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The Nativity scene outside St. Joseph Cathedral depicts the anticipation of the birth of Jesus as parishes across the diocese begin the observance of Advent, Page 7

New pastor installed at Christ the King



Father Brian Stacy, OFM Cap. (center) offers his signature on Saturday, Nov. 22 as a testimony of his intention to serve as pastor of Columbus Christ the King Church with Bishop Earl Fernandes as a witness after Father Stacy made a renewal of the Oath of Fidelity on the Solemnity of the parish's patron, Christ the King. Also at the altar are Deacon John Paul Stepnowski (left), diocesan seminarian and Mass emcee Matthew Waldman (second from left) and Deacon Tom Phillips (right).

CT photo by Ken Snow

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Holy Day observed on Dec. 8

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, which will be celebrated this year on Monday, Dec. 8, is a Holy Day of Obligation.

With the holy day falling on a Monday in 2025, there will be no evening Masses of Anticipation for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Sunday, Dec. 7.

All Masses on Sunday, Dec. 7, will be celebrated for the Second Sunday of Advent.

The normal conditions apply on the holy day for the obligation to attend Mass, meaning that Catholics are to attend Mass on both Sunday and on Monday.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is one of the holy days of obligation observed annually in the United States. The others are the Solemnities of Mary, Mother of God on Jan. 1, Easter Sunday, the Ascension (abrogated in most U.S. dioceses, including Columbus, to the Sunday following the Thursday of the sixth week of Easter), the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Aug. 15, All Saints on Nov. 1 and the Nativity of the Lord on Dec. 25.

The Immaculate Conception honors the Blessed Mother's purity and that she was preserved from the stain of original sin by a special grace at the moment of her conception in anticipation of her becoming the mother

of Jesus Christ at the incarnation. It is sometimes misunderstood that the Immaculate Conception celebrates Jesus' conception in the womb of Our Lady.

The Church defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 with Pope Pius IX's papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus*. Four years later, the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, France, under the title of the Immaculate Conception.

The U.S. bishops had adopted a decree in 1846 during a meeting in Baltimore at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary to make Our Lady the patroness of the United States. In 1857, Pope Pius IX approved the decree to place the U.S. under her patronage.

Mary's purity serves as a reminder of her role in salvation history and as an inspiration for the faithful to seek holiness in their lives.

As an additional reminder for those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, Evening Prayer for Sunday, Dec. 7 is for the Second Sunday of Advent and not Evening Prayer I for the Immaculate Conception.

All Catholics in the diocese are advised to check their parish bulletins and websites for Mass times on Monday, Dec. 8.



Three diocesan seminarians were instituted as lectors or acolytes by Bishop Earl Fernandes on Sunday, Nov. 16 at the Pontifical College Josephinum. Pictured are (from left) Matthew Waldman (acolyte); Father Steven Beseau, rector and president of the Josephinum; Bishop Fernandes; Miguel De La Torre (acolyte) and Absalom Hall (lector).

Photo courtesy Pontifical College Josephinum

Seminarians installed as acolytes, lector

Seminarians Miguel De La Torre and Matthew Waldman were instituted as acolytes and Absalom Hall as a lector by Bishop Earl Fernandes on Sunday, Nov. 16 at the Pontifical College Josephinum.

All three seminarians from the Diocese of Columbus are in the configuration stage of formation. Bishop Fernandes serves as vice chancellor of the Josephinum.

Once termed minor orders, the ministries of lector and acolyte were established by Pope Paul VI in 1973 with the apostolic letter *Ministeria Quaedam*.

Lectors are commissioned to proclaim the Word of God in the liturgical assembly and to instruct children and adults in the faith to

prepare them to receive the sacraments. Acolytes are entrusted with attending to the altar, assisting the deacon and priest at Mass, and distributing Holy Communion during the liturgy and to the sick.

In the rite, each candidate is handed a symbol of the ministry to which he is being instituted. Lectors receive a Book of the Gospels and acolytes are presented with a ciborium, as the bishop calls the men to fulfill the ministry faithfully.

Institution to these ministries is an important step on the journey toward priesthood. Typically, seminarians are instituted as lectors in their first year of the configuration stage and as acolytes the following year.

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Diocese of Columbus

Evangelization summit stresses urgent need for family catechesis

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

The fifth annual Evangelization Leadership Summit held Saturday, Nov. 15 was not simply a meeting of parish catechists, educators and evangelists. It was a call to urgency.

The summit, organized by the diocesan Department of Evangelization & Catechesis and conducted at Ohio Dominican University (ODU), united the diocese's chief faith formators, including priests, laity and consecrated religious. Keynote and breakout speakers stressed the significance of their roles.

"We want to create an opportunity for the person to be a beggar before God, that urgency to see Christ and to share that urgency with others among us," Dr. Marlon De La Torre, senior director of the Department of Evangelization & Catechesis, noted in his opening remarks.

The summit began with daily Mass celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes in ODU's Matesich Theatre. The bishop delivered the first keynote later that morning.

His bilingual presentation "To God through Knowledge," delivered in English and Spanish, proposed education as a means for encountering God. Parents, he said, are the primary educators of their children, also noting the Columbus diocese's move toward family-based catechesis and formation.

All of the baptized share a co-responsibility in imparting knowledge of the faith, he explained. If education and evangelization efforts do not lead to holiness and sanctify families, they fail.

Bishop Fernandes noted many failures in catechesis and formation occurred the past 60 years.

"If you want to have a strong Church, you need to have strong families," he stressed. "Our families are hurting, so we have to work on healing the family."

The bishop also spoke about the diocese's recent change in age for receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. The sacrament will be administered to children beginning in fourth grade.

"Younger people are facing greater challenges," he said, alluding to a need for strengthening through Confirmation. "I don't think parents today really talk to their kids or understand properly what their kids are going through."

"Priests hear confessions. We get a clearer picture. It's not out there in the public eye, but you really see how badly our children are hurting."

Bishop Fernandes offered catechists four principles, reflected on by Pope Leo XIV during the Jubilee of Educators – part of the Church's 2025 Jubilee Year – in October.

Interiority, unity, love and joy, he said, can be a framework for parents in shaping and forming their children.

The bishop also expressed the value of a parent's witness. He reflected on several childhood stories, noting the impact of observing his parents authentically live the Catholic faith.

Dave VanVickle, a speaker from Pittsburgh on the topic of spiritual warfare from a Catholic perspective, followed with the second keynote, "The Battle for our Children's Souls."

Parents need to live their faith fervently and model commitment to the Gospel for their children, the father of five urged. "We can never expect to raise saints if we're not going to be saints ourselves."

He recognized many families wrestle in bringing their children back to the faith.

VanVickle challenged such families to not simply pray for their child's return.

"A lot of the people that I work with, their

If you want to have a strong Church, you need to have strong families.

— Bishop Earl Fernandes

intentions are very social," he explained. "They want their kid back in the family. They want them to not be a scandal. They want a lot of things."

"You kind of have to ask, more than anything, do you want them to just know Jesus? That's what we have to pray for, is that our children will know the Lord and know Him in an intimate way."

VanVickle also addressed the culture's "obsession with balance." He noted the prevalence of buzz words such as "balance" and "self-care" that are often used but not found in the Bible.

"I want to say to my kids, 'No, go and kill yourself for the Lord. Go and be a martyr,'" he expressed. "I don't want any balance in their life, and I want them to see in our life that there's a radical aspect to it."

He added that his children should recognize a significant difference in how the VanVickle family lives versus the world. Faithful should pour themselves out for others and strive for heaven, not to create balance in their lives.

Prayer teaches children to hear God's voice among the noise. Millions of voices are competing for their hearts, he added. They are exposed to numerous different messages.

He emphasized the importance of family prayer. Praying the rosary as a family, he acknowledged, can be difficult and unenjoyable but necessary.

The VanVickles established a daily family rosary before Dave's wife, who battled cancer for four years, died in 2023.

"I had this moment in my head," he recalled, "where it was like, you know, it's time for me to stop with trying to save her life and start preparing her for the next life."

He noted how important the discipline was for his children when that suffering occurred.

"So many of us, we protect them from the serious problems, and we protect them from the cross, and maybe we let them mature a little bit too late," he recognized. "All of a sudden, when something bad happens, we tell them to turn to the Lord, but they don't know how."

"We have to instill in them every single day that we are there, begging the Lord, begging our Blessed Mother for them to be in our life and be seriously in our life."

Instilling prayer can also prepare for evangelization.

VanVickle recalled joyfully praying the rosary as a family at his wife's hospital bedside, drawing the attention of nurses and patients. His children evangelized to hospital staff and were concerned about the salvation of the dying patient next door.

"It's just this thing that my kids understand," he reflected. "The answer to most of life's problems are not practical – that it's the Lord."

He also encouraged exposing children to various vocations: marriage, priesthood and consecrated religious life. While not forcing a vocation, VanVickle explained, it is an act of faith for parents to say, "Yes, Lord, they're yours," and be open to "that radical reorientation to the Gospel."

Other speakers included Dr. Juan Ren-



Dave VanVickle, one of the keynote presenters at the Evangelization Leadership Summit on Nov. 15, speaks about spiritual warfare and the battle for children's souls. Photos courtesy Aaron Christy



Andrea Patch of NET Ministries provides insights on small group discipleship and adult mentorship during the diocese's Evangelization Leadership Summit at Ohio Dominican University.



A Mass celebrated by Bishop Fernandes and priests serving in the diocese is offered during the Evangelization Leadership Summit in Ohio Dominican University's Matesich Theatre.



Religious sisters serving in the diocese listen to one of the speakers at the diocese's fifth annual Evangelization Leadership Summit.



Dr. Juan Rendon from the Diocese of Dallas gives a presentation in Spanish at the Evangelization Leadership Summit about Catholic families as the domestic church.

don from the Diocese of Dallas who spoke about Catholic families as the domestic Church. The bilingual speaker, who holds a doctorate in spirituality from The Catholic University of America in Washington, delivered his keynote in Spanish.

Breakout sessions were offered by various speakers, including Deacon John Green of the Diocese of Cleveland. In addition to serving his parish, Green is the mission expansion officer for Evangelical Catholic, which offers a people-centered approach to evangelization.

The deacon shared several of Evangelical Catholic's materials to reach friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members. Green addressed nurturing adult children back to the Catholic faith through practical conversations.

Andrea Patch, eastern regional director for NET (National Evangelization Teams) Ministries, also spoke.

Patch offered parents a guide to small-group discipleship and adult mentorship.

She shared statistics that approximately 1,700 young people exist for every one paid youth minister.

NET missionaries lead small groups, mentor youth one-on-one and participate in the parish or school where they serve. Teams of Catholic young adults also travel the country, proclaiming the Gospel to young people.

The summit concluded with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Exposition and benediction was led by Father Adam Streitenberger, vicar for evangelization and director at the Columbus St. Thomas More Newman Center near Ohio State University. He was assisted by diocesan seminarians Miguel De La Torre and Mark Jewett.

The sixth annual Evangelization Leadership Summit was announced for Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026.

Bishop Fernandes shares insights at Evangelization Summit

The following is Bishop Earl Fernandes' presentation at the diocese's Evangelization Leadership Summit on Saturday, Nov. 15 at Ohio Dominican University in Columbus.

"AD DEUM PER SCIENTIAM"

Part I: The Object and Place of Catechesis, Education and Formation

My Dear Friends in Christ:

Good morning. I am very happy to be with you for this Evangelization Leadership Summit. Let me express my gratitude to Fr. Adam Streitenberger, Marlon de la Torre and the Office of Evangelization, and to all who have made this event possible, especially Ohio Dominican University and the Dominican Sisters of Peace for hosting the event.

"Ad Deum per Scientiam"—to God through knowledge: these were the words sown into the patch for the National Honor Society at my high school. Here in the Diocese of Columbus, I have set out some priorities: vocations, evangelization, education and formation, and social outreach. All of these are in some ways inter-connected, but this morning, I want to reflect on education as a means for encountering God. I wish to do so in light of the recent Jubilee for Education and because we wish to engage parents, as primary educators of their children in the faith, in the mission of evangelization, which, in this diocese, will tend more and more toward family-based catechesis and formation.

Fifty years ago in *Evangelii nuntiandi*, Pope St. Paul VI stressed that evangelization - which has the aim of bringing the Good News to the whole of humanity, so that all may live by it - is a rich, complex and dynamic reality, made up of elements, or one could say moments, that are essential and different from each other, and that must all be kept in view simultaneously. Catechesis is one of these moments - a very remarkable one - in the whole process of evangelization. (cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 17-24; *Catechesis tradendae*, 18).

Within a decade, in *Catechesis tradendae*, Pope St. John Paul II communicated very clearly the essential content of catechesis:

To put it more precisely: within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know His "mystery," the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message, and the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him. (CT, 20)

Although catechesis, education, and evangelization are distinct, they are certainly related to one another. Pope Leo recently issued an Apostolic Letter, "Drawing New Maps of Hope", marking the 60th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's document on Education. He recognized that the world in which we live today - that is, the context in which we evangelize - is changing and, in fact, has changed. He noted that we live in a complex, fragmented, digitized educational environment. His letter was an invitation to propose a "cosmology of Christian *paideia*", rooted in the Gospel, which can offer "educational constellations", which he described as "experiences that are both humble and powerful, capable of interpreting the times, of preserving the unity between faith and reason, between thought and life, between knowledge and



Bishop Earl Fernandes presents a keynote address at the diocese's Evangelization Leadership Summit on Nov. 15 at Ohio Dominican University.

Photo courtesy Aaron Christy

justice." (Drawing New Maps of Hope, 1.2).

Educating is an act of hope and a passion that is renewed because it manifests the promise we see in the future of humanity. It is, therefore, a gift handed on from generation to generation, especially in the family. It is not merely technical knowledge to be learned, but it is something more that prepares one for life and eternal life. We are not educated or formed in isolation, but in a community. Truth, he notes (3.2), is sought in community, but the first school of humanity is the family (4.1).

Time and again, we say that parents are the first educators of the children in the ways of faith, yet rarely do we equip or engage parents and families to fulfill their task and their vocation; rather, we tend to compartmentalize education - Catholic schools, PSR programs, etc. - rather than recognizing that the education of humanity involves formation of the whole person - spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. Education today is reduced sometimes to acquiring basic or technical skills or to measuring success on the basis of efficiency. Catholic education measures success based on whether the person encounters God through the pursuit of knowledge and whether such education serves the person and the common good.

Acknowledging the principle of subsidiarity, we must reiterate that the family is the primary cell, the building block, for society. The family is precisely the place where authentic education can happen. Failure to strengthen families, which are also broken and fragmented, or to equip families for their collective mission of forming the whole person will hinder the Church's mission of evangelization, which is the reason for which the Church exists.

Pope Leo writes:

"The family remains the first place of education. Catholic schools collaborate with parents; they do not substitute them, because the "duty ... devolves primarily on them". The educational alliance requires intentionality, listening and co-responsibility. ... It is both hard work and a blessing: when it works, it inspires trust; when it fails, everything becomes more fragile." (Drawing New Maps, 5.3)

With a nod to the Global Compact on Education, the Holy Father reiterated its seven pathways one of which is "recognizing the family as the first educator." Nevertheless, the context in which families educate and evangelize has changed. As such, the Pope listed three priorities: creating a space for the "inner life" - for prayer, silence, and discernment; to educate with the judicious use of technology and artificial intelligence (which demands vigilance and education

in spiritual, emotion, and ecological intelligence); and, thirdly, educating young people in the way of peace, in the language of non-violence, reconciliation, and in the construction of building bridges.

The environment in which the Gospel message is transmitted can seem dark and intimidating. In his homily on All Saints Day for the Jubilee for Education, Pope Leo, quoting from St. John Henry Newman, now a doctor of the Church, reflected:

This reference to the darkness that surrounds us echoes one of Saint John Henry Newman's best-known texts, the hymn "Lead, Kindly Light." In that beautiful prayer, we come to realize that we are far from home, our feet are unsteady, we cannot interpret clearly the way ahead. Yet none of this impedes us, since we have found our Guide: "Lead, Kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on;" "Lead, Kindly Light, The night is dark, and I am far from home, Lead Thou me on."

The task of education is precisely to offer this Kindly Light to those who might otherwise remain imprisoned by the particularly insidious shadows of pessimism and fear. For this reason, I would like to say to you: let us disarm the false reasons for resignation and powerlessness, and let us share the great reasons for hope in today's world. (Homily, Solemnity of All the Saints, 1 November 2025)

Christ, the object and content of catechesis, education, and formation, is the guide whom we have found, yet we also find authentic guides, in the lives of the saints, who "shine like stars in the world" (Phil 2:15), and in the lives of so many parents, catechists, teachers, and members of the Christian faithful. The task is daunting but not impossible.

This is not an impossible task for parents. Archbishop Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, who ordained me, said that he would have been a much better priest and bishop if only he had remembered five words his parents taught him in kindergarten: "Please; I'm sorry; and thank you." I recall the words of Hans Urs von Balthasar: "Sanctity is theology on its knees." In my family, we spent a lot of time on our knees, praying the daily rosary. We were all very intelligent; my mother was a teacher, and my father was a doctor, but they were both people of faith.

We learned, were educated and evangelized by the witness of their lives. For example, in those days, we would walk to the hospital to visit my father during the day. Invariably, he was in the library researching some medical condition or treatment to be able to help his patients or he was in the chapel praying for his patients. He taught us that faith and reason were connected; that technical knowledge was

not enough to heal the whole person; and that we needed to rely on the strength of God. I remember how tired he was when he would come home from work, yet he always made time to teach us our catechism - one-on-one - and to review the lessons with us. Today, that might seem extraordinary, given the pace of life, but I cannot say that my father was not busy. He and my mother accepted responsibility for us, and there was nothing more important than getting us boys to heaven, especially through study - ad Deum per scientiam.

Part II: Fundamental Principles of Christian Education

On Friday, October 31, 2025, Pope Leo gave an address to Catholic educators on the occasion of the Jubilee of the World of Education. As an Augustinian, he reflected on four principles, which I believe, can also be useful for us as catechists and evangelists to keep in mind and which we can serve as a useful framework for parents as they shape and form their children: interiority, unity, love, and joy.

Interiority. When he opened the Jubilee for Educators on October 27, Pope Leo addressed the students from Pontifical Universities. That day, the Gospel was taken from Luke (13:10-17), which recounted the story of the woman who was bent over, with a crooked spine. She had suffered in that condition for eighteen years until she encountered Jesus, who touched her life and delivered her from the evil spirit which afflicted her. The Pope suggested that the woman's condition resembled that of ignorance - of being closed in oneself, commenting that "When human beings are incapable of seeing beyond themselves, beyond their own experiences, ideas and convictions, beyond their own projects, then they remain imprisoned, enslaved and incapable of forming mature judgements." (Homily, 27 October 2025)

Today, young people face this risk. They are always looking at their phones. They are constantly taking selfies, or looking at how many views they have on social media, but even as technological connections grow, we see a rise in the pandemic of loneliness, isolation, and mental illness, demonstrated in Jonathan Haidt's book, *The Anxious Generation*, but which is observed by all of us. Rather than engaging in life and being educated in the things of God or contemplating creation, the young are turned inward. The Holy Father pointed out that "...in reality, many of the things that truly matter in life - we might say, the most fundamental things - do not come from ourselves; we receive them from others. They come to us through our teachers, encounters and life experiences. This is an experience of grace, for it heals us from self-absorption." (Ibid.)

In this regard, the encounters, life experiences, and education that we receive in the family are critical. There are many things we can learn from books, but we do not learn love. We are concerned not with the exclusive education of the mind but of the whole person - of our humanity - in the teachings of the Lord Jesus, but more precisely in the way of the Lord Jesus - in a whole way of life - in a vision of life.

The Pope noted:

... The healed woman receives hope, for she can finally lift her eyes and see something different, can see in a new way. This especially happens when we encounter Christ in our lives, when we open ourselves up to a life-changing truth capable of making us step out of ourselves and freeing us from our self-absorption. Those who study are

SUMMIT: Bishop Fernandes shares insights on evangelization, Continued from Page 4

“lifted up,” broadening their horizons and perspectives in order to recover a vision that does not look downward, but is capable of looking upward: toward God, others and the mystery of life. (Ibid.)

The task of the family in catechesis and evangelization is to help the young person look upward to God and to the mystery of life. As immigrants, my parents strongly emphasized education. My brothers and I all did well in school, but my parents often took us to the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio. It is a majestic basilica in the middle of farm country, a little more than an hour from here. The basilica was staffed by the Conventual Franciscans. The organ was magnificent, and it was there that we were exposed to Exposition and Benediction. It was there that we heard the *O Salutaris* and *Tantum Ergo* sung. It was there, with the beautiful mural in the apse and magnificent windows, that our Catholic imagination was formed. There were other devotions – rosary processions, prayers with the relics of Saint Anthony and the True Cross, lighting of candles, kissing the wounds of Christ in the sepulcher – that also shaped the Catholic imagination. The processions which took place, when the weather was nice, went from the basilica to an outdoor shrine, where we could also appreciate the beauty of creation. There was also a park, which allowed us to play and have fun.

All of this was integral to our being evangelized. My parents broadened our perspective of the Church and the world. We were not restricted to the guitar Masses of our parish church but experienced the majesty of truly sacred music. Our parish church was built in 1955, so there was no real artwork or stained-glass windows; now we could see streams of light and understand the bible stories, even before we could really read. There we could visualize and contemplate the Church Triumphant in the mural in the apse in the church, while contemplating the God who made all things, in the outdoor park. All the while, Christ was at the center. Pope Leo said: “When we encounter Christ in our lives, we open ourselves up to a life-changing truth capable of making us step out of ourselves and freeing us from our self-absorption.”

Families offer us perspective which allow us to look outward and upward – toward God and neighbor. At the same time, in his audience with educators, the Pope also encouraged greater interiority, quoting Augustine who says that “the sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is within” and again “Do not look without, return to yourself, for truth dwells within you.” The Holy Spirit has been poured into our hearts. Christ, the True Teacher, is within and comes to us in the sacraments that we might experience His grace. The content of the faith which we teach in our classrooms and formation programs is necessary, but it will remain as mere content unless it is nurtured by the life of prayer. Commitment by educators and parents to prayer – to interiority – is essential for evangelization, because young people are looking for credible guides on their journey of faith.

Unity. We live in a polarized and fragmented world. Pope Leo’s episcopal motto is *In illo uno unum* – One in the One. Only in Christ do we find true unity. Sharing our knowledge and experience of Christ – sharing the wisdom of our Tradition – is a great act of love. Leaving future generations in ignorance of Christ, the Scriptures and Tradition, the richness of our spiritual and liturgical traditions, is not an act of charity but is an act of cruelty, leaving them to suffer like the woman who was bent over.

