

The CATHOLIC TIMES

THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS' INFORMATION SOURCE
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Bishop announces pro-life initiative for diocese

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the season of Advent begins, we journey with the Blessed Virgin Mary, an expectant mother who faced many challenges, toward the celebration of her only begotten Son. Although many in our Diocese were discouraged by the vote this past November, our commitment to accompanying women and their children continues. In these days that have followed the ballot initiative, some women have contemplated terminating their pregnancies. With renewed effort, we need to make abortion unthinkable, and the birth of a child not to be seen as a burden but a blessing.

Outside the realm of politics, the true victory will come by winning hearts through our unconditional and relentless love for women and their children. Following the November issue, Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of Cincinnati stated that the result was a sign that our society needed deeper conversion. Sharing the sentiments of Archbishop Schnurr, I began to think of what the Diocese of Columbus could do to continue to build a culture of life and a civilization of love.

First, I encourage all the faithful to a deeper life of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. I was grateful and moved by how many people committed themselves to prayer, the Rosary and Adoration, and Mass during the lead-up to the ballot initiative. It is not that your prayers were ineffective or in vain; rather, God was trying to teach us something according to His time and His plan. Nevertheless, we must not lose our commitment, but rather renew and strengthen it.

To that end, I wish to encourage all pastors, priests and deacons to make a serious commitment to offering a Holy Hour in the parish church(es), especially on the Thursday before First Friday (or on the First Friday itself) in reparation for sins against human life and dignity, praying also for the building of a civilization of love. The People of God in the Diocese of Columbus, which has been consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, can console

the Heart of Jesus and can be inspired to love more generously through this sacred time. The upcoming Jubilee Year, in honor of the 350th anniversary of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary, is a fitting occasion to begin this initiative.

I also want to encourage all Catholics in the Diocese, at the conclusion of the Christmas season, to resume the traditional practice of abstinence from meat on Fridays. Catholics are already obliged to either abstain from meat or do some other form of penance every Friday throughout the year. In 2009, the Diocese of Steubenville encouraged the faithful there to abstain from meat on Fridays and to donate what was saved on meals to pro-life charities.

Almsgiving could be tied to this practice. The need to support organizations like the Women's Care Center, Pregnancy Decision Health Centers, Heartbeat International, Birthright, Bottoms Up and Mommies Matter has never been greater. Our support of these and like organizations demonstrates our commitment to the good of human life and the care of the least of our brothers and sisters.

The idea behind abstinence from meat on Fridays is not merely external, that is, to keep a rule; rather, it is a form of Christian asceticism. Simply trying to circumvent the discipline by having an extravagant shrimp dinner, for example, defeats the purpose. We ought to do penance as a means of encountering Christ in the hope of deeper conversion to Him. We can be intentional in our abstinence and penitential practices, mindful of unborn children, their mothers and fathers,

and the men and women in the trenches working to support them. Our Catholic institutions in the Diocese can and should take this discipline into account. What is demanded is not the external rule but a conversion of our mindset and our culture with the hope that we will be more mindful of the child in the womb. In 2011, the Bishops of England and Wales

resumed the practice of Friday abstinence from meat; this resumed practice has shown that abstinence from meat is not only beneficial to an individual's health but also is environmentally more friendly. If we abstained from meat on Fridays, we could also raise awareness of our need to care for our "common home."

In addition to these spiritual practices (prayer, abstinence, and almsgiving), the Diocese of Columbus, in the coming year, will be more intentional in its support of a pro-life apostolate. Building upon the good works of the Office for Social Concerns, which cares for a wide spectrum of issues to advance the social mission of the Church, a new Respect Life Office will be dedicated to helping build the culture of life in a sustainable and lasting way, including through formational conferences for pro-life leaders and healthcare workers.

In the coming year, a summit of Respect Life leaders will convene to discover what the many organizations are presently doing, what the true needs are, and how the Diocese can respond to those needs in support of structures that are currently in place. The Holy Father continues to call us to be a Church that listens, and the Diocese of Columbus wants to listen to the experiences of those who work with mothers in need and their families, and to collaborate with Catholic Social Services and other like-minded organizations in meeting the practical needs of families. The Church must also listen to women, particularly those who have experienced the pain of abortion and who need healing. Beginning an apostolate like Project Rachel for healing and reconciliation can help remind people of the Pope's call for us to be a Church of Mercy.

The call to put our faith into action also falls within the realm of evangelization. To proclaim the Good News of salvation is also to proclaim the Gospel of Life. The Office of Evangelization will seek out means to proclaim boldly the entirety of the Gospel message, and the Office of Catholic Schools will continue to promote and foster Catholic academic

integration -- weaving the Truths of our Faith into all content areas throughout the school program to build a strong culture of life and to form in each student the spirit of radical solidarity that our times demand. For example, in science classes, our students will come to a greater appreciation for the gift of human life at conception and the development of life as a gift in the image and likeness of God. The Diocese of Columbus will organize a pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., for the annual March for Life in January and will engage our young people in the Vigil for Life and in pro-life events to form them as missionaries, advancing the culture of life. Students from all of the Catholic high schools in the Diocese will participate.

God has called us to be a People of Life. The need to build a Culture of Life will take time and patience. It will encounter resistance; nevertheless, we cannot abandon unborn children and their mothers. Law may refuse to recognize the dignity and right to life of the child in the womb, but we cannot be indifferent to the reality. When Mary visited Elizabeth, the child in her womb recognized the Presence of the Savior and leaped for joy. The Church wishes to acknowledge and defend the rights of the unborn child, while accompanying mothers in their time of need and during what should be a joyful time of their lives. May we rise to meet our responsibility, grateful for the gift of life we have received.

Entrusting all of you and these efforts to the intercession of the Mother of God, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, the patroness of the United States, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
 Bishop of Columbus

Clergy assignments announced

The Diocese of Columbus announced the following clergy assignments:

Reverend Matthew Morris, from Pastor, St. Catharine Church, Columbus, to

Sabbatical Leave, effective December 31, 2023.

Reverend Patrick Toner, from retirement, to Administrator Pro Tem, St.

Catharine Church, Columbus, effective December 31, 2023.

Reverend Veevin Richard Pitchaisavary, SAC, from pastoral service at Holy

Spirit Church and St. Philip the Apostle Church, Columbus, to Pastor, Holy Spirit Church, Columbus, effective December 1, 2023.



Front Page photo:
PRO-LIFE INITIATIVE

A plan for the diocese to strengthen its pro-life efforts in the coming year to be a voice for the voiceless was announced recently by Bishop Earl Fernandes. *CT photo by Ken Snow*

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Schedule for diocesan Christmas Masses

The following is a list of Mass times for the Vigil of Christmas, Sunday, Dec. 24 and Christmas Day, Monday, Dec. 25, as provided to *The Catholic Times*. The list does not include Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Advent that will be celebrated on the morning of Dec. 24.

Christmas is a holy day of obligation for all Catholics. The Dec. 24 morning Masses are not included in the list because they do not fulfill the obligation to attend a Christmas Mass.

Ada Our Lady of Lourdes – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m., midnight

Buckeye Lake Our Lady of Mount Carmel – Christmas Eve, 6 p.m. (children's Mass), midnight; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Cardington Sacred Hearts – Christmas Eve, 4:30 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Canal Winchester St. John XXIII – Christmas Eve, 4 and 10 p.m.

Chillicothe St. Mary – Christmas Eve, 6 p.m.; Christmas Day, 11 a.m.

Chillicothe St. Peter – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (children's Mass), midnight

Circleville St. Joseph – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m., midnight; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Columbus Christ the King – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (English), 6 p.m. (Spanish); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (English), noon (Spanish)

Columbus Holy Cross – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Columbus Holy Family – Christmas Eve, 5 and 7 p.m., midnight; Christmas Day, 9 and 11 a.m.

Columbus Holy Rosary-St. John – Christmas Day, 9:30 a.m. (joint Mass for Holy Rosary-St. John and Columbus St. Dominic parishioners)

Columbus Holy Spirit – Christmas Eve, 4 and 8 p.m.; Christmas Day, 11 a.m.

Columbus Immaculate Conception – Christmas Eve, 4, 7 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Columbus Our Lady of Peace – Christmas Eve, 4, 6:30 and 10 p.m. (music 9:30); Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Columbus Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal – Christmas Eve, 4 and 7 p.m. (music 6:40); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (English), 1:30 p.m. (Creole French)

Columbus Our Lady of Victory – Christmas Eve, 4, 7 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 11:30 a.m. (Maronite Rite)

Columbus Our Lady, Star of the New Evangelization (formerly Parroquia Santa Cruz and Columbus Holy Name) – Christmas Eve, 7 p.m. (Spanish); Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (English), 11 a.m. (Spanish)

Columbus Sacred Heart – Christmas Eve, 9 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10:30 a.m.

Columbus St. Agatha – Christmas Eve, 4 and 6 p.m., 10 p.m. (music 9:30); Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Columbus St. Agnes – Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.; Christmas Day, noon (both in Spanish)

Columbus St. Aloysius – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (Ghanaian), noon

Columbus St. Andrew – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (church and parish hall), 6 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 and 11 a.m.

Columbus St. Andrew Kim Taegon Korean Community – Christmas Eve, 8 p.m.; Christmas Day, noon (both at Columbus St. John the Baptist Church)

Columbus Sts. Augustine & Gabriel – Christmas Eve, 6 p.m. (English); Christmas Day, 11 a.m. (Vietnamese)

Columbus St. Catharine of Siena – Christmas Eve, 4, 6:30 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 11 a.m.

Columbus St. Cecilia – Christmas Eve, 5 and 8 p.m., midnight (Office of Readings 11:15 p.m.); Christmas Day, 9:30 a.m.

Columbus St. Christopher – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (children's Mass), 6 p.m., 10 p.m. (Polish Mass); Christmas Day, 8 and 10 a.m.

Columbus St. Dominic – Christmas Eve, 6 p.m. (Joint Mass for St. Dominic and Columbus Holy Rosary-St. John parishioners)

Columbus St. Elizabeth – Christmas Eve, 4 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Columbus St. Francis of Assisi – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Columbus St. James the Less – Christmas Eve, 4:30 p.m. (English), 6 and 8 p.m. (Spanish); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (English), noon (Spanish)

Columbus St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic – Christmas Eve, 10 p.m., followed by blessing of oils; Christmas Day, noon, followed by blessing

Columbus St. John the Baptist – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m.

Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral – Christmas Eve, 4 and 6:30 p.m., midnight (cathedral choir and brass 11 p.m.); Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Columbus St. Leo the Great Oratory – Christmas Eve, midnight; Christmas Day, 8 and 10 a.m.

Columbus St. Margaret of Cortona – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (children's Mass), 10 p.m. (carols 9:30); Christmas Day, 10:30 a.m.

Columbus St. Mary German Village – Christmas Eve, 4 and 9 p.m. (music 8:20); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (English), 12:30 p.m. (Spanish)

Columbus St. Mary Magdalene – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (bilingual children's Mass), midnight; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Columbus St. Matthias – Christmas Eve, 5 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 11 a.m.

Columbus St. Patrick – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (children's Mass, crib blessing), 6:30 p.m., midnight; Christmas Day, 7 (no music) and 10 a.m., noon

Columbus St. Peter – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m. (English), 7:30 p.m. (Spanish), midnight (English); Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (English), 11 a.m. (Spanish)

Columbus St. Stephen the Martyr – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m. (English), 7 and 9 p.m. (Spanish); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (English), noon (Spanish)

Columbus St. Thomas the Apostle – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m. (bilingual); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (English)

Coshocton Sacred Heart – Christmas Eve, midnight (music 11:30); Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Danville St. Luke – Christmas Eve, 4:30 p.m. (children's pageant 4); Christ-

mas Day, 10 a.m.

Delaware St. Mary – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (church and gym), 7 p.m., midnight (music 11:30); Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (English), 11:30 a.m. (bilingual)

Dennison Immaculate Conception – Christmas Eve, 6:30 p.m.; Christmas Day, 11 a.m.

Dover St. Joseph – Christmas Eve, 5:30 p.m. (English), 7:30 p.m. (Spanish), 11:30 p.m. (English); Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (English)

Dresden St. Ann – Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (children's choir), 6:30 p.m. (Brigid's Gael choir), 9 p.m. (adult choir, strings); Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (cantor, instruments)

Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle – Christmas Eve, 4 and 7 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Granville St. Edward the Confessor – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m. (children's choir 4:30), 9 p.m. (adult choir and bells 8:30); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (vocal and instrumental music 9:45)

Grove City Our Lady of Perpetual Help – Christmas Day, 4 p.m. (church and gym), 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9:30 a.m.

Groveport St. Mary – Christmas Eve, 6 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Heath St. Leonard – Christmas Eve, 4 and 9 p.m. (both preceded by 30 minutes of music); Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (church and gym), 6:30 p.m. (church and gym), 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 8:45 and 10:45 a.m.

Jackson Holy Trinity – Christmas Eve, midnight; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Johnstown Church of the Ascension – Christmas Eve, 4, 6:30 and 11 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Junction City St. Patrick – Christmas Eve, 8 p.m.

Kenton Immaculate Conception – Christmas Eve, 6:30 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Lancaster Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption – Christmas Eve, 4 and 9 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Lancaster St. Bernadette – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m., midnight (carols 11:30); Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Lancaster St. Mark – Christmas Eve, 6:30 p.m.

Logan St. John the Evangelist – Christmas Eve, 4 and 6:30 p.m., midnight; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

London St. Patrick – Christmas Eve, 5 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10:30 a.m.

Marion St. Mary – Christmas Eve, 5 and 8 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (English), 11 a.m. (Spanish)

Marysville Our Lady of Lourdes – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (cherub choir 3:40), 7 p.m. (youth choir 6:35), midnight (parish choir 11:35); Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Mattingly Settlement St. Mary – Christmas Eve, 4:30 p.m.

Millersport St. Peter – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m.; Christmas Day, 11:30 a.m.

Mount Vernon St. Vincent de Paul – Christmas Eve, 4 and 6 p.m., midnight; Christmas Day, 10:30 a.m.

New Albany Church of the Resurrection – Christmas Eve, 4, 7 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

New Lexington St. Rose of Lima – Christmas Eve, 4 and 6 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

New Philadelphia Sacred Heart – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m.; Christmas Day, 8:30 a.m.

Newark Blessed Sacrament – Christmas Eve, 4, 6:30 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (English), 11 a.m. (Spanish)

Newark St. Francis de Sales – Christmas Eve, 4, 6:30 and 10:30 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Pickerington St. Elizabeth Ann Seton – Christmas Eve, 4 and 6 p.m., midnight; Christmas Day, 9:30 a.m.

Plain City St. Joseph – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (children's Mass, activity center), 4 p.m. (church), 7 p.m. (activity center), midnight (church); Christmas Day, 9 a.m. (church)

Pond Creek Holy Trinity – Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Portsmouth Holy Redeemer – Christmas Eve, 6 p.m. (English), 8 p.m. (Spanish); Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Portsmouth St. Mary – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m., midnight

Powell St. Joan of Arc – Christmas Eve, 4, 6:30 and 10 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Reynoldsburg St. Pius X – Christmas Eve, 4, 6 and 9 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Somerset Holy Trinity – Christmas Eve, 3 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Somerset St. Joseph – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m.; Christmas Day, 8 a.m.

Sugar Grove St. Joseph – Christmas Eve, 8 p.m.; Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Sunbury St. John Neumann – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (praise ensemble, contemporary), 6:30 p.m. (string trio, carols), midnight (choir, traditional); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (choir, carols)

Washington Court House St. Colman of Cloyne – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m., midnight; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Waverly St. Mary, Queen of the Missions – Christmas Day, 9 a.m.

