founded, intercede for us to the Lord so that we rediscover the full union of our churches, thereby fulfilling his divine will in crucial times for humanity and the world,” the patriarch said.

At the end of the service, in a typically spontaneous gesture, the pope asked the patriarch to bless him and the church of Rome.