Jesus Himself, at the Last Supper, prayed: “That they may be one Father, as you and I are one.” Why? “So that the world may believe that you sent me.” Here we begin to understand how unity is essentially

connected to evangelization. Nevertheless, we are experiencing polarization, which sometimes leads to violence. In the educational context, this means teaching others to “decenter” themselves and to educate them to the idea of journey with others.

About seven or eight years ago, the University of Mary published a book, entitled *From Christendom to an Apostolic Age*. It acknowledged the rapid secularization that had taken place. Rather than trying to evangelize and re-evangelize in a Christian context, we find ourselves now much more in a context like that of the apostles – one of persecution, marginalization, and paganism. Five years after the publication of the work, a second book was published, entitled *The Religion of the Day*.

Often, we hear about the rise of the “nones”, the religiously unaffiliated. Many will say, “I am spiritual but not religious,” yet, in fact, the authors point out that they practice a type of religion. It is similar to the Christian narrative, but it is attempting to replace the Judeo-Christian narrative. It retains some elements such as the call for justice. We all experience, because of the effects of original sin, alienation and injustice, which also brings about some feelings of anger and resentment. Saint Thomas argues that the passions move us to act; therefore, many people, with political motivations, capitalize on people’s experience of alienation, injustice and anger to mobilize them to stamp out injustice.

This narrative for “stamping out injustice” goes something like this: Many people experience grave injustice. This injustice is systematic. If we eliminate unjust social structures and systems of injustice, life would be better for everyone. But we must ask: Who is responsible for the unjust systems, for the oppression and alienation we are experiencing? If we cancel or eliminate these people, life would be better. We would have peace and unity. The experience of alienation, injustice, and anger will go away. This becomes the justification for social and political violence as seen in some of the activism of some “social justice warriors.”

The starting point is not solidarity, fraternity, or Christ Himself. In this narrative, rather than seeing someone with whom I disagree as a brother or sister, the other is viewed as an enemy to be eliminated. For this reason, the recent Popes and Catholic Social Doctrine have emphasized the values of solidarity and human fraternity.

Recently, I gave remarks at a talk at the Ohio State University for the 60th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, on the relationship of the Church with other religions. The talk was jointly sponsored by the Diocese of Columbus and Jewish Columbus. Many of our Jewish brothers and sisters are worried about the rise of Antisemitism, not only from the political left but also, in recent days, from the right through Nick Fuentes and the Heritage Foundation.

Nostra Aetate states: “The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. With sincere respect she looks on those ways of conduct and life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing on many points from what she herself holds and teaches, yet not rarely reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all human beings.”

Already, Pope Paul VI had begun to address the question in his 1964 encyclical letter *Ecclesiam Suam*. John Paul II continued his reflections in *Redemptor Hominis* and in *Dominum et Vivificantem*. In the latter document, John Paul II, in preparation for the Great Jubilee, wrote of the need to understand the presence and working of



Bishop Earl Fernandes prays during Mass at the Evangelization Leadership Summit.

Photo courtesy Aaron Christy

the Spirit, especially in Judaism. One of the distinguishing factors of Christianity and Judaism is that religion is not reduced to the human search for God. In these two religions, God reveals Himself, speaking to persons, entering into covenants with them, and showing them the path by which he may be reached.

Despite the clear appreciation of the Council for other religious traditions and Judaism in particular, a change of heart and mindset among the Christian people demands ongoing work and formation. I have, in the past, especially on the occasion of June Nineteenth, condemned racism and bigotry. It is a sin, and it has no place in the Church, nor can it be considered a part of the Christian way of life. The same needs to be said of antisemitism in all its forms. It is a sin and has no place in the Church or in our world.

When I was a child, my father had my brothers and me watch a documentary entitled, “The Memory of the Camps.” It was horrifying, yet it convinced me that we can never allow such attitudes and actions to inflict such damage on the human family. A short time after that, around the time I graduated from grade school, Pope Saint John Paul II visited a Roman synagogue, at which time he said:

The Jewish religion is not “extrinsic” to us, but in a certain way is “intrinsic” to our own religion. With Judaism therefore we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers, and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers.

Pope Benedict XVI himself reiterated this in a visit to Paris in 2008, addressing representatives from the Jewish community:

The Church compellingly repeats, through my voice, the words of the great Pope Pius XI, my beloved predecessor: Spiritually, we are Semites. The Church therefore is opposed to every form of anti-Semitism, which can never be theologically justified. The theologian Henri de Lubac, in a time of darkness, as Pius XII described it, added that to be anti-Semitic also signifies being anti-Christian. Once again, I feel the duty to pay heartfelt recognition to those who have died unjustly and to those that have dedicated themselves to assure that the names of these victims may always be remembered. God does not forget!

The horrific events of October 7th have revealed that there is much work to be done. While some may criticize the

response to the terrorist attacks, the Church herself remains firm in condemning anti-Semitism. Writing to “our Jewish brothers and sisters in Israel” in February 2024, Pope Francis stated: “The path that the Church has walked with you, the ancient people of the covenant, rejects every form of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, unequivocally condemning manifestations of hatred toward Jews and Judaism as a sin against God.”

At the Angelus address on October 5th of this year, following the attacks outside a synagogue in Manchester, Pope Leo also condemned anti-Semitism; “The rise of antisemitism wounds humanity itself,” he said, calling on the faithful to resist all forms of hatred that distort the human heart and fracture communities. He added, “We must not grow accustomed to hatred,” he told the crowd, urging Catholics to persist in prayer and action for peace “that is not imposed by power, but born of justice.”

Evangelization, to be effective, demands commitment to the unity of the human family. We are one in the One.

Love. Love was the third word used by Pope Leo at the Jubilee for Educators. Again, quoting Augustine, he said: “The love of God is the first commandment; the love of neighbor is the first practice.” It is in the family that we learn to love God and neighbor. It is precisely here that parents can be engaged in teaching children how to love God by teaching them their prayers and catechism; by spending time reading the Bible with their children, as the Scriptures manifest the love God has for His people; and, by modeling love to their children by their words or affection, instead of shouting, arguing, or exhibiting passive-aggressive behavior.

As the primary educators of their children, parents can teach their children to be engaged in the life of the Church

and demonstrate the primacy of charity through volunteerism, especially through the assistance of the poor, who are not merely an object of our charity but who also teach us how to rely on Divine Providence. Regular charitable work helps young people to escape from the dominant patterns of narcissism, going outside of themselves to make an authentic gift of self.

The Faith cannot remain merely at the level of ideas; rather, it must impact our humanity and the lives of others. The Holy Father puts it succinctly: “Sharing knowledge is not enough for teaching: love is needed. Only then will knowledge be beneficial to those who receive it, in itself and above all, for the charity it conveys. Teaching should never be separated from love.” (Ibid.)

The fourth word in our framework is joy. Parents are the primary teachers and educators of their children in the ways of faith. The Holy Father remarks that “true teachers educate with a smile, and their goal is to awaken smiles in the depths of their students’ souls.” Instruction in religion is unlike a course that one would take in school or university; it is instruction in a way of life. When the faith is presented as “rules” or a series of teachings, it is not well-received, or, at least, it does not touch or awaken the soul. When it is presented with severity and judgment, it simply does not attract. Parents, as educators of their children, along with teachers and catechists, ought to radiate the joy of being loved by the Lord.

It is a spousal love with which Jesus, the Bridegroom, loves the Church. Love and joy are, therefore, closely related. It is not enough to share knowledge. When we think about young people today and their fragility, we recognize a pandemic

Parishes offer regular, special Adoration times during Advent

The following is an updated list of locations throughout the diocese where Eucharistic Adoration is taking place, as supplied by the parishes to *The Catholic Times*. The list includes special Adoration times during Advent.

Ada Our Lady of Lourdes – Mondays, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 6 to 7 p.m. with confessions; Thursdays and Fridays, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Bridgettine Sisters (Order of the Most Holy Savior of St. Brigid of Sweden) convent, 40 N. Grubb St., Columbus – Tuesdays and Fridays, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Wednesdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 4:30 to 9 p.m.

Buckeye Lake Our Lady of Mount Carmel – First Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to noon

Canal Winchester Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Wednesdays, 6 to 7 p.m.; First Fridays, 9 a.m. Friday to 9 a.m. Saturday

Cardington Sacred Hearts – Saturday, Dec. 6, 9:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Chillicothe St. Mary – Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Chillicothe St. Peter – 6 a.m. Tuesdays to 7 a.m. Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays, 9 to 10 a.m. First Saturdays

Circleville St. Joseph – First Sundays, 2 p.m.

Columbus Christ the King – Wednesdays, 6 to 9 p.m.; Fridays, 4 to 6 p.m.

Columbus Holy Cross – Saturdays, following 11:30 a.m. Mass

Columbus Holy Spirit – First Fridays, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Columbus Immaculate Conception – first Wednesdays 7 to 8:15 a.m., with Mass at 8:30 a.m. and Adoration resuming from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Columbus Our Lady of Guadalupe, Star of the New Evangelization – 6 p.m.

Columbus Our Lady of Peace – Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Columbus Sacred Heart – Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Columbus St. Agatha – Wednesdays, 9:30 to 11 a.m.; Thursdays, 7 to 8 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 7, 3 p.m.

Columbus St. Andrew – Tuesdays,

6 to 9 p.m., ending with Compline and Benediction

Columbus St. Catharine – Sundays through Fridays, 6 a.m. Sunday to midnight Friday, church closed Saturday from 12:01 to 6 a.m.; Saturdays, 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursdays at 7 p.m. are ADORE nights featuring candlelit programs and confession

Columbus St. Cecilia – Tuesdays, 5:45 to 6:45 p.m.; First Fridays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Columbus St. Christopher – Weekdays, 3 to 4 p.m. with Mass at 4; Young Catholic Professionals Advent adoration, Thursday, Dec. 18, 7 to 8 p.m.

Columbus St. James the Less – Wednesdays, noon to 8 p.m. with bilingual Benediction

Columbus St. Josephine Bakhita at St. Elizabeth Church – Tuesdays, 5 to 6 p.m.

Columbus St. Margaret of Cortona – Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to noon

Columbus St. Mary German Village – First Fridays, from after 8:30 a.m. Mass to 1 p.m.; Tuesdays, Dec. 2, 9, 16 and 23, 5 p.m.

Columbus St. Patrick – Fridays, 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.; Fridays, 8 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Saturday (church locked; call church office at (614) 224-9522 for access information)

Columbus St. Peter – Mondays through Fridays, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Columbus St. Stephen the Martyr – Thursdays, 6 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Columbus St. Thomas More Newman Center – Mondays through Fridays, 8:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. when Ohio State University classes are in session

Columbus St. Thomas the Apostle – Tuesdays, 7 to 8 p.m.

Columbus St. Timothy – Sunday, Dec. 7, following 6 p.m. talk by Father Brian Beal on “Eucharistic Amazement.”

Coshocton Sacred Heart – First and third Fridays, 9:30 to 11:15 a.m.

Danville St. Luke – Tuesdays, 11:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 5:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Delaware St. Mary – Thursdays, after 5:30 p.m. Mass to 7:30 p.m.

Dennison Immaculate Conception – Tuesdays, 8:45 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Dover St. Joseph – Tuesdays, 5 to 6 p.m.;

Thursdays, 9 to 9:30 a.m.; First Fridays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare – Wednesdays, 5 to 7 p.m., chapel; First Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., church

Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle – 24 hours, seven days a week in basement adoration chapel. Open to the public from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays and 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Holy Hour for the reparation, purification and sanctification of the Church, fourth Fridays, 7 to 8 p.m.

Granville St. Edward – Mondays, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Grove City Our Lady of Perpetual Help – First Fridays, 9 a.m. Friday to 9 a.m. Saturday; other Fridays, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator – Mondays, 6 to 10 p.m.; Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Wednesdays, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. (First Fridays until 1 p.m. Saturday); Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Johnstown Church of the Ascension – Tuesdays, 5 to 6 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Kenton Immaculate Conception – Tuesdays, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, from end of 9 a.m. Mass to Benediction at 1 p.m.

Lancaster St. Bernadette – Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; 6 p.m. Thursdays to 8 a.m. Fridays

London St. Patrick – Thursdays, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.; First Fridays, noon to 5:15 p.m.

Marion St. Mary – Fridays, 5 to 6 p.m.; First Fridays, 4 to 7 p.m.

Marysville Our Lady of Lourdes – First Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.; second Sundays, 10 to 11 a.m.

Mattingly Settlement St. Mary – First Fridays, 6 to 7 p.m.

Mount Vernon St. Vincent de Paul – Thursdays, 3 to 10 p.m.; Fridays, 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.

New Albany Church of the Resurrection – Third Sundays, noon to 4 p.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.; Wednesday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.

New Lexington St. Rose – Wednesdays, 5:15 to 6:15 p.m., concluding with Benediction and followed by Mass at 6:30

New Philadelphia Sacred Heart – Tuesdays, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Evening Prayer and Benediction, Mondays, Dec. 1, 15 and 22, 6 p.m.

Newark Blessed Sacrament – Mondays, noon to 8 p.m.; Wednesdays, 9 to 11 a.m.

Pickerington St. Elizabeth Seton – Perpetual Adoration, except from noon to 1 p.m. Thursdays. Sign up at www.setonparish.com/ministries/adoration

Plain City St. Joseph – Mondays through Thursdays, 6 to 11 a.m. and 6 to 9 p.m.; Fridays, 6 to 8 and 9 to 11 a.m. and 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Portsmouth St. Mary – Perpetual Adoration 24 hours a day, except when there are Masses or special events

Powell St. Joan of Arc – 9 a.m. Mondays to 8 a.m. Saturdays

Reynoldsburg St. Pius X – Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 9 p.m. in chapel, with Holy Hour from noon to 1 p.m. in church; Sundays, 4 to 5 p.m.; First Fridays, 9 a.m. Friday to 6:30 a.m. Saturday

Sugar Grove St. Joseph – First Thursdays, 9 to 10 a.m.

Sunbury St. John Neumann – 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily in chapel

Washington Court House St. Colman of Cloyne – Sundays, 8 to 8:45 a.m. and 5 to 6 p.m.; Tuesdays, 6 to 7 p.m.; Wednesdays through Fridays, 7:15 to 8:15 a.m.

Waverly St. Mary, Queen of the Missions – Wednesdays, 5 to 6 p.m.

West Jefferson Sts. Simon and Jude – Tuesdays, 5 to 6 p.m.; First Fridays, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Westerville St. Paul the Apostle – Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in chapel

Worthington St. Michael the Archangel – 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Mondays and 5 a.m. Tuesdays to 9 p.m. Fridays in chapel

Zanesville St. Nicholas – First Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Zanesville St. Thomas Aquinas – Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. in chapel

Zoar Holy Trinity – Wednesdays 7 to 8 p.m.

SUMMIT: Bishop shares insights on evangelization, Continued from Page 5

of loneliness and mental illness. There are many silent cries for help, which often go unheard. With all our technological advances, including the development of artificial intelligence, there is a risk that education grows cold and technical, far removed from the awe and wonder evoked by the loving and creative hand of God. The risk of an evermore “rules-oriented” and “technical” education is that it will further isolate young people, distancing education and formation from the authentically human encounter of people – parent and child, teacher and student, lifelong Catholic and convert – who are loved infinitely by the Lord. The educational endeavor described by St. Augustine is a “flame to melt our souls together, and out of many to make but one” (Augustine, Confessions IV, 813), but we are one in the One.

Conclusion

What then is the hallmark of success in the educational endeavor? It is the encounter with the living God. On the Solemnity of All Saints, Pope Leo named St. John Henry Newman a doctor of the Church, co-patron of Catholic education (along with Saint Thomas). While many see education and formation as a means to a profitable career and livelihood, for us as Christians, education and formation is

part of our vocation. The Holy Father, in his homily, quoted Newman, who wrote: “God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission – I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.” (Meditations and Devotions, III, 1, 2)

If we do not educate toward the Mystery of the Godhead, then we shall never understand our own mission here below, veiled in mystery as it may be. Thus, our efforts at evangelization, education, and catechesis, especially family-based catechesis, must be directed toward helping the person understand his or her proper vocation. Pope Leo put it this way, “Life shines brightly not because we are rich, beautiful or powerful. Instead, it shines when we discover within ourselves the truth that we are called by God, have a vocation, have a mission, that our lives serve something greater than ourselves. Every single creature has a role to play. The contribution that each person can make is uniquely valuable, and the task of educational communities is to encourage and cherish that contribution.” (Leo XIV, Homily for the Solemnity of All the Saints, 1 November 2025).

What is the measure of success? That the one who educates and the one



Bishop Earl Fernandes gives a blessing at the diocese's Evangelization Leadership Summit.

Photo courtesy Aaron Christy

who is educated become saints. At the beatification of Cardinal Newman in 2010, Benedict XVI said: “What God wants most of all for each one of you is that you should become holy. He loves you much more than you could ever imagine.” (Benedict XVI,

Address to Pupils, 17 September 2010) If our efforts to attain greater knowledge do not lead to holiness or do not convey God's love, then we will have failed. May we come to God through knowledge. Ad Deum per scientiam.

Diocesan churches schedule Advent activities

Churches and other organizations throughout the Diocese of Columbus will conduct many special programs throughout the Advent season. The following is a list of seasonal activities provided by parishes to *The Catholic Times*:

Canal Winchester Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Advent lessons and carols, Sunday, Dec. 14, 3 p.m.

Cardington Sacred Hearts – Eucharistic Adoration, Saturday, Dec. 6, 9:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Columbus Christ the King – Blessing of Advent wreaths from previous day's workshop at Columbus St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Sunday, Nov. 30, after 10:30 a.m. Mass; Mass, followed by Advent prayer service, with breakfast, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 9 to 11 a.m.; Christmas concert, Sunday, Dec. 21, 4 p.m.

Columbus Holy Cross and St. Joseph Cathedral – Both churches will be part of the Columbus Landmarks Foundation's Hallelujah Tour of Downtown Churches, Saturday, Dec. 6, noon to 5 p.m. Tickets \$25 for foundation members and \$35 for non-members. More information at www.columbuslandmarks.org/events.

Columbus Holy Family – Rorate Caeli Advent votive Mass in honor of the Virgin Mary, taking place in the pre-dawn darkness, Wednesdays, Dec. 10 and 17, 7 a.m. (meditation music 6:45); concert with choir of Columbus Chesterton Academy of St. Benedict, Friday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.

Columbus Holy Spirit – Ohio Dominican University choir Christmas concert, Sunday, Nov. 30, 7 p.m.

Columbus Our Lady of Peace – Stations of the Crib, Tuesdays, Dec. 2, 9, 16 and 23, 6 p.m.; tree lighting and Nativity scene blessing with chili, hot dogs and chocolate available, Saturday, Dec. 6, 5:30 p.m.; penance service, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.

Columbus Our Lady of Victory – Reconciliation service, Sunday, Dec. 7, 6:30 p.m.; Maronite Christmas concert, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.; string quartet Christmas concert, Sunday, Dec. 21, 3 p.m.

Columbus St. Agatha – Afternoon Prayer followed by Eucharistic Adoration and confessions, Sunday, Dec. 7, 3 p.m.

Columbus St. Cecilia – Advent Vespers, Sundays, Nov. 30 and Dec. 7, 14 and 21, 5 p.m.

with confessions available

Columbus St. Christopher – Parish mission with Father Joseph Tuscan, OFM Cap, national director general of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, Sunday, Dec. 14, 5:30 p.m. and Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 15 and 16, 6 p.m. Theme: "Repent and Believe." Mass, talks, rosary and confession each night.

Columbus St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic – Guided tour of the church focusing on the spirituality of a Byzantine Advent, Sundays, Dec. 14 and 21 after 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Columbus St. Mary German Village – Eucharistic Adoration and confessions, Tuesdays, Dec. 2, 9, 16 and 23, 5 p.m.; chili and carols hosted by parish school, Friday, Dec. 5, 5:30 p.m.; church is part of Village Lights event from 4 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7, with Columbus Maennerchor concert at 4; ProArte OHIO concert featuring motets, holiday favorites and French carols, Sunday, Dec. 14, 4 to 5 p.m.

Columbus-Powell St. Peter St. Joan of Arc – Penance service, Monday, Dec. 1, 7 p.m., St. Peter; children's Christmas festival, Friday, Dec. 5, 6 to 7:30 p.m., St. Joan of Arc; lessons and carols, Saturday, Dec. 13, 6 to 9 p.m.; St. Joan of Arc social hall; breakfast with Santa, Sunday, Dec. 14, after 9 and 11 a.m. Masses, St. Peter gym; Advent by Candlelight women's program, Sunday, Dec. 14, 7 to 9 p.m., St. Joan of Arc

Columbus St. Thomas More Newman Center – Concert titled O Magnum Mysterium, a reflection on the mystery, Friday, Dec. 5, 7 p.m.

Columbus St. Thomas the Apostle – Advent wreathmaking workshop, Saturday, Nov. 29, 9 a.m. to noon. \$25 per wreath, \$5 breakfast; Advent reflections in Spanish, Tuesday, Dec. 2, 6 to 8 p.m.; bilingual Advent retreat, Saturday, Dec. 6, 10 a.m. to noon

Columbus St. Timothy – Talk by Father Brian Beal, pastor of Coshocton Sacred Heart Church, on "Eucharistic Amazement," Sunday, Dec. 7, 6 p.m., followed by Eucharistic Adoration and confessions

Delaware St. Mary – 40 Hours of Eucharistic Adoration, Thursday, Dec. 4 after 5:30 p.m. Mass until 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6; Breakfast with Santa, Sunday, Dec. 7, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; church takes part in

Delaware holiday trolley tour, Saturday, Dec. 13, noon to 5 p.m.; Advent Stations, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 6 to 7 p.m.; Advent by Candlelight women's program, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Dover St. Joseph – Lessons and carols, Sunday, Dec. 7, 5:30 p.m.; Tuscarawas Central Catholic Elementary School Nativity play, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 6 p.m.

Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare – Vespers, Saturdays, Nov. 29 and Dec. 6 and 20, 4:30 p.m.; Taize prayer service, Thursday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m.; Vespers and individual confessions, Sunday, Dec. 14, 5 p.m.; individual confessions, Monday, Dec. 15, 7 p.m.; St. Brigid School lessons and carols, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 7 p.m.; Cookies with Santa, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 4:30 to 5:30 and 6 to 7 p.m., \$12 per child, registration required

Gahanna St. Matthew the Apostle – Advent music and prayer service, Sunday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m.

