

## Answered prayers and granted favors

A year after first getting sick, Father Christopher Aubuchon gives thanks for God's many blessings and the ongoing restoration of his health.

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# The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

January 8, 2021 • Vol. 64 No. 14

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

## Celebration themes approved for Year of St. Joseph



*“When all the land of Egypt became hungry and the people cried to Pharaoh for food, Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians: ‘Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you.’”*

— Genesis 41:55

By Jay Nies

The words of the Old Testament echoed into the New when St. Joseph took Mary, already carrying the Son of God in her womb, to be his wife.

Although none of the four evangelists record any of St. Joseph's words in their Gospel accounts, Matthew and Luke clearly and deliberately note the actions of the righteous and obedient protector and provider for Mary and Jesus.

Catholics revere St. Joseph as the patron saint of fathers, foster parents, workers, refugees, immigrants, people seeking shelter, all who hope for a happy death, and as of 150 years ago, the Universal Church.

“Him Whom countless kings and prophets had desired to see, Joseph not only saw but conversed with, and embraced in paternal affection, and kissed,” curial officials stated in a decree on Dec. 8, 1870. “He most diligently reared Him Whom the faithful were to receive as the bread that came down from heaven whereby they might obtain eternal life.”

“It has now pleased our Most Holy Sovereign, (Blessed) Pope Pius IX, in order to entrust himself and all the faithful to the Patriarch St. Joseph's most powerful patronage, ... has solemnly declared him Patron of the Catholic Church,” the Church's Sacred Congregation of Rites stated at that time.

**“Go to Joseph”**

Pope Francis marked the 150th

See ST. JOSEPH, page 15

This stained-glass image of St. Joseph working as a carpenter adorns St. Joseph Church in Palmyra.

— Photo by Jay Nies

## Bishop McKnight mulling recommendations for staffing of parishes in 10 counties

**Taking into account 1,777 survey responses from parishioners**

By Jay Nies

The No. 1 response to a survey the diocese circulated last fall regarding the staffing of parishes in 10 counties was a question.

“Why now?”

“People seem to think that because of COVID and the world being shut down, we need to shut down, too,” stated LeAnn Korsmeyer, diocesan director of parish and charitable services, who helped facilitate the survey.

“But that's the last thing we need to be doing,” she said. “We have to prepare for tomorrow. We can't wait five years from now until we've lost more priests to retirement.

“We have to have a plan, a vision,” she stated. “We are called to be warriors for the faith, and this is what warriors do.”

In light of the dramatic decline in Sunday Mass attendance in the last 20 years and the steeply decreasing number of available priests in the diocese, Bishop W. Shawn McKnight sought input from parishioners in Chariton, Cooper, Crawford, Howard, Monroe, Phelps, Pike, Pulaski, Ralls and Saline counties about options for carrying on the work of the Church with fewer priests available to serve each county.

“Doing nothing is not an option,” he stated. “We have to ask the right questions, we have to listen, we have to pray and we have to act.”

He noted that even if there were enough priests to staff

See 10 COUNTIES, page 17

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## Pray for deceased priests

Jan. 14 — **Fr. Senan M. O'Connell**, Shrine of St. Patrick, St. Patrick (1973); **Fr. J. James Offutt**, Holy Spirit, Centralia (2020)

Jan. 16 — **Fr. Krsto J. Jelenic**, St. Michael, Kahoka (1978)

Jan. 17 — **Fr. Michael M. O'Donovan**, St. Elizabeth Hospital, Hannibal (1979); **Fr. Peter Walsh**, Sacred Heart, Vandalia; and **St. John**, Laddonia (2011)

## Position Openings - Chancery Office



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City has several positions open in the Jefferson City office at 2207 West Main Street:

**Administrative Assistant** — Support the clerical needs of the Moderator of the Curia and Vicar General. Responsible for training others, coordinating maintenance on office equipment and serving as back-up to the Executive Administrative Assistant to the Bishop as necessary. Excellent skills with Microsoft Office, ability to prioritize and switch tasks as needed, maintain confidentiality and high degree of professionalism.

**Bi-lingual Administrative Assistant** (Spanish/English) — Support the Executive Director of Faith Formation and Hispanic Ministry, and the Vocations Department. Responsible for taking meeting minutes, composing letters, assisting in event coordination, and serving as back-up receptionist. Ability to translate both oral and written communications, with an energetic, welcoming disposition and solid understanding of Hispanic culture and Catholic values.