Wellston Sts. Peter & Paul – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m.

West Jefferson Sts. Simon & Jude – Christmas Eve, 4 and 6 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Westerville St. Paul – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. (church, Westerville North High School), 6:30 p.m. (youth choir 6), midnight (adult choir 11:30); Christmas Day, 8 and 10 a.m., noon

Wheelersburg St. Peter in Chains – Christmas Eve, 4 p.m.

Worthington St. Michael – Christmas Eve, 4, 6 and 10 p.m. (last Mass followed by reception); Christmas Day, 10:30 a.m.

Zaleski St. Sylvester – Christmas Eve, 5:30 p.m.

Zanesville St. Nicholas – Christmas Eve, 5:15 and 7:30 p.m.; Christmas Day, 8 a.m.

Zanesville St. Thomas Aquinas – Christmas Eve, 5 and 9 p.m. (carols 8:30); Christmas Day, 10 a.m. (all in activity center)

Zoar Holy Trinity – Christmas Eve, 5 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

Bishops issue joint statement on potential merger of dioceses

Leadership teams from the Diocese of Columbus and Steubenville met last week to resume discussions that began more than a year ago regarding a potential merger between the two dioceses.

Both dioceses emphasized that no decision has been made and that there is no timetable on when a final determination will be issued by Pope Francis.

The Vatican's Apostolic Nunciature

in the United States asked Bishop Earl Fernandes of Columbus and Bishop Paul Bradley, the apostolic administrator for Steubenville, to lead their respective diocesan leadership teams to compile data

to be presented to Pope Francis in order to discern a path forward.

A joint statement was issued Monday, Dec. 11 to update the respective dioceses on the process.

December 11, 2023



The Diocese of Columbus

197 E Gay St,
Columbus, OH 43215

•
Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus



The Diocese of Steubenville

422 Washington Street
Steubenville, OH 43952

•
Most Reverend Paul J. Bradley
Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Steubenville

Bishops Issue Joint Statement on Dioceses Potential Merger

Bishop Paul J. Bradley, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Steubenville, and Bishop Earl K. Fernandes of the Diocese of Columbus, along with their staffs, have begun very preliminary discussions regarding the potential merger of the dioceses.

The Apostolic Nunciature has asked the dioceses to work together to consider how different dimensions of the dioceses, including the temporal aspects of life, might be affected by such a proposal.

While no decision has been made, due diligence is needed so an educated and responsible decision can be discerned in a timely manner. Ultimately the decision is up to the Holy Father.

The work has begun, and as the work continues, updates will be provided.

Bishops Bradley and Fernandes ask the clergy and the laity to pray that the unified work may be fruitful.

+ *Earl K. Fernandes*

Earl K. Fernandes
Bishop of Columbus

+ *Paul J. Bradley*

Paul J. Bradley
*Apostolic Administrator of the
Diocese of Steubenville*

Is Friday penance still required?

Dear Father: My son just entered the seminary, and now he is telling our family that we're supposed to be eating fish on Fridays. I told him that Vatican II got rid of all that stuff. Can you please help me find information to show him that he's wrong? – Sydney

Dear Sydney:

Oh, those pesky seminarians! Why can't they just leave us alone?

Actually, you should be thanking your son, although he's not entirely correct about the necessity of eating only fish on Fridays. We must do some penance on most Fridays, one form of which is to abstain from meat. Vatican II did not get rid of that.

Vatican II did not say that we must absolutely eat fish on Fridays, or, to my knowledge, did the Church ever say that we had to eat fish. In the history of the Church, fish was the protein substitute for meat. But it was always perfectly fine to eat a vegetarian meal in place of meat, especially on Fridays of Lent.

The Church, our venerable Mother, like all mothers, has continually urged her children to eat carefully. Sometimes that means she has told us how to eat on certain days: less on some and to feel free to have a party on other days.

Her insistence on guiding our diets is because she knows that our true end is to gain the prize of heaven. It's a long journey that we are making together to heaven, and journeys require proper nutrition. Consider the athlete. Every athlete knows that there are times to eat certain foods and times to avoid certain foods to be fit to win an earthly prize.

Some days require a party, such as our Lord's birthday (Christmas) and His resurrection from the dead (Easter). Other days require that we hold back. Each

SACRAMENTS 101

Father Paul Jerome Keller, OP, S.T.D.

Father Paul Jerome Keller, O.P., S.T.D., director of the diocese's Office of Divine Worship, is a priest of the Dominican Province of St. Joseph. His doctorate is from Rome in sacramental theology. He currently assists at Columbus St. Patrick Church.



week we limit our diets by abstaining from meat, and sometimes we fast by limiting the amount of food.

We use bodily abstentions and fasting to train our souls, lest they become bloated (like our bodies) with excessive concerns about earthly things. Just as getting to heaven is both pre- and post-Vatican II, so is abstinence and fasting.

In fact, it was a post-Vatican II teaching from Pope St. Paul VI (1966) that deals with the importance of fasting and abstinence. Titled *Paenitemini (Be Converted)*, the pope used the image of our pilgrimage from this earthly city to our heavenly homeland. Our pilgrimage means that we turn our faces upward toward our goal and away from our downward focus on affairs of this world.

That's what conversion means: to change, and this change involves a "letting go" of what keeps us earth-bound. That's the joy of penance. We let go of a lesser good to attain a greater good. Like good spiritual athletes, we watch our diet by fasting and abstinence; we build spiritual muscle by exercising with prayer and spiritual reading; we become spiritually lean and fit by caring for the poor.

Perhaps you thought that Vatican II got rid of abstinence from meat on Fridays on account of the relaxation that Pope St. Paul VI allowed. He never, however, abolished the necessity of doing penance on Fridays of the entire year.

In the United States, our bishops have insisted that we do penance of some sort on Fridays, even outside of Lent. While it used to be sinful to eat meat on Fridays (prior to 1966), that is no longer the case. The sin was not a matter of merely forgetting about abstaining. A person committed a sin by eating meat on Fridays out of contempt for the regulation. Contempt for holy things is always evil.

Did removing the strict requirement go too far? Some might argue that the pope and bishops gave us too much freedom. But I think everyone recognizes that it's better to offer up sufferings out of love rather than being forced by law. When your seminarian son comes home for vacation, wouldn't you rather that he offers to take out the garbage voluntarily and with love rather than by force?

It seems that the majority of Catholics have forgotten that we are still supposed to offer up some form of penance every Friday, whether by abstaining from meat or by mortifying ourselves in some other way. On Fridays that are solemnities or great feasts, we suspend our penance for that day. If, for example, when the Immaculate Conception falls on a Friday, we celebrate and put aside our special mortifications. Catholic calendars usually indicate these days.

Perhaps I will be accused of "turning back the clock," but I really believe that we need penance now more than ever. The world isn't getting any better, but we might help turn things around if we beseech heaven with works of mortification. The call to fasting is a constant throughout the Scriptures. Our Lord Jesus especially calls us to repent and to conform our lives to His cross.

I think that's what your seminarian son is probably wanting for you and your family.

German Catholicism: on the brink or at the cutting edge?

On November 10, a "Synodal Committee" created by the recently completed German "Synodal Way" met for the first time. The committee's mandate is to prepare the foundations for a "Synodal Council" of laity, clergy, and bishops to govern the Catholic Church in Germany from 2026 on. The idea of such a "Synodal Council" has already been rejected by the Holy See. And in a recent letter to four German laywomen who had resigned from the "Synodal Way" to protest deviations from settled Catholic truths and practices, Pope Francis reiterated that the "Synodal Council" cannot be reconciled "with the sacramental structure of the Catholic Church."

The Pope also said this about the current state of Catholic affairs in Germany:

"Instead of seeking 'salvation' in ever new committees and discussing the same topics with a certain self-absorption, in my Letter to the People of God in Germany I wanted to recall the need for prayer, penance, and adoration, and invite people to open up and go out to meet 'our brothers and sisters, especially those who are abandoned on the steps of our churches, on the streets, in prisons and hospitals, squares and cities.' I am convinced that this is where the Lord will show us the way."

About which, perhaps a few things may be observed:

Doesn't "seeking 'salvation' in ever new committees and discussing the same topics with a certain self-absorption" describe precisely what Synod-2023 did for four agonizingly long weeks two months ago — and what the preparatory local, national, and continental "phases" of the Synod on Synodality were doing, at a great cost in time and money, for the past two years?

Why is "salvation" in quotation marks in the Pope's

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

George Weigel

George Weigel is the Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. George Weigel's column 'The Catholic Difference' is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.



letter? Is it because he's referring to "saving" the institution of the German Church, which is hemorrhaging congregants (and thus losing revenue, because fewer self-identified Catholic congregants means the institution gets less of a cut of the German Church tax)? Given the German context, that suggests why "salvation" was put in quotation marks. But it might also be noted that the theme of salvation in its full biblical and theological sense — and the corollary notion of the Lord Jesus as the unique and sole savior of humanity — was not explored in any great depth during Synod-2023, or during the German "Synodal Path."

Which leads to a third point: The Pope suggests that institutional German Catholicism will save itself by opening itself up to the poor, displaced, and marginalized in society. The German Church already does that, however, maintaining (with the help of the Church tax) a considerable network of social service agencies and programs. If meeting the marginalized were the answer to contemporary German Catholicism's religious ennui and evangelical anemia, the German Church would have become a powerful engine of the New Evangelization decades ago.

But it didn't, and it isn't. The reason why has little or

nothing to do with a failure to meet the marginalized, and everything to do with that loss of faith in Jesus as Lord, and in the Church as his sacramental Body in the world, that turns local churches into non-governmental organizations doing good works. Meeting the Lord Jesus in Word and Sacrament is (to borrow from the Pope's letter) "what will show us the way."

It was interesting that, at Synod-2023, the "hot-button" issues beloved of the German Synodal Way were, in the main, not pressed by Germans, but by others. The president of the German bishops' conference, Bishop Georg Bätzing, oozed *gemütlichkeit* throughout, a smile constantly on his face. Perhaps this deliberately low profile reflected a recognition by the German bishops' leadership that it would be inadvisable to inflame things in Rome, given their fractious situation at home. But another reading of those tea leaves is possible.

As suggested in this space before, some of those in charge of the "Synod on Synodality" may have regarded the German "Synodal Path" as a useful instrument in clearing the path for a dramatic reconfiguration of Catholic self-understanding and governance, moving the goalposts so far to the left that the old 50-yard line of the Catholic Vital Center would now be the old left end zone. Those of that cast of mind may not have wanted the Germans to get so far out front as to give the whole game away before Synod-2024 meets next October; so the German stalking horse was advised to trot, not gallop.

Which might suggest that German Catholicism is not regarded in certain Roman circles as being "on the brink" so much as "at the cutting edge."

During Advent, we must watch as we wait

If love is a mission, then having eyes to see is its goal. When people are invited to our busy home, they often ask how they can help. My response is, "Have eyes to see a need and go ahead and fill it," whether that be the vegetables on the cutting board that need to be chopped or a child who is sad and needs a hug.

As a parent, I seek to raise children who have eyes to see a need and hearts ready to serve. We are reminded that Advent is a season of preparation, a season of waiting and watching for God to show Himself. And so, we keep an expectant faith.

I love this season of soft Christmas lights twinkling, carols playing, cookies baking and decorations being put upon a tree. But amid all that nostalgia is the reality that, for many of us, there is a part of our life where all is not quiet and all is not calm.

When I sit by my Christmas tree early in the morning giving my day to Jesus, I have learned to give Him these worries. I point out the pain of the unexpected, the lonely, the broken and ask Him: When will it all ease up? How hard it is to rejoice when there is pain, worry and suffering to work through!

A wise and dear priest friend shared in his homily

ALL THAT WE HAVE

MaryBeth Eberhard

MaryBeth Eberhard writes about marriage, life experiences of a large family and special needs. She attends Sunbury St. John Neumann Church.



that maybe this is where our Advent really begins. Perhaps this is the work we need to do this season – the expectant waiting, the trust. Like the Wise Men who followed the star to greet the newborn King in Bethlehem, we could look to the star to reveal how He is working in our lives.

For some that might mean a call from a loved one this season where a relationship was broken and a branch is being extended. There might be a moment of peace as everyone reconvenes under the same roof and you share a glance across the room to marvel that, for one moment, it is good. Because in that moment, God is revealing Himself, and, if we blink, we might miss it.

The media representation of Christmas is one of hype over hope, stuff over substance, and we quickly lose focus. This Advent, I am leaning into being watch-

ful. The promise of hope is coming. There will be a glimpse of peace this season, and if we are not watchful, we will miss it, and oh, how a part of me is parched for that glimpse.

It could be as noticeable as the day the sun danced at Fatima or as subtle as the small voice that whispered to Elijah. Nevertheless, it will be certain. Having eyes ready to see Him working means forming a heart fully aware that He has been, is and will continue to be working, even if we do not see it clearly.

As Catholic Christians, let us press into this season of Advent like the shepherds who watched their sheep by night and followed the star. Let us watch for Jesus to reveal Himself working in our lives, in our situations, because we know He will. Let us have expectant hearts full of rejoicing because, even though all might not be calm and quiet, He is still coming.

Let us celebrate joyfully a season set apart for watching. Let us have eyes to see how God is working in our lives and hearts open to follow (like the shepherds), to go where we see a need. For we do not know where or how He will show Himself to us. We know for certain only that He will.

Christ's birth really happened; biblical references tell us so

By Thomas Storck

The Gospel reading for Christmas Midnight Mass, from St. Luke Chapter 2, is the beautiful account of Jesus' birth at Bethlehem, a story familiar to all Catholics.

But have you ever wondered why it begins by mentioning the current Roman emperor, Augustus, and even one of the governors of Syria, Quirinius? Why are these persons, obscure to most of us, part of the touching story of the Holy Family, the stable, the shepherds and the angels?

On one level, the reason is obvious. In the ancient world, there was no one system of dating, and events were frequently dated by reference to the reign of the current monarch. But there is a second and more important reason: By situating the birth of Jesus in the broader events of history, St. Luke is telling us that the Catholic faith is a historical religion, a religion based on real events, things that really happened.

In Evelyn Waugh's historical novel about St. Helena, the mother of the Em-

peror Constantine, Helena, before her conversion to Catholicism, is told by her husband about his initiation into the pagan cult of Mithras. He explains the story of Mithras, and she replies, well, when did this all happen?

That's a silly question, he says, don't you know this is a myth? It's symbolic. Helena is not much interested. Then, much later in the story, Helena encounters a Catholic, Lactantius, who recounts to her the story of Jesus Christ, His crucifixion and resurrection.

Again, she asks, well, when did this happen? But this time the answer is different: Lactantius tells her that "he died two hundred and seventy-eight years ago in the town now called Aelia Capitolina in Palestine." She is impressed – no more mythic stories, this really happened.

And so it is with our Catholic faith and the Gospels themselves. At the beginning of Chapter 3 of his Gospel, St. Luke gives us another chronological marker by fixing the date for the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry by the reigns of no fewer than six secular and religious rulers. Luke wants to make clear

to his readers that what he is writing is something true, something that really happened – and therefore something important.

And that is why every week when we Catholics say the Nicene Creed at Mass, we include the phrase "crucified under Pontius Pilate" – not to commemorate a rather second-rate Roman bureaucrat, but to witness that we are dealing here with real events.

The Church makes a tremendous claim to us. She is telling us about things that really happened, that happened whether we like it or not, whether we find them appealing or not. Jesus Christ did come during the reign of Caesar Augustus; He really was crucified and rose again during the reign of Tiberius.