Lancaster Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption – ProArte OHIO concert featuring motets, holiday favorites and French carols, Sunday, Nov. 30, 3 p.m.; musical program at basilica concludes annual Downtown Christmas Stroll, Saturday, Dec. 13, 5:30 to 9 p.m., tickets \$15 adults, free for children 10 and younger, obtained at Destination Downtown Lancaster, 128 N. Broad St., more at downtownchristmas2025stroll@gmail.com; lessons and carols, Sunday, Dec. 14, 3 p.m.

London St. Patrick – Parish takes part in city's Old Fashioned Christmas celebration, serving chili and hot dogs, Saturday, Dec. 6, 2 to 7 p.m.

Marion St. Mary – Rorate Caeli Mass, 6:45 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 13

New Lexington St. Rose of Lima – Penance service, Monday, Dec. 15, 6 p.m.

New Albany Church of the Resurrection – Holy Hour, Tuesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.; Breakfast with Santa, Saturday, Dec. 6, 8 to 11 a.m.; Advent by Candlelight women's event, Saturday, Dec. 6, 6:30 to 9 p.m.; Reconciliation service with Eucharistic Adoration, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.

Newark St. Francis de Sales – Church is first and last stop of downtown Sights and Sounds of Christmas walking tour, Thursday, Dec. 4, 6 p.m. Tickets \$5 in advance at church

or on night of event; Advent Reconciliation, praise and worship service with Eucharistic Adoration, Thursday, Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m.; Breakfast with St. Nicholas, Sunday, Dec. 21, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Johnson Hall

Portsmouth St. John Paul II Scioto Catholic Community – Christmas dinner sponsored by Ladies Guild and Knights of Columbus, followed by hobby auction, Sunday, Dec. 7, 1 p.m., Wheelersburg St. Peter in Chains Church Hall. \$10 adults, \$5 children 12 and under; Breakfast with Santa, Sunday, Dec. 21 after 9 a.m. Mass, St. Peter Hall. Proceeds benefit Portsmouth St. Francis Catholic Outreach

Sunbury St. John Neumann – Penance service, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.; Advent concert by The Vigil Project, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m.; children's Christmas pageant, Sunday, Dec. 21, 3 p.m.

Washington Court House St. Colman of Cloyne – Rorate Caeli Mass, Saturday, Dec. 20, 7:30 a.m.

West Jefferson Ss. Simon & Jude – Parish mission with Father Ted Cassidy, SM, Sunday, Dec. 7 to Tuesday, Dec. 9, with 6 p.m. Masses each day, Eucharistic Adoration and an Advent penance service from 7 to 8 p.m. Dec. 7, refreshments and discussion after Mass on Dec. 8 and Adoration and confessions at 5 p.m. Dec. 9

Westerville St. Paul – Rorate Caeli Masses, Wednesdays, Dec. 3, 10 and 17, 6:30 a.m.; penance services, Wednesday, Dec. 10 and 17, 7 p.m.; lessons and carols, Saturday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.

Worthington St. Michael the Archangel – Rorate Caeli Masses, Saturdays, Dec. 6, 13 and 20, 6:30 a.m.; Christmas concert with children's choirs, Saturday, Dec. 6, 5:30 p.m., followed at 6:30

with concert by St. Michael and Columbus-Powell St. Peter St. Joan of Arc choirs singing music from St. Michael choir's 1976 Christmas album, with recorded narration by the late Father John Byrne, St. Michael's founding pastor

Zanesville St. Nicholas – Penance service, Sunday, Nov. 30, 8 p.m.

Zanesville St. Thomas Aquinas – Advent music and prayer, Sunday, Dec. 7, 5 p.m.

Parishes to celebrate Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, is Friday, Dec. 12. Several parishes in the diocese will celebrate the feast on that day or other days near the observance of the feast. Following is a list of activities planned in those parishes:

Columbus Christ the King – Mass in Spanish, 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 11, followed by mananitas ("Happy Birthday" serenades to Mary in Spanish) at 10:30; Masses, 6:45 a.m. (English) and 7 p.m. (Spanish), Dec. 12; procession from Columbus St. Philip Church to Christ the King, 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 14, followed by Mass at 12:30 p.m. and fiesta at 1:30 in All Saints Academy gym

Columbus Our Lady of Guadalupe, Star of the New Evangelization – Procession starting at COTA Park and Ride, 4949 N. High St., traveling 3.9 miles down High Street and Patterson Avenue to church, 154 E. Patterson Ave., 8 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 7, with Mass at noon and gathering afterward; Mass, 9 p.m. Dec. 11, followed by mananitas; Mass, 7 p.m. Dec. 12

Columbus St. Agnes – Mass, 7 p.m. Dec. 11

Columbus St. Cecilia – Mananitas with Rosary, 5:30 a.m. Dec. 12, followed by breakfast with tamales; Mass in Spanish, 7 p.m. same date; posadas (re-enactments of Mary and Joseph's attempts to find shelter in Bethlehem), 6 p.m. Sunday and Monday,

Dec. 21 and 22 and 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 23

Columbus St. James the Less – Mananitas, 5 a.m. Dec. 12; Mass, 7 p.m. same date, followed by celebration

Columbus St. Mary German Village – Procession, Rosary and play re-enacting the Guadalupe apparitions, 5:30 p.m. Dec. 12, followed by Mass at 6:30 in church and celebration at 7:30 in Heritage Hall

Columbus St. Mary Magdalene – Mass, 8:30 a.m. Dec. 12

Columbus St. Peter – Procession to Powell St. Joan of Arc Church, Dec. 7, 2:15 p.m.; Rosary, music and mananitas, 9 p.m. Dec. 11 to 1 a.m. Dec. 12; Rosary, 6:30 p.m. Dec. 12, followed by Mass at 7 and play, food and dancing at 8; posadas, Tuesday, Dec. 16 to Tuesday, Dec. 23 (Dec. 20 bilingual); pastorela, a play about the infant Jesus and the shepherds, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2:15 p.m.

Columbus St. Stephen the Martyr – Rosary, dinner and play, 8 p.m. Dec. 11, followed by Mass at 11 and mananitas at midnight; Rosary, 5 a.m. Dec. 12, followed by Mass in Spanish at 6, breakfast at 7, Mass in English at 8:30, breakfast at 9, Rosary every hour from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., procession at 6 p.m., mananitas at 6:30, Mass in Spanish at 7, play at 8 and dinner at 9

Columbus St. Thomas the Apostle – Mananitas, 10 p.m. Dec. 11; celebration, 5

p.m. Dec. 12, followed by bilingual Mass at 6:30 with Bishop Earl Fernandes and reception and dancing after Mass

Delaware St. Mary – Procession, 6:45 p.m. Dec. 12, followed by bilingual Mass at 7 and celebration with food and music from 8 to 9:30

Dover St. Joseph – Eucharistic Adoration, 7 p.m. Dec. 11 to 5 a.m. Dec. 12; Mananitas, 5 to 6 a.m. Dec. 12, with Mass at 6 a.m., followed by celebration; posadas, 8 p.m. daily from Tuesday, Dec. 16 to Wednesday, Dec. 24

Kenton Our Lady the Immaculate Conception – Rosary, 4:45 p.m. Dec. 7, followed by Mass at 5:30 and reception in St. Anthony Center

London St. Patrick – Posadas, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m.

Marion St. Mary – Mananitas and Rosary, 5:30 a.m. Dec. 12; procession, 6 p.m. same day, followed by traditional dances at 6:30, Mass at 7 and celebration and play at 8

Mount Vernon St. Vincent de Paul – Mass, 10 a.m. Dec. 11

Newark Blessed Sacrament – Mass, 6 p.m. Dec. 11, followed by Mexican dinner

Portsmouth St. John Paul II Scioto Catholic Community – Mass, 7 p.m. Dec. 12, followed by celebration, music and dancing, Portsmouth Holy Redeemer Church



Renovation helps St. Vincent Family Services expand outreach

By Doug Bean
Catholic Times Editor

The diocesan-supported St. Vincent Family Services on the east side of Columbus completed a nearly \$900,000 renovation in November to its lobby and intake department to enhance and improve the welcoming experience for families in need of assistance.

Bishop Earl Fernandes blessed the upgrades to the facility at 1490 E. Main St. on Wednesday, Nov. 19, and participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony with representatives from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health and the Ohio State University Total Health Care Center.

"We are grateful for the partnerships that made the renovations to St. Vincent possible so that the hundreds of families who seek help for their children here each day can be welcomed into a space that is inviting and hospitable," said Deacon Dave Bezusko, director of Catholic Charities with the diocese's Vicariate for Catholic Social Doctrine. "Strong, healthy families are at the heart of a strong, healthy society and at the heart of a strong, healthy Church."

"The pediatric behavioral team at St. Vincent strengthens families by providing individual and family counseling, in-home and in-school care, and even 24/7 residential care for children who need it."

The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health



Participating in the ribbon cutting are (from left) Terri Donlin Huesman, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation; Jenifer Fraioli, Ohio Department of Behavioral Health; Bishop Earl Fernandes; Susan Lewis Kaylor, St. Vincent Family Services; Candy Rinehart, Ohio State University Total Health Care Center; Ken Keener, St. Vincent Family Services; and Rejeana Haynes, St. Vincent Family Services.



Renovations include a new lobby and intake area at St. Vincent Family Center. Photos courtesy St. Vincent

contributed \$650,000 and \$225,000, respectively, to the project. The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation has partnered with St. Vincent Family Services since 2019 and invested nearly \$2.5 million to enable the center to provide care.

At the same time, the Ohio State University Total Health

Care Center reaffirmed its commitment to expanding primary care access at St. Vincent Family Services to the community.

The Ohio State Total Health Care Center at St. Vincent, in partnership with the Ohio State University College of Nursing, is one of three locations in



Susan Lewis Kaylor, president and CEO of St. Vincent Family Services, speaks at the grand opening.



Ohio State's Total Health Care Center provides medical care at St. Vincent Family Services.

Columbus that offers routine physicals, treatment of acute conditions, immunizations, and preventive care and wellness examinations.

"We are deeply grateful for the community and funding partners who made these renovations and expansion of services possible," said Susan Lewis Kaylor,

president and CEO of St. Vincent Family Services. "Together, these collaborations strengthen our shared commitment to promote wellness and healing in every aspect of care."

She said the renovation will allow St. Vincent to expand its essential services to the community that include immediate behavioral health assessments to receive behavioral health services (counseling, psychiatric care and medication management); outpatient trauma-informed therapy to strengthen family social and emotional health; and St. Vincent Prep Academy, a licensed charter school combining academics with behavioral health treatment for children from preschool through elementary grades during the school year and in the summer.

Lewis Kaylor explained that the redesigned entrance area will provide a calm, welcoming, private and more efficient environment to serve families in need of walk-in services.

"But this isn't just a renovation," she said. "It's a promise to the community that every child and family who needs care will be met with dignity, compassion and trauma-informed care that heals."

In 2024, St. Vincent served more than 6,000 youth, families and partners across central Ohio with residential treatment for children, students in its prep academy, outpatient therapy and early childhood consultation and prevention.

See ST. VINCENT, Page 9



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CSS packs Thanksgiving meals with community support

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Two thousand individuals in central Ohio this Thanksgiving ate meals consisting of traditional favorites.

Catholic Social Services (CSS), which serves the 23-county Columbus diocese, hosted its first annual "Everything But the Turkey" food collection drive on Friday, Nov. 14, less than two weeks before Thanksgiving Day.

CSS invited community members to its Our Lady of Guadalupe Center, located in Columbus' west side. The center serves the Latino population through classes, workshops and a cultural food pantry.

For the first time, the organization partnered with corporations, businesses, schools, churches and individuals to box Thanksgiving meals for people who would otherwise be without.

"We are witnessing volunteerism at a large scale," CSS president and CEO S. Kelley Henderson said.

During the three-hour "Everything But the Turkey" drive, 42 volunteers packed 500+ boxes of food, each feeding a family of four, equating to more than 2,000 individuals with full tummies on Thanksgiving.

Boxes were delivered to CSS' three primary populations served – seniors, families with children and disabled individuals – just in time for the holiday.

Meal boxes contained a "Happy Thanksgiving" card and staple food items. Donations came from 17 various organizations – churches, schools and business partners – each assigned a specific item.

Food included canned vegetables, yams, cranberry sauce, gravy, stuffing mix and dessert mixes. While meat was missing, each box included a gift card for a Thanksgiving turkey.

More than 20 employees from American Electric Power (AEP), one of the largest electric utility companies in the country, a supporter and community-engaged partner of CSS, volunteered at the meal-packing drive.

The company brought employees from corporate AEP – located in downtown Columbus – AEP Ohio and AEP Transmission, a subsidiary of the company based in Pataskala.

The company is a longtime partner of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Center.

"We believe in the same mission," said Jackie Orozco, communications and community engagement lead at AEP. "It's part of our core principles to help with the community."

A number of local individuals and



Volunteers from American Electric Power join the community effort on Nov. 14 at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Center in Columbus to pack food for Thanksgiving meals.

Photos courtesy Catholic Social Services

families also lent a hand at the drive.

"We have a saying at Catholic Social Services that we never do this work alone," Henderson noted. "Ministry is better together. We ... help our neighbors in need, but we also connect them with people who are willing to serve."

The drive's participants lined each side of a conveyor belt, filling boxes with Thanksgiving foods. Others disassembled cardboard and compiled bags for re-use at the center's food pantry. A few served as quality control, ensuring each box contained the necessary items.

Volunteers who delivered the Thanksgiving meal boxes across central Ohio spent time with their recipients. Equally – if not more – important was offering love, support and hope to the needy.

"Part of what we do is accompany people," Henderson said. "It's not just about the things that we can provide."

"It's about the hope and the accompaniment that comes from a neighbor who cares. That's incarnational."

CSS provides additional support to clients during the holiday season. The opening of its new Our Lady of Guadalupe Center facility earlier this year presented an opportunity to expand services.

Henderson said CSS hopes to begin an annual tradition.

"We may not agree on everything. We can agree that it's better if we do it together," he explained of bringing various members of the community together for a drive.

"We can be neighbors, especially during this time of year."

Catholic Church teaching on serving the needy inspired Maggie Noblet, a Columbus St. Patrick parishioner, to bring five of her 10 children to the drive.

A homeschooling mother, Noblet transferred the classroom to the Our Lady of Guadalupe Center warehouse on Nov. 14.

"What better way to teach the Corporal Works of Mercy (seven charitable actions found in Christ's teachings) than to actually come and do it?" she reflected. "We took off school today, and I thought this would be a better lesson than learning your math and ABCs."

Noblet, whose children range from 19- to 1-year-old, is eager to instill the virtue of charity.

"When you have plenty, you should share," she said. "We should be charitable with what we have. If you don't have a lot that you can share, you can always volunteer – you give your time, your work."

"We're able to donate our work to ... those who aren't able to ... get out to the grocery store to get their own groceries for Thanksgiving."

The drive also brought an element of nostalgia. Noblet recalled her mother, Lorraine, taking her as a child to pack grocery carts with food for people in need at Christmastime.

She enjoyed bringing several of her children to do the same at Thanksgiving.

"A lot of us, in our own churches, our towns, our own homes, you don't see the



Workers add donated items to boxes from the "Everything But the Turkey" food collection drive.



Donated food from the "Everything But the Turkey" drives filled more than 500 boxes.

need. You don't see what people are going through," she acknowledged. "We kind of live in our own little bubble."

"This is a concrete way to show your kids that there are things that you can do for those people who need it."

John Byrne, a retiree who attends the Columbus Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Star of the New Evangelization parish, participated in the drive and has volunteered with CSS for several months.

"The staff here are amazing," he emphasized. "They're fun, but they're also dedicated, and they are on task all the time."

"The other volunteers have been absolutely amazing. It's like a little family."

Going forward, CSS hopes to be resourceful for parishes, schools and businesses in the communities it serves.

"Who knows," Henderson added, "maybe we can do something like this in your local parish or your local neighborhood next year."

CSS serves more than 11,000 individuals annually, operating as a source of compassion, dignity and hope for poor and vulnerable seniors and families in the community since 1945.

ST. VINCENT: Renovation helps expand outreach, Continued from Page 8

The need for mental and emotional health services among youth has increased over the last five years because of family hardships such as homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, addiction and neglect, Lewis Kaylor said.

Of the more than 540 diagnostic assessments completed last year at St. Vincent, 83 percent of the clients were walk-ins, which Lewis Kaylor said is confirmation that families don't want to be on waiting lists for assistance. Eighty percent of its clients are considered low income, 90 percent have experienced trauma and 70 percent identify as African-American, Hispanic, Asian or multi-racial.

During the renovation, St. Vincent and Ohio State's Total Health Care Center

continued to serve clients.

"The most recent survey needs assessment from the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board (ADAMH) of Franklin County nor surprisingly paints a picture that more care is needed," Lewis Kaylor said. "Nearly half of the respondents said they needed behavioral health care and couldn't get it, and the biggest barrier is they don't know where to start."

"It's a really complicated system in mental health care to navigate and so we're hoping in this transformation we're making it a little simpler."

In 2024, the Total Health Care Center saw more than 300 patients for primary care services at St. Vincent, some of them clients, families and staff. Its outreach has

now expanded to serve all community members, said Candy Rinehart, CEO of Ohio State's Total Health Care Center.

"Last year, more than 32 million people in this country utilized health centers like ours to find affordable, accessible, comprehensive primary care services for themselves and their families," Rinehart said. "And the need is enormous. Thirty-five percent of Americans last year – more than a third of the country – reported that they were unable to access quality and affordable health care, so when this opportunity came up to expand our services, providing great access to integrative primary care ... is literally a life-saver."

Lewis Kaylor noted that St. Vincent is located on the spot where a Catholic

orphanage was established 150 years ago and that children continue to be served at that location.

"We are proud of that legacy," she said. "While our programs and services have changed through the years, one thing that has remained constant is we stand with families in some of their hardest moments and offer a path filled with hope."

For more information about St. Vincent Family Services or to schedule an appointment, visit svfsohio.org or call 614-824-5437.

To schedule an appointment with the Ohio State University Total Health Care Center, visit svfsohio/the-ohio-state-university-total-health-wellness-center or call 614-685-9994.

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St. Brendan's 'Come Home for Christmas' attracts lapsed Catholics

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

"Come home for Christmas."

The phrase often evokes thoughts of gifts wrapped under a lit Christmas tree, families gathered around a fireplace and a cup of eggnog.

Coming home for Christmas at Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator Church looks a little different. Individuals might find stockings filled with books on the sacraments, Mass and transubstantiation.

The parish hosted "Come Home for Christmas," a four-session series leading up to the Church's Advent and Christmas liturgical seasons. Each Monday evening in November, inactive Catholics were invited to attend refresher sessions led by Deacon Jim Morris, who serves at St. Brendan.

The sessions were geared toward Catholics who had not attended the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for a significant period of time. Interested individuals could participate in any or all of the four sessions offered.

Each session began with prayer followed by discussion. Attendees were welcome to ask questions pertaining to a previous session or various Church-related topics.

The program was established by Morris and his wife in the 1990s. It died out around the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

A few months back, several members of the parish's Inviting Catholics Home ministry – developed to invite individuals back to the Church and offer support in their faith journey – decided it was time to restart the program and bring Catholics home.

The ministry team sat down in August, dusted off the old books and prepared to welcome Catholics "home" for Christmas. The series previously included six sessions and was condensed to four.

By Nov. 30, the first Sunday of Advent this year, the team was hopeful participants would be confident in returning to the Church.

"The more life you live, the more you come to understand there's something more," reflected Mary Destefani, a member of the ministry team. "When that starts to happen, where do you go? You go back to your roots."

"They certainly don't recognize it ... what we're doing now," she said of partici-



A sign along Dublin Road in front of Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator Church welcomes lapsed Catholics back to Mass.
Photos courtesy St. Brendan the Navigator Church

pants, "but really, the basic dogma, the basic philosophy of the Catholic Church has always remained the same."

Some program participants were away from the Catholic Church for as many as 50 years.

To reach lapsed Catholics, St. Brendan advertised the series in its parish bulletin, across the diocese, online and through postcards handed out to family and friends.

A physical sign proved the most effective. Of the seven participants who attended one of the sessions, more than half learned of the program through a sign in the church yard.

Janet Walsh, who helped lead the sessions, returned to the Church 10 years ago after being away for three decades. She recalled seeing a sign in St. Brendan's front yard inviting Catholics home.

"I kept driving by here because I live right in the area," she explained. "We always said, 'The sign was the sign.'"

The parish continues to place the large sign in the yard on Dublin Road, garnering much attention. "This is your 'sign' to return to Mass!" it proclaims, also including a phone number and website for information about faith refresher sessions.

The sign attracted Walsh 10 years ago and continues to draw fallen-away Catholics.

"That's where we're getting all the traffic," she said, "the sign in the yard, believe it or not. Social media and all this stuff isn't all that. It's the sign."

Those who took a leap of faith to come home for Christmas spent the four ses-

sions relearning the Church's seven sacraments, the origins of the Mass and prayer.

The various sessions were divided into instruction on the sacraments of initiation (baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation), healing (reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick) and service (Holy Orders and matrimony).

When discussing the Eucharist, participants explored transubstantiation, the Church's teaching on the change of the whole substance of bread into the substance of the Body of Christ and wine into the Blood of Christ.

Attendees were reminded that, at the moment of consecration, the outward characteristics of bread and wine remain unaltered, but the substance changes.

Due to the various lengths of time participants were away from the Church, sessions also sparked conversation about the Tridentine, or Traditional Latin Mass – which some participants grew up with – and changes that resulted from the Church's Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

Attendees reflected on differences between the two Mass forms.

They considered the change from Latin, the Church's universal language, to the vernacular, or local language, used in the Novus Order (New Order) Mass. They also noted changes in liturgical music, formerly Gregorian chant and sacred music, to Masses with modern hymns and compositions.

"I was away for 30 years – I was shocked at how different, even with the music," Walsh said of her return to church.



The "Come Home for Christmas" series uses several books during its sessions.

The Columbus diocese has made ongoing efforts to return to sacred music in parish liturgies.

Dan Davis, who returned to church about 10 years ago, attended the series and now serves as a member of the ministry team. He attributed his departure to poor catechesis as a child.

"We did what we did because we were told that's what we do," he reflected.

"When I started coming back to the Church, finding out the richness of the faith, rationale of our faith based off of the Bible, there were so many pieces of it that just started connecting for me."

"That was the benefit of the group because, one, I met some people who were just like me coming back, so I wasn't alone, and just the support of the parish."