**Director of Religious Education and Youth/Young Adult Ministry** — Administer the curriculum approval process for parish-based religious education. Provide direct support for, and development of, parish-based young adult leaders and youth ministers in the outreach, evangelization, faith formation and pastoral care of their youth; serve as liaison between Newman Center campus ministers and the Chancery; oversee the coordination of diocesan-supported youth ministry events at the diocesan, regional and national levels; and exercise diligence and oversight for assigned budget. Bilingual candidate (English/Spanish) with the capability of ministering across cultures preferred, with well-developed social media skills. Master's degree in catechetics, religious education, theology or youth ministry required.

Qualified candidates for the above positions should email resume to [HRDir@diojeffcity.org](mailto:HRDir@diojeffcity.org).

**Payroll Specialist** — Responsible for all payroll processes including management of employee data, confirming accuracy of timekeeping records, computing wages, ensuring employees are paid correctly and on time, and serving as back-up to the Benefits Coordinator. Experience in processing payroll for a large employer with multiple divisions. Apply online at [indeed.com](https://indeed.com).

# Epiphany Proclamation

## Announcement for Easter and moveable feasts for 2021

The proclamation of the date of Easter and the other moveable feasts on the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord dates from a time when calendars were not readily available.

It was necessary to make known the date of Easter in advance, since many celebrations of the liturgical year depend on its date. The number of Sundays that follow Epiphany, the date of Ash Wednesday, and the number of Sundays that follow Pentecost are all computed in relation to Easter.

On the Epiphany of the Lord, after the proclamation of the Gospel, a deacon or

cantor, in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Church, announces from the ambo the moveable feasts of the current year:

*"Know, dear brothers and sisters, that, as we have rejoiced at the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, so by leave of God's mercy, we announce to you also the joy of His resurrection, Who is our Savior.*

*"On the 17th day of February will fall Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten season.*

*"On the fourth day of April you will celebrate with joy Easter Day, the Paschal feast of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*"On the 16th day of May will be the Ascension of*

*our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*"On the 23rd day of May, the feast of Pentecost.*

*"On the sixth day of June, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.*

*"On the 28th day of November, the First Sunday of the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

## Chancery Closing

The diocesan Chancery offices will be closed on Monday, Jan. 18, in observance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This is a revision from previously announced schedules.

# 2021 Holy Days of Obligation

Holy Days of Obligation are days on which all Catholics are required to attend Mass.

Every Sunday is a Holy Day of Obligation in the sense that Catholics are required to attend Mass every Sunday.

In accordance with Bishop W. Shawn McKnight's Official Decrees of Aug. 21 and Nov. 11, giving a temporary dispensation from in-person attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation due to the pandemic, those who do not attend Mass on any of these days are directed either to:

- participate prayerfully in a Mass livestreamed from their parish church or chapel, the Cathedral of St. Joseph, the Vatican, or of any Mass of

the day celebrated in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, or

- prayerfully read and meditate on the readings of the Mass for the Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation and recite the Rosary or Divine Mercy chaplet.

Here are the Holy Days of Obligation for 2021:

- **Friday, Jan. 1:** Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

- **Wednesday, Dec. 8:** Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

- **Saturday, Dec. 25:** Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord.

The Solemnities of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Sunday, Aug. 15, and All Saints Day on Monday, Nov. 1 are not Holy Days of Obligation this year.

## Mass times for Marshall, Slater, Sweet Springs

- **Saturday:** 4 p.m., Holy Family Church, Sweet Springs; 5:30 p.m., (English), 7:15 p.m., (Spanish), St. Peter Church, Marshall.

- **Sunday:** 7:30 a.m., 11 a.m. (English), 1 p.m. (Spanish), St. Peter, Marshall; 9:15 a.m., St. Joseph, Slater.

## Sing in exultation!

Members of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City, in coordination with the parish's Social Concerns Commission and Music Ministry, sing Christmas carols on

Dec. 23 outside the homes of parishioners who haven't been able to attend Mass during the pandemic. "It really helped bring them some Christmas cheer during this very isolating time," the daughter of one of the homebound parishioners stated.

— Photo from the Immaculate Conception Catholic Parish Facebook page



### The Catholic Missourian

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— Bishop Joseph M. Marling C.P.P.S., July 7, 1957

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# Salisbury parishioner cooked up Christmas meals in her home

By Jay Nies

Janice Armentrout's family gave her a new oven this year.

She put it to good use.

"I enjoyed making the pies," she said. "It was fun because I could put five in a at time."

Mrs. Armentrout, her daughter and a tight group of

volunteers from St. Joseph Parish in Salisbury prepared free Christmas dinners for 75 people affected by the pandemic.