Today there is frequently talk about being "spiritual but not religious." Often that means attracted by a vague belief in some higher power or powers. What those might be, what they have done, what they will do in the future is seldom asked. Each person is free to imagine them in any way that is personally pleasing. This is a made-to-order spirituality.

But Catholicism is something dif-

ferent, a religion that makes historical truth claims, that stands or falls by assertions about God acting in history, during the reigns of real, live emperors, kings and governors. And, of course, that is why it is so important, why, in fact, it is the most important thing there is. Something which, when we embrace it, we must adhere to it with our whole heart and life as well as our whole mind.

So, these little historical markers that, on account of their familiarity, we are apt to overlook, are vital to our faith and are guarantees that our religion is true. Both true and important, and, in fact, if we are faithful, the gateway to eternal life.

Thomas Storck is the author, editor or translator of 10 books and numerous print and online articles. His latest book is *"The Prosperity Gospel: How Greed and Bad Philosophy Distorted Christ's Teaching"* (TAN Books, 2023). He is a contributing editor of *"New Oxford Review"* and a member of the editorial board of *"The Chesterton Review."* Storck and his wife, Inez, are members of Westerville St. Paul Church.

Keep the candle lit: pouring out the greatest gift

By Christina Capecchi

Twenty Something

Oprah Winfrey looks regal in a purple pleated skirt and matching sweater, beaming on the cover of the magazine that delivers her much-anticipated Favorite Things – "112 crowd-pleasing gifts for everyone on your list."

Now in her ninth year partnering with Amazon, Oprah vouches for each product with her trademark hype: a \$22 silk eye mask she calls "life-changing," \$350 Beats headphones that are "the best of the best," a \$600 True-Brew Drip Coffee Maker she lauds as "a dream for per-

snickety coffee drinkers." Not to mention her new book, which will help you "be happier in 2024."

It's commerce with a spiritual bent. "What I know for sure," Oprah writes, "is that what you give comes back to you."

I've always been intrigued by the television queen's shopping list, but what strikes me most is how much company she now has. These days, everyone has a holiday gift guide – from high-profile peddlers to micro-influencers and suburban moms.

You can follow them in real time, linking every item. The wreaths they're hanging. The bows they're hanging on the wreaths they're hanging. The joggers they're

wearing while they're hanging the bows on the wreaths they're hanging.

'Tis the season to spend money. It's never been easier to do, requiring the kind of deliberation that vanishes in the blink of an eye, the tap of a button. It can almost feel like play money – no paper trail, no accountability, just an invisible Venmo transaction.

What we lack in time, we try to make up for in money, throwing it at people and problems who actually need minutes and hours. The kindergartener doesn't need a fancy new baseball glove but an adult to play catch with.

See GIFT, Page 7

In spirit of St. Nicholas, collection aids poor, needy

As I write this, it is the feast day of St. Nicholas, patron saint of occupations too numerous to mention and a special patron saint of children, young people and of charity in the fullest and richest sense.

Nicholas grew up in Turkey, was orphaned at a young age and used his inheritance to assist the needy, the sick and the poor. He was elected bishop of Myra, and stories abound about his Christ-like love for his people in the direst of circumstances.

His legendary charity and patronage of the young gave rise to the tradition of giving gifts on his feast day, Dec. 6, in the Low Countries and throughout Germanic lands. He was known as Sint Nikolaas in the Netherlands, later shortened to Sinteklaas, precursor to the figure of Santa Claus.

To read more about his life, go to <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/saints/12/06/saint-nicholas-of-bari-bishop-of-myra.html>.

This month, you can emulate the charity of St. Nicholas in assisting the needy and the poor. Christmas Day has typically been the date when the Catholic Charities collection is taken up. Originally a second collection with a specific envelope in your collection envelope pack, but now in the day of electronic funds transfers it is often a designation you would apply to a gift through your parish's electronic giving portal.

The Catholic Charities collection supports diocesan and diocesan-sponsored charities including the Joint Organization for Inner-City Needs (J.O.I.N.), the

FAITH IN ACTION | Mark Huddy

Mark Huddy is the Episcopal Moderator for Catholic Charities and the Office for Social Concerns in the Diocese of Columbus.



Church's own assistance organization helping individuals and families with emergency needs of basic items such as food, prescriptions, birth certificates, utility assistance and shelter-related needs.

J.O.I.N. works with St. Vincent de Paul parish conferences for those shelter-related needs. The collection also supports the St. Francis Evangelization Center in McArthur by helping residents in Vinton County (one of the poorest counties in Ohio) obtain food and clothing.

The Catholic Charities collection also assists our three major diocesan-sponsored charitable agencies – Catholic Social Services, St. Stephen's Community House and St. Vincent Family Services.

Catholic Social Services (CSS) is a multi-faceted social services agency offering a variety of services and programs for seniors, including money management, payee services, transportation for medical purposes in Licking County, a senior companion program, a foster grandparent program, service coordination at the Seton Square properties and other supportive services.

CSS also operates the Our Lady of Guadalupe Center meeting multiple needs of the growing Hispanic pop-

ulation in central Ohio and the Stay the Course program helping students at Columbus State Community College navigate unexpected challenges on the way to graduation.

St. Stephen's Community House (SSCH) is also a multi-faceted social service agency largely focused on the needs of Columbus' Linden area, however its reach in providing for basic needs such as food extends throughout Franklin County.

By providing programs such as the Early Learning Center, summer STEM programs, Achieve More and Prosper, Family to Family, the Nutrition Center and Senior Programming, SSCH addresses the needs of the Linden community throughout the life cycle.

St. Vincent Family Services (SVFS) provides behavioral health-care services to children and their families from the preschool years through middle school. St. Vincent's offers outpatient and community-based services, day treatment programs through a pairing of education and mental health treatment in their Prep Academy, up to full residential care, when necessary, with an opportunity to step down into foster care until family reunification can take place.

All of these agencies and organizations extend help and hope to low-income individuals and families. Your donation to the Catholic Charities collection is a way of participating in the good work and loving response to need that was modeled so well by the bishop of Myra, St. Nicholas. Please consider giving generously on Dec. 25.

In diocese, charity abounds in quiet but impactful ways

As Advent comes to a conclusion in preparation for the celebration of the Savior's birth, take a moment to reflect on the countless individuals and groups who do so much good for so many people without any hint of recognition.

The parish and Catholic organizations that collect toys and gifts this time of year should be commended, but don't forget that so many people have such great needs after Christmas and throughout the year that tend to be ignored.

For the poor and downtrodden who are struggling with the burdens of life, a Christmas gift is a wonderful gesture, particularly for the children. More important to them, though, are things that most of us take for granted – paying the rent and utilities, owning a car, buying groceries, having adequate clothing, staying warm.

Mary and Joseph knew what it was like to be transient and poor. When they searched for a place where Our Lady could give birth to the Child Jesus, they ended up in a smelly, dirty barn.

Manger scenes help create an image in our minds of the Holy Family's surroundings in Bethlehem. However, creches are a sanitized version of what really took place on the day that changed the world more than 2,000 years ago.

Most barns or stables where animals are kept reek of manure and are filled with dust and flies. They're nothing like the sterilized, sanitized hospital delivery

EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

rooms where most babies today see the light of day for the first time.

Keep this image in mind – that the infant Jesus was laid in a livestock feeding trough after His entrance into the world – to provide a perspective on the type of humility that humanity needs to one day, God willing, reach heaven.

Servant of God Father John Hardon, S.J., often said that no one can be humble without being humiliated. One would think that Mary and Joseph might have felt humiliated when they were turned away from the inn at their hour of need, but they realized that they were carrying out God's plan in His kingdom on earth.

Humble service might not bring earthly recognition or rewards, but God sees everything, and He must be pleased when He sees volunteers serving the needy.

"And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:40)

The members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul conference at Corning St. Bernard Church, which was closed by the diocese in October, serve as a shining example of individuals humbly doing their part to serve the less fortunate.

Their weekly food distribution impacts countless

lives in Perry County, where poverty is evident and the people are struggling to find gainful employment.

Most of the St. Vincent de Paul conference members in Corning are retired and could be home taking it easy. They could have suspended their outreach when the church was closed as part of the Real Presence Real Future initiative.

Instead, they use their time once a week to prepare and bag groceries and carry them to the vehicles of appreciative recipients waiting in a pickup line while kindly interacting with the people as if they see the face of Christ in everyone.

This faithful group, like countless others throughout the diocese, carries out God's work in relative obscurity.

No monetary rewards. No commendations. No pats on the back. Just the satisfaction of trying to practice the corporal works of mercy.

Not everyone is physically capable or has the financial blessings to perform public acts of generosity. Powerful graces also flow from the spiritual works of mercy, especially praying for the poor, the incarcerated, the sick and the dying.

If you're a shut-in or dealing with an ailment that keeps you at home, take consolation in knowing your prayers and fasting will bring unimaginable benefits to many souls. The Lord hears your prayers.

GIFT, continued from Page 6

Back and forth, again and again, chasing all the errand throws until, finally, there are fewer.

Our immigrant ancestors had no money and all the time in the world. They made use of long bus rides, early mornings, tiny apartments, daily walks to Mass. Stitching and scheming, painting and plotting.

Today we have flipped the script. We have all the mon-

ey in the world, so it seems, but no time. We're busy. And when we're not busy, we're distracted by screens siphoning our precious time. But the things we buy cannot replace quality time spent with loved ones.

I once read an article about a troubled teen who was turning to the wrong remedies. Her parents recognized a better one and chose to lavish her with their time and

attention.

"We took her kayaking, played more board games with her and watched more TV with her and took other short family trips," her mom said. They asked their teen to stay off the internet and instead keep a journal. She

See GIFT, Page 8

Plenary indulgence opportunities available

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Two opportunities to receive a plenary indulgence, which removes the temporal punishment due for sin, will be offered for the faithful beginning in December.

From Dec. 8, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through Feb. 2, the feast of the Presentation in the Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a plenary indulgence can be obtained by visiting a church run by the Franciscan order and praying in front of the church's Nativity scene.

In the Diocese of Columbus, Columbus Christ the King and St. Thomas the Apostle churches are run by the Capuchin Franciscan Friars. The faithful can receive the plenary indulgence by praying in front of the Nativity scene at ei-

ther church.

The usual conditions to receive an indulgence also must be met: detachment from all sin, including venial sin (sins pertaining to a less serious matter); sacramental confession and Holy Communion within a reasonable time period; and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father.

The plenary indulgence for praying in front of a Nativity scene at a Franciscan-run church was granted by Pope Francis to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Christmas in Greccio, Italy. St. Francis of Assisi created the first live Nativity scene in Greccio in 1223.

People who are ill or unable to participate physically can receive the plenary indulgence by offering their sufferings to the Lord or through practices of piety, such as prayers and hymns.

A plenary indulgence can also be obtained during the Jubilee Year lasting

December 2023-June 2025. The Jubilee commemorates the 350th anniversary of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, which took place in Paray-le-Monial, France.

During the Jubilee Year, which begins Dec. 27, the anniversary of the first apparition, and concludes June 27, 2025, the date of the solemnity of the feast of the Sacred Heart, an indulgence can be obtained by making a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial, known as the City of the Eucharist.

Bishop Earl Fernandes will lead a diocesan pilgrimage to France, including a visit to Paray-le-Monial, from May 31 to June 9, 2024 for the Jubilee.

For people who cannot make the diocesan pilgrimage, a plenary indulgence can be obtained locally.

Four sites in the diocese will be places of pilgrimage during the Sacred Heart

Jubilee year: Cardington Sacred Hearts Church, Columbus Sacred Heart Church, Coshocton Sacred Heart Church and New Philadelphia Sacred Heart Church.

The faithful can receive the plenary indulgence during the Jubilee Year after meeting the following conditions: visiting one of the local pilgrimage sites; assisting at Mass; reciting prayers, such as the Litany of the Sacred Heart; making a Holy Hour of reparation; and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father.

To receive the plenary indulgence, the usual conditions – detachment from sin, sacramental confession and Holy Communion within a reasonable time period and prayer for the Holy Father's intentions – also must be met.

An indulgence is a grace granted by the Catholic Church through the merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints.

High-end or homemade, Nativity set recalls God's love for us

By Sharon Mech

Years ago, when I worked in an office, I had a tiny glass Nativity set that I kept in a desk drawer. I'd set my Wise Men "on the road" after Thanksgiving. Mary, Joseph, the animals and the molded glass baby-in-the-manger came out in late December.

I'm hardly alone. Nativity sets, from the simplest printed silhouette to the most expensive, jewel-encrusted porcelain, start appearing in stores by September every year. Nativity sets are a multimillion-dollar business.

But how and when did they start and why? The original Nativity scene was created by St. Francis of Assisi exactly 800 years ago in the Italian mountain village of Greccio.

St. Bonaventure's "Life of St. Francis" tells us:

"It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, St. Francis determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff.

"Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise.

"The man of God (St. Francis) stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem.

"A certain valiant and veracious soldier, Master John of Greccio, who, for the love of Christ, had left the warfare of this world, and become a dear friend of this holy man, affirmed that he beheld an Infant so marvelous sleeping in the manger, Whom the blessed Father Francis embraced with both his arms, as if he would awake Him from sleep."

The first Nativity showed the Incarnation to the peasants of Greccio in the guise of familiar things. They owned or cared for oxen and asses, whose breath warmed them in the cold mountain winters. They fed their stock hay in mangers. How was it that God's Son

could be born in a humble cave stable, so like theirs, to sleep where farm stock fed?

In his book "In Love with Christ, The Secret of St. Francis of Assisi," Father Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., observes:

"Francis restored 'flesh and blood' to the mysteries of Christianity, which were often 'disincarnate' and reduced to concepts in syllogisms in theological schools and books. A German scholar has seen in Francis the one who created the conditions for the birth of modern Renaissance art, in as much as it frees sacred persons and events from the stylized rigidity of the past and confers on them concreteness and life."

Francis was heartbroken at the poverty of the newborn Savior and his parents, who were forced to travel, to stay in a cave that housed animals and later to run for their lives.

My little glass figurines and all those beautiful, expensive, collectible Nativity sets are just fancy dust collectors unless they call us to remember – as St. Francis did, 800 years ago - that God loves us so much that He sent His beloved Son to be cold, hungry and poor with us, and that we need to act with great love in response.

Sharon Mech, OSF, is a member of St. Pio of Pietrelcina Franciscan Fraternity in Columbus.

GIFT, continued from Page 7

obliged, even though she was frustrated.

Eventually, something shifted. Her depression lifted, and, in its place, a sense of self emerged.

This will be our first Christmas without my paternal grandma, who showered us with loving attention. She and my grandpa bought a modest cabin on a little lake up north where we all squeezed in countless hours and memories.

The porch was the gathering place where Grandma was always perched, catching all the comings and goings, the fishing reports, the sunscreen applications. We played 500 at the long dining room table where Grandma placed the centerpiece: a chianti straw bottle hold-

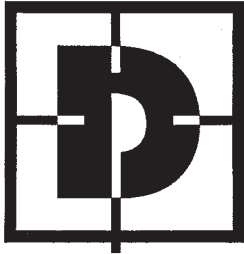
ing a taper candle. She lit it every day, letting the wax from candle after candle drip down the straw, lumpy strands of mauve and violet, sage and cream.

It was a visual of our time together, hour after hour, a work of art that could not be rushed. Our layered family, ever expanding yet bound together. The sum, greater than the parts.

It will not make Oprah's Favorite Things list. But it was, indeed, "life-changing," "the best of the best." Time together – the ultimate Christmas gift.