Having a small-group gathering with open-ended discussion was beneficial for those reconsidering the faith.

"You can come here and feel like you are a part of something and everybody's on the same page," Walsh noted. "I think that's what people are yearning for, is to get with people who are like them."

Sessions also provided quiet reflection with questions. Prompts included, "My hopes/expectations for attending these sessions are ..." and "Some fears/apprehensions I have are ..."

Attendees received a listing of Catholic resources, including television, radio, news and apps.

"We want to help them on their journey," Walsh emphasized. "We don't work that hard – we do, but it's really the Holy Spirit."

Concerts will begin St. Michael 80th anniversary celebration

Worthington St. Michael the Archangel Church, 5750 N. High St., will begin a celebration of its 80th anniversary with two concerts on Saturday, Dec. 6.

The first, at 5:30 p.m. after the 4 p.m. Saturday Mass, will feature the St. Michael School Schola choir, which specializes in Gregorian chant.

The second, at 6:30, will be a re-creation of an album recorded in 1976 by the parish choir and will include the choirs of both St. Michael and St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Church of Columbus and Powell.

The voice from the original album of Father John Byrne, St. Michael's founding pastor, who served the church from 1946 to 1976, will provide the narration. A reception will follow.

Proceeds from a goodwill offering at the concert will be split between the St. Michael and St. Peter St. Joan of Arc conferences of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Besides beginning the 80th anniversary celebration, the concert will mark the 50th anniversary of the album, titled "Rejoice," which was a fundraiser for an organ that

has since been replaced by the church's current organ.

St. Peter and St. Michael churches have ties going back to 1973, when the current St. Peter Church opened and St. Michael parishioners living west of the Olentangy River began attending services there. St. Peter and St. Joan of Arc churches, which are 2½ miles from each other, merged into a single parish on June 30, 2024.

St. Michael Church, along with Our Lady of Peace Church in the Clintonville neighborhood of Columbus and Christ the King Church on the city's east side, were established on Dec. 1, 1946 by Bishop Michael Ready because of the growth in those areas resulting from the post-World War II housing boom.

The current St. Michael Church was built in 1964 and renovated in 1999. Weekend Masses are at 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 and 5 p.m. Sunday, with weekday Masses at 6:30 and 8:15 a.m. weekdays, 6 p.m. Wednesdays and 8:15 a.m. Saturdays. Eucharistic Adoration in the parish chapel is on Mondays from 9 a.m. to

11 p.m., resuming on Tuesdays at 5 a.m. and continuing until 9 p.m. Friday. On other days of the week, the Blessed Sacrament is reposed in the tabernacle.

In 2013, the parish adopted the theme "Rise Up Now!" as a unifying phrase expressing its aspiration to be "a Catholic community on fire for the Lord that inspires people to ... become active disciples to fulfill God's purpose in their lives," as proclaimed in its mission statement.

The parish has about 1,250 families. At the time of its founding, it had about 80 families, with 128 people attending its first Mass, celebrated by Father Byrne in the chapel of the nearby Pontifical College Josephinum.

The parish school started in the fall of 1946 with two sisters teaching two grades each. The school, church and rectory all were in the mansion at North High Street and Selby Boulevard built by the Rev. Philander Chase, who was Episcopal bishop of Ohio from 1819 to 1832. An Army Quonset hut also was used for a time for school and Masses. A combined church

and school building was built in 1954 and the current church was completed 10 years later.

The Joliet Franciscan sisters who taught at the school until 1974 used the mansion as a convent from 1954 until 1967, when it was torn down and replaced by a new convent now occupied by the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, who accepted Bishop Frederick Campbell's invitation to come to the parish in 2011 and have remained since then.

St. Michael's staff includes Father Stash Dailey, pastor; Father David Johhstone, parochial vicar; Father Robert Kitsmiller, priest in residence; Deacons John Crerand and Bill Demidovich; Sister Riya Mary, pastoral minister; Jake Asuncion, youth minister; Jake Neal, OCIA director; Kris Jesse, business manager; Kathy Trafford, secretary; Rhonda Marinelli, receptionist; Rebecca Lund, marketing and communications; Ron Barrett, choir director and organist; Sister Mary Regina, OP, school principal and Laura Wells, preschool director.



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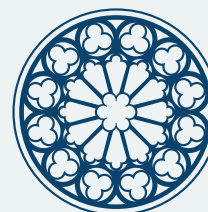
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St. Agatha concludes liturgical year with Sacred Heart consecration

By Hannah Heil
Catholic Times Reporter

Columbus St. Agatha marked the conclusion of the Catholic Church's liturgical year on Sunday, Nov. 23, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, by consecrating the parish to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Father Mark Summers, the church's pastor, said he desired to enhance the spirituality of the parish and its members.

The church, located in northwest Columbus' Upper Arlington suburb, features a statue of Jesus revealing His Sacred Heart with St. Margaret Mary Alacoque kneeling at His feet.

With the statue as a signature feature of the church, Father Summers considered the Lord's Heart "already enthroned here, in a manner of speaking," he said. "So I'm calling it a consecration or a dedication of St. Agatha's parishioners, both present and future, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

The dedication took place during the parish's 11 a.m. Sunday Mass on Nov. 23.

A ritual for parish enthronement offered by Welcome His Heart Sacred Heart Enthronement Network, based in Columbus, was used for the dedication.

The network received diocesan



Father Mark Summers, pastor at Columbus St. Agatha Church, leads the faithful in prayer while consecrating the parish to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on Sunday, Nov. 23, the Solemnity of Christ the King. Photos courtesy St. Agatha

approval from Columbus' then-Bishop Robert Brennan in August 2020. Bishop Earl Fernandes also encouraged enthronement through Welcome His Heart in an August 2023 letter.

Diocesan parishes enthroned to the Sacred Heart include Newark St. Francis de Sales, Delaware St. Mary, Cardington Sacred Hearts, Reynoldsburg St. Pius X, Westerville St. Paul the Apostle and Worthington St. Michael the Archangel.

Chuck and JoAnn Wilson, whose daughter, Emily Jaminet, serves as national executive director of the Sacred Heart

Enthronement Network, are actively involved with enthronements and approached St. Agatha's pastor about the possibility.

"They knew that I wanted to do this, and they came to me, offering to help in whatever way they can," Father Summers recalled.

To consecrate the parish on the final Sunday of the liturgical year, Father Summers recited a prayer at the ambo and the 12 Promises of the Sacred Heart given to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in 17th-century Paray-le-Monial, France.

He preceded to the church's alcove that envelops the Sacred



Father Mark Summers sprinkles a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with holy water.

Heart statue, offering prayers with responses from the faithful.

The pastor blessed the image with incense and sprinkled holy water around the statue. The congregation was also blessed with holy water.

The ceremony included a series of petitions, praying the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a parish and offering a prayer of Thanksgiving.

"The participation of the faithful is critical," the pastor explained, "because they are the ones ... being consecrated to the Sacred Heart."

In His 12 promises, Christ

assured the grace of final perseverance to faithful who receive Holy Communion on First Fridays for nine consecutive months. The Lord promised that such devotees will not die without receiving the sacraments, and His Heart will be their refuge in the last moment.

Father Summers said he hopes to offer several opportunities for Sacred Heart devotion in the parish, such as the sacrament of reconciliation and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on First Fridays.

The parish regularly offers Eucharistic exposition in the church on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

"When I'm in there praying with the Blessed Sacrament, I can't help but think about the Sacred Heart of Jesus," Father Summers reflected, "and how, even as I gaze at the host in the monstrance – the consecrated Body and Blood – I see the Heart of Jesus even in that plain white host."

St. Agatha's pastor also considered numerous popes who wrote about the devotion during the past few centuries, discovering "it's not only a pious practice to be devoted to the Sacred Heart. It's absolutely necessary to our spiritual advancement."

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Somerset Holy Trinity completes church restoration

Parishioners in what has become known as the birthplace of Catholicism in Ohio have much to celebrate.

Not only has the parish community completed an expansion of its school, but it recently finished an extensive church restoration project.

On Sunday, Nov. 23, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Somerset Holy Trinity Church welcomed Bishop Earl Fernandes to preside over a 10 a.m. Mass with Father Allen Moran, OP, provincial of the Dominican order's Province of St. Joseph, and Father Andre-Joseph LaCasse, pastor at the combined parishes of Holy Trinity and St. Joseph, as concelebrants.

The restoration of an old church building might not seem like earth-shattering news to some people in the diocese, but parishioners in the Perry County village of Somerset consider it an accomplishment. While the town does have a famous citizen, Civil War-era General Phillip Sheridan, it sits on the front edge of Appalachia, where poverty is native to the hills and mountains of the region.

The Catholic community in Somerset is the oldest in Ohio and one of the oldest in what was known in the late 1700s as the Northwest Territory, which later would be divided into several states.

In 1808, when then-Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore responded to the entreaties of settlers Jacob and Sarah Dittoe for a priest and sent Father Edward Fenwick, O.P., a Dominican, it was on a Native American trail known as Zane's Trace (now State Route 22) that he arrived.

St. Joseph, the first church in Ohio, was built three miles from Somerset and initially was not much more than a log cabin. Father Fenwick would go on to be made the first bishop of Cincinnati and the Dominican order would be entrusted with the care of Catholics in the Somerset area at St. Joseph Church and then Holy Trinity, a relationship that has lasted for more than 200 years.

Holy Trinity and St. Joseph were formally merged into one parish as part of the diocese's Real Presence Real Future initiative after sharing a priest for decades.

When Father LaCasse returned to the diocese several years ago after serving as pastor at St. Gertude Church in Cincinnati, he found the parishes in Somerset to be proud of their frugal ways but in need of maintenance. Having addressed building maintenance and beautification at parishes where he previously served as pas-

tor, including Columbus St. Patrick, Father LaCasse launched a campaign to upgrade Holy Trinity.

The church had undergone various touchup projects but never a thorough renovation since it was built in 1852. Research was done on the original designs of the building and the parish sought input from Bill Heyer, a nationally known church architect from Columbus.

The original "knob and tube" wiring was replaced and air conditioning was added. The pews were refinished by the Martin Painting Company after being transported to Grove City.

Meanwhile, the doors required total rebuilding with only a few panels being salvaged. The floor was repaired and refinished for the first time in history. The communion rail, which was in pieces around the church, was reassembled and repositioned for use.

In addition, the building was repainted inside and out. Concrete steps were repaired and replaced, and outdoor lighting was upgraded and enhanced. Interior lights were converted to LED for savings on electrical bills.

The restoration included murals of St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena, which had once adorned the sanctuary apse but had been put in a parishioner's barn because they were considered beyond repair. They were re-created by an artist and put in their original position over the main altar.

Other projects were the rebuilding of a

See SOMERSET, Page 23



Parishioners attend Mass on Sunday, Nov. 23 in the newly restored Somerset Holy Trinity Church with Bishop Earl Fernandes as the principal celebrant.

CT photos by Ken Snow



Father Andre-Joseph LaCasse, OP, the parish pastor, offers words of thanks and congratulations to parishioners for their contributions.



Thurifer Landon Shaner leads the procession at the beginning of Mass at Somerset Holy Trinity Church on Sunday, Nov. 23.



Bishop Earl Fernandes gives Holy Communion to Dominican sisters attending the Mass.



Bishop Earl Fernandes elevates the host during Mass.



Parishioners leave Mass on the Solemnity of Christ the King at Somerset Holy Trinity Church.

Order of Malta dinner supports Center of Care

The Columbus region of the Order of Malta held its annual dinner on Wednesday, Nov. 12 in the Jessing Center at the Pontifical College Josephinum in north Columbus to benefit its Center of Care, a clinic that offers free medical care to those struggling with lack of medical insurance.

The clinic is located on the near east side of Columbus and operates each Thursday morning with the addition of free dental care every other week. The clinic is staffed by volunteer nurses, dentists and physicians as well as non-medical volunteers, providing an opportunity volunteers to fulfill a portion of the Beatitudes.

The Order of Malta is a lay religious order of the Catholic Church. Started in the 12th century, the order has the dual charisms of *tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*, the defense of the faith and care for the poor. The dinner supported both charisms by collecting funds for the clinic and featuring Joseph Pearce, a Catholic convert, biogra-

pher, teacher and journalist.

Honorees for the Center of Care included Dr. Bill Meily, the medical professional volunteer of the year, and Jessica Joseph, the non-medical volunteer of the year.

Pearce told his story of conversion from atheist and racist to Catholic intellectual. He quoted the famous hymn "Amazing Grace" to illustrate that he was saved by grace, especially the grace of reading the works of G. K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis. He noted that his conversion occurred through his rational participation but, more important, through the healing of the emotional scars of his racist past.

The dinner began with an Invocation and blessing by Father Thomas Blau, OP, the regional chaplain, and ended with the daily prayer of the Order lead by Charles Mifsud, who encouraged all in attendance to join the work of the Order as a volunteer at the clinic or in prison ministry.



Joseph Pearce, a Catholic writer, teacher and journalist, speaks at the Order of Malta's annual Dinner on Nov. 12. Photos courtesy Order of Malta



Charles Mifsud (left) prepares to present an Order of Malta Center of Care volunteer award to Jessica Joseph.

Sacred music and college students: “Beauty will save the world”

By Dr. Nicole Simental
For The Catholic Times

St. Pope John Paul II in his “Letter to Artists” talks about the “Beauty” that saves. That from the creative inspiration of an artist, beauty will be passed on to future generations to stir them to wonder. He speaks of the call to transcendence and that beauty is a key to this mystery. (Letter to Artists, St. Pope John Paul II: 1999)

I am blessed to be the director of music for Buckeye Catholic at the St. Thomas More Newman Center next to the Ohio State University campus in Columbus, and I have seen how the beauty of sacred music has been one of the means to encounter the One who is Beauty Himself within the Sacred Liturgy.

In my role as music director and within the mission of Buckeye Catholic, my goal is to help form missionary disciples of Jesus Christ at the Ohio State University by fostering a love for Jesus through the Catholic liturgy and sacred music, all for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The Church beautifully expresses this truth in one of her documents, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “Sacred music surpasses merely religious music when it is joined to the liturgical rite to become a necessary and integral part of the solemn liturgy, ‘whose purpose is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful.’” (112) In other words, sacred music is not just a preference but an objective reality.

The teaching of the Church expressed in the Second Vatican Council states that “Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when it is celebrated in song ... prayer is expressed in a more attractive way, the mystery of the liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, is more openly shown, the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the union of voices, minds are more easily raised to the heavenly things by the beauty of the sacred rites, and the whole celebration more clearly prefigures that heavenly liturgy which is enacted in the holy city of Jerusalem.” (*Musica Sacram*: 1967 no. 5) This shows the vital importance and the role that music plays in the Liturgy.

So how do I foster a love for the Sacred Liturgy at Buckeye Catholic through its rich treasury and patrimony of sacred music? Well, I would say, it’s not me but rather the Holy Spirit, who through the wisdom of the Church has given us a model and directives to help us achieve the goal of sacred music, which is 1) glorifying God and 2) for the salvation of souls.

Often these days, there tends to be strong preferences on traditional vs. con-



Dr. Nicole Simental (right) directs the Buckeye Catholic choir at the St. Thomas More Newman Center. Photo courtesy Buckeye Catholic

temporary music. To be honest, I try not to use too much of this language. I find it to be divisive -- we are all called to be Catholic and are all called to be saints. This is not a halfhearted call where I pick and choose what I like. To be part of the one, holy, apostolic Church means embracing and living all of what the Catholic Church teaches, and in the Catholic Church, she has called us to worship God in a particular way with music most fitting of worship.

Why is this? Very simply, because God has asked us to; it is “right and just ... our duty and our salvation” and, secondly, God truly knows what we need. The music the Church has used over the centuries “is a treasure of inestimable value” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 112) and has the capacity to not only glorify God but to help souls get to Heaven. This happens naturally by the faithful being drawn into the prayer and beauty of the Liturgy and, most importantly, the sacred text of the liturgy, which is scriptural.

I have found that the college-aged students I work with have responded to this “beauty” in a transformative way. Currently in my office there is a “favorite music list” that the students have created, and among those are music such as *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, *O Magnum Mysterium*, *O God Beyond All Praise*, *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*, *Ubi Caritas*, *Anima Christi*, just to name a few.

This list has grown not because it was something that most were familiar with coming to college but rather they were exposed to the rich treasury of sacred music that the Catholic Church has to offer and have been captivated by the beauty of the

music that has helped them to encounter the living God who is Beauty Himself.

St. Pope John Paul II in his chirograph on sacred music reminds us: “As a manifestation of the human spirit, music performs a function which is noble, unique and irreplaceable. When it is truly beautiful and inspired, it speaks to us more than all the other arts of goodness, virtue, peace, of matters holy and divine. Not for nothing has it always been, and will it always be an essential part of the liturgy.” When I read that quote, I am struck with awe thinking that God has allowed me to participate in sharing the love for sacred music, which “speaks to us more than all the other arts of goodness.”

Why is this? Because it has a way to penetrate the depths of our soul. We are attracted to beauty because God is Beauty and we were made for God. Therefore, sacred music is not an end in itself but a means to the end, which is God. This music that we call sacred cannot be “ordinary, every-day or profane” but must draw us to the eternal saving Paschal Mysteries. Throughout the centuries, the Church has given us a model of sacred music that allows this to happen organically.

“The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as especially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, all things being equal, it should have pride of place in liturgical services.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, No. 116). Through exposure to sacred music such as chant, teaching at times before Mass begins, offering a class on what exactly is sacred music, the students have opportunity for dialogue and to learn why the Church has a paradigm of sacred music. This is an opportunity to teach and form the young people so that they can be strengthened in their prayer life through the Liturgy and be sent out to evangelize the world.

Dr. Peter Kwasniewski in his book

“Good Music, Sacred Music, and Silence,” says, “Gregorian chant has been the model of sacred music: fraternal twins from the cradle ... Its exclusive function is to clothe in music God’s holy words to us, and our words to Him and about Him; it has no other realm or purpose.”

Chant is sung in unison showing the universality of the Church. It is scriptural and is a part of the Liturgy. Therefore, chant cannot be separated from the Liturgy; it is the very music of the Catholic Church. One cannot tap their foot to chant or grasp at it and so it creates an ethereal quality. Similarly, one cannot possibly grasp and comprehend everything about God -- there is a mystery.

The Church has set a paradigm of sacred music to follow. Gregorian Chant, having pride of place, polyphony, pipe organ and hymnody. The further we stay within this model and paradigm the Church teaches us, “the further we are in accord with the spirit of the liturgy.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 116) This is not to say that new compositions cannot be composed, but that the closer we follow this model the more we will be in line with the Church’s model of sacred music.

A question often asked regarding sacred music is why we can’t sing certain songs at Holy Mass. While there is a lot of religious music that is still “good” and one might be drawn to God through a particular piece of music, not all is fitting for the Sacred Liturgy and the worship of Almighty God. Certain songs are lacking in qualities that sacred music should possess that evoke the grandeur, majesty, dignity of God, and transcend time and space. (Kwasniewski)

St. Pope Pius X in his *motu proprio* reminds us that “it (sacred music) must possess holiness and beauty of form and from these two qualities a third will spontaneously arise -- universality.” This allows for a greater accessibility to all. Just imagine going anywhere in the world for Holy Mass and still being able to sing the Sanctus -- this unifies all of us.

Here are just a few examples of how I have seen the power of sacred music move the souls of students at Buckeye Catholic.

One student approached me to say how appreciative he was of the beauty of the music here at Mass. He went on to say, while not trying to put down anyone, that when he goes to his home parish, the music is distracting and takes away from prayer rather than drawing him closer to prayer and God. He started, without any instruction, to see how certain types of music referred only to themselves and their feelings and did not reference God and that the music should be about God.

Another student wrote me this summer expressing how much she missed the music from Mass at Buckeye Catholic and

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MUSIC: Sacred music and college students,

Continued from Page 16

asked me to record the *Ave Regina Caelorum* that I taught the students so she could share with her friends. This is not a testament to me but rather to the power of sacred music in the Liturgy and how it transforms people's prayer life.

For daily Mass, we sing the various Marian antiphons that the students have grown to love. Even some students will ask "when can we sing the Latin Sanctus?" Or will say "the choir sounded like angels" today. This clearly informs me that through the power of the beauty of the sacred music, they were able to be brought from the ordinary to a glimpse the heavenly realities through their senses and their participation in lifting their hearts to God in worship.

This past All Souls Day, before each Mass, I taught the congregation in about five minutes the entrance and offertory antiphons in English. To hear close to 1,200 students throughout the day chanting "Eternal Rest grant unto them, O Lord ..." for the Entrance chant brings tears to my eyes imagining the holy souls in purgatory entering the heavenly Jerusalem.

Here at Buckeye Catholic, I try to encourage the students that we "sing the Mass." That we don't just sing songs at Mass but rather we "sing the Mass." We sing the entrance and communion antiphons that are a part of the Mass and the Mass Ordinary, which consists of the Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, etc. We chant the Our Father and preface dialogue.

These are all a part of the Mass and when we sing, it elevates the hearts and minds of the faithful toward the Eternal. Even if someone doesn't actively sing the antiphon, they can still actively participate through uniting their heart to the prayers, text and music. We sing hymns that direct our minds and hearts to God and are about God. This is not something novel or new, but rather it is what the Church in her wisdom has handed down for centuries.

I came across this quote, and I think it speaks volumes. "The liturgy is demanding: one cannot just do whatever, and personal subjectivity must take a back seat, because one must above all follow the path of a centuries-old tradition of sacred music ... God is the Sovereign Good and the Sovereign Beautiful -- and the liturgy is a foretaste of His glory, an epiphany, Heaven on earth!"

So, mediocrity can't be allowed!" (DiPippo, "We Sing of God Alone and for God Alone, through the Traditional Liturgy")

On Nov. 16 at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral, the diocese had its annual Gold Mass that promotes sacred music according to Church teaching, which are the same goals that I try to adapt to my work here at Buckeye Catholic. There is a timelessness in sacred music, and people of all ages can participate. St. Pope John Paul II references this timelessness of beauty in his "Letter to Artists," saying, "Beauty is a key to the mystery and a call to transcendence. It is an invitation to savor life and to dream of the future. That is why the beauty of created things can never fully satisfy. It stirs that hidden nostalgia for God which a lover of beauty like St. Augustine could express in incomparable terms: 'Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you!'"

Sacred music has a huge range of complexity from very, very simple to very complicated; so, people of all ages and abilities can be spiritually nurtured while also being technically challenged. It facilitates growth not only of the Christian person but also of one's musical abilities. Sacred music is didactic: one can learn about the faith, the liturgy, the history of Western music and how it developed under the auspices of the Church, etc.