They cooked turkeys and hams, baked pumpkin pies and procured sumptuous side dishes.

Volunteers helped assemble

the meals and delivered them to people around Salisbury who are separated from friends and family due to the pandemic.

"You have to give to the poor and you have to feed the hungry and you have to love your neighbor," said Mrs. Armentrout.

It all started when Father Michael Murphy, pastor of St. Joseph Parish and of St. Mary of the Angels Parish in Wien, suggested doing something to brighten Christmas for people who are homebound or in need.

"They were going to be at home by themselves," said Mrs. Armentrout. "He thought that maybe somebody could cook a dinner and take it to them."

He shared the idea with the parish bookkeeper, Donece Henke, who happens to be one of Mrs. Armentrout's friends.

"She mentioned to me that Father would like to have a dinner for people in town," said Mrs. Armentrout. "I said yes, I'd be more than interested."

The women had already prepared Christmas meals together in years past.

Mrs. Armentrout and her husband William, now deceased, lost their son in a car accident about 30 years ago.

"And instead of having Christmas with him, we decided to serve Christmas," she recalled.

Their pastor let them use the kitchen and cafeteria at St. Joseph School.

"We cooked over there and served over there and we asked people to come and eat with us there as a group," Mrs. Armentrout recalled.

The tradition continued for 11 years, with a growing circle of volunteers and diners.

"So I knew we could do it," she said.

Mrs. Armentrout carried on with it after her husband died in 1998, until her own heart

attack took her out of commission for a while in 2002.

## "A lot of help"

This year, Mrs. Armentrout and Mrs. Henke started asking around.

"We got the turkeys donated," she said. "Salisbury Meat Market donated the hams. We got the potatoes donated. We got the corn and the green beans donated. We got the bread for the dressing donated. We got the salad donated."

One of Mrs. Armentrout's sons grew pumpkins last year. She had already used some to make pie filling this fall.

Her daughter Kathleen came down from Des Moines to help her make 13 pies and roast the four turkeys.

They, Mrs. Henke and her husband Bob prepared the rest of the food and divvied it up for delivery.

Volunteers brought deviled eggs and delivered the meals — mostly one and two at a time.

"We had a lot of help," said Mrs. Armentrout. "The Altar Sodality and the parish had the cartons that we put the food in."

## "The main thing"

Mrs. Armentrout grew up in

Nebraska, but her husband was a Salisbury native. He and all his siblings went to St. Joseph School.

Accordingly, the couple sent all seven of their children to the school.

"So I just call this home," she said of the town. "It feels like home."

One of their grandchildren, Rev. Mr. Benjamin Armentrout, is a transitional deacon and hopes to be ordained a priest this spring.

Toward that end, Mrs. Armentrout believes the best way for families to promote vocations in the Church is by example.

"That's the main thing," she said. "The way they act, and their attitude about their church duties."

Mrs. Armentrout feels fortunate about many things.

"I'm 81," she said. "I'm so thankful that I'm able to do these things."

She's praying for an end to the pandemic so everyone can go back to Mass and start getting together with families.

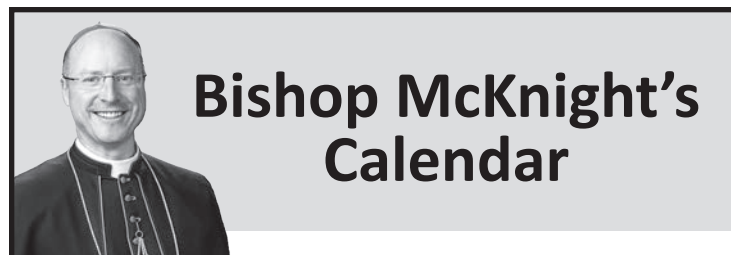
"We pray for peace and for a cure to this COVID," she said. "And hopefully, prayerfully, we won't have to do this again next Christmas."

## Seminarian Hoffmann installed as lector



**Bishop Robert Brennan of Columbus, Ohio, vice chancellor of the Pontifical College Josephinum in Worthington, Ohio, bestows upon seminarian Christopher Hoffmann of the Jefferson City diocese the ministry of lector, an important step in priestly discernment, on Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Fourteen seminarians in the School of Theology received the ministry of lector or acolyte during the Mass in Saint Turibius Chapel, celebrated by Bishop Brennan. The discipline for the formally instituted lector and acolyte was established by Blessed Pope Paul VI on Aug. 15, 1972, in his *Motu Proprio, Ministeria quaedam*. The document defines the duties of each ministry. The lector is appointed to: read the Word of God (except for the Gospel) during the liturgy; recite the psalm in the absence of a psalmist; present the general intercessions if no deacon is present; instruct the faithful for the worthy reception of the sacraments; and prepare other faithful who are appointed on a temporary basis to read the Scriptures in liturgical celebrations.**

— Photo by Carolyn A. Dinovo



## Bishop McKnight's Calendar

The following appointments are tentative, depending on the pandemic.