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

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Bishop participates in annual Thanksgiving Day dinner



Bishop Earl Fernandes took part in the annual Thanksgiving Day community dinner at Columbus St. Aloysius Church on Thursday, Nov. 23. The bishop served food and chatted with people enjoying the special holiday meal that is open to anyone as part of the community's outreach to the poor. Joining them this year were members of the Ghanaian Catholic community, which now celebrates Masses in its native language at St. Aloysius. Photos courtesy Sandy Bonneville and Ghanaian Catholic Community

*From
all of us at
THE CATHOLIC
TIMES!*

Doug, Emma, Hannah,
and
all of our contributors

Merry Christmas

Nativity of the Lord

DECEMBER 25

Check individual parishes for schedule of Holy Day Mass times

Speaker urges women to be 'wounded healers'

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

For signs of physical dehydration, a person might check a medical book. For symptoms of spiritual dehydration, however, where should one look?

Lisa Brenninkmeyer says the symptoms are listed in the Book of Isaiah.

Brenninkmeyer, the founder and CEO of Walking with Purpose, a Catholic woman's Bible study ministry, spoke about spiritual dehydration to more than 600 women gathered Dec. 6 at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church.

Walking with Purpose was founded in 2008 and is present at nearly 600 parishes across the United States, Canada and Europe, including at 19 parishes in the Diocese of Columbus. More than 70,000 women have participated in the ministry, in which women hold each other accountable and lift up one another.

"This gathering is off-the-charts powerful," Father Jonathan Wilson, pastor of St. Paul, said in his opening remarks about Walking with Purpose.

In her talk, "Hope for Right Now," Brenninkmeyer shared that women today are under attack, and they need to take back ground from the enemy.

Using the Book of Isaiah, Brenninkmeyer said there is a "spiritual dehydration of the heart." Unlike spiritual dryness, which might entail a lack of enthusiasm or zeal for prayer or the sacraments, there are symptoms specific to spiritual dehydration.

In Isaiah 58:9, Brenninkmeyer said, symptoms include: "the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil"; compassion fatigue; and emotional overheating, such as anger.

Each symptom corresponds to a symptom of bodily dehydration: dry mouth or stale breath, a symptom of dehydration, is the counterpart of speaking evil. Compassion fatigue, when "we know we're supposed to be loving but feel we have nothing to give," is similar to bodily fatigue, another symptom of dehydration.

When the body is dehydrated, it overheats, just as emotional overheating is a symptom of spiritual dehydration, Brenninkmeyer said.

In Isaiah 58:11, the prophet Isaiah writes that the Lord promises to satisfy a person's needs in parched places, and they will be like a watered garden, a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

Brenninkmeyer said it is important that a woman is a well-watered garden, a source of comfort and strength, because her family needs that. She said the Book of Isaiah shows three stages: rugged ruins, response and a rewarding restoration from God.

The Book of Isaiah is broken into two parts. The first part, chapters 1-39, describes a time of sin, when everything is in ruins, and God is at war with His peo-



Walking with Purpose founder Lisa Brenninkmeyer shares spiritual insights during her presentation on Dec. 6 at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church. Photos courtesy St. Paul Church



A crowd of approximately 600 women gathered for a talk by Walking with Purpose founder Lisa Brenninkmeyer at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church.

ple. Beginning in Chapter 40, there is a switch, Brenninkmeyer said, and Isaiah offers a solution to the problem.

"What we see in Scripture is that God does keep His promises, each and every one, but not according to our timetable," she said.

Reading Isaiah 58, she explained that everything at the time was in ruins.

"Are there some rugged ruins in your life?" Brenninkmeyer asked. "Do you desperately want union but all you see is division?"

She recalled a time when she "felt like there would never be light in my heart

again."

Brenninkmeyer said her garden "looked like everything was dying," and she was waiting for God's promises, but she felt as if nothing was happening. She knew she could choose to be a victim of her circumstances, which was tempting.

In the toughest moments, she said, she recalled thinking, surely, the Lord could not expect anything from her but survival. However, the Book of Isaiah showed an "if, then" pattern.

"We all want the blessings described in Isaiah 58," Brenninkmeyer said.

She wanted to get from the rugged ru-

ins that she was experiencing to the reward God was promising. Between those two places, and to get from one to the other, the Book of Isaiah showed that a response was required.

Brenninkmeyer said that Isaiah had an aim. He wanted the Israelites to change their sinful behavior. The prophet told the Israelites to stop pointing the finger and to "lift the yoke," or take away the oppression or injustice, from other people.

The prophet was calling the people living in rugged ruins to turn outward and attend to the needs of the oppressed. If they would do that, then they would become a watered garden whose waters never fail.

"So many people are paralyzed with worry about themselves," Brenninkmeyer said.

She explained that, while it is important for people to take care of themselves, women are living in a culture that is obsessed with self-care. There can be a temptation to turn inward in times of brokenness, pain and while in "rugged ruins," but God promises a reward to those who serve and do good to others.

"We can be wounded healers in the midst of our own pain," Brenninkmeyer said.

In attending to and healing the hearts of others, she said, "our own hearts will be restored."

She said that every prayer and cry is heard by the Father. In the "Catechism of the Catholic Church," section 2606, the Church writes that all troubles, petitions and intercessions are summed up in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word. He is the answer to every prayer and cry.

The "Catechism" states that the Father accepts every cry and answers them by raising His Son. Prayer is brought to completion in salvation.

Brenninkmeyer said that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus make anything and everything possible.

Even in anger or heartache, she said, "God calls us to be more than something we feel capable of." He helps the brokenhearted to heal others' hearts because "God wants to do the work in and through us."

She recalled the words of St. Therese of Lisieux, who is the patron of Walking with Purpose. The 19th-century French saint wrote, "The elevator which must raise me to the heavens is Your arms, O Jesus! For that I do not need to grow; on the contrary, I must necessarily remain small, become smaller."

Brenninkmeyer acknowledged that people are little, weak and fail often.

"If the garden of our lives is in ruin, we turn to the gardener," she said.

Brenninkmeyer reminded women not to come to God thinking they can earn His favor, mercy or their identity as a

Hospitals share Christmas joy with patients

By Tim Puet

For *The Catholic Times*

Christmas and the period surrounding it is always a difficult time to be in a hospital for patients who are away from family and friends. Hospital staff members recognize this and make special efforts to bring cheer to those patients.

"Mount Carmel has multiple locations providing primary, urgent or emergency care in the Columbus area, and you'll find them all showing the holiday spirit with trees, tinsel and other decorations," said Mellissa Gallagher, communications manager for the Mount Carmel Health System.

"All the locations have 'ugly holiday sweater' days for employees, and our hospitals serve special meals to patients for Christmas and New Year's days and have free meals for employees choosing to work on those days. Infants born in the hospitals during the holiday season are given a special outer garment reading 'Best Gift Ever.'

"Several sites have holiday parties at which employees donate items for those in need. One good example is an event at our Franklinton Healthy Living Center on Columbus' west side at the site of the original Mount Carmel Hospital.

"Employees there, participants in our pre-medicine program and Mount Carmel College of Nursing students have a celebration at which all bring pairs of gloves for our street medicine program which serves the homeless.

"They also have a Giving Tree from which they select the name of a child from within the Mount Carmel staff community for whom they will purchase a gift, and they sign Christmas cards for the people the street medicine team serves."

The gloves are part of gift bags that are presented to residents of homeless encampments and people living on the streets and to those who have recently found housing and are adjusting to their new situation. The bags include gloves, socks, toiletries, coffee mugs, cocoa packets, dish towels and other useful items, said Kathleen Buchen-Barbara, a nurse for 50 years, about 20 of them with the street medicine program.

"Whenever possible, we also try to include something with personal meaning to the recipient," she said. "I remember one man who had found housing and was a big Ohio State fan and was thrilled to receive a Buckeye shirt last year.

"I visited about 40 people over the

Mount Carmel colleagues wear their Christmas spirit while standing in front of a tree at the New Albany location. A joyous occasion at any hospital is the arrival of a baby but especially on Christmas Eve, when Riley Alaina was born last year.

Photos courtesy Mount Carmel



holidays in 2022 and expect to do the same this year. We go in pairs to talk with people, sing carols with them, see how they're doing, lay hands on them, tell them about what assistance is available to them, especially any new resources, and just see how well-connected they are.

"This is important not just to the homeless, but to many who have found housing but can't yet afford a phone and don't realize everything that's out there for them. One year, we even had Christmas trees donated to us and were able to delight some people with their very own tree.

"I absolutely love what I do, especially at this time of year when I'm able to touch people, share their wisdom, sadness and sorrows and embrace them with love," Buchen-Barbara said.

"I also attend the annual Christmas memorial service at Trinity Episcopal Church downtown for the homeless who have died in the past year. We read their names and say prayers, and everyone is given a lit candle. It offers a mixture of both sadness for their loss and hope that as children of God, they have gone on to something better."

Dr. John Green, a Powell St. Joan of Arc Church parishioner and member of the Catholic Medical Association of Central Ohio, said the Christmas holidays are a time when physicians must pay closer attention to patients' conditions.

"As a physician, there's always a question of how to be festive at this time of year," he said. "You need to make sure your energy level matches that of the patient and his or her family members.

"About two-thirds of patients are happy to see me wearing an ugly sweater or a Santa hat, but you don't want to be happy and cheerful for a patient in tragic circumstances.

"I remember one case where I wore a Christmas sweater and came to see a patient who turned out to be extremely ill, and there was no chance to change clothes or put hospital scrubs on over the sweater.

"I thought of what an unsavory contrast my outfit must have made in the situation, but the patient didn't seem to mind and didn't have family with him. I'm grateful he was understanding."

Green is a hospitalist – a physician who cares strictly for inpatients, meaning he works only inside a hospital. He worked in central Ohio for about 20 years and now practices independently and is called upon by hospitals in several areas of Ohio, particularly around Port Clinton.

"It's surprising and sad to see the number of patients who are not anxious to be discharged during the holidays and prefer to spend them at a hospital, perhaps because they have no one close to them or they feel uncomfortable about going home for the season," he said.

"It's different in most cases for people in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities. For them, these places have become home, and the staff has become a second family."

"No one looks forward to being away from their homes and families during the holidays," said Father Michael Lumpe, pastor of Worthington St. Michael Church and diocesan coordinator of hospital ministry.

"It's always good for friends and family to reach out to those in hospitals and stay connected and for hospital chaplains to provide their services, both at these times and throughout the year."

"I've found that for people of faith, it's especially crushing to not have visitors around the holidays," said Barb Martin of Reynoldsburg St. Pius X Church, an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist

who has distributed communion once a week to Mount Carmel East Hospital patients since 2010.

"There are a lot of good, faithful hospitalized Catholics who want communion, especially on Sundays and holy days, and it's been harder to get people to distribute the Eucharist since the start of the COVID epidemic.

"I've found that people of faith generally deal with illnesses much better than others do. They seem to be more grateful for being alive, and their faith helps them pull through. This is true whether they're churchgoers or not. They find comfort in prayer and are just happy to have someone who will come to pray with them."

"At Christmas, in addition to the gift of time that we give of ourselves to others is the greatest of all gifts – the gift of the Eucharist," Father Lumpe said. "On Christmas Day, or on a Sunday, if you are an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion and have the permission of your pastor, consider bringing the Eucharist to a family member or loved one who is hospitalized, in a nursing or care facility or who is homebound.

"Jesus' great gift of the Eucharist is the best gift that we can bring to someone who cannot make it to church. It keeps them connected to the mystical body of Christ through this greatest of all sacraments."

Father Lumpe cautions that anyone who provides the Eucharist to someone in a medical or care situation should first make certain that the patient or resident is not under an "NPO" restriction. NPO means "nothing by mouth," from the Latin nil per os. The acronym is medical shorthand indicating a person may not eat or drink anything for a period of time because of swallowing difficulties or other reasons.

WOMEN, continued from Page 10

daughter of God. The Father loves His children as they are and desires to work through them.

She told the women that God's answer to their grief, heartache and disappointments is Himself, His presence. After a

person recognizes that God is the answer, they are called to a complete surrender of self to Him.

"He comes as the breaker of chains," Brenninkmeyer said.

She recalled the words in Isaiah 58:9-

10 about God's promise: "If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness."

In the toughest, darkest moments, Brenninkmeyer reminded women that God's light will rise in the darkness. His promises to them will be fulfilled. His glory will come.

Logan church ministry receives foundation grant

By Tim Puet
For *The Catholic Times*

We Are Friends ministry of Logan St. John Church has received a \$5,000 grant from The Catholic Foundation to cover short-term needs.

We Are Friends was founded three years ago by Deacon Don Robers of the parish and several community representatives, including Hocking County Municipal and Common Pleas Court judges, to help the area's needy, especially those recovering from drug addiction.

The foundation's grant will enable the organization to continue providing furniture, bedding and household items and helping people with groceries and clothing, funeral expenses and rent and utility payments.

Deacon Robers said continued recent increases in the cost of nearly everything have resulted in more requests for assistance. More than 200 individuals and families have been helped by We Are Friends in 2023.

The organization receives new bedframes and mattresses at a discount but needs other bedroom furniture and bedding; small couches, small chairs or small recliners and end tables and lamps for living areas; bath towels, washcloths and personal hygiene items; small microwaves, small kitchen tables and chairs, dishes, silverware, dishwashing items and kitchen utensils.

The ministry does not accept knickknacks, picture frames, clothes, yard sale items or heavy furniture.

Besides the recent grant, We Are Friends has set up a donor-advised fund for long-term financing with the foundation that has increased from a \$5,000

starting amount to about \$35,000 through support from generous donors.

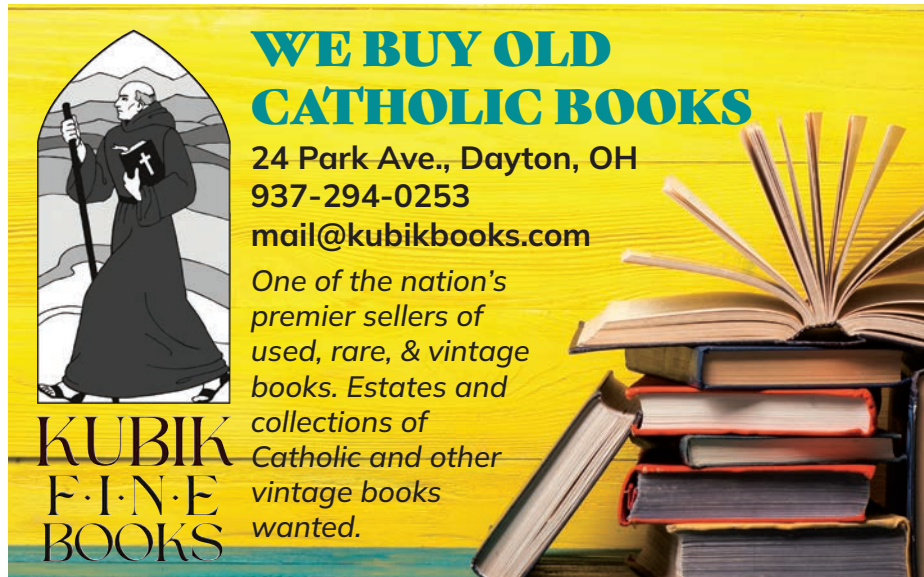
"This fund goes on forever," Deacon Robers said. "By donating to this fund, your gift will keep on giving."

To help We Are Friends with its immediate needs, send a check payable to We Are Friends to the organization in care of St. John Catholic Church, 351 N. Market St., Logan, Ohio 43138.

To donate to the ministry's Catholic Foundation fund, write a check to The Catholic Foundation, We Are Friends (noting Fund ID #325KJ in the memo section) and mail it to The Catholic Foundation, 257 E. Broad St., Columbus, Ohio 43215.