If you would like the opportunity to experience the beauty of sacred music at Buckeye Catholic, I would like to personally invite you to come join us for our Advent and Christmas Lessons and Carols titled "O Magnum Mysterium: O Great Mystery" on Dec. 5 at 7 p.m. at the St. Thomas More Newman Center. Here you will be able to hear some of these treasures of sacred music that the Church has to offer.

In conclusion, as Dr. Kwasniewski says so beautifully, "Let us begin, begin, if we have not yet started; let us continue, if we have already begun; let us bring to perfection all that concerns the divine, holy, pure, immortal, heavenly, life-creating, and awesome mysteries of Christ, for the glory of God and the sanctification of the people." (Good Music, Sacred Music and Silence: Three Gifts of God for the Liturgy and for Life)

Musicians participate in Gold Mass at Cathedral



(Above) Stephen Smith, organist and director of sacred music at Westerville St. Paul the Apostle Church, plays the organ at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral during the annual Gold Mass for musicians on Sunday, Nov. 16. (top right) Dr. Richard Fitzgerald, director of music for the diocese and at St. Joseph Cathedral, directs some of the singers. (Middle right) Musicians from parishes throughout the diocese take part in the Gold Mass, which was celebrated by Bishop Earl Fernandes. (bottom right) The sacred music includes violin and organ at the Gold Mass held annually at the Cathedral on a date close to the feast of St. Cecilia, who is considered a patroness of music by the Church. Under the guidance of Dr. Fitzgerald with the blessing of Bishop Fernandes, the diocese is working toward incorporating sacred music into Masses to enhance the liturgy in all parishes. One of the documents from the Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, states, "Sacred music surpasses merely religious music when it is joined to the liturgical rite to become a necessary and integral part of the solemn liturgy, 'whose purpose is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful.'" Photos courtesy Anna Lincoln



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Newark Catholic, Watterson win state championships

By Tim Puet

For The Catholic Times

The Newark Catholic girls volleyball team and the Columbus Bishop Watterson boys soccer team both ended long periods of frustration by winning Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) championships earlier this month.

Newark Catholic took Division VI volleyball honors on Saturday, Nov. 8 with a 25-22, 25-23, 25-18 sweep of St. Henry at Wright State University. The championship was the ninth overall for the Green Wave but its first since 2004. The team had made eight appearances in the state semifinals since then without bringing home top honors.

Newark Catholic finished its first undefeated season since 1983 with its 27th straight victory and was led by All-Ohio player Natalie Harrington with 10 kills and 12 assists. Sydney Gummer added eight kills and 15 assists, Leah Caudill eight kills and five assists, Sophia Basham six kills and Aubrey Winters five kills.

One day after the Newark Catholic victory, Watterson won its first state boys soccer championship, shutting out Aurora 3-0 at Historic Crew Stadium for the Division III crown on goals by Alex Das, Max Meacham and Michael Quinn.

The Eagles (16-5-3) had been state semi-finalists in 2023 and lost to archrival Columbus St. Francis DeSales in a shootout in the regional final last year. Watterson also reached the Final Four in 2010, 2013, when it finished second, and 2014.

"We were determined this year to end the frustration after making eight straight Final Fours and not winning one," Newark Catholic's first-year coach Katie Hill said. "This was a special group of 14 girls who were friends as well as players. That's what may have made the difference with this year's team. They really enjoyed playing together and seemed to have more chemistry than in past years."

"They also were playing for something bigger than themselves. When the seniors were seventh-graders, a classmate, Brady Hempleman, died in a car accident. His parents have been to all our games and you can see number 3, his football number, everywhere in the school, even on our warmup shirts. We dedicated the season to him."

St. Henry, ranked second in the state volleyball coaches association poll, took a 6-1 lead in the first set of the championship game, but the third-ranked Green Wave called a timeout and settled down to win the set. They led 20-13 in the second set, but St. Henry tied the score before Gummer connected with Harrington on a kill and Harrington finished the set off with a pass from Veronica Bailey. The champions never trailed in the final set, leading by as much as 23-12 before St. Henry staged a late rally that fell short.

Newark Catholic had a harder time in the state semifinals, having to come from two sets down to defeat No.1-ranked Bremen with victories in the next three sets.

The nine championships ties Newark Catholic for second all time in OHSAA volleyball. Cincinnati Mount Notre Dame has 10. This was Newark Catholic's 27th state championship in all sports, including eight each in football and baseball, but the school's first since the baseball team won OHSAA honors in 2016.

"Because of the school's history, there's always pressure for Newark Catholic to make a deep postseason run. That makes playing here a different experience than at many schools and adds to the impact of being able to post another state banner at



Members of Newark Catholic's girls volleyball team hold the trophy after winning a state championship on Nov. 8 at Wright State University. Photo courtesy Newark Catholic High School



Columbus Bishop Watterson team members celebrate their first boys state soccer championship on Nov. 9 at Historic Crew Stadium. Photo courtesy John Hulkenberg

school," Hill said.

Although this was Hill's first year as head coach, she started coaching in the Newark Catholic program when the current seniors — Christiana Scarsella, Mackenzie Gebhart, Bailey, Gummer and Harrington — were seventh-graders and has been with them ever since.

She also was a member of the 2007 Green Wave team that lost in the state semifinals. Her assistant, Mackenzie Egan, played with her on that team and with the 2008 Green Wave, who ended the season the same way.

Hill said Newark Catholic's volleyball team is a family in more ways than one. Caudill and Basham had older sisters play in the program, as did Caudill's mother and the aunts of four players. Harrington, Caudill and Winters are cousins.

The Green Wave is anticipating another strong season in 2026 with the return of Caudill, a junior, and sophomores Basham and Winters.

Watterson's state championship was unexpected by many because the Eagles were seeded fifth in the Central District when the playoffs started. "What happened in the tournament was a surprise to a lot of

people, but not to us," coach Aaron Linden said.

"Before the season started, we felt there was a real possibility we could make it to the state championship based on how far we'd come in the previous two years. That feeling kept on growing even when we lost games because you could see how much pride and confidence this group had."

Linden said that in his pregame talk before facing Aurora, "I could be like many coaches and say it was just another game, but we all knew better. I just told everybody to let their emotions fuel you now that you've gotten this far."

He described the game-time conditions as "freezing cold and snowing like crazy" and thought that would work to the Eagles' advantage because it would dictate that most of the game would be played in the midfield. "We like to press really hard and the conditions made for that type of game," he said.

"Aurora's a very good team, but I don't think they had seen a team do what we did as far as pressing them right from the start. We were all over them in the first 20 minutes. We've done that to every team we've

played."

Das, a defender who's sometimes sent up front to give the attack a different look and is the team's captain, scored what proved to be the only goal Watterson needed in the 22nd minute of the first half. "That was only his third goal of the year, along with three assists, but two of the goals were game winners in the tournament," Linden said. "Alex has really taken advantage of the chances he's had to make plays."

Meacham, a first-team All-Ohioan, made it 2-0 in the 35th minute with his ninth goal. Quinn provided insurance with his third goal of the season, a header set up by Meacham, in the 71st minute.

"Quinn had been injured until the start of the tournament and really came through," Linden said.

"The first goal was the key, as it usually is, and once we got up 2-0, the Meachams (Max and his brother Sam, a junior, the team's leading scorer with 11 goals) and (sophomore Andrew) Fultz, three of the better players in central Ohio, controlled the pace most of the rest of the way. In the end, our talent level made the difference."

All three goal scorers in the championship game are seniors. Other team members graduating this year are Luis Porcayo, Eli Pham, Connor Adkins Davidson, Cannon Graessle, Creux Martin and Madden Galiffo.

Linden has been coaching youth soccer in central Ohio for more than 20 years and is in his fourth season at Watterson. He also coached at Westerville South from 2011 to 2015.

He echoed his counterpart at Newark Catholic in describing how team members related to each other. "Without a doubt this is the closest group I've ever coached," he said. "Their meals, where they go after games — they do everything together."

"You can't create something like that. It just happens. I've seen the joy in their faces after winning games and just gotten the feeling that I've been fortunate they brought me along for the ride."

"Being a Catholic school, of course we pray before every game. We had a pre-season team blessing ceremony and it was a special moment to be part of their Mass before the championship game. These guys take their faith very seriously."

Hill said that's also true for her champions. "One of the things that's bonded us has been going to chapel together before games," she said. "There's a specific hallway in school we walk down together in reverence. A different player for each game picks a Scripture verse and we base reflections and prayers on that. It's something we've done here at least since I've been in high school."

In football, Watterson (12-0) continued its quest for a second consecutive Division III state title by defeating Steubenville 43-0 on Friday, Nov. 21 in a regional final game.

The Eagles, 48-6 victors over Dresden Tri-Valley on Nov. 14, won their 28th straight game and will play Tipp City Tippecanoe (13-0) on Nov. 28 with the winner going to the state championship game in Canton the following weekend.

A football championship would be the school's third state title of this academic year. The Watterson girls won the Division II cross country title in early November.

DeSales ended its football season 9-3, losing to Massillon Washington 48-14 on Nov. 14 in a Division II regional semifinal.



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The St. Charles Preparatory School water polo team celebrates in the pool after its 17-8 victory in the Division I state championship match over Upper Arlington on Oct. 25 at Cincinnati Sycamore High School.
Photo courtesy St. Charles Preparatory School

St. Charles wins state water polo title

The Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School water polo team repeated as Division I state champions, defeating Upper Arlington 17-8 in the final on Oct. 25 at Cincinnati Sycamore High School.

The Cardinals pulled out to an early advantage and led the rest of the way to secure the program's ninth state championship.

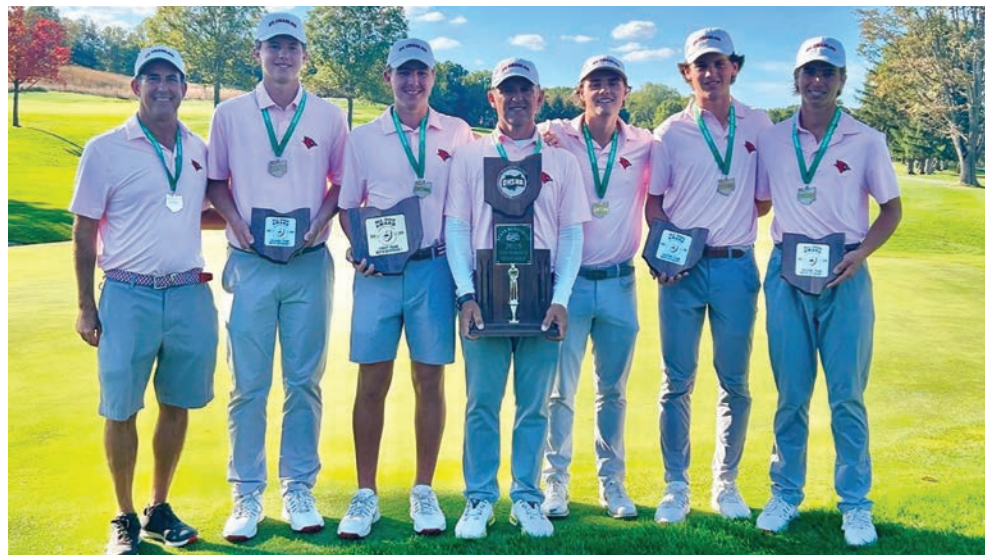
St. Charles advanced to the final with an 11-9 victory over Thomas Worthington. Upper Arlington defeated Cincinnati St. Xavier in the other semifinal.

Senior Pierce Bateman, who scored six goals for St. Charles in the semifinal,

teamed up with senior Austin Carpenter to lead the Cardinals in scoring in the final with four goals each. Junior Caleb Moore and senior Gabe Nixon contributed two goals each. Junior Dylan Rohyans, senior Alex Wu and junior Brendan Williams added one goal each for St. Charles, which lost to Upper Arlington in last year's state final.

Bateman was selected as the Ohio Player of the Year and first-team All-Ohio. Nixon was named second-team all-state, Carpenter made third-team all-state and Williams was honorable mention.

St. Charles golf team takes second in state



Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School's golf team finished as the runner-up in the two-day Division I state championships that ended Oct. 13 at Firestone Country Club in Akron. The Cardinals were two shots behind first-place Dublin Jerome High School and 18 shots ahead of third-place Cleveland St. Ignatius. "Our boys fought hard," St. Charles head coach Brian Unk said. "We had a tough start (in the first round) and a tough middle of the (final) round, but I am proud of their effort. At one point (in the final round), we were 12 shots back and came back and cut it to two. It was a good season." Receiving all-state honors were junior Harry Hadden (first team) and senior Mike Pagnotto, junior Hudson Burkey and sophomore Pierce Stealey (second team). Pictured (from left) are coach Rick Thomas, Stealey, Hadden, Unk, Beckham Martin, Pagnotto and Burkey. Photo courtesy St. Charles Preparatory School

Five St. Charles seniors sign letters of intent



Five St. Charles Preparatory School seniors signed national letters of intent on Nov. 11 to play at Division I universities next year. The signees are (from left) Jake Lloyd (swimming, Arizona State University), Ryan Sullivan (soccer, Ohio State University), Mike Pagnotto (golf, Ohio State University), Grant Brokaw (soccer, Bucknell University) and Austin Carpenter (swimming, University of Texas).
Photo courtesy St. Charles Preparatory School



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AVE MARIA
ACADEMY
at St. Peter St Joan of Arc Parish

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Tuesday, December 2
4:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 6
10 a.m.

Offering PS, PreK and K in 2026-27!



BISHOP FLAGET
SCHOOL

Educating PS - Grade 8
Thursday, December 4
5:30 p.m.
www.bishopflaget.org



Immaculate Conception School
SINCE 1903

Educating PS - Grade 8
Sunday, December 7
9:30 a.m.*
www.ic-school.org

*Event requires pre-registration. Please visit the school's web site for more information.

LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS

Catholic Man of the Year nominations being accepted

The diocesan Catholic Men's Luncheon Club is accepting nominations for its Catholic Man of the Year 2026 award.

The award will be presented by Bishop Earl Fernandes at the club's program on Friday, March 6 after the 11:45 a.m. Mass at Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave.

Submissions must be submitted by midnight Thursday, Jan. 15 and must be made by using a form located online at <https://www.catholicmensministry.com/man-of-the-year>.

Nominees must be laymen who, through their daily actions, words and prayers, exemplify the "good and faithful servant." Nominations must comply with requirements listed on the website.

Newly ordained priest to speak to luncheon club

Father Sam Severance, who was ordained as a priest of the Diocese of Columbus in May, will speak to the Catholic Men's Luncheon Club on his first six months as parochial vicar at Hilliard St. Brendan the Navigator Church.

His talk will be at the club's meeting on Friday, Dec. 5, after the 11:45 a.m. Mass

at Columbus St. Patrick Church, 280 N. Grant Ave. No reservations are necessary. A \$12 donation covers the lunch and meeting.

The club's next meeting will be on Friday, Feb. 6 at the same time and place and will feature a talk by Ismael Rodriguez, founding headmaster of the Chesterton Academy of St. Benedict, an independent Catholic high school in the Diocese of Columbus.

The Dec. 5 luncheon will be sponsored by the Serra Clubs of Columbus and North Columbus, Catholic organizations committed to promoting and supporting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.

Their mission is to create a culture where young people are encouraged to hear and respond to God's call.

If you are interested in sponsoring a luncheon, contact Dave Kilanowski at dkilano@aol.com.

Ss. Simon & Jude, St. Christopher to host missions

Advent parish missions will take place in December at West Jefferson Ss. Simon and Jude and Columbus St. Christopher

churches.

Father Ted Cassidy, SM, will present a mission with the theme "Mary Guides Us Together to Be Christ in our World" from Sunday, Dec. 7 to Tuesday, Dec. 9 at Ss. Simon & Jude Church, 9350 High Free Pike.

Father Cassidy is a retired Marianist priest who lives at the University of Dayton, where he celebrates Masses and conducts retreats and prayer sessions.

His mission talks will be presented at 6 p.m. Masses on each day of the retreat. In addition, there will be Eucharistic Adoration and an Advent penance service from 7 to 8 p.m. Dec. 7, refreshments and discussion after Mass on Dec. 8 and Adoration and confessions at 5 p.m. Dec. 9.

The mission at St. Christopher, 1420 Grandview Ave., will have the theme "Repent and Believe" with talks by Father Joseph Tuscan, OFM Cap, a Columbus native who is a Franciscan friar of the Pittsburgh-based Province of St. Augustine and national director general of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers.

It will begin at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14 and will continue with talks on each of the next two days. Subjects of the talks will be: Sunday, "The Greatest Threat to Holiness"; Monday, Dec. 15, "Pray, Hope

and Don't Worry: How to Raise Faithful Catholics and Encourage the Return of Those Who Have Left Their Catholic Faith" and Tuesday, Dec. 16, "The Solution."

All three evenings will include Mass, praying of the Rosary and confessions.

Father Tuscan also will celebrate Mass at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 13 and give a talk about the Christian Mothers for all Catholic women aged 18 and older.

Fr. Joseph currently serves as the Director General of the Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers and in full-time preaching ministry for the Capuchin Province of St. Augustine.

Ohio Dominican choir concert will be at Holy Spirit

The Ohio Dominican University choirs will present a concert of sacred music titled "The Stars Point the Way" from 7 to 8 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 30 at Columbus Holy Spirit Church, 4383 E. Broad St.

Under the direction of Sheila Cafmeyer, the concert will feature seven university musicians and graduate accompanist Tessa Wigal. Admission is free.

Retired religious collection scheduled for Dec. 13-14

The annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection will be held in parishes throughout the diocese on the weekend of Dec. 13-14.

In 2024, Catholics across the diocese contributed \$143,457 to the collection, mostly through their home parishes.

"The generosity of U.S. Catholics continues to make a profound difference in the lives of aging religious," said John Knutsen, director the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO). "This year, we invite all Catholics to help provide the care and dignity these women and men of faith so richly deserve."

Rising health-care costs and the absence of traditional retirement plans have placed significant financial strain on many religious communities. The Retirement Fund for Religious helps address this need, supporting more than 21,000 religious over age 70. In 2024, the average annual cost of care was about \$56,600 per person, with skilled nursing care averaging \$96,000.

Since its establishment in 1988, the col-

lection has raised over \$1 billion, with nearly \$900 million distributed for direct care and over \$103.7 million allocated to retirement planning projects.

In 2024, the appeal raised over \$28.1 million, providing financial assistance for the retirement needs of 266 U.S. religious communities. Beyond financial aid, the collection supports educational programs, empowering religious communities to plan for their long-term needs.

The NRRO coordinates the annual national appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious and distributes financial assistance to eligible religious communities. It is sponsored by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

For more information, visit retiredreligious.org, or contact Robin Cabral, by phone at (508) 685-8899 or by email at campaign@retiredreligious.org.

Filipino Simbang Gabi Masses set for Dec. 17-23

The Filipino Catholic Community of Central Ohio will participate in their traditional novena of Masses, known as Simbang Gabi, in spiritual preparation for Christmas from Dec. 17 to 23 at Columbus St. Josephine Bakhita Parish, 6077 Sharon Woods Blvd.

This year's celebration will mark the 15th in the diocese for Simbang Gabi.

Each evening will begin with a rosary at 6:30 p.m. followed by Mass at 7 p.m.

Bishop Earl Fernandes will be the principal celebrant for the last Mass on Tuesday, Dec. 23. A potluck dinner will follow Mass. A dinner RSVP is required.

All are invited to experience the Filipino Catholic Christmas tradition while preparing for the celebration of Jesus' birth.

For more information, please contact: Irene Sze (irene_sze@yahoo.com) or Minda Li (minda-li58@hotmail.com).

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All Preorders must be picked up by 1:00pm or items will be offered for general sale.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL PRODUCT QUANTITIES ARE LIMITED
and may run out prior to order deadline



IN THE WAITING WITH MARY

A Gift Guide for Hearts Preparing Room this Advent

By MaryBeth Eberhard
For The Catholic Times

1. PREPARE HIM ROOM

— *Gifts for the Home*

Creating peace within our homes so Christ may be welcome.



ST. ANDREW NOVENA PRINT

— *Just Love Prints*

The St. Andrew novena is an ancient prayer prayed for 29 days up to Christmas Day. I love having this beautiful print framed and placed at the forefront of our Advent traditions.

<https://justloveprints.com/collections/8x10-prints/products/saint-andrew-christmas-novena>

ADVENT WREATH STAND & BEESWAX

— *West Coast Catholic*

This modern Advent wreath stand gives such simplicity and flexibility. I love these thick beeswax candles, which burn for over 100 hours — perfect for the seasons when I keep candles lit long past the usual time to remind myself to keep praying. The minimalist stand leaves space for fresh greenery and lets me change up my wreath each year.

<https://westcoastcatholic.co/collections/home/products/modern-advent-wreath-stand-and-beeswax-advent-candles>



MAGNIFICAT BLANKET

This blue-and-white, oh-so-soft blanket feels like being wrapped in Mary's mantle. Keeping Marian touches throughout my home reminds me of the Blessed Mother's constant presence.

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/1691265450/magnificat-prayer-catholic-blanket>

NATIVITY TEA TOWEL

— *Mother & Home Market*

My kids love my seasonal towels. This bright and colorful design brings the Nativity into our everyday spaces and helps us tell the stories of our faith.

<https://motherandhomemarket.co/collections/advent/products/nativity-tea-towel>

2. LITTLE HEARTS IN WAITING

— *Gifts for Littles*

Helping children wonder at the mystery of Christmas with their hands and hearts.



CHEWS LIFE ROSARY

These teething-safe rosaries help our littles grow spiritually and physically. My kids grew up with tactile faith items like this — saint dolls, crinkle books, and rosaries — and they make the stories of our faith come alive.

<https://chewslife.com/products/jacinta-shepherd-kids-rosary>

WATER REVEAL STORY BOOKS

— *Gather and Pray*

A Mass bag essential. These quiet, faith-filled books depict Scripture stories through water reveal pages. They draw little hearts deeper into the Mass and give moms a few minutes with Jesus. Even my teenagers still “help” with these!

<https://gatherandpray.co/collections/water-reveal-books>

NATIVITY WOODEN MAGNET SET

— *Shining Light Dolls*

Our wooden toys have stood the test of time far more than plastic. This magnet set is a beautiful, contained way to tell the Nativity story again and again.

<https://shininglightdolls.com/collections/wooden-toys/products/christmas-nativity-wooden-magnet-set>

GEM ART KIT

— *Shining Light Dolls*

A creative Marian-themed craft perfect for Advent afternoons.