### JANUARY

- Jan. 4-10** Region IX Bishops' Retreat, Spiritual Life Center, Wichita, KS
- Jan. 11** Missouri Governor Michael L. Parson Inauguration Benediction, 11 am, Missouri State Capitol
- Jan. 14** Personnel Board Meeting, 10 am, videoconference
- Jan. 28** Finance Council Meeting, 11 am, Catholic Center

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## Bishop McKnight's January prayer intention for our Local Church

For those seeking employment; that through the intercession of St. Joseph the Worker, they may find dignified work in supporting themselves and their family.

## Intención del mes de enero del Obispo McKnight por nuestra Iglesia Local

Para quienes buscan empleo; que por intercesión de San José Obrero, puedan encontrar un trabajo digno para mantenerse a sí mismos y a su familia.



Please be so kind as to make this a part of your group and private prayer.

## Fr. Aubuchon gives thanks for ongoing restoration of his health

**Credits God's grace, prayers of many, intercession of the Blessed Mother in strengthening his weakened heart**

By Jay Nies

The Psalmist proclaims that God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Father Christopher Aubuchon knows this to be true.

"God is so very good in the blessings He has poured out in my life over this past year, including what seems to be a miraculous healing of my heart," the priest wrote in a Dec. 21 Facebook post. "It's incredible!"

It's been a whole year since the 33-year-old priest of the Jefferson City diocese first became sick with an illness that wound up stealing his energy and marking him as a candidate for a heart transplant.

He experienced a new kind of Christmas joy this past year, mindful that things could have turned out very differently for him.

"It seems that our Blessed Lord has decided that miraculously healing my heart will give Him the most glory and will best help create me into

the saint He is calling me to be," Fr. Aubuchon stated.

"These are, 'the priest construed, 'two key reasons why He has allowed this cross in my life. Blessed be God forever!'"

Fr. Aubuchon received the diagnosis of his extreme heart condition, brought on by an unknown viral infection, in early February 2020, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in the United States.

He had struggled for over a month with fatigue and shortness of breath and had spent three weeks in two different hospitals.

He went to Hermann to live with his parents, who took excellent care of him.

He spent three months there, bewilderingly ill.

"I know that it was very painful and heart-wrenching for my parents to watch me suffer and for them to feel helpless to be able to take the pain away," he said. "I know they would rather have all of the suffering put on them than for me to have to carry it — that is the depth of their love for their children."

They never complained, even while taking care of him

at his sickest and lowest.

"I thank God for them each day, and in a renewed way, after having borne the cross of suffering in an unexpected way this year," he said.

Fr. Aubuchon then spent several months living in community with two other priests at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish near St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City while awaiting a replacement for his heart that had been battered by cardiomyopathy and congestive heart failure.

He offered his daily Mass in the chapel at the parish rectory each day and spent significant time adoring Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

### In Mary's footsteps

Born on Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Fr. Aubuchon has been cultivating a close relationship with the Blessed Mother for his entire life.

"Her courage in her 'yes' to being the Mother of God inspired me to push through my fears and say 'yes,' to the Holy Priesthood several years ago," he noted.

"Her response also inspired me to have the courage to welcome God's will for my heart health, in saying, 'yes' to whatever that ultimately ends up being — to 'be not afraid' when at times I have been overwhelmed and fearful," he said.

He found the strength to accept whichever of the three options lay before him:

- to be healed from his heart condition,
- to receive a heart transplant, or
- to be called to the Lord from this life through death.

He tells God each day: "Whatever You want is what I want, too."

### Recognizing the gift

The priest's health improved dramatically, to the extent that he could return to the diocese on Nov. 1 and continue his recovery at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Columbia.

"It seems that God wants to heal my heart, which I am open to and very excited for,"



Father Christopher Aubuchon

the priest stated. "God's will be done! I trust in Him!"

Fr. Aubuchon still has a lot of recovering left to do. He asks for continued prayers for healing as he continues offering up his own prayers and

discomforts for others who need it.

He was quick to acknowledge the love and support God has provided for him and his family throughout this journey.