To give online, go to www.catholic-foundation.org and find the Giving tab, select Existing Funds from the menu, type "We Are Friends" in the search box and click the link to "We Are Friends Donor Advised Fund" to complete your donation.

Additional information about the fund is available from the foundation's Dan Kurth at (614) 443-8893. All donations are tax-deductible.



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position is asked to contact Anne Streitenberger, director of human resources for the Diocese of Columbus, at amstreitenberger@columbuscatholic.org.



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Vehicles line up outside the former Corning St. Bernard School, which serves as the food pantry for the local St. Vincent de Paul group, while patrons pick out items. *CT photos by Ken Snow*



Longtime customer Doris Irene Eing (left) is assisted with bags of food by Ben Altier.

Dedicated St. Vincent de Paul group helps needy in Perry County

Shortly before 10 on a chilly November morning, a line of cars has formed on the driveway in front of the old school next to Corning St. Bernard Church, extending onto Chestnut Street and snaking down a hill and around a corner onto Adams Street.

The occupants of those vehicles have come to pick up groceries mostly but also some household goods, diapers and miscellaneous items that will get them through another week.

In southeast Ohio, many individuals and families struggle to make ends meet in an economically depressed area of the state. The goods they receive in shopping bags from the Perry County Catholic Consortium's Society of St. Vincent de Paul conference might not seem like much, but they are a godsend to the patrons.

The nine active members and nine associates who volunteer with the St. Vincent de Paul Society haven't let the closing of the historic church stop them from fulfilling their missionary outreach to the poor.

"What amazes me with the size of this conference is what gets accomplished," said Cathie McClary, the conference's president, "with the client aid and being

able to help with needs and the pantry and the clothing we have. We're not a huge group, but we have a great group of volunteers."

In October, Corning St. Bernard in the southern Perry County town of about 500 was closed as part of the Real Presence Real Future initiative. On Oct. 14, Bishop Earl Fernandes celebrated a final Mass in the church that had served the community for more than 100 years.

St. Bernard was part of the Perry County Catholic Consortium with New Lexington St. Rose of Lima Church, Junction City St. Patrick Church and Crooksville Church of the Atonement, all served by one priest, Father TJ Lehigh.

The Church of the Atonement also was closed in October, leaving St. Rose and St. Patrick as well as two churches in Somerset as the remaining active parishes in the county.

There's a rich Catholic history in Perry County that's still evident today. The first Mass in Ohio was celebrated near Somerset in 1808 by Bishop Edward Fenwick. Somerset St. Joseph Church became the first Catholic church to be built in Ohio in 1818. That parish still exists today and is staffed by Dominican priests, who have

maintained a presence there for 200 years.

In the Corning area, a Catholic community emerged in the 1830s. Into the late 1800s and the early 1900s, Corning not only developed a strong Catholic presence, but its population (peaking at 1,628 according to the 1920 U.S. Census) and reputation also grew with the arrival of the railroad and coal mining.

Corning became notorious as a violent mining town that witnessed several strikes by workers and a battle with bloodshed between white and African-American miners that needed intervention from the Ohio National Guard.

The parish grew enough to build a new church, rectory and convent in the early 1900s. In the 1940s, St. Bernard swelled to 965 parishioners and 200 children in the school, but coal mines began to suspend operations, and the convent and school were closed in 1969-70.

The mining industry has long since dried up in the state, and jobs with good wages are hard to come by nowadays. The poverty rate in Perry County is estimated at 20%, similar to most of the counties in southern Ohio.

With inflation driving up prices, the



Ben Altier receives a heartfelt hug from Leah Fitzpatrick after he loaded her vehicle with food from the pantry.

economic impact is more deeply felt in places such as Corning. That's evident in the number of people served by the local St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The number of weekly visitors has

See NEEDY, Page 17



Members of the St. Vincent de Paul group that runs a food pantry in Corning are (clockwise from lower left) Cathie McClary, Barbara Nash, Ann Cramer, Barbara Russell, Ben Altier, Lee Kaido, Tim Kirchgessner, Cindy McLain, Mary Dodd, Anne Barnett and John Barnett.



Beverly George, a regular customer of the free store that offers clothing and household goods, sorts through seasonal items.



Ruth Ann Rose is the free store manager.



Filling bags of food are (from left) Anne Barnett, Cathie McClary and Barbara Russell.

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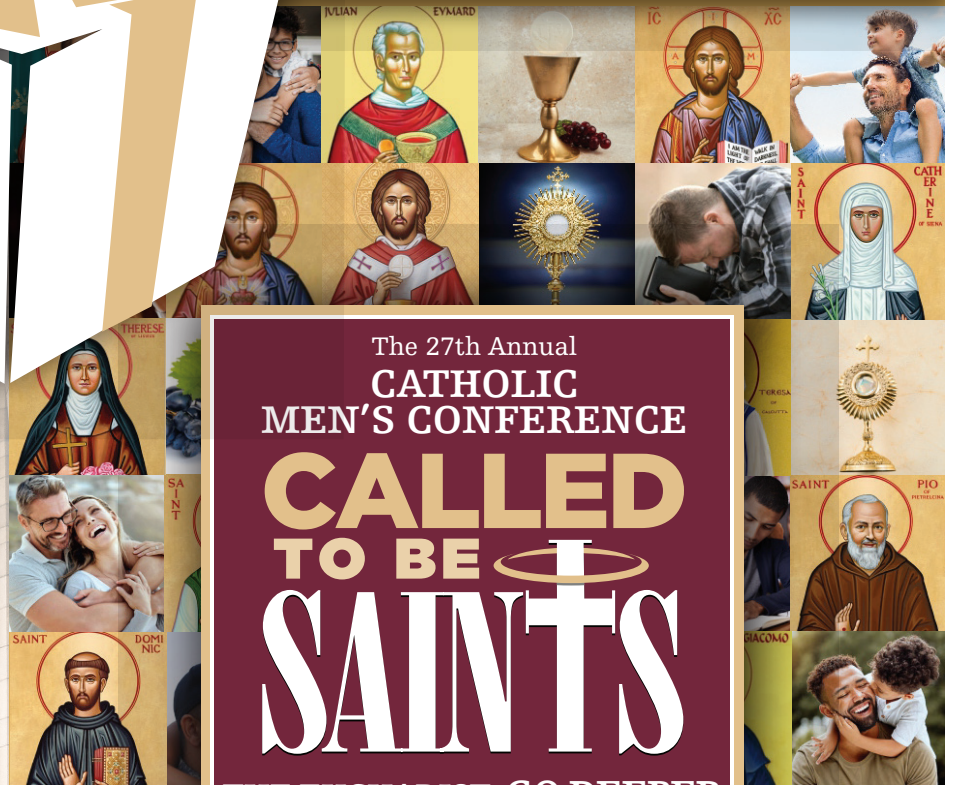


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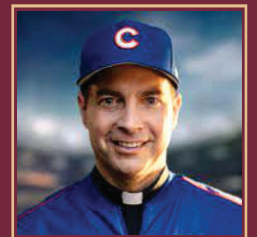
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More priests, nuns from orders serving diocese

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

The Diocese of Columbus welcomed members of four religious congregations in 2023.

The new congregations include two orders of priests: the Capuchin Franciscan Friars and the Pallottine Fathers from India.

The Pallottine Fathers are from the Province of Our Lady of Good Health in Salem, Tamil Nadu, India. The order, known formally as the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (SAC), was founded by St. Vincent Pallotti and is based in Rome.

The Indian Pallottine Fathers are serving at Columbus Holy Spirit Church. They also served at Columbus St. Philip the Apostle Church, which closed in November.

Father Sesu Maria Crescensis Panguraj, SAC is serving as the chaplain of Columbus St. Francis de Sales High School.

There are also Pallottine Fathers from Poland serving in the diocese. The Polish Pallottine Fathers first came to the diocese in 2020.

The Capuchin Franciscan Friars returned to the diocese in July. The order previously served in the diocese decades ago in Tuscarawas County and at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church.

The Capuchins are now serving at Columbus Christ the King and St. Thomas the Apostle churches.

Father Stephen Fernandes, OFM, Cap. (Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin) serves as the pastor. Fathers Rafael Anguiano, OFM, Cap. and Anthony Baetzold, CFR (Franciscan Friars of the Renewal) serve as parochial vicars.

Father Anthony Essien, OFM, Cap. is the chaplain at Columbus Bishop Hartley High School, and Brother Michael Herlihey, OFM, Cap., who is a deacon and is anticipating ordination to the priesthood next year, serves as the parish youth evangelization director.

The friars belong to the Province of St. Augustine, which is based in Pittsburgh.

The Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin was founded in Italy in 1536. The order has expanded throughout the world and has provinces on six continents.

Father Fernandes said the friars came to the Diocese of Columbus at the invitation of Bishop Earl Fernandes to serve the two east side parishes, which have a growing Hispanic population. About 65% of parishioners at Christ the King are Hispanic, he said.

In the Province of St. Augustine alone, Brother Herlihey said, men who are in formation to become friars have many different cultural backgrounds. With such a diverse population, he said, the friars have a strong understanding of the Universal Church and how to serve



Apostolic Sisters of St. John (from left) Sister Marie, Sister Monika Maria and Sister Agata are members of one of the religious orders that arrived this year to serve in the diocese. *CT photo by Ken Snow*

interculturally.

“When you live with people from different cultures, then you can serve people from different cultures just because your worldview starts to expand, which is helpful in the Church in the United States and then the Church here in Columbus,” Brother Herlihey said.

“I understand, as the bishop here has described it, our diocese here is growing, and it’s growing largely because of the immigrant population. So, I think that one large reason that Bishop (Robert) Brennan and now Bishop Fernandes were wanting us to come is because this is a strength of our province.”

While walking with the Hispanic community they serve, Father Fernandes said, it will be important for the friars to learn to speak the language – Spanish – and understand their culture.

Father Baetzold, who has served Hispanic communities for years, said that children of immigrants often feel “stuck between two worlds.”

Father Baetzold is eager to minister to children of immigrants who are growing up in the United States but are born of a different culture. He believes the Franciscans are well equipped to serve the immigrant population at the parish, especially the children.

“The great opportunity that we have, and then – the Capuchins – it’s very international, so we understand culture really well, and living together, you have to get to know other cultures and take them to heart,” Father Baetzold said.

“And so, how is it that we can help them assimilate into America while keeping their faith and the best parts of their culture? So, that’s a great opportunity that we have in the diocese, not just to create another Mexico at Christ the King, but especially for the kids: How do we pass on something for them that will assimilate?”

Following Jesus’ example in the Incar-

nation, when Christ became man and dwelt among His people, the Capuchins seek to be part of the lives of the people they serve. That aspect of Capuchin spirituality, Brother Herlihey said, is something people at his former parishes recognized.

“They often will tell us that they feel like we understand family, which makes sense; we’re a community, down to earth, boots on the ground,” he said.

“And then, the incarnational quality, that really goes back to Francis being so fascinated by the Crèche and the cross, having his conversion through the San Damiano cross, being the one to popularize the Nativity scene, this fascination and just real draw to God becoming man, and then, God really entering into the mess – the mess of a broken world, of a sinful world, of a world that is not perfect.”

Brother Herlihey said he believes parishioners at Christ the King and St. Thomas the Apostle will “pick up the Capuchin spirituality.” Having served at various parishes, he said parishioners often notice the “incarnational quality” of the Capuchin order.

“In my experience with the Capuchins, I think we’ve emulated that we’re not afraid to go into the mess, sometimes into the chaos and into the difficult situations,” he said. “In my experience, I think we tend to do a lot of spending time with the people, even beyond the parish, in their homes, in their communities, in their gatherings.”

St. Francis of Assisi emphasized that his followers, the Franciscans, should be servants, Father Fernandes said.

“Jesus calls us in Scripture,” Father Fernandes said. “He said, ‘I didn’t come to be served but to serve.’ So, taking that Scripture passage, Francis emphasized that, for his followers, his brothers, we

Religious orders in diocese

A listing of religious communities in the Diocese of Columbus:

MEN

- Apostles of Jesus, AJ
- Congregation of the Fathers of Mercy, CPM
- Congregation of the Holy Spirit-Spiritans
- Congregation of the Resurrection, CR
- Congregation of the Sons of Immaculate Conception, CFIC
- Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, IC
- Institute of the Incarnate Word, IVE
- Franciscan Friars, OFM
- Missionary Servants of the Word, MSP
- Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy, Mercedarian, OdeM
- Order of Preachers-Dominicans, St. Joseph Province, OP
- Pallottine Fathers, SAC
- Society of the Precious Blood, CPPS
- Theatine Fathers, CR

WOMEN

- Bridgettine Sisters (Order of the Most Holy Savior)
- Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm
- Children of Mary
- Congregation of the Apostolic Sisters of St. John
- Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Kilimanjaro
- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes
- Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate (Joliet, Illinois)
- Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Salesian Sisters
- Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy
- Dominican Sisters, Congregation of the Immaculate Conception
- Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist (Ann Arbor, Michigan)
- Dominican Sisters of Peace
- Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity
- Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary – Puducherry
- Leaven of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters
- Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
- Missionaries Sisters Servants of the Word (Hermanas Misioneras Servidoras de la Palabra)
- Sisters Daughters of Holy Mary of the Heart of Jesus
- Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
- Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky
- Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
- Sisters of St. Francis – Holy Name Province
- Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity (Stella Niagara, New York)
- Sisters Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

See **ORDERS**, Page 17

Christ Child Society names new board members



The Christ Child Society of Columbus recently elected its 2024 Board of Directors. Pictured are (front row from left) Betsy Sidor, Kathy Kohler, Julie Smerdel, Laurie Knight, Catherine O'Connell; (back row from left) Karen Albertson, Karen Kleinhenz, Molly Wood, Ann Christopher and Lisa Davies. Not pictured are Janey Davies, Diane Giffin, Kathy Milligan and Jeannette Oxender. The Christ Child Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving children in need.

Photo courtesy Christ Child Society of Columbus

ODU appoints interim president

Dr. Michael Grandillo, retired president of Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan, has been appointed interim president of Ohio Dominican University by ODU's board of trustees. He became president-designate on Wednesday, Dec. 6, five days after the appointment was made, and will assume the presidency on Saturday, Dec. 16.

He succeeds Connie Gallaher, who was appointed as ODU president in 2021.

"Due to some family health issues and challenges that have arisen recently, Connie actually announced her retirement to the campus community a little less than a month ago" ODU spokesman Tom Brockman said. "The process of the board identifying an interim president has been taking place of the course of a number of weeks."

Grandillo brings more than 43 years of higher education experience to ODU, including seven years as president at Madonna from 2015 until his retirement in 2022. He has been living since then in Tiffin, where he led a consulting firm specializing in higher education, government and public policy.

At Madonna, he was in charge of a financial and academic transformation that erased a multimillion-dollar operations deficit while transforming the university from a largely commuter to a residential campus, with three new

residence halls built and a former high school campus transformed into an arts, academic and athletic center during that time. While he was its president, Madonna's endowment increased 20 percent, surpassing \$54 million.

Grandillo also has served as president of Lakeland College in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He spent 17 years as vice president for development and public affairs at Tiffin University and nine years as director of development at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, where he has been a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church for 42 years and held a number of volunteer leadership positions. He also was a City Council member in Tiffin for four terms and was consultant for ODU's last presidential search.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Ohio Northern University, a Master of Science degree in education from the University of Dayton and his doctorate of philosophy in higher education and Italian Renaissance history from the University of Toledo. He has published many articles in academic journals on subjects including the Renaissance, the American Presidency, student success, and how colleges serve veterans.