<https://shininglightdolls.com/products/gem-art-craft-kit-blessed-virgin-mary>

PLAYFUL PITCH MUSIC SET

— *Catholic Bundle*

A sweet and faith-centered introduction to music, rhythm and praise.

<https://playfulpitch.com/products/catholic-bundle-pitch-bar-set-accessories>

PRAY + PLAY FELT BOOK

— *Saintly Heart*

Soft, colorful, and full of conversation starters for the Adoration or Mass bag. Also perfect for cozy prayer time at home with your little one.

<https://www.saintlyheartco.com/products/my-pray-play-busy-book>

HOLYPALS PAJAMAS

I once sat behind the sweetest sisters in Mass wearing Scripture-themed dresses — adorable. These pajamas are made of soft bamboo and feature a starry Bethlehem night, retelling the Nativity with beauty.

<https://holypals.com/collections/away-in-a-manger/products/away-in-a-manger-twirl-dress-cotton>

3. BEHOLD THE GROWING HEART

— *Gifts for Teens*

Encouraging courage, creativity and quiet prayer in the young soul discovering purpose.

THE BIBLE IS FUNNY CARD GAME

A laugh-out-loud family favorite in place of Apples to Apples. This is the kind of game that gathers kids onto my bed until I finally have to shoo them out late at night.

<https://www.catholiccompany.com/products/the-bible-is-funny-card-game>

MARIAN BRACELET STACK

— *Mother & Home Market*

My daughters love stacking bracelets and sharing the meaning behind each one. This one is a friendship one. That one is to support my friend. I love listening and giving them faith-filled pieces that spark conversation and connection.

<https://motherandhomemarket.co/collections/jewelry/products/marian-blue-bracelet-stack>



ST. ANTHONY “FOUND ‘EM” AIRTAG HOLDER

— *The Little Catholic Box*

A clever, punny AirTag holder inspired by the patron saint of lost things — very relevant in my home! These make great gifts for teens, college students, spouses, and grandparents.

<https://thelittlecatholicbox.com/products/st-anthony-found-em-airtag-holder-keychain>

4. THE WATCH OF JOSEPH

— *Gifts for the Men Who Lead and Protect*

For the fathers, brothers and friends who wait and lead with steady hearts.

“BE NOT AFRAID” CREWNECK

My husband's sweatshirts are often borrowed, and this message from St. John Paul the Great resonates with such relevance. A wearable reminder of courage.

<https://www.catholictothemax.com/catholic-apparel/be-not-afraid-heather-red-crew-neck-sweatshirt/>



MARIAN CONSECRATION RING FOR MEN

This is an intricate Marian devotional ring with a similar feel to a Marian consecration bracelet but it has a more masculine feel to it.

<https://shop.saintbenedict.com/sterling-true-devotion-ring-for-men>

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL DARK ROAST COFFEE

Caffeine is a necessity in a family of eight children and all of them teenagers or early adults. We love the different varieties offered, but dark roast has been our go to lately. I love the mug and coffee combination gift set and think this would be a great gift for a husband, or boss as well.

<https://www.catholiccoffee.com/products/st-michael-the-archangel-dark-roast-coffee-travel-mug-gift-set>

MORNING STAR EBONY POCKET ROSARY CHAPLET

I love the way my husband keeps a chaplet nearby. It comforts me to know he has Mother Mary near him. These bold ebony beads culminating with a Lapiz Lazuli Our Father stone are tied together with combat ready paracord and a very secure clasp. I know this will be a definite gift in one of our stockings this year.

<https://catholicwoodworker.com/products/handmade-wooden-pocket-rosary-morning-star>

5. FULL OF GRACE

— *Gifts for the Women You Hold Dear: For the hearts who nurture, pray and hold the world close.*

“MINISTRY IS MOTHERHOOD” STICKER

— *Modern Catholic Goods*

Perfect for a water bottle, mirror, or journal. Little reminders like this honor the work and love we pour into our families each day.

<https://moderncatholicgoods.ca/products/motherhood-is-my-ministry-sticker-card>



OUR LADY OF LOURDES NECKLACE

— *Telos Art Shop*

I hold a special devotion to the Blessed Mother. This beautiful gold necklace keeps her close and serves as a constant reminder of her intercession.

<https://telosartshop.com/products/our-lady-of-lourdes-yb>

AVE MARIA BASEBALL CAP

— *The Little Catholic Box*

Some days call for a hat. For me, typically those days correspond with a need to offer up my day begging the Blessed Mother's intercession in my vocation. This simple cap says “Yes, I'm Catholic. Yes, I love Mary. And, yes, it's going to be a long day, but we will get through it together!”

<https://thelittlecatholicbox.com/products/ave-maria-classic-baseball-cap>

ADORATION BAG / PRAYER CADDY

— *The Little Rose Shop*

A perfect Adoration-bag-in-disguise. It fits my Bible, rosary, journals, pens, glasses and more. The Little Rose Shop's items are beautiful and thoughtfully made.

<https://thelittleroseshop.com/products/catholic-prayer-corner-caddy>

MAGNIFICAT CANDLE

— *Mother & Home Market*

Lighting a candle is part of how I pray. This beeswax candle, with notes of bergamot, myrrh and sage, reminds me of tradition and reverence.

<https://motherandhomemarket.co/products/magnificat-beeswax-candle>

“OUR CALL TO LOVE WITH OPEN ARMS” TEE

— *Mother & Home Market*

Inspired by St. Thérèse's reminder that our vocation is love. A gentle wearable reminder to love deeply.

<https://motherandhomemarket.co/products/cest-lamour-tee-1>

OUR LADY OF LOURDES MEDAL

— *House of Joppa*

A French-inspired medaille with Our Lady's outstretched arms — a meaningful Marian gift for women of all ages.

<https://www.houseofjoppa.com/products/lady-lourdes-necklace-french-blue>

6. PONDER THESE THINGS

— *Books for the Soul*

Marian reflections, Catholic literature, Advent devotionals and words that quiet the heart.

MOTHER LOVE DEVOTIONAL

A beautiful companion for mothers during sports practices, dance pickups and the daily waiting moments of life.

<https://motherandhomemarket.co/collections/journals/products/mother-love>

HUMANS OF HEAVEN

A stunning black-and-white portrait book of the saints — gorgeous for a coffee table and a natural conversation starter.



<https://www.januaryjanes.com/collections/home-living/products/humans-of-heaven>

WORD ON FIRE CATHOLIC KIDS COOKBOOK

We once assigned each of our kids a night of the week to cook dinner — lots of pasta, pancakes and eggs were involved! They've grown since then. This cookbook helps bring liturgical living into family meals.

<https://bookstore.wordonfire.org/products/catholic-kids-cookbook>

HONOR THY WIFE

— *Kevin Lowry*

An excellent gift from a father to a young adult son. Full of wisdom, vulnerability and practical insights. This would also be a great devotion to do the month before a wedding anniversary.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DVR6CG1B>

7. STOCKING STUFFERS

— *Little Lights for the Journey*

Small gifts, big graces for the journey toward Christmas.



SAINT HOTLINE CARDS

Quick visuals of saintly intercession — perfect for a book, backpack, letter to a college student or a note to a parent.

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/4310038289/saint-emergency-hotline-sticker-or>

THE LITTLE FLOWER SOAP COMPANY

Natural soaps and lip balms from a Catholic family business — even a bacon-themed lip balm for the priest who loves

bacon! Beautifully wrapped and gift-ready.

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/1174031188/homemade-soap-handmade-soap>

WATERCOLOR SAINT BOOKMARKS

— *Sacred Treasures*

Delicate, deckled-edge watercolor saint bookmarks — perfect for little add-ons gifts.

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/1464737681/watercolor-saint-bookmark>

“GOD’S VOICE” STICKER

— *Gather & Pray*

A gentle reminder of who speaks truth into our lives.

<https://gatherandpray.co/collections/the-gathered-market/products/gods-voice>

8. WAITING IN OUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD

— *Shop Local with Purpose*

Supporting local shops as we wait with Mary in our own communities.

MARIAN BOOK STORE

— *Westerville St. Paul's Catholic Church*

A well-loved local staple for Catholic books, sacramentals and gifts. We love stopping by this sweet shop inside the gathering space of St. Paul's. Everyone is always so helpful and kind.

GENERATIONS RELIGIOUS GIFTS

A warm and well-stocked family shop offering Catholic gifts for every age and sacramental moment. Generations is a staple in our community for Catholic shopping. We have been shopping there for decades and the selection they have is impressive. They are also always willing to help you find an item if not in stock.

REMAIN BOUTIQUE — THE SPA AT RIVER RIDGE: DUBLIN

One of my favorite little local Catholic boutiques tucked into a corner of an incredible spa. Their small faith-based boutique features rosaries, apparel, baby items, jewelry, candles, CORDA candles, modern faith apparel, accessories, prayer pillows and more. While you stop in, grab a gift card for that someone special!

<https://www.thespaatriverridge.com>

SOMERSET: Holy Trinity completes church restoration, Continued from Page 15

confessional and the removal of an outdated reconciliation room; creation of a dedicated space for the baptismal font using marble tile that matched the original font; resurfacing of the entrance narthex in the same marble by Dan Boyden of Veritas Tile Works; renovation of nearly every surface; and the repainting and repairing of statues that were returned to their original settings in many cases.

Funding for the project was provided by parishioners, who took part in a Beacon on the Hill building campaign.

Such an undertaking was met with some skepticism, but the generosity and faithfulness of those who pledged gave the committee and the pastor a budget of about \$500,000, which the parish used wisely to accomplish its res-

toration goal and create a moment worthy of celebration despite the financial challenges amid the poverty of Perry County.

About the same time, Holy Trinity Catholic School across the street from the church began building a new wing that increased the size of the school by 50 percent under the leadership of principal William Noll, a sixth-generation descendant of one of the original families of St. Joseph.

The school addition, which was funded through a campaign separate from the church renovation, created room not only for a grade school at capacity but a preschool and kindergarten.

Bishop Fernandes blessed the new school wing after Sunday's Mass.



Bishop Earl Fernandes blesses an addition to Somerset Holy Trinity School after Mass on Sunday, Nov. 23.

CT photo by Ken Snow

First Sunday of Advent Year A

Wait for it: Prepare for Christmas during Advent

Isaiah 2:1-5
Ps. 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:37-44

Advent is a season of waiting. We hear the invitation to “be prepared.” We are called to expect and to wait for the coming of the Lord, the Son of Man. Yet we are also told that it will happen at a time that we cannot anticipate. There is a paradox here, as if we are being told to “hurry up and wait!”

Waiting with expectation, in awareness of longing, is different than simply being bored while waiting. We are not “waiting for Godot.” Rather, we are waiting for God to manifest Himself as the God of the universe, the Lord of time and history, who is ushering us into eternity.

The human experience of waiting for someone that we are eager to see is a helpful image for the expectant waiting of Advent. We watch the horizon, we check the time, we seek affirmation that the coming is promised and will surely happen. Advent is meant to be this kind of waiting.

“Jesus is coming! Look busy!” is a humorous reminder of the importance of the One Who is soon to arrive, but we are called

not just to look busy. We must be prepared, ready and waiting with an attitude of openness.

Unfortunately, Advent comes at a very busy time and waiting may not be easy for us. We want an immediate response to our requests. We become demanding of one another without paying any attention to what others are doing. This is a time of great stress. Advent and Christmas are meant to bring delight and peace and joy. How can we open our hearts to these gifts?

Many years ago, teenagers in many dioceses attended Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) retreats. (Some still do!) One of the mottos for the retreat was “Don’t anticipate, participate.” There was a schedule, but each part was built on those that came before. To experience Christ, it was necessary to “get in there” at each moment. So, for Advent, since our expectation is to receive Christ at Christmas, we ought to live in the moment. Each day, each week, each candle is able to offer something special. We prepare for Christmas by participating.

What will Advent bring? Week one ushers us into the season. Isaiah calls us: “Come, let us climb the LORD’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may



SCRIPTURE READINGS
Father Timothy Hayes

Father Timothy M. Hayes is pastor of St. Edward The Confessor, Granville.

walk in his paths.” So, let us go to the holy mountain, the place where we worship together. Mass each weekend is a start. Daily Mass, visits to church and to the tabernacle for quiet meditation on the readings of the season, especially those of Isaiah, all these can serve to slow us down to listen more profoundly to God’s voice speaking in our hearts. So, “Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord!”

Reconciliation will be celebrated with

penitents and confessors gathering. Let us make a good confession. Gatherings for Scripture studies or presentations on the Advent themes are made available. Let us make time for these, with an intentional stepping back from the hustle and bustle of the secularized season.

The theme of light in darkness matches the winter season. Our religious activities and gatherings bring us to deeper knowledge of God’s ways and a greater commitment to live in accord with our faith. In this way, we rise above the darkness all around us. St. Paul exhorts us: “Brothers and sisters: You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day.”

Advent can be a time of personal renewal and growth, but this will be so only if we choose to allow it to penetrate into our lives. Many are in need of hope, which we can offer if we live our faith in concrete and intentional ways. “Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.”

Second Sunday of Advent Year A

Repentance as the prerequisite for peace

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
Romans 15:4-9
Matthew 3:1-12

What did people make of the wild figure of St. John the Baptist? We know he was thought to be the long-awaited messiah by many, but certainly not quite in the way Scripture had trained them to expect: “The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord.”

All those attributes could be variously interpreted, but perhaps upturned their anticipated idea of the savior if it were in fact to be John. St. Paul adheres to this mindset with regard to the insights in the inspired texts: “Whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” He’s writing to the persecuted Roman Christians with a sincere prayer for their perseverance through trials unto their eventual tranquility, that they may “think in harmony with one another.”

John’s strange twofold diet of “locusts and wild honey” similarly signifies that pattern of divine judgment through suffering (as with the plague of locusts) joined



SCRIPTURE READINGS
Father Tyron Tomson

Father Tyron Tomson is a priest of the Diocese of Columbus pursuing a Licentiate in Sacred Scripture in Rome.

to subsequent abundant delight for which they long (as in the land flowing with milk and honey). “John wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist.”

An identical detail is paralleled as a symbolic object in the messianic prophecy of Isaiah: “Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.” Maybe we might call to mind the old custom of being punished with a belt.

Camel’s hair garments also represent painful penance. Ominously, we hear, “Even now the ax lies at the root of the

trees,” ready for the thinning out of the fruitless overgrowth. “His winnowing fan is in his hand” to “clear his threshing floor” of “the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” After all, John’s talk of a “brood of vipers” and “the coming wrath,” what would they think then when he tells them, “... the one who is coming after me is mightier than I”?

We might suppose that such an unpopular message would have had few takers. To the contrary, “At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River.” During this penitential time of Advent, we must take a cue from these, our spiritual ancestors, who “acknowledged their sins,” as the best and necessary preparation for the coming of the Savior. Only when we know the depths of our need for grace, although it might be harrowing to acknowledge, can we appreciate the Incarnate Grace we await to behold at Christmas, and then at last when He comes again at the end of time, another major and related theme of this sacred season.

What will that conclusive consummation of the world be like? Isaiah compares the grace of the finalized eschatological universe to the vastness of the ocean: “There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled

with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.” The Psalmist relays a similar sentiment: “May he rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.”

This patternistic strategy of penitence-preceding-perfection works for both Jews and foreign converts, as it serves “to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, but so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.” That’s all people, without exemption. Indeed, “In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.” This affirms the specified end goal as the harmonious praise of God: “that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Baptist stands uniquely at the threshold of the New Covenant, introducing the advent of the Messiah with an urgent message of conversion so that absolute serenity can ultimately be effected. We enter this process ourselves as we renew our own compunction and joyfully prepare for His coming. First must come the balancing out of the cosmic scales of right and wrong by God’s merciful grace, with all the chastisement that entails, and then the total reconciliation that it brings can descend throughout the whole land: “Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever.”

THE WEEKDAY BIBLE READINGS

12-1/12-6 MONDAY Isaiah 4:2-6 Psalm 122:1-2,3-4b,4cd-5,6-7,8-9 Matthew 8:5-11	THURSDAY Isaiah 26:1-6 Psalm 118:1,8-9,19-21,25-27a Matthew 7:21,24-27	12-8/12-13 MONDAY Genesis 3:9-15,20 Psalm 98:1,2-3ab,3cd-4 Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12 Luke 1:26-38	THURSDAY Isaiah 41:13-20 Psalm 145:1,9,10-11,12-13ab Matthew 11:11-15
TUESDAY Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17 Luke 10:21-24	FRIDAY Isaiah 29:17-24 Psalm 27:1,4,13-14 Matthew 9:27-31	TUESDAY Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 96:1-2,3,10ac,11-12,13 Matthew 18:12-14	FRIDAY Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelation 11:19a;12:1-6a,10ab Judith 13:18bcde,19 (Ps) Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47
WEDNESDAY Isaiah 25:6-10a Psalm 23:1-3a,3b-4,5,6 Matthew 15:29-37	SATURDAY Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26 Psalm 147:1-2,3-4,5-6 Matthew 9:35-10:1,5a,6-8	WEDNESDAY Isaiah 40:25-31 Psalm 103:1-2,3-4,8,10 Matthew 11:28-30	SATURDAY Sirach 48:1-4,9-11 Psalm 80:2ac,3b,15-16,18-19 Matthew 17:9a,10-13

DIOCESAN WEEKLY RADIO AND TELEVISION: Mass Schedule: Weeks of November 30 and December 7

SUNDAY MASS
10:30am Mass from Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral on St. Gabriel Radio AM820, Columbus, FM88.3, Portsmouth, and FM106.7, Athens., and at www.stgabrielradio.com and diocesan website, www.columbuscatholic.org.

Mass from St. Francis de Sales Seminary, Milwaukee, at 7:30 and 10 a.m. on WWHO-TV (the CW), Channel 53, Columbus. Mass with the Passionist Fathers at 10:30 a.m. on WHIZ-TV, Channel 18, Zanesville. 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); Delaware St. Mary (www.delawarestmary.org); Sunbury St. John Neumann (www.saint-johnsunbury.org); and Columbus Immaculate Conception (www.iccols.org). Check your parish website for additional information.

We pray the propers for Weeks I and II of the Liturgy of the Hours

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Year A

Holy Day honors Our Lady, full of grace, conceived without sin

Isaiah 2:1-5
Ps. 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:37-44



SCRIPTURE READINGS

Father Ervens Mengelle, IVE, SSL

Father Ervens Mengelle, IVE, SSL, is an Assistant Professor of Scripture and Dean of Men in the School of Theology at the Pontifical College Josephinum. He holds a licentiate in biblical exegesis from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome with further biblical studies at the Toronto School of Theology.

On Dec. 8, the Church celebrates the Immaculate Conception, the unique privilege of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. It means that when she was conceived in the womb of St. Ann, her mother, she was preserved, by the special intervention of God, from what Catholic theology calls Original Sin. The solemn dogmatic definition of this mystery took place in 1854, to be followed shortly after by the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin in Lourdes, where she used the same title for St. Bernadette Soubirous.

But the mystery had been present for a long time in the history of the Church. Ancient hymns like Tota Pulchra ("All Beautiful") recall it. It had already been supported for a long time, especially in Spain (in Rome, the Column of the Immaculate Conception is in Piazza Spagna as a tribute of the Pope to that nation's defense of the dogma). All Hispanic countries prayed one way or another to the Pura y Limpia Concepción ("Pure and Unstained Conception"), as countless images of the Blessed Virgin witness. Above all, we need to stress the fact that this is the title by which she is revered as the Patroness of the United States of America.

Today's liturgical texts recall the mystery in a variety of ways. Thus, the prayers point out the way the Father acted to avoid the contamination of sin: "You preserved her from every stain by virtue of the Death of your Son, which you foresaw ..." (Collect Prayer), "on account of your prevenient grace" (Prayer over the Offerings), "in a singular way you preserved Blessed Mary" (Prayer after Communion). On the other hand, other texts present the positive aspect of the divine intervention: "He has clothed me with a robe of salvation, and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bride adorned with her jewels" (Entrance Antiphon), "endowed (her) with the rich fullness of your grace" (Preface).

This last reference connects with today's Gospel, which points out the root and origin of such a singular privilege as the Blessed Virgin enjoyed. When the Archangel greeted Mary, he addressed her not by name but by a revealing attribute. The translation we use says: "full of grace." It is a good one, given the limitations we face to translate the term into our modern languages. The Greek term is kecharitoméne, which is a passive participle in perfect tense. The verbal root is char- from which comes the term "grace" (Greek cháris.) The perfect tense indicates an action performed in the past whose effects are still present. But what is especially

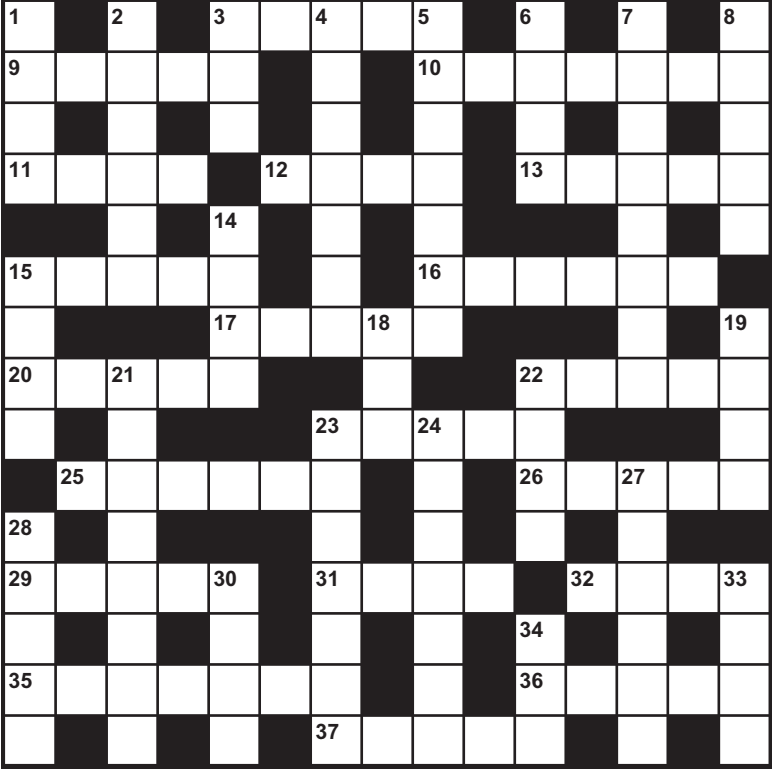
relevant is the passive voice. The reason is what commentators of the Bible call the "divine passive." The "divine passive" is a grammatical construction, primarily in Greek, where a verb is in the passive voice, but the context implies that God is the unstated agent performing the action. This is used to emphasize that the action is divinely produced (for instance, in the phrase "your sins are forgiven" in Mark 2:5, Jesus implies God is the one doing the forgiving). In sum, the term kecharitomene indicates an action gratuitously performed by God in the past whose effects are still determinant in the present.

Theological reasoning, in pondering the mystery of the Blessed Virgin Mary, reflected on her unique role as mother of the Savior and concluded with the necessity of preserving her from any stain of sin. The liturgy contains echoes of those considerations: "God, by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, prepared a worthy dwelling for (His) Son" (Collect Prayer), "so that in her ... you might prepare a worthy Mother for your Son" (Preface), "Glorious things are spoken of you, O Mary, for from you arose the sun of Justice, Christ our God" (Communion Antiphon).

In the second reading, St. Paul points out that God "has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him ..." If this is said of us believers, how much more must those words be applied to the Blessed Virgin? It is reflected in a Spanish popular saying: "If He wanted to do it and could not, then He is not God; if He could do it, but did not want, then He is not son; therefore, He could and did it."

It is very fitting for the Church, especially in the United States, to rejoice in her mystery and therefore celebrate the dawn of the day of salvation.

CATHOLIC CROSSWORD



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ACROSS

- 3 "When we eat this ___ and drink..."
- 9 The Jesuits, for example
- 10 He saw the wheel
- 11 Some fell on the path, some on rocky ground, some among thorns, and some on rich soil
- 12 Jerusalem's Mount ___
- 13 Paul's companion during his missionary travels
- 15 Catholic actress Holmes
- 16 Holy objects
- 17 Sister ___, hermit
- 20 "...many ___ and wonders were being done by the apostles" (Acts 2:43)
- 22 White silk garment worn by the Pope
- 23 Jesus said this divided could not stand
- 25 Holy one, in Paris
- 26 Number of humans in Noah's ark
- 29 Jesus praised her generosity
- 31 Ancestress of Jesus
- 32 The Mass is both a sacrifice and a ___
- 35 "His Eye is on the ___"
- 36 "Quo ___?"
- 37 Commandment place

DOWN

- 1 Members of orders take these

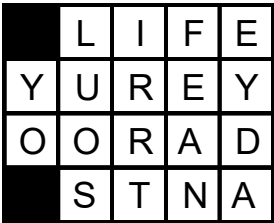
- 2 Season during which the Joyful Mysteries are prayed
- 3 Some Carmelites (abbr.)
- 4 "Kyrie ___"
- 5 Formed by several parishes
- 6 Papal symbol
- 7 Pertaining to Scripture
- 8 "The cup of blessing that we ___" (1 Cor 10:16)
- 14 Good ___
- 15 "Greet one another with a holy ___" (2Cor 13:12)
- 18 "Gloria in excelsis ___"
- 19 The ___ Supper
- 21 "Angel of God, my ___ dear"
- 22 "___ my sheep." (Jn 21:17)
- 23 Book before James
- 24 Extreme ___
- 27 This kind of person stirs up strife, according to Proverbs
- 28 Nationality necessary to be in the papal guard
- 30 Liturgy of the ___
- 33 "For whoever wishes to save his life will ___ it" (Mk 8:35)
- 34 Benedict's number

Words of Wisdom

by Pat Battaglia, aka Dr. Fun

Draw a path from letter to letter to spell the words given in capital letters that completes the wisdom statement. Move one square at a time, up, down, right, left or diagonally until all letters are used once. Ignore any black squares.

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PRAY FOR OUR DEAD

- ABBOTT, Theodore, 89, Nov. 10**
St. Bernadette Church, Lancaster

ALLEN, Carolyn A. (Whipps), 81, Nov. 8
St. Matthew the Apostle Church, Gahanna

ALTIER, Mary E. (Garey), 92, Nov. 7
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

AMADIO, Beverly A. (Barcalow), 76, Nov. 10
St. Christopher Church, Columbus

BALLARD, Kathleen, 75, Nov. 15
St. Timothy Church, Columbus

BANCROFT, Cecilia "Cece," 78, Oct. 30
St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Parish, Columbus-Powell

BAUER, Teresa "Tessie" (Kanzleiter), 96, Nov. 2
St. Brendan the Navigator Church, Hilliard
- BURNS, Karl J., 87, Nov. 13**
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, Pickerington

CHOCANO, Hugo A., 75, Nov.16
St. Paul the Apostle Church, Westerville

COOK, Ruth, 93, Nov. 8
St. Andrew Church, Columbus

DENBOW, Carol J., 61, formerly of Columbus, Oct. 30
St. Luke Church, Danville

DeROBERTS (DeRUBERTIS), Joseph L., 78, Nov.8
Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel, Columbus

ELLIS, Mary Louise, 92, Nov. 19
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

ELLIS, Pamela, 79, Nov. 7
St. Bernadette Church, Lancaster
- GUANCIALE, Carol L. (Lewis), 73, Nov. 10**
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark

HAGARMAN, Edward, 98, Nov. 15
St. Joseph Church, Dover

HETTINGER, June E., 78, Nov. 6
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Columbus

HOLEHOUSE, Edward G., 69, Nov. 13
Church of the Resurrection, New Albany

KUHN, James Clifford "Jim," 56, Nov. 11
St. Paul the Apostle Church, Westerville

LANCIA, Anthony, 94, Nov. 18
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Grove City

MAY, Elizabeth "Betsy" (Boggs), 86, Nov. 11
St. Mary Church, Chillicothe
- NAPLES, Michael, 59, Sept. 14**
Resurrection Cemetery Chapel, Lewis Center

PLAISTED, Ramona (Carney), 91, Nov. 4
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

QUINN, Joseph T., 88, Nov. 7
St. Rose of Lima Church, New Lexington

RICHARDS, Kristina M., 25, Nov. 8
St. Peter St. Joan of Arc Church, Powell-Columbus

RICHARDS, Rickard, 80, Nov. 7
St. Mary Church, Marion

TANTES, Vincent, 79, Nov. 10
Immaculate Conception Church, Columbus

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

V	A	B	R	E	A	D	K	B	B
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S	P	A	R	R	O	W	O	V	A
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- ESSMAN, John J., 94, Nov. 11**
St. Josephine Bakhita Parish at St. Elizabeth Church, Columbus
- GIAMETTA, Charles A., 83, Nov. 4**
St. Pius X Church, Reynoldsburg
- GOLDEN, James E., 94, Nov. 6**
Our Lady of Peace Church, Columbus

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Q	N	D	H	S
N	T	A	T	J
F	I	N	D	S

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Deacon Elmer L. Lampe Jr.

Funeral Mass for Deacon Elmer L. Lampe Jr. 91, who died Thursday, Nov. 13, was celebrated Tuesday, Nov. 25 in the chapel of Resurrection Cemetery, Lewis Center, followed by burial at the cemetery.

He was born in Dubuque, Iowa on March 30, 1932 to Elmer and Agnes (Yates) Lampe.

He graduated from Bellevue (Iowa) High School, earned a Bachelor's degree in religion and a Master's degree in history from the University of Iowa and studied theology at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, philosophy at the University of Wisconsin and history at Ohio State University. He had a long career teaching history at Ohio Dominican University.

He was ordained to the diaconate on Aug. 14, 1977 at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral by Bishop Edward Herrmann. He served as a deacon at Worthington St. Michael Church, Doctors North Hospital, Columbus; Ohio State University Hospital and Sunbury St. John Neumann Church and as a member of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission. He retired from active ministry in 2005.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Catherine (Nutting) and his brother, David. He is survived by his children Mark, Matthew (Lisa) and Jean, a grandson and two granddaughters.

Maureen A. Luis

Funeral Mass for Maureen A. Luis, 76, who died Sunday, Nov. 2, was celebrated Thursday, Nov. 13 at Powell St. Joan of Arc Church. Burial was at Resurrection Cemetery, Lewis Center.

She was born in Cincinnati on Sept. 29, 1949, to Alan Klonne and Marion (Williams) Hamm.

She was a graduate of Ursuline Academy and Edgecliff College in Cincinnati, earning a degree in mathematics. She was a math teacher, left that career to raise her children and, after they had grown, served

for nearly 30 years as religious education director of Columbus St. Peter Church, which is now part of a combined parish with St. Joan of Arc.

She also was active in the Powell Women's Club, serving a term as its president.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Michael, former business manager of St. Peter Church. Survivors include a son, Timothy (Renee); a daughter, Michelle Blevins; brothers, Mike Klonne and Tim (Tina) Klonne; and six grandchildren.

John A. Albright

Funeral Mass for John A. Albright, 71, who died Sunday, Oct. 26, was celebrated Saturday, Nov. 1 at Chillicothe St. Peter Church. Burial was at St. Margaret Cemetery, Chillicothe.

He was born on Feb. 3, 1954 in Chillicothe to Herman and Catherine (Reider) Albright.

He spent 53 years in maintenance and operations management positions at the Goodyear Atomic plant in Piketon, from 1972 until one month and one day before he died.

Since 1990, he had been a maintenance volunteer at St. Peter Church and Chillicothe Bishop Flaget School and briefly

served as the school's facilities manager.

He was a member of Knights of Columbus Council 15793, the boards of the Assistance House and the Burton Stevenson House in Chillicothe, the Flaget school board and the St. Peter parish council and finance committee.

He was preceded in death by a son, John, and an infant grandchild. Survivors include his wife of 48 years, Lynn (Freygang); daughters, Terrina (Gregory) Fahnestock and Kathryn (Bradley) Edwards; twin brother, Joseph (Jane); sister, Mary Lukco; grandsons, Nicholas and Nathan; and granddaughter, Sadie.

Veterans Day ceremony takes ‘God bless America’ to another level

By Michele Williams
For The Catholic Times

The words “God bless America” have taken on a profound new meaning for me.

It is because the Ohio Reformatory for Women (ORW) celebrated Veterans Day with a ceremony organized by the Group of Incarcerated Veterans Enduring (G.I.V.E.), which was established in 2005. It was held in the gym to accommodate the many staff members, inmates, outside guests and 11 very special dogs.

I had been invited with the Stitching Post team in appreciation for making patriotic bandanas for the Circle Tail (service dog training program) dogs to wear during the ceremony and all around the grounds. The overarching message was obviously to honor American veterans, yet it taught me a lesson in history, humanity and quiet heroism.

Before I go on, it’s confession time: Studying history and government was never my idea of fun. In high school, I worked hard and earned A’s in both, but most of my retention ended when summer began.

As a member of Columbus Centennial High School’s flag corps, I marched with the band in Veterans Day parades. They were fun, and then we had the rest of the day off. What typical teenager doesn’t love that?

I hang my head in shame as I admit that even having three uncles as veterans (they each enlisted and served in the Army as

soon as they turned 18), I just didn’t grasp the magnitude of their service for our country. Now as a mature adult, I watch the news every night and read Time Magazine in order to learn more so I can hold a respectful conversation.

However, the power of ORW’s ceremony brought me new focus and a bone-deep level of admiration and appreciation for service men and women over the entire arc of time.

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC) has its own color guard made up of veteran employees from different prisons. They began the program with a striking procession and presentation of the U.S. and Ohio flags, flanked by riflemen and followed by their commander.

This was the first time I’d witnessed a formal presentation of this nature up close and personal (as opposed to just seeing it on TV) and I was filled with awe and respect, and was a little intimidated by the unblinking precision of their maneuvers and position of attention. The entire gym was so utterly soundless except for the marching that it gave me goosebumps.

In the front of the gym were also displayed flags of all six branches of the Armed Forces: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and Space Force.

The next procession was of inmate veterans who stood in front of their branch’s flag. You might be surprised by the number of women veterans who are incarcerated. I don’t know their stories or the journey they took from serving

our country to serving time, but I do pray for their recovery, healing and for their families.

Then our Circle Tail dogs, wearing branch-specific, color-coordinated bandanas paraded in and went to stand with each group of women. We also had four “patriotic puppies” wearing cute red, white and blue printed bandanas to complete the landscape.

An unexpected comic moment happened when the “pets for vets” support dog, Lucy, wanted to say ‘Hi’ to the Circle Tail dogs by whining really, really loud as they passed her on the way to their places. Dogs will be dogs, and more than one detoured from the route to say “Hi” back! Not to worry, they all had a meet and greet and treats after the ceremony.

Several speeches followed. ORW’s deputy warden of administration, a veteran himself, acknowledged many staff members who are also veterans. The number was eye-opening for me and, again, I don’t know their stories or how they went from the Department of Defense to the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, but I respect and am thankful for their service.

The G.I.V.E. group presented donation checks to the Veteran Companion Animal Services (aka: pets for vets) and the Union County Military Family Support Group. ORW does a lot of fundraising whereby inmates can purchase pies, doughnuts, fresh vegetables, cheese and the proceeds go to several outside charities. It’s a wonderful opportunity for us to help the community and have some rare foods. In this case, we raised \$1,300, so both charities received \$650. Representatives from each one spoke about their experiences and how our donation impacts their work in such a meaningful way.

And then, the history lesson I’ll never forget!

First, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, along with the exacting discipline and dedication of those who protect it was explained.

Second, the relevance of 11 a.m. on 11/11 and how Veterans Day came into existence. An emotion-filled poem,

written by an incarcerated military mom, was read. An achingly beautiful song was sung to accompany a slide show of a tiny, yet startling fraction of American service people who didn’t make it home. There wasn’t a dry eye in the place.

The color guard recovered the flags, solemnly marched out and the ceremony was over. I finally exhaled.

Interestingly, I recognized the representative from the UCMFSC, and the Holy Spirit propelled me to speak to him. Mr. Bonnell had been the investigator here in the early 1990s and I met him in 1995.

I reintroduced myself and told him how he helped me through a complicated, rough time of adjustment at the very beginning of my incarceration. He introduced me to his wife (of 61 years!) who got tears in her eyes as we talked and she realized I’d been here over three decades.

Mrs. Bonnell shook my hand and said quietly, “It’s time for you to go home, dear,” and he nodded in agreement.

I felt the poignant presence of God in that moment. I thanked them for their kind words, for his service in the Army as well as ORW, and left the gym positively humbled.

As I walked back to my housing unit, paeans of freedom overwhelmed me with gratitude. God truly has blessed this country with thousands of motivated, courageous, selfless people who fight for and protect our freedom.

While I do not have the exact same freedom as most Americans, I am thankful for those who serve because this prison could be so much worse! I know I’ll earn my freedom (parole) one day and I will never take it for granted.

“God bless America” is more than a slogan for me now; it is a fundamental truth. He did, He does, and He will bless us forever.

Michele Williams is incarcerated at the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville.

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Are we the cause of our own sins?

If you were to ask someone if he is the cause of his own sins, you would think that the answer might seem obvious. Unfortunately, in an age when associating a person with any form of sin would be considered harsh, judgmental or worse, hateful, he may argue on the contrary due to his personal interpretation of what sin means to him. As outlandish as this scenario may sound, it has become more commonplace among those who identify as Catholic but may not see the value in actively engaging a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

An important point to make about the nature of sin is its value in relation to the gift of grace from God. If the person recognizes himself as a penitent before Christ and seeks to amend his sinful ways, then the desire for grace, especially through the sacrament of reconciliation, becomes the spiritual balm the person so desperately craves to sin no more and avoid the near occasion of sin. The value in recognizing the danger of sinful acts is that you realize that the act, e.g., fornication, adultery, saying the Lord's name in vain, is sinful, and you have an immediate desire to seek healing from these sinful acts.

I once encountered a young man preparing for marriage who told me that he saw nothing wrong with pre-marital sex because he loved his fiancée. As he continued to reason his position to fornicate, I asked him if he admired his fiancée and if he would be happy simply being in her presence without any sexual pretext. He could not answer the question. It became apparent that this gentleman's sense of reason had become illusory, convincing himself that any sexual encounter before marriage was acceptable based on the distorted understanding of



CALLED TO TEACH, NOT JUDGE

Dr. Marlon De La Torre

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the virtue of love.

In the temptation discourse described in St. Luke's Gospel (Lk 4:1-14), Jesus entered the desert filled with the Holy Spirit and prepared to engage the futile propositions of the devil to renounce, recant and reject his mission as Messiah, Redeemer and Lord. What is telling about the temptation discourse is how Christ chooses to engage the devil. All three temptations had a specific purpose to disrupt or destroy the filial relationship between Jesus and God. As the demonic antagonist, the devil sought to confirm with Jesus what he did with Adam and Eve, convince Jesus to reject his trust and obedience to God. What Adam was unwilling to do when confronted with his rejection of God, he

sought to blame someone else for his act of disobedience. The relationship and progression between the temptation of Adam versus the temptation of Jesus ends with Christ reminding Satan that he cannot tempt the Lord God, and that he has no authority over Him.

The typology of temptation between Adam and Jesus Christ reveals the importance of the will and the desire to seek good and avoid evil, or vice versa. Any initiative to do evil rests with the will of man. St. Paul reminds us of his own personal battle with sin:

Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now, if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. (Rom 7:13-20)

The spiritual battle St. Paul encounters reveals a battle every person encounters when presented with the proposition to act in accordance with the will of the Father or reject him as Adam and Eve did. Either man chooses to assent to God or he chooses a path of evil that amounts to a spiritual destruction of the soul. Let's not forget that

God made us in his image and likeness, a body-and-soul composite graced with free will and an intellect. This means that we are naturally inclined toward an ordered good. Sin was not created by God; man is responsible for his sins. Are we the cause of our own sins? Yes, do we have the opportunity to walk away from our sins as a humble penitent? Yes, if we choose the path God has offered us through his son Jesus Christ. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that:

Jesus invites sinners to the table of the kingdom: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. He invites them to that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom, but shows them in word and deed his Father's boundless mercy for them and the vast joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life "for the forgiveness of sins. (CCC 545)

In conclusion, the Prayer of Abandonment by St. Charles De Foucauld serves as a spiritual reminder that our abandonment to God serves as a great antidote to avoid the near occasion of sin.

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures -- I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul: I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father.

St. Charles de Foucauld

Preparing for death: A brief imaginative pilgrimage

November, the month of the dead, calls us to remember our own death and to prepare for eternal life. We may be tempted to think of this preparation in minimalist terms — avoiding mortal sin and fulfilling a basic set of obligations, such as attending Sunday Mass. We could call this an "avoid hell" approach. Purgatory might linger in the back of our minds as a kind of insurance policy, a last-ditch means of making up for lost opportunities and loose ends. Aiming directly for Heaven, well, that feels like a tall order, something reserved for canonized saints.

Yet, this, and nothing less, is our vocation, even if we need to be cleansed of the effects of sin before seeing God face to face. Remaining focused on Heaven can guide the steps of our earthly pilgrimage and spur us on to deeper preparation.

What if we could visit hell, purgatory, and Heaven? Wouldn't that open our eyes and put life into an entirely different and eternal perspective?

Some saints were given this grace, like St. Francesca of Rome and St. Christina the Astonishing, but we must follow a different path, more akin to Dante's, relying on our imagination for a meditative journey. It's not simply a matter of meditating upon three different places as much as three different states that arise from our thoughts, desires and choices. Dante takes this approach in his Divine Comedy, envisioned as a great jubilee year pilgrimage, set in the Church's first jubilee year, 1300. Even though his Inferno seems, at first glance, to reflect an almost grotesque interest in the suffering of other souls, the supreme poet makes it abundantly clear that his journey to the afterlife was taken not as a tourist but for the good of his own soul, serving as a

catalyst to purify his loves and to enable him to contemplate the divine. He needed to see the flames of hell to realize how its punishments arose precisely from life on earth.

We can begin our own imaginative pilgrimage, as Dante does, by meditating on hell. Rather than the fear of potential torments, its reality begins in the wounds we carry deep within, painful memories of estrangement from God and those close to us, and, even now, disordered desires that, if left unchecked, would overrun us and wreak havoc in our lives. Imagine what you would be like if all that is broken and unruly within you were to take over. What if you turned your back on God and hurt others for your own advantage? This path would lead to a horrible distortion of your person and would create a place in hell that fits the darkness allowed to dominate you. St. Teresa of Avila describes in her Autobiography how she saw a little hole where she herself would end up were it not for the mercy of God.

"The entrance seemed to be by a long, narrow pass, like a furnace, very low, dark and close. ... At the end was a hollow place in the wall, like a closet, and in that I saw myself confined. All this was even pleasant to behold in comparison with what I felt there. ... But as to what I then felt, I do not know where to begin, if I were to describe it; it is utterly inexplicable. I felt a fire in my soul. I cannot see how it is possible to describe it. My bodily sufferings were unendurable" (ch. 32).

We, too, create a little hole that will await us if we do not check our evil inclinations and continually lift our minds and hearts toward the light of Christ.

As part of this lifting up, purgatory should



THE CATHOLIC CULTURALIST

Dr. R. Jared Staudt, Ph.D.

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commence now as we make reparation for sin, experience reconciliation and cooperate with the Lord's healing grace. Dante's ascent of Mount Purgatory focused on the seven deadly sins and how these must be overcome through penance to rightly order the soul to God through corresponding virtues. You can picture yourself carrying the baggage of past sins, weighed down by bad habits that are difficult to break. On the other hand, imagine the opportunities you have to serve, to give of yourself sacrificially to others, to grow in humility, patience and other virtues. St. Catherine of Genoa, at the beginning of her Treatise on Purgatory, reflects that she was able to enter into the same purging fire the holy souls already in this life: "This holy soul found herself, while still in the flesh, placed by the fiery love of God in Purgatory, which burnt her, cleansing whatever in her needed cleansing, to the end that when she passed from this life she

might be presented to the sight of God, her dear Love." Now is the time to make up for all our missed opportunities, to atone for them and to make a new start by taking up the Cross and dying to ourselves daily.

And finally, we can reflect on what it would look like for our potential to develop to its full capacity. We often think of the great accomplishment we might be able to achieve. The novelist Leon Bloy, however, famously remarked that "the only real sadness, the only real failure, the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint." Saints are the ones who are fully alive because Christ has begun to live within them through an absolute abandonment to God's will and service of others. Meditating on Heaven requires us to shift our perspective to what matters most in this life. St. Faustina relates an experience of Heaven in her diary:

"And God has given me to understand that there is but one thing that is of infinite value in his eyes, and that is love of God; love, love and once again, love; and nothing can compare with a single act of pure love of God. Oh, with what inconceivable favors God gifts a soul that loves him sincerely! Oh, how happy is the soul who already here on earth enjoys his special favors! And of such are the little and humble souls" (778).

We can embrace Heaven on earth if we're willing to die to this world, giving up good things now in exchange for infinitely greater things to come.

To recap this pilgrimage, we can journey to the afterlife through meditative prayer, shedding light on the hidden darkness within us, seeking to overcome it by ascending out of bad habits, and embracing God's will for us to live, even now, enveloped by his loving and transforming mercy.

Rushing Christmas

Dear Father,

Can you please address the rush for Christmas decorations before Advent even begins? It seems that even the Church is secularizing the Christmas season that doesn't begin until December 25. It is very hard to teach children how to celebrate the seasons when the lines have become blurred even by the Church!

-Yani

Dear Yani,

You are spot on concerning rushing the Christmas season. Just one correction: The Christmas season begins with the Vigil Mass on December 24. This year, Christmas runs through January 11, 2026, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Not only is it hard to teach children how to celebrate the seasons, it's tough to teach grown-ups about the differences between Advent and Christmas, too!

To be fair, I don't think the Church, as you mentioned, is blurring the distinction. The problem lies with certain parish churches, not the entire Catholic Church.

You didn't distinguish which decorations are being put up during Advent in various churches. I think it's worth differentiating between lit-up Christmas trees and a Nativity scene or creche.

Some homes keep the Nativity scene set up all year long to be reminded of the great gift that God gave us when He was born as the God-man to redeem us. I know of churches that do the same thing. It's a 3-D version of the churches' stained-glass windows depicting the birth of Christ. The Nativity is an essential part of the Rosary, when we meditate on the amazing grace of

Bethlehem.

Advent is the season during which we prepare to celebrate Christ's first coming among us, but it is also a time to prepare for his Second Coming, the Final Judgment.

How do we prepare for these two comings of Christ? The common denominator is reception. Christmas is the time to more deeply receive the grace of union with Christ, who continues to give himself to us through the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

When we live the sacramental life, that is, when we enter more deeply into the meaning and graces of the sacraments, and when we maintain a life of prayer, we are preparing for the Second Coming. The Second Coming of Christ is not so much to be feared as to be anticipated with joy. Christians see it as the culmination of what God has made us for.

The color violet is used for the vestments during Advent. It signifies dying to self to live in union with God. During Advent, we mute the noise of the world and our own ambitions that we may see and love Christ more, both in his Person and in the persons of those who walk beside us.

Church music changes during Advent, too. We are instructed to use the pipe organ and other musical instruments more moderately. This also includes floral decorations. Thus, it is not appropriate to fill the parish church with Christmas decorations and lights during Advent. Even weddings during Advent must observe a certain liturgical sobriety.

The brevity of the Advent season makes it challenging to put up Christmas decorations in churches. Depending on the year, sometimes there are four full



SACRAMENTS 101

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

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weeks of Advent, while at other times Advent lasts only three weeks plus one day.

When Advent is so compacted, finding time to decorate the church is rough. As a result, church decorating often begins just after Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, when the priest wears rose-colored vestments (see my article Why don't priests wear pink more?). Christmas trees and wreaths may need to be set in place, but without the tree lights burning.

Often, the nativity scene needs to be set up during Advent, too, because of the elaborate tableau. Churches in Italy vie with one another to show how Christ's first coming changes every aspect of life. The Vatican annually begins setting up a life-size creche in St. Peter's Square, just outside the pope's apartment, weeks before Advent.

Having the creche set up during Advent adds an air of expectation, especially when the image of the Christ

Child is absent. At the Christmas Vigil Mass, the priest processes to the manger scene and symbolically places the Baby Jesus in his crib. The commemoration of his holy birth has begun and we offer the Mass in thanksgiving to God for his condescension. The presence of the Divine Infant shows us that God's love knows no bounds.

Finally, we should take advantage of the Christmas season to the fullest extent. The season used to last from Christmas Eve until the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, 40 days after his birth, on Feb. 2. With the creation of the new Church calendar, the season lasts only between two and three weeks.

One can't help but wonder if we have unwittingly contributed to moving Christmas decorating earlier by shortening the season. People used to keep their home Christmas decorations up for much longer. Now, we see the sad remnants of Christmas trees by the side of the road on December 26. Stores will begin displaying Valentines before we know it.

It's time to renew our embrace of the full Advent season. Genuine renewal happens at the grassroots. May we all work at taking the fullest advantage of preparing our souls for Christ's birthday and the end of the world by making Advent a time for spiritual revitalization. Make a good sacramental confession. Do small acts of penance. Give more to the poor. Love God and neighbor!

Questions about the sacraments should be sent to sacraments101@columbuscatholic.org

Leaning into Advent

Like every year lately, November has been filled with Christmas music, toy commercials and advertisements. It's as if we skipped straight from Halloween to Christmas, nearly bypassing Thanksgiving altogether. But what about Advent? While the secular world has jumped over Advent, I would encourage you to lean into the Advent season and help your children do so as well.

At the heart of it, Advent is a time of waiting and patient anticipation for the coming of our Lord. The Catechism of the Catholic Church elaborates on this, stating that Advent "makes present the ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming" (CCC 524). But how do we explain this to our children when they're surrounded by the idea that it is already the Christmas season? Setting the tone in your house doesn't mean that we aren't celebrating Christmas, or that you have to take your tree down if it is already up, but that we are building even more anticipation for the coming of our Lord on that joyous day. Keeping Advent traditions in your home is an easy way to do that, especially with children.

When I was a child, we had a tradition of decorating our Christmas tree for Advent with purple and rose-colored ornaments and lights until Christmas Eve. We even had little Advent candles made out of craft foam that we would add to echo our Advent wreath. Then, on Christmas Eve, we would decorate the tree with our usual



LOADS OF LAUNDRY AND LOVE

Rachel Romantic

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Christmas lights and ornaments before going to Mass, helping to show outwardly that our time of waiting had come to a close.

Now as a parent, I get to help create that same magic for our children, and I invite you to do the same. Consider some of these simple ways to help your children or perhaps even yourself dwell in Advent this year. A Jesse Tree, a tradition similar to an Advent calendar, can be as easy as adding a new ornament to the tree each night, or you can take it a step further by reading scripture. Perhaps take the Gospel reading for the day and read it as a family.

Many parishes also give out free Advent prayer guides or reflections, often tailored to children. Apps like Hallow or other online resources also offer kid-friendly Advent reflections or prayers that you can use as a family.

If your family enjoys listening to Christmas music, an Advent playlist may be just the thing to help you lean into the season. Songs like "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord" are just a few examples to add to your own playlist. The whole family — from parents to little ones, to teens, and even grandparents — could add their own songs that focus on waiting for the Lord's coming. Remember, too, that songs reflecting on waiting for our Lord's second coming also fit the Advent theme.

Another small way to build anticipation in the Advent season is to set up your nativity scene slowly. If space allows, have Mary and Joseph make their way across the living room, moving from bookshelf to bookshelf each day until Christmas Eve. You could then add the baby Jesus figure after everyone else has gone to sleep so it can be found on Christmas morning in the manger.

Of course, the simple Advent wreath is always a wonderful way to experience the Advent season. The candles themselves represent hope, peace, joy and love. Each week, we build anticipation by reflecting on those virtues. We have hope in knowing that Christ conquers all, peace in trusting God's providence, and joy in knowing our Lord is coming. We close the season with the greatest of these, that being love — the

love that comes to us through our Lord as an infant in a manger, the very Word made flesh who saves us for eternity. The same Lord for whom we patiently wait to come again.

I know my own family has had years when we forgot to light the candles on our wreath every day, but I think we all ought to make it a goal this year to keep going all the way through Advent. When we find ourselves wrapped up in physical preparations for Christmas, we grow tired and just want to skip over the Advent season straight to Christmas. Being patient is hard — not only for our children but for us as well. But by leaning into Advent, we aren't denying the joy of the season but rather elevating it. We wait in anticipation because it is something wonderful and should be given special honor — not rushed into and rushed out of by Dec. 26. Remember, too, that the liturgical season of Christmas continues into January, coming to a close on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, so there is even more time ahead to celebrate!

For now, though, as we begin Advent this weekend, we will wait — not because we aren't excited about Christmas, but precisely because we are. Just as it says in James 5:7-8, "Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord." Waiting is not wasted time — it's sacred time. May we find Christ in these moments of preparation and discover that the waiting itself is part of the gift of the season yet to come.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts

John Wimber, an early leader of Vineyard Fellowship, used the phrase “naturally supernatural” to popularize his teaching that all Christians can work “signs and wonders,” including healing, and that such exercises of “power” were the way to evangelize. “Power evangelism” became a bedrock tenet of the New Apostolic Reformation. Some Catholics have adopted this teaching and are spreading it. For example, the Encounter School of Ministry says, “Jesus is our standard for what a naturally supernatural lifestyle looks like. Jesus reveals our inheritance and shows us what we have access to through the power of the Holy Spirit.” Other Catholics present the same teaching using the words “living the lifestyle of Jesus.”

This teaching assumes the following: working extraordinary phenomena can and should be part of the life of every Christian. Every believer can be taught to perform signs and wonders to demonstrate the truth of the Gospel. Because Jesus told his apostles to heal the sick (Matt 10:8), this must mean that he has given all Christians the power to do just that.

While some may find this teaching attractive, it’s important to note that it goes against the true message of the Gospel as contained in the Scriptures and conserved within the Catholic Church. The key to seeing the problems with the “naturally supernatural” and “power evangelism” concepts is distinguishing between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and extraordinary spiritual gifts.

When someone is baptized, he or she receives sanctifying grace, removing all sin and bestowing holiness. They also receive the seven gifts of the Holy



A SHEPHERD’S CARE

Father Thomas Buffer

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Spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord).

Some Christians, but not all, receive extraordinary spiritual gifts, also called charismata or charismatic gifts. Unlike the gifts of the Spirit received at baptism, charismatic gifts are given, not for the benefit of the recipient but for the good of others. St. Paul lists some charismata: the utterance of wisdom, words of knowledge, gifts of healing, working miracles, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, various kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues (see 1 Cor 12:4-11). He emphasizes that different persons receive different spiritual gifts, but that all these gifts have the same origin in God, and the same purpose: service to the whole community.

Paul also speaks of hierarchical gifts given to leaders of the Church. The Second Vatican Council taught about both charismatic and hierarchical gifts when it said, “Extraordinary gifts are not to be

sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from their use; but judgment as to their genuinity and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good” (Lumen Gentium 12)

Groups that claim the ability to teach Christians how to prophesy and work healings are disobeying the Council’s teaching that extraordinary gifts are not to be sought after. Yet, some Catholics are doing precisely that. In an attempt to legitimize their approach, they appeal to the lives of saints who worked miracles. One Catholic has published a book called *Supernatural Saints* to promote this approach. What gets lost in this discussion is what it means to be a saint in the first place.

On Nov. 13, Pope Leo spoke about the place of mystical phenomena in the lives of the saints. His teaching also applies to extraordinary spiritual gifts. The Pope observed that experiences such as visions or ecstasies “remain secondary and non-essential with respect to mystical experience and sanctity in themselves, while the true goal of mysticism is and remains communion with God ... Consequently, extraordinary phenomena which can connote a mystical experience are not indispensable conditions for recognizing the sanctity of a Christian (di un fedele); if they are present, they strengthen the virtues, not as if they were individual privileges, insofar as they are ordered to the building up of the whole Church, the mystical body of Christ. What is more important, and what must be primarily emphasized in examining

candidates for sainthood, is their complete and constant conformity to the will of God, as revealed in Scripture and in the living apostolic Tradition.”

The Pope also noted that discernment is needed to distinguish between authentic spiritual phenomena and deceitful manifestations. He quoted St. Teresa of Avila: “It is clear that the highest perfection does not consist in interior sweetness, great raptures, visions, or the spirit of prophecy, but rather in the perfect conformity of our own will with that of God, in such a way as to will, and will firmly, what we know to be his will, accepting with the same gladness both the sweet and the bitter, as he wills.”

What makes it possible to follow this teaching – in other words, to be a saint – has already been given to every Christian in baptism. What determines sainthood is whether we accept, appreciate and live out these gifts of grace. The call to holiness is universal; extraordinary gifts are not, or are they necessary for sanctity or salvation. In fact, the ability to prophecy or heal is not in itself evidence of true sanctity.

Just as an alcoholic doctor can help a patient by telling him to quit drinking, while not giving up alcohol abuse himself, someone who appears to have charismatic gifts may have serious spiritual problems. This is because the power at work in such healings is God’s omnipotence, not some special quality of the human beings involved.

As a rule, we can avoid misunderstandings about life in the Spirit if we remember that the greatest gift is not power, but charity. Our goal should not be demonstrating power, but union with God, who is love.

The German bishops’ conference, over the cliff

When it was first published in 1993, Pope St. John Paul II’s encyclical on the reform of Catholic moral theology, *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth), dealt a severe blow to the pride of many German theologians who had long thought themselves the cutting edge of Catholic intellectual life. Indeed, within a year of the encyclical’s publication, a book composed entirely of essays critical of John Paul’s deeply humanistic explication of Catholic teaching on the path to happiness and beatitude was published in Germany — because, its editor explained, Germany had a special obligation to police the Church’s theological precincts. Who had appointed German theologians to this supervisory role was left unstated. So was the idea that seemed to undergird much of the German Catholic intellectual resistance to John Paul II: German theologians must be smarter than a Pole.

German resistance to the papal magisterium antedated John Paul II, of course; it would be hard to find a prominent German theologian (or bishop, for that matter) who defended Pope Paul VI after he issued the 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on the morally appropriate means of regulating fertility. But much has changed since then, and the locus of progressive Catholic revisionism in moral theology has shifted from contraception to homosexuality. And now the German resistance to the truths taught by *Humanae Vitae* and *Veritatis Splendor* has metastasized into what seems to be an embrace of the claims of gender ideology and the “trans” movement by most of the

country’s bishops.

On October 30, the German bishops’ conference secretariat announced on the conference website the publication of a text by the bishops’ Commission on Schools and Education, *Created, Redeemed, and Loved: Visibility and Recognition of the Diversity of Sexual Identities in Schools*. And by “diversity,” the text did not mean the diversity of Genesis 1:27 (“...male and female he created them”); the title refers to the ever-expanding catalog of “identities” promoted by rainbow ideologists and LGBTQ+ activists. As Cologne-based domradio.de reported, the text urges teachers to “contribute to the visibility of people with diverse sexual identities by using language that reflects that diversity. Teachers ... should foster a classroom climate in which children and young people feel seen and taken seriously as they explore their sexual orientation and gender identity.”

And then the *Deutsche Woke Express* careens over the cliff into apostasy: “The paper calls on religious education teachers to present the Catholic Church’s sexual morality in a differentiated manner and to address controversial points in the Church and theology in their lessons so that students can form their own reasoned judgment.”

So: No affirmation of biblical anthropology. No proclamation that the Church authoritatively teaches a sexual ethic that has fostered human flourishing and sanctity for two millennia. No call to conversion. Do-it-yourself moral discernment. No recognition



THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

George Weigel

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that empirical studies demonstrate that “transitioning” or “sex-reassignment” does not lead to positive, long-term mental health outcomes. No suggestion that young people experiencing gender dysphoria and other confusions over their sexuality should seek counsel from a religious educator, priest or consecrated religious who believes that what the Catholic Church teaches about the moral life is true, and who lives that truth happily.

The document’s call to challenge bullying is welcome and, in the climate created by brutal social media “conversations” and rancid internet sites, urgent. And who would deny that schools

should be places where the pains and crises of maturation are not worsened by “discrimination and personal degradation?” But treating others with respect is a basic obligation of Christian charity (not to mention human decency) that has been known for millennia. It’s not something gender ideology, rainbow activists and trans advocates have taught us in the 21st century.

It is tragic that this abandonment of theological sanity and pastoral responsibility coincides with the 60th anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, in which German bishops and theologians (including the future Pope Benedict XVI) played significant roles. Vatican II rightly rebalanced the Church’s self-understanding by affirming that bishops are true teachers, governors and sanctifiers in their local churches, not simply branch managers of Catholic Church, Inc. For a bishops’ commission to issue a text calling for a “differentiated” approach to Catholic teaching — that is, an approach to education in which the settled truths of Catholic faith are regarded as one option on a menu of possibilities — is thus beyond bizarre. It is a betrayal of Vatican II. And it will result in intensified human suffering rather than the healing of troubled souls through the ever-available grace of God and truly compassionate pastoral care.

The disastrous German situation cannot go unaddressed by Rome indefinitely.

The Northern Lights and appreciation of God's creative power

The evening of Nov. 11, I saw something in the sky I've only seen a couple times before: the northern lights. And that night, they were the brightest of the now three times I've viewed them. I looked up in wonder at that gentle red glow and offered a thank you to the Lord for sharing such a beautiful sight with us here in Ohio.

Our state is far south of the part of the northern hemisphere where auroras are frequently visible, so they are rare here. It takes quite a solar storm from the sun to push those red, yellow, green, blue and purple glows this far. It's reported on the news that when the northern lights are seen this far south, there can also be disruptions in technology.

Understanding that, though, I still find the northern lights delightful. God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth — the entire universe — has filled His creation with many wonders that, if we are predisposed to doing so, can draw our minds and hearts toward the Lord.

Let's do that — place our minds and hearts into that predisposition that gives us the ability to be in wonder and appreciation of God and the work of His hands.

We start by affirming that God created everything and everyone: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Holy Scripture begins with these solemn words. The profession of faith takes them up when it confesses that God the Father almighty is 'Creator of heaven and earth ... of all that is, seen and unseen ... (CCC 279)."

Creation is not a haphazard event or the result of sheer luck. No, creation is God's will, an act of profound love by Him. God brings all things into existence out of nothing. "God created freely out of love (CCC 295)." Even though God needs nothing, He still brought us into existence so that we can share in His creative generosity.

"God saw that it was good (Gn 1:18)." The next step is trusting this. Creation is a sign of the Lord's wisdom and love. The goodness of creation includes both the



THE CHANCELLOR'S ARCHIVE Deacon Tom Berg Jr.

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visible — the world and universe beyond that we can see — and the invisible — the world of the spiritual. Through the glory of all creation, such as the northern lights, we see glimpses of God's own infinite glory.

"God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them male and female he created them (Gn 1:27)." As a result, humanity holds a special place in creation. Nothing else was made in God's likeness and image, and every person has an immortal soul, reason and freedom. Such qualities reflect God Himself. Humanity is not merely part of material existence. We are also spiritual beings called to communion with the Lord.

Also, God's creative activity did not end with the beginning of the universe. The Church teaches that God continues to sustain and govern creation through His wisdom. "The truth that God is at work in all the actions of his creatures is inseparable from faith in God the Creator. God is the first cause who operates in and through secondary causes: 'For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good ... (CCC 308).'"

This teaching invites trust in God and



The bright red glow of the northern lights could be seen in Ohio on the evening of Nov. 11.

Photo courtesy Deacon Tom Berg Jr.

an understanding that our lives are not subject to fate or happenstance. We are all held in the loving embrace of God the Father, the Creator. "We firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history (CCC 314)."

Lastly, creation was the first step in God's plan, which reaches its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the new creation. "Conversely, the mystery of Christ casts conclusive light on the mystery of creation and reveals the end for which 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth': from the beginning, God envisaged the glory of the new creation in Christ (CCC 280)." The universe was made through God's Word: "Let there be ..." Each time God spoke those words, more and more came into being. And through God's Word made flesh, all is renewed and all of us are renewed along with it through our

active participation in the life of faith. All of this is that disposition of trust and faith I spoke of before. God's glory transforms and perfects creation.

Whether it's a tall mountain, a deep canyon, a cute little animal bounding about, a butterfly gently waving its wings as it rests on a leaf or the northern lights painting the night sky, let such things draw your mind toward

the Lord and inspire you to say, "I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth." Let creation and your prayer draw you closer to Him, and may you walk in His path, seeing that it is good.

Perspectives on Advent

By Tony Rossi

*Director of Communications
The Christophers*

As we light the first Advent candle this weekend, the real countdown to Christmas begins! Sure, the TV movies, Christmas songs on the radio, and decorating have already started, but the first Sunday of Advent makes the season official from a Christian perspective. And it's always interesting to read what insights different people bring to the days leading up to the celebration of Jesus' birth.

For instance, during Advent a couple of years ago, Christopher Award-winning author Amy Julia Becker took to her social media accounts to explore two Biblical figures' very different responses to the news of Jesus' coming. Becker wrote, "When Mary hears the message that she has been chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, Luke tells us she was 'troubled.' When King Herod hears from the three magi that Jesus has been born, Matthew tells us he was 'troubled.' The news that Jesus is coming disrupts their lives."

"Herod responds with denial and violence," Becker continued. "Mary responds with surrender and acceptance and receptivity. The news of God's love entering our world disrupts our expectations. It challenges us. It

proclaims our belovedness apart from our achievements or worth. It exposes injustice. The news of God's love entering the world invites us to healing and freedom. It threatens us with radical acceptance and grace. God's love is a holy disruption that might trouble us deeply. How will we respond?"

While we may think of Lent as a greater season of "holy disruption," Advent can play a similar role in taking us out of ourselves to think more about loving God and neighbor. In fact, if you search for one online, you might find "Advent of Kindness" calendars to help you do just that — or you could create one of your own. Some suggestions:

While waiting in line at a store, allow someone to go in front of you. Get in touch with an old friend or relative whom you've lost contact with; if you had a disagreement with that person, try your best to make peace. Write a thank you note to someone, and express gratitude to anyone who helps you in the course of your day. Bake Christmas cookies for a neighbor or offer to help put up decorations if they're unable to do so themselves. Give a meal to someone who is hungry. Learn about another person whose life or beliefs are different from yours and see if you can find some commonality. Pray — and work — to be more like Jesus, serving others with love.

Advent is also the perfect time to take part in opportunities for joy and community. That's part of the reason Jen Sawyer has attended Fordham University's annual Festival of Lessons and Carols for the past 20 years. Writing at Jesuits.org, Sawyer describes a scene in which a female soloist, holding a single candle in the darkened church, begins singing, "Once in royal David's city." The choir then joins in, "as the flame from the single candle is passed from choir member to choir member until the once-dark church is fully illuminated by candlelight." This experience always resonates with Sawyer.

She writes, "I listened attentively to the scriptural lessons and reflections, sang my heart out with my friends, and realized I was part of a community coming together in prayer and song to welcome Christ into our hearts."

This Advent, may each of us find our own way to make the season meaningful and fulfilling.

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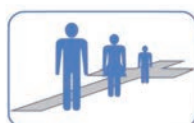
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