He and his wife, Nancy, have been married for 39 years and have a son, a daughter and two grandchildren.



*"Glory to God in
the highest and on
earth peace to
those on whom
His favor rests."
Luke 2:14*

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Mt. Calvary Cemetery
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**CATHOLIC
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of Columbus

ORDERS, continued from Page 15

have to be lesser brothers.

“That’s what we try to bring in the parish wherever we work – that spirit of being lesser brothers. And so, there’s – I call it – an absence of pomp and circumstance with us.”

Among the congregations the diocese welcomed this year are two orders of religious sisters: the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (FIHM) from Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, India, and the Apostolic Sisters of St. John.

The FIHM sisters are serving in Dover and Chillicothe.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (FIH) from Kollam, Kerala, India are also serving in the Diocese of Columbus. They came to the diocese in 2022 and serve in Columbus and Chillicothe. Some of the FIH sisters live in the convent at Columbus Our Lady of Peace Church.

Both religious orders are branches of the original order founded by St. Francis of Assisi.

The Apostolic Sisters of St. John are serving the diocese on the west side of Columbus.

The sisters came to the diocese for a one-year trial period and at the end of the year they will decide whether to establish a convent in Columbus.

There are four sisters, two of whom are

teaching theology at Columbus Bishop Ready High School and two are directors of religious education (DRE) at Columbus St. Christopher and St. Mary Magdalene parishes.

The Apostolic Sisters of St. John were founded in France in 1984 and have Dominican heritage. The order has two priories, or religious houses, in the United States.

The four sisters in the diocese come from Princeville, Illinois, where their priory was formerly based. The sisters now live in a convent at Bishop Ready. The other priory in the United States is located in New Jersey.

Sister Marie, CSJ, who serves as the DRE at St. Christopher and is originally from France, said that Bishop Fernandes was interested in the community’s “dimension of evangelization and formation of faith.”

The Apostolic Sisters of St. John take their name from St. John the Evangelist, who is known as the beloved disciple.

“There is something in evangelization that wishes to lead people to understand how much they are beloved, how much they are loved by God, how much they are precious in the eyes of God, and especially, also lead them to discover the (Real) Presence of the Eucharist,” Sister Marie said.

“In Chapter 13 of the Gospel (of John), John is resting his head on Jesus after having received communion, and that’s a mo-

ment of great intimacy that leads him also to be faithful at the foot of the cross.”

On the cross, Jesus gave His mother to St. John, and the disciple took her into his home, which also symbolizes all Christians receiving Mary as their mother. Perhaps, Sister Marie said, it was because of St. John’s “very intense relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist” that he was faithful at the Crucifixion and received Mary as his mother.

St. John is the author of the Book of Revelation, the final book of the Bible, and he is believed to be the author of the Gospel of John. The New Testament also includes three letters of St. John.

“The first letter of St. John ... could be summarized as ‘love one another as I have loved you,’ whoever loves his brother loves God, the fraternal love and walking in the truth and loving,” Sister Marie said. “So, this is an important part of the spirituality of St. John that is at our core and what we desire to bring to the Church.”

The order’s charism – what distinguishes the order – is to be beloved disciples like St. John, Sister Marie said. The sisters seek to abide with Jesus in a life of prayer and Adoration and draw others into Christ’s friendship by serving the Church in a ministry of evangelization.

The order evangelizes through helping individuals to encounter the love of Christ.

“John, resting on the Heart of Jesus, discovered the mystery of the charity (love) flowing from the Heart of Jesus given to him and the whole Church,” she said. “John’s zeal (is) to make all the people discover the infinite love of Jesus.”

Sister Marie said, “by providence,” the order’s motherhouse is located near Paray-le-Monial, France, where Jesus revealed His Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in a series of apparitions that took place between 1673-75.

“The message of Jesus to Margaret Mary – here is this Heart Who so loved the world – is very important for us as Sisters of St. John,” Sister Marie said. “We don’t just want to give a knowledge; we want to transmit a knowledge that leads to greater love of the Presence of Christ and the Heart of Christ.”

The Gospel of John contains many accounts of personal encounters Jesus had with people, Sister Marie said, such as with the Samaritan woman or Nicodemus. The sisters also seek to transmit the spirituality of St. John, which leads to a greater love of Christ, through individual encounters in their mission of hospitality, education and faith formation.

“We are open to ‘short’ missions that could be added to what we do on a daily basis,” she said, such as spiritual direction, giving a talk or a parish retreat.

NEEDY, continued from Page 13

climbed from 50-60 a year or so ago to 80 or more today. Before Thanksgiving, more than 90 individuals came to St. Bernard from various parts of Perry County for assistance.

“I think it’s just the poverty level in Perry County,” St. Vincent de Paul member Mary Dodd said.

“Food prices are just outrageous,” added McClary, a St. Patrick parishioner. “SNAP (the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) only goes so far, and then they can cut those benefits.”

Donations enable the center to continue to provide for the needs of the less fortunate. Support for the center has come from government grants, the Hunger Relief Fund from the Joe Burrow Foundation, private donations, food banks, the Bottoms Up Diaper Bank, individuals and several companies, including Dollar General.

Most of the food and meat that’s distributed comes from the Southeast Ohio Foodbank, which serves Perry, Athens and Hocking counties.

What’s unique about the St. Vincent de Paul center in Corning is that it’s open weekly. Other food banks generally are open only biweekly or once a month.

“At least here they can come every week,” said Dodd, a St. Rose parishioner.

And the operation runs smoothly. The flow of traffic is relatively steady during the three hours the center is open on Tuesdays as each vehicle’s driver patient-

ly waits in line for his or her turn.

As cars pull up, the associates and volunteers are waiting with bags containing an assortment of goods. Some clients stay in their cars as the bags are loaded; others get out of their vehicles to choose miscellaneous offerings from boxes.

Many of the faces are familiar. Friendly hugs and greetings are often exchanged between the members and appreciative clients.

Inside the former school, the members and associates bag and organize the products for distribution and maintain the pantry’s inventory.

On the group’s wish list is a walk-in freezer in which meats and frozen items could be stored. A grant will cover part of the cost, but more funds are needed to purchase and install a unit.

In addition to the weekly food distribution, the group provides utility and rental assistance and help with prescriptions and gasoline to about 20 people per month.

Across the driveway in the former convent next to the church, the group operates a free store that’s neatly arranged, utilizing upstairs and downstairs rooms for gently used men’s, women’s, children’s and teen clothing, shoes, some household and personal items, and even some Christmas selections.

Member Ruth Ann Rose manages the clothing and household goods store, and Dixie Kaido volunteers at the store and

helps shoppers.

Merchandise donations are accepted for the store, and patrons can make a freewill offering based on their ability to contribute.

Despite the hardships in the area and the uncertain future of St. Bernard Church, the group remains committed to its charitable efforts and the preservation of the parish.

Recently, a small group of people led by St. Vincent de Paul member Ann Cramer formed the Friends of St. Bernard Church, a non-profit organization dedicated to maintaining the Romanesque church built in 1915. The group hopes to raise funds for repairs and to develop educational resources that will document the parish’s rich history in Perry County and the Corning community.

The church remains available for wed-

ding, funerals, baptisms and special Masses. Father Pete Gideon, who retired in July as pastor at Lancaster St. Mark Church, moved into the St. Bernard rectory and had planned to offer occasional Masses there, but he was asked in November to become the administrator at the Scioto Catholic Consortium in the Portsmouth area until a replacement pastor is named.

Meanwhile, the St. Vincent de Paul conference will serve as the face of the Church and of Christ to the hungry who show up every week needing sustenance in their time of need.

“We’re blessed we can do it,” McClary said. “It’s truly our gift.”

Financial gifts may be made for the group’s work by sending a check to: Society of St. Vincent de Paul, P.O. Box 416, 425 Adams St., Corning, OH 43730-0416.

PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM | Assistant Professor of Literature (rank negotiable)

The Pontifical College Josephinum is seeking to hire a full-time **Assistant Professor of Literature in the College of Liberal Arts**, beginning in fall 2024. An ideal candidate will possess a completed doctorate (PhD) in literature or an associated area and exhibit a strong commitment to Catholic higher education. The candidate must be able to teach broad literature survey courses, writing and composition, and offer electives at the 300 to 400 course code level. The expected teaching load will be six courses annually. The successful candidate will

have the opportunity to participate in the overall formation program through membership on various committees according to his/her interests and the needs of the seminary.

Applicants may respond via email by March 1, 2024, with a curriculum vitae listing three references from whom letters of recommendation may be obtained, graduate transcripts, student and peer evaluations of two classes, and a letter of interest to: Cathi Ebling, Administrative Assistant to the Academic Dean, at cebbling@pcj.edu.

Third Sunday of Advent Year B

His coming gives us hope

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
 Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 John 1:6-8, 19-28

Scriptures reveal the coming of the Messiah as the hope, the dream, the longing that arose from Israel's experience of God through their entire history. God was with them as they came into being as a people, then a nation. God was with them when they faced wars and the devastation of their homeland.

God was, much to their surprise, found to be with them even in their time of exile. Their return to the homeland was less than glorious, but their trust and hope for deliverance remained. In a time of expectation, they heard the voice of John the Baptist, and their expectations were renewed.

John knew his call. He never claimed the role of Messiah. "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said." John declared that another would come after him: "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."

At a particular moment in time, in a particular place ("Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing"), this proclamation was made. Soon after, Jesus would come to be baptized by John, and John would identify Him with such clarity that some of his own disciples would follow Jesus.

The Advent season up to now has been an invitation to acknowledge that Christ will come in glory at the end of time. Now we move toward a renewal of

Fourth Sunday of Advent Year B

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Timothy Hayes

Rev. Timothy M. Hayes is the pastor of Granville St. Edward the Confessor Church.



our welcome of the Christ Child as our Savior.

St. Paul invites the Thessalonians to trust in God's fidelity to His people: "May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it."

This Third Sunday of Advent calls us to turn our thoughts to the coming of Christ in history. We are to recognize Him as the fulfillment of our longings. Immediate preparation for Christmas allows us to open our lives to the presence of God with us.

Day by day in the week ahead, the "O Antiphons" of the Magnificat in the Liturgy of the Hours call to mind the prophecies of old that are fulfilled in Christ: O Wisdom (Dec. 17); O Leader (Dec. 18); O Root of Jesse's stem (Dec. 19); O Key of David (Dec. 20); O Radiant Dawn (Dec. 21); O King of all nations (Dec. 22); and O Emmanuel (Dec. 23).

While these prophetic expressions begin as the promise to Israel, through John and the unfolding story of the Incarnation, they also prove to be the cry of every human heart. There is a dawning of understanding that is ongoing through human history. In these times of turmoil and struggle, it is good for us to remember that God is with us in every circumstance. We can face the challenges of our time with confidence in the

ward with his plans: "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you." But then, God turns the tables and makes a promise to David, that instead, He will build a house for David that will endure forever.

"Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever." This promise is fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah, which is announced to the Virgin Mary, betrothed to Joseph, a Gospel that is very familiar to us because it is used for many of the Church's celebrations.

The gift of the Incarnation is God's entering into our world and sharing the fullness of relationship with us. In

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS

12/18-12/23 MONDAY Jeremiah 23:5-8 Psalm 72:1-2,12-13,18-19 Matthew 1:18-25	THURSDAY Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a Psalm 33:2-3,11-12,20-21 Luke 1:39-45	12/25-12/30 MONDAY (Mass During the Night) Isaiah 9:1-6 Psalm 96:1-2,2-3,11-12,13 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14	John 20:1a,2-8
TUESDAY Judges 13:2-7,24-25a Psalm 71:3-4a,5-6ab,16-17 Luke 1:5-25	FRIDAY 1 Samuel 1:24-28 1 Samuel 2:1,4-5,6-7,8abcd Luke 1:46-56	TUESDAY Acts 6:8-10;7:54-59 Psalm 31:3cd-4,6,8ab-16bc-17 Matthew 10:17-22	THURSDAY 1 John 1:5-2:2 Psalm 124:2-3,4-5,7cd-8 Matthew 2:13-18
WEDNESDAY Isaiah 7:10-14 Psalm 24:1-2,3-4ab,5-6 Luke 1:26-38	SATURDAY Malachi 3:1-4,23-24 Psalm 25:4-5ab,8-9,10,14 Luke 1:57-66	WEDNESDAY 1 John 1:1-4 Psalm 97:1-2,5-6,11-12	FRIDAY 1 John 2:3-11 Psalm 96:1-2a,2b-3,5b-6 Luke 2:22-35
		SATURDAY 1 John 2:12-17 Psalm 96:7-8a,8b,9-10 Luke 2:36-40	

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION

Mass Schedule: Weeks of Dec. 17 and Dec. 24, 2023

SUNDAY MASS

10:30 a.m. Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com and diocesan website, www.columbuscatholic.org.

10:30 a.m. Mass from Portsmouth St. Mary Church on St. Gabriel Radio (FM 88.3), Portsmouth.

Mass with the Passionist Fathers at 7:30 a.m. on WWHO-TV (the CW), Channel 53, Columbus and 10:30 a.m. on WHIZ-TV, Channel 18, Zanesville. Mass from St. Francis de Sales Seminary, Milwaukee, at 10 a.m. on WWHO-TV. Check local cable system for cable channel listing.

Mass from Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, Birmingham, Ala., at 8 a.m. on EWTN (Spectrum Channel 385, Insight Channel 382, or Breezeline Channel 378).

(Encores at noon, 7 p.m., and midnight).

Mass from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee at 6:30 a.m. on ION TV (AT&T U-verse Channel 195, Dish Network Channel 250, or DirecTV Channel 305).

Mass from Massillon St. Mary Church at 10:30 a.m. on WILB radio (AM 1060, FM 94.5 and 89.5), Canton, heard in Tuscarawas, Holmes, and Coshocton counties.

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, Ada, Logan, Millersburg, Murray City, Washington C.H.; Channel 125, Marion, Newark, Newcomerstown and New Philadelphia; Channel 207, Zanesville); 8 p.m., St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com.

12:05 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. Saturdays, Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio (AM 820), Columbus, and at www.stgabrielradio.com and diocesan website, www.columbuscatholic.org. (Saturdays on radio only).

Videos of Masses are available at any time on the internet at these and many other parish websites: Mattingly Settlement St. Mary (www.stannstmary.org); Columbus St. Patrick (www.stpatrickcolumbus.org); Delaware St. Mary (www.delawarestmary.org); Sunbury St. John Neumann (www.saintjohnsunbury.org); and Columbus Immaculate Conception (www.iccols.org). Check your parish website for additional information.

WE PRAY THE SEASONAL PROPS FOR WEEKS III AND THE CHRISTMAS SEASON OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

hope of salvation.

When God fulfills His promises to us, we are filled with joy. This joy lifts our hearts from sorrow and makes known our capacity to share the Gospel promise of salvation and justice:

"I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like

a bride bedecked with her jewels. As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all the nations."

With Mary, soon to give birth to the Messiah, the hope of Israel and Savior to the nations, we cry out our joy: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

God's gift to us is unique to our needs, desires

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
 Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29
 Romans 16:25-27
 Luke 1:26-38

Advent always has four Sundays, but at times, as this year, the fourth week is cut short. Parishes have little time to prepare for the Christmas liturgies, and the schedule of Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Advent might be reduced. Nonetheless, the readings are rich and worth our reflection.

David wants to respond to all that God has done for him by building a temple, a "house for the Lord." At first, the prophet Nathan encourages the king to go for-

ward with his plans: "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you." But then, God turns the tables and makes a promise to David, that instead, He will build a house for David that will endure forever.

"Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever." This promise is fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah, which is announced to the Virgin Mary, betrothed to Joseph, a Gospel that is very familiar to us because it is used for many of the Church's celebrations.

The gift of the Incarnation is God's entering into our world and sharing the fullness of relationship with us. In

David, we have a human response of gratitude that suggests the building of a house for God to dwell with us.

In Mary, who is a daughter in David's line betrothed to a husband in David's line, we see the full response of gratitude and the willingness to be God's dwelling place. Her "let it be done" makes possible the salvation for which we long.

Something profound is revealed here. God shapes His gifts to each one of us. What we need, what we desire, what we long for offer a "form" to God's gift of Himself in us. Each unique soul can turn to God, offering self, and God's response is the fullness of the gift that He desires to share with each and all.

David's response is tainted by his checkered past – and his subsequent life will reveal that he is still in need of the salvation and mercy that will come through the Messiah. Mary's response, complete and withholding nothing, has been prepared by God since she is "full

of grace."

We journey through our own lives more like David, who is always God's beloved, with our own half-hearted response, but we also follow in the line of Mary, who shows us how to respond to the grace that has been bestowed upon us.

All ages since that encounter have indeed called Mary "blessed," and, responding to the Gift of her Son, have received that blessing. We are members of the House of David, and God dwells in us forever.

As we close Advent and move into the Christmas celebrations, may each of us cry out with Mary, "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord." May we allow God to turn the tables on us and on our efforts to respond to His gift. Our hearts are ready, prepared by the action of grace to receive the gift of the Incarnation and to share our joy with the world.

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Christmas Mass at Dawn Year B

'The Lord is born for us'; salvation is at hand

Isaiah 62:11-12
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:15-20

The Christmas Liturgy offers four distinct Masses: The Vigil Mass, Mass During the Night (traditionally called "Midnight Mass"), Mass at Dawn and Mass During the Day.

The readings assigned to each of these express a movement from the promise of Jesus' ancestry, through the events of Christmas night and daybreak, to the deep meaning of the Incarnation of the Word made flesh. Most parishes opt to use the readings of the Mass During the Night for most of the Christmas Masses. Often there are several Vigils and only one Mass on Christmas Day.

The readings of the Mass at Dawn have a wonderful message that is worth our reflection. We join the shepherds as they journey to Bethlehem to see what the angels had proclaimed. They seek the sign foretold and share the news they heard from the angels: "So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child."

What is told to Mary and Joseph then becomes something that Mary ponders in her heart: "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." The shepherds return to their fields, full of joy, "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them."

The message about Who the Child is and how heaven has made known to the humblest of persons is now proclaimed for us. We are invited to allow it to enter our hearts and to bring it to our own experience of life in this world. With Mary, we ponder in our hearts all that we have heard. With the shepherds, we return to our own homes and lives and glorify God.

Paul expresses to Titus the deeper meaning of the Christmas message: "He saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be

justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life."

The message of Christmas includes not only the Word of God becoming man, dwelling among us, but also the gift of salvation that would be accomplished through Jesus Christ. Christmas fulfills Isaiah's promise: "See, the Lord proclaims to the ends of the earth: say to daughter Zion, your savior comes!"

The Incarnation and the Redemption are given to us in the Child born in Bethlehem. Although we often see Christmas as a feast for children, in truth, we are called to acknowledge that it holds a deep meaning for us at every age. "A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us."

We may see what occurs through the eyes of little ones, but when we ponder in our hearts what is being offered, something more happens in the depths of our spirit.

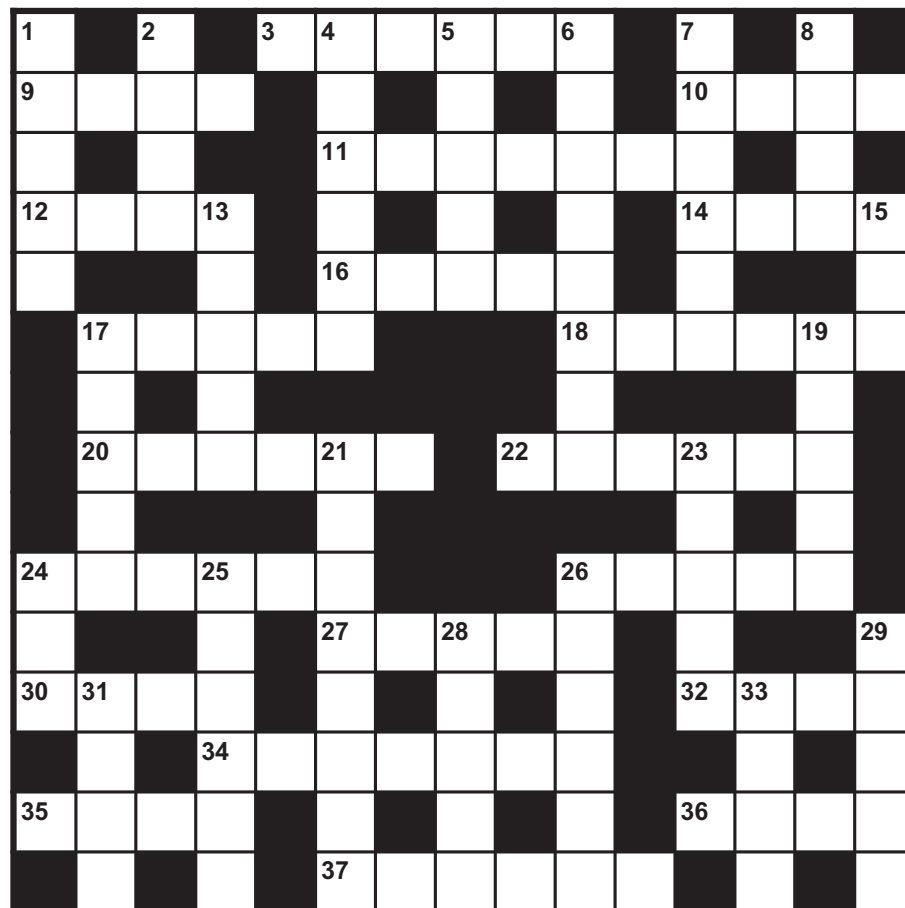
Even in a culture that sets aside religious faith and denies the existence of a benevolent God, this season is experienced as a time for human beings to acknowledge our solidarity with one another.

Men and women of every background can be caught up in the spirit of giving and of concern for those who are less fortunate. There is a light that shines on in the darkness, a truth that is received into hearts that we might not understand. All are called to ponder the reason for the season.

Christmas Day begins an Octave, observed on the Solemnity of Mary, the mother of God, eight days of reflection and prayer concerning the Mystery of the Incarnation. This continues with the "12 Days" of Christmas that carry us to Epiphany, traditionally Jan. 6, but observed on the Sunday after the Solemnity of Mary.

The formal end to the Christmas season is the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, this year on a Monday. For those who are strong, the spirit of Christmas may be kept along with many religious orders until Feb. 2, the Feast of the Presentation. Let us who do acknowledge the coming of Christ in the flesh live this season fully.

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD



www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

ACROSS

- 3 Deliver a homily
- 9 "Dies ___"
- 10 The Wise Men came from here
- 11 Honorific title for a bishop
- 12 Gift of the Infant Jesus
- 14 "___ for us"
- 16 Mother-in-law of Ruth
- 17 Christ the King, for example
- 18 Agatha is their patron saint
- 20 Most likely Paul's first epistle (abbr.)
- 22 Deaconess in the early Church
- 24 Nativity scene
- 26 Old Testament book
- 27 ___ Pio
- 30 French-Canadian Catholic singing phenomenon
- 32 "Eternal ___ grant unto them"
- 34 Saint of Lisieux
- 35 Angel's hat?
- 36 Son of Eve
- 37 Partner of Cosmas

DOWN

- 1 "I will raise you up on eagle's ___"
- 2 Altar linen

- 4 Turn away from sin
- 5 Catholic United States Supreme Court justice
- 6 16th century saint with a flowery name
- 7 "...am I my brother's ___?" (Gen 4:9)
- 8 The Archdioceses of Tokyo and Mandalay are here
- 13 ___ of the firstborn (plague)
- 15 "For however many are the promises of God, their ___ is in him." (2 Cor 1:20)
- 17 Brother
- 19 Letter by which a priest is released from one diocese and accepted into another
- 21 The Good ___
- 23 Church days
- 24 Religious instruction, formerly (abbr.)
- 25 Church song leader
- 26 Saint of Avila
- 28 Joseph was told in one to flee to Egypt
- 29 Make up for sin
- 31 The Garden of Eden might have been in this modern-day state
- 33 Brother of Jacob

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PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

AUGUSTINE, Wanda L., 81, Nov. 17
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

BISUTTI, Dino, 94, Nov. 24
St. James the Less Church, Columbus

BOGGS, Rose M., 92, Nov. 4
St. James the Less Church, Columbus

BRESOCK, Barbara A., 91, Oct. 15
St. James the Less Church, Columbus

BRETT, Mary C., 89, Nov. 24
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

BURKHART, Margaret "Marge," 94, Nov. 21
St. Catharine Church, Columbus

COLUMBUS (FROMAN), Patricia (Suell), formerly of Gahanna, 87, Nov. 29
St. Michael Church, Louisville, Ky.

COMPSTON, Pamela R. (Altier), 76, Nov. 29
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

COOPER, William J., 78, Nov. 21
St. Paul Church, Westerville

CROCK, Rita E., 98, Nov. 30
St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville

DENIUS, David L., 81, Dec. 2
St. Edward the Confessor Church, Granville

EDGERLEY, Ronald L. Jr., 42, Nov. 17
St. Elizabeth Church, Columbus

FATH, Jane (Napoliton), 86, Dec. 3
St. Joseph Church, Circleville

FIORE, Nicholas Mario, 71, Nov. 29
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

GABLE, Ronald F., 92, Nov. 23
St. John Church, Logan

HANSON, Rosemary (Wirth), 101, Nov. 25
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

HASWELL, Linda K., 76, Nov. 29
St. Nicholas Church, Zanesville

HOPPER, Anna (Simcoe), 90, Nov. 21
Resurrection Cemetery Chapel, Lewis Center

MAHER, Edward, 85, Sept. 10
St. James the Less Church, Columbus

MANCHAK, John F. III, formerly of Columbus, 75, Nov. 22
St. Maximilian Kolbe Church, Hamilton

MARSHMAN, Judith A., 76, Oct. 28
St. James the Less Church, Columbus

McKENDRY, Linda L. (Wallace), 77, Nov. 24
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Grove City

O'CONNOR, Charles P., 18, Nov. 21
Our Lady of Victory Church, Columbus

SCHMOEGER, Theresa A., 83, Nov. 19
St. Paul Church, Westerville

TARINI, Steven, 65, Nov. 25
Our Lady of Victory Church, Columbus

VARRASSO, Mary B., 85, Dec. 4
St. Edward the Confessor Church, Granville

WILEY, Sharon Lee, 78, Nov. 30
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

WISE, Stephen Z. "Zach," 45, Nov. 17
St. Patrick Church, Columbus

Sister Lorraine Marie Torres, OP

Funeral Mass for Sister Lorraine Marie Torres, OP, 90, who died Monday, Nov. 20, at the Mohun Health Care Center, was celebrated Wednesday, Nov. 29 at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Peace. Burial will be at Rosaryville, Ponchatoula, Louisiana.

She was born on Jan. 6, 1933 in Reserve, Louisiana to Edmond and Sylvia (Songy) Torres.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and Spanish in 1960 from St. Mary's Dominican College in New Orleans and attended Louisiana State University.

She entered the congregation of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary (New Orleans), now the Dominican Sisters of

Peace, on July 2, 1949 and made her profession of vows on Jan. 6, 1951, taking the name Sister Mary Mark.

She taught at elementary and high schools in Louisiana and ministered for 24 years in pastoral care for the elderly at Chateau de Notre Dame in New Orleans and for 10 years in the congregation's infirmary. In 1999, she received the Outstanding Religious Award from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers, E.J. and Dean; and sisters, Marilyn Maurin and Sandra Duhe. She is survived by a brother, Bryan; and a sister, Barbara Hill.

Sister Jacqueline Baum, OP

Funeral Mass for Sister Jacqueline Baum, OP, 89, who died Monday, Nov. 20, was celebrated Friday, Dec. 1 at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Peace. Burial was at St. Joseph Cemetery, Columbus.

She was born on Sept. 20, 1934 in Cincinnati to John and Mildred (Tussey) Baum.

She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education in 1961 from St. Mary of the Springs College (now Ohio Dominican University), a Master of Education degree from Hunter College in New York City in 1972 and a certificate of advanced study in administration from Boston College in 1985.

She entered the congregation of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs (now the Dominican Sisters of Peace) on Sept. 8, 1952 and professed her vows on July 9, 1954, taking the name Sister Joris.

In the Diocese of Columbus, she was

a teacher at Lancaster St. Mary School (1956-1960) and principal at Columbus Christ the King (1975-1983), Delaware St. Mary (1983-1990), Columbus St. Cecilia (1990-1993) and Columbus St. Timothy (1993-1995) schools. She also was administrator of the Mohun Health Care Center (1996-2002), a member of her congregation's ministry team, including time as its secretary general (2002-2009), and served at the Dominican Acres environmental ministry (2010-2013 and 2017).

She also taught at schools in Pennsylvania, Texas, New York and the Diocese of Steubenville and was administrator of the congregation's Oxford, Michigan Motherhouse. She retired from active ministry in 2017.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Ronald, Milton, and Anthony; and sisters Mary Ellen Powell and Kathleen Keely. She is survived by brothers Thomas, John and Dominic.



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St. Padre Pio relic coming to women's conference

The glove of St. Padre Pio will be displayed for veneration at the Columbus Catholic Women's Conference on Saturday, Feb. 17 at the Ohio Expo Center.

Early registration for the conference extends through Monday, Jan. 1. Go to www.columbuscatholicwomen.com for register or for more information.

Watterson finishes as state Division III football runner-up

By Tim Puet

For The Catholic Times

Columbus Bishop Watterson High School football coach Brian Kennedy knew he had the makings of a successful team even before the 2023 season started, and the Eagles wasted no time in backing up his confidence.

They outscored a pair of Division II teams 89-0 in the season's first two games, followed that with four victories against strong opponents, finished with one loss in the regular season and added four playoff victories before losing to Toledo Central Catholic 27-7 in the Division III state championship game on Dec. 1 in Canton.

"We were 12-2 in 2022, made it to the regional finals and had enough players back who knew the experience of a playoff run that they felt they could take things a few steps more," he said. "You could tell from the first two games when we beat Columbus Whetstone 47-0 and Dublin Scioto 42-0, two teams that were in the division above us, that the motivation was there.

"We want to schedule challenging opponents from other areas, and we had that in the next three games with Parma Padua Franciscan, a usually strong program; Tiffin Columbian, which made it to its regional finals; and Chardon, a regional finalist. Then came our annual CCL (Central Catholic League) battle with (Columbus Bishop) Hartley. Once we won that and were 6-0, the feeling really began to develop that this team was something special."

The Eagles closed the regular season with victories over KIPP Columbus, Columbus St. Charles and Harrison (near



Watterson linebacker Dominic Purcell (6), the Division III state defensive player of the year, set a championship-game record with 21 tackles against Toledo Central Catholic.



(Above) Bishop Watterson's AJ. McAninch (7), Elliot Baur (11) and Braxton Rundio (1) run onto the field for the Division III state football championship game with Toledo Central Catholic on Friday, Dec. 1 at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton. (Right) Watterson students and players come together after the game. The Eagles came up short in the final, losing 27-7 to the defending state Division II champions. Photos courtesy John Hulkenberg

Cincinnati) before losing to Columbus St. Francis DeSales, then posted playoff wins over Columbus South, Miami Trace, Bloom-Carroll, Bellefontaine and Celina to make it to the championship game, where they faced an opponent that was unbeaten, ranked No.1 in the Associated Press poll all season and had won 30 straight games, including the 2022 state championship in Division II.

"Toledo Central, first of all, is a very well-coached team," Kennedy said. "Their coach, Greg Dempsey, has been there 24 years and is a graduate of the school. I'm a Watterson graduate and have been here seven years. I think coaching your alma mater does make a difference because it means a little more to you and makes you coach that much harder."



Watterson teammates John Spencer (33) and Elliot Baur embrace after the 27-7 loss in the Division III state final to Toledo Central Catholic.



Kennedy is 51-28 at Watterson, which finished as state runner-up for the fourth time. The others were in 2001, 1999 and 1972. The Eagles won their only state title in 2002. Toledo Central Catholic's state championship was its fifth, with the others in 2022, 2014, 2012 and 2005. The Irish were runners-up in 2015.

"Central is a team with no deficiencies, no weaknesses," Kennedy said. "I knew we would have to play practically a perfect game to beat them, but we gave them a few opportunities and they took advantage of them."

Ben Uhlenhake's 6-yard touchdown run for Watterson in the first quarter opened the scoring, but the Irish responded with touchdowns after an interception, a fumbled punt and a mishandled snap by Watterson to make it 21-7 after three quarters.

Central Catholic was led by Marquan Braswell, a member of the Ohio Prep Sports Writers Association's All-Ohio Division III first team, who scored twice and had 169 yards rushing on 22 carries. Watterson appeared to get within 21-13 about halfway through the fourth quarter, but A.J. McAninch's 12-yard pass to Jake Uhlenhake was ruled to have hit the ground.

The Eagles had three first-team All-Ohioans, led by senior linebacker Dominic Purcell, who also was selected as the division's defensive co-player of the year. McAninch at quarterback and kicker Rudy Kessinger, both seniors, joined him as first-team members, with senior linebacker Braxton Rundio on the second team and junior wide receiver-tight end Jake Uhlenhake on the third team.

Purcell, who also was on last year's All-Ohio first team, finished with 200 tackles, including a game-record 21 in the championship game, as well as 40 tackles for loss, eight sacks, five interceptions and two fumble recoveries. He

had announced before the season that he had accepted an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

"I can't say enough about Dominic and his work ethic," Kennedy said. "You could tell that last year when he was elected a captain and was only a junior. You could see him grow into the epitome of leadership and be more comfortable as a leader in and out of the classroom all through this year. He's the type of person that should do well at the academy in every way.

"And you can see the kind of football player he is from looking at the names of the guys whose record for championship-game tackles he surpassed – players like (former Ohio State and NFL star) Chris Spielman."

McAninch, the starting quarterback since the middle of the 2022 season, finished with 249 pass completions in 390 attempts for 3,391 yards, with 38 touchdowns and 11 interceptions. Kennedy said McAninch's best sport is baseball, and he will be attending Marshall on a baseball scholarship, joining two brothers who also played the sport at the Division I level.

"A.J. is another whose leadership you could see blossom as the year went on, more in a quiet way than Dominic. He wasn't one for spectacular plays but was efficient and effective."

His leading receivers, both juniors, were Jake Uhlenhake with 68 catches for 1,130 yards and 13 touchdowns and Cal Mangini with 61 receptions for 727 yards and four scores. The team's leading rusher was Zack Weber, also a junior, with 826 yards and 13 touchdowns on 154 carries.

"Jake missed almost all of last year with an injury and worked really hard to make up for that lost time," Kenne-

See WATTERSON, Page 23

English as a new language takes flight at Hilltop school

By Dr. Holly Peterson, Ph.D.

Since arriving in the Diocese of Columbus earlier this year, one of the highlights of my time has been visiting all 50 of Our Catholic Schools across 23 counties in Ohio.

During my recent travels, I happened upon a little gem nestled in the Hilltop neighborhood of Columbus: St. Mary Magdalene. The Hilltop community, known for its rich diversity, is reflected in the student body at St. Mary Magdalene, as evidenced by 40% of its students speaking Spanish as their primary language.

That is just the beginning, however. Upon entering the school, it is wholly evident that this is a special place. The halls are filled with statuary and pictures at student height level, while prayers are written in both Spanish and English. The daily morning gathering is bilingual, culminating with a final prayer prayed in Spanish by 250 exuberant voices.

In speaking with Principal Courtney Caric, I was curious about how it evolved to the diverse school it is today. When she joined St. Mary Magdalene three years ago, she came with a vision, which complemented strides made at the school by the previous administra-

tion.

"[My vision is for] students in this school to have the same opportunity for an excellent education that I had at St. Catharine (Bexley)," she said.

This vision led to the hiring of fourth grade teacher Jen Maschari who "had a strong root belief that all kids have the right to have the best education with cultural and linguistic supports. She strives for excellence," Caric said.

Maschari's classroom is an encounter with a word-rich environment. Phrases, words and instructions are on every wall in both Spanish and English.

With nearly 50% of her fourth-graders speaking Spanish at home, Maschari recalled, "I realized that I didn't have the tools to teach English language learners well."

Doing what teachers do, she enrolled in the University of Notre Dame Alliance for Catholic Education's Hernandez Fellows program to gain not only core instructional practices for her Spanish speakers but strategies for excellent pedagogy to assist all students.

"Because the majority of languages overlap, I've learned to use cognates, leveraging the Latin root of Spanish and English to assist with language acquisition," she shared.

For example, Spanish speaking stu-

dents use their knowledge of the word observación to understand the meaning of the English word observation. Maschari also learned to use sentence stems and pictures to help her students write.

"Kids are seeing words in their language throughout the classroom and it makes them proud of their culture, while English-speaking students are learning words in a new language," Maschari said.

The Hernandez Fellows program has opened Maschari's eyes in other ways, too. Because English is not necessarily the second language for her students, it is a new language, the acronym ENL (English as a New Language) rather than ESL (English as a Second Language) is used.

In addition, meeting and getting to know parents now is a regular part of her curricula.

"Family is very important to my students, and when I'm invited, I've found home to be places of pride and faith," Maschari said.

She has parents who sew, do intricate tile work, garden, and one father plays rock and roll guitar! All these encounters she brings to the classroom, creating greater connection between learning and the home life of her students.

Principals in the Diocese of Columbus look for teachers to reflect the diversity of the student populations of their schools, but there is a national shortage of teachers from diverse backgrounds. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), the number of Black, Hispanic and Asian American teachers has increased over the decades, but has not kept pace with the rapid growth in student diversity.

The most recent data from NCES showed 79% of teachers in the United States identify as non-Hispanic White. That said, programs like the Hernandez Fellows program are invaluable in equipping teachers with the tools needed to help ENL students acquire a new language.

"The Hernandez Fellows program has been invaluable for me as a teacher and advocate," Maschari noted. "There is a fire in me to serve and serve well, and to follow the Church's call to welcoming all."

To learn more about the work being done in the Hernandez Fellows program, visit <https://ace.nd.edu/programs/enl/enl-hernandez-fellows>.

Dr. Holly Peterson, Ph.D., is the assistant superintendent for academics in the diocese's Office of Catholic Schools.



Merry Christmas

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. — Isaiah 7:14

The Ohio Dominican University family sends you and your loved ones best wishes for a blessed Christmas and a wonderful 2024! May each day of the New Year be filled with abundant blessings, joy and peace.

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Art teacher Yvette Hardy discusses the design for a blank wall outside a temporary classroom in the gym at Columbus St. Mary School in the German Village area during construction.

St. Mary German Village students transform drywall into art

Columbus St. Mary School in the German Village area turned its temporary classrooms in the gym this fall into an ongoing art project.

During a construction project to add teaching and learning spaces that will include the latest technology and systems, students in grades two through five were moved into the gym. Pre-K and preschool classrooms were relocated in an area that will become Heritage Hall, a multipurpose space that will be open to the school and parish.

Before the start of classes in August, a discussion that started with the thought of creating a paper sign to welcome the 443 students in preschool through eighth grade back to school sparked an idea that led to an ongoing project under the direction of art teacher Yvette Hardy.

"In the absence of having a (permanent) classroom, I could paint the (temporary) walls, which would allow students to still participate in art recess without a designated art space," Hardy said.

After receiving the go-ahead from principal Gina Stull, Hardy began preparations for the students to turn the drywall separating the eight temporary classrooms in the gym into works of art.

She reached out to teachers for themes

or lessons that they'd like to see on the walls outside their classrooms. Hardy decided on an alphabet theme to match letters with a word or idea that reflects the school's identity and mission.

"As this project is in motion, there is no definitive master plan for what everything looks like," Hardy said. "Each wall has developed as it is being created. Often, students will share ideas in conversation that will inspire ideas for the wall."

"Some ideas developed with experimental processes, and others evolved with respect to color or materials. Every wall carries a layer of meaning as designated by its respective letter."

The goal is to complete all letters of the alphabet before the walls are removed. She said the walls have transformed the gym into a unique and inviting space where students can interact with their art and one another in a different way.

"I hope students take away a new respect and love for art, whether as a participant or observer," Hardy said. "I hope students are inspired to think of new ideas and possibilities when they see the variety of abilities, materials and imagery."

"Students often ask, 'Why are we painting the walls if they're going to take them down?' I explain that we are appre-



St. Mary School students work on painting a wall of a temporary classroom set up in the gym during construction of a new addition to the parish and school. Photos courtesy St. Mary School



The letter B is the theme for one of the temporary classroom walls at St. Mary School.

ciating the walls while they are here. We talk about how artists often do not keep their art forever. They may sell it, give it away or create it with the intention that it will only exist for just a short time.

"This has been the best part of the project for me, the process of creating art with the students, not the planning or product. The process has created moments of dialogue, respect, creativity, gratitude, pride, connection, problem-solving and learning that can be hard to achieve in the regular classroom setting."

"This process has allowed for kids to



St. Mary German Village School art teacher Yvette Hardy

get the attention that they sometimes need on a personal level."

The construction project, which began in the summer, is scheduled to be completed in January.

"Ms. Hardy is one of the purest and sweetest souls I have ever encountered," Stull said. "She is a blessing to our students and inspires so much creativity in them. The process of creating this gem from plain drywall has been so fun to see. The transformation has been miraculous."

WATTERSON, continued from Page 21

dy said. "It seemed like whenever we needed a big play, he made it." He and his brother Ben, a freshman, are sons of former Ohio State and Newark Catholic star Jeff Uhlenhake, an assistant on Kennedy's staff.

"Zack Weber is another player who stepped up and helped tremendously more and more as the season went on," Kennedy said. "He's also a wrestler and, as is so often the case, wrestlers seem to make good football players because of the discipline involved in both sports."

Kessinger joined Purcell as back-to-

back first-team All-Ohio players. He scored 114 points this year on 66 of 67 extra point attempts and 16 field goals in 18 tries. "He's going to Eastern Michigan on scholarship because he was so dependable," Kennedy said. "We'll miss the feeling of assurance he brought to the kicking game."

With the number of players with recognized talent he has coming back in 2024, Kennedy hopes for another strong season and long playoff run.

"The schedule's almost identical," he said. "We're still looking for a first-week

opponent and have Westerville North replacing Whetstone, but otherwise we play the same strong out-of-area teams and our CCL opponents Watterson, St. Charles and DeSales. Every one of those

St. Brigid School plans open house on Jan. 28

Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare School, 7175 Avery Road, will host an open house from 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 28. Representatives of the three-time Blue Ribbon Award-winning school will be on hand to answer questions.

league games is like playing in a playoff atmosphere and is good preparation for the postseason.

"We have a strong tradition to uphold and look forward to adding to it."

Registration for preschool to eighth-grade students is underway through Friday, Feb. 2.

To RSVP for the open house or for more information, go to stbrigidofkildare.com/apply.

Catholic schools mark Advent with prayer, service to others

During Advent, schools across the Diocese of Columbus are helping students prepare their hearts for Jesus' coming.

Columbus St. Andrew



For several years, students at the school, preschool and parish school of religion have hosted an Advent service project to benefit the Run the Race Center in Columbus, where inner city children can go after school and on weekends for tutoring, homework help, sports, activities and more.

Students collected items, packaged them and held a prayer service to bless the gifts before they were delivered to the center for Christmas.

Columbus St. Charles



Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School has been honoring the season of Advent with a number of special liturgies, activities and student initiatives.

Principal Jim Lower starts each school day by reading a special Advent Prayer over the intercom as the candle is lit on the large Advent wreath in main hallway's foyer.

On Dec. 5, priests from across the diocese helped conduct a daylong series of Advent penance services in the school's Mother of Mercy Chapel attended by every student during their scheduled religion class period that included prayers, silent reflection time, and confessions.

The St. Charles Student Council is also sponsoring a Cardinal's Spirit of Giving campaign that provides three opportunities for our students to "be our brother's keeper" and help others who

are in need: collecting gifts for the Toys for Tots program, a "Giving Tree" with gloves, mittens, scarves, and hats donated to the families of Columbus Holy Spirit Church and a day of service at the Toys for Tots in Columbus.

Columbus Bishop Hartley



On Nov. 30, Columbus Bishop Hartley High School students participated in an Advent penance service with confessions heard by the school chaplain and priests from feeder parishes.

Also during Advent, students decorated the House System display cases with Nativity scenes using their artistic talents. On Dec. 1, students spent time after school decorating each doorway, locker and hallway to spread Christmas joy.

Chillicothe Bishop Flaget



On Nov. 30, the school held an Advent retreat led by the seventh- and eighth-grade students. Students from preschool through grade six moved through various stations to learn more about special traditions and people who help us in our celebration of Advent.

Students designed their own Advent wreath, sang the antiphons, learned about the liturgical calendar, put together a puzzle of Our Lady of Guadalupe, traveled the hallways looking for "room in the inn" in the Las Posadas tradition, decorated Jesse tree ornaments and heard the stories of Sts. Andrew, Lucy, Nicholas and Juan Diego and the Im-

maculate Conception.

Columbus Bishop Watterson



The student council again coordinated two major giving drives for the holiday season in an annual event dubbed "Season of Giving." A monetary collection raised more than \$4,580 to benefit the St. Lawrence Haven toy drive, while a food drive collection generated 7,350 non-perishable items to be donated to the St. Francis Center in McArthur.

Columbus Our Lady of Bethlehem



In December, Mike and Joy Dattilo, parents of kindergarten teacher Jenna Yanko, brought 35 pieces of their 500-piece Fontanini Nativity collection from Cincinnati to share with the students. The Dattilos immersed the students in the story of Jesus' birth through the pieces.

Columbus St. Catharine



On Dec. 6, students received treats in their shoes in celebration of the Feast of St. Nicholas. Eighth-graders helped fill the shoes and served as ELVES for younger students.

Columbus St. Agatha



As part of the school's year-long service to the community, fifth- and eighth-graders helped make "magical reindeer food" of oats and glitter to be distributed to sick children and their siblings at this year's NC4K (Nellie's Champions for Kids) Christmas party.

NC4K supports kids fighting cancer so that "no kid fights cancer alone." This project is near and dear to school principal Veronica Stemen because her son, Troy, battled and beat leukemia six years ago.

Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare



Following a morning visit on Dec. 6 from St. Nicholas on horseback, the school community made prayer bracelets for the children and families served by the Columbus-based non-profit A Kid Again. The service project was planned by the eighth-grade service committee.

Gahanna St. Matthew Pre-K



Students created Advent wreaths after learning about the meaning and colors of the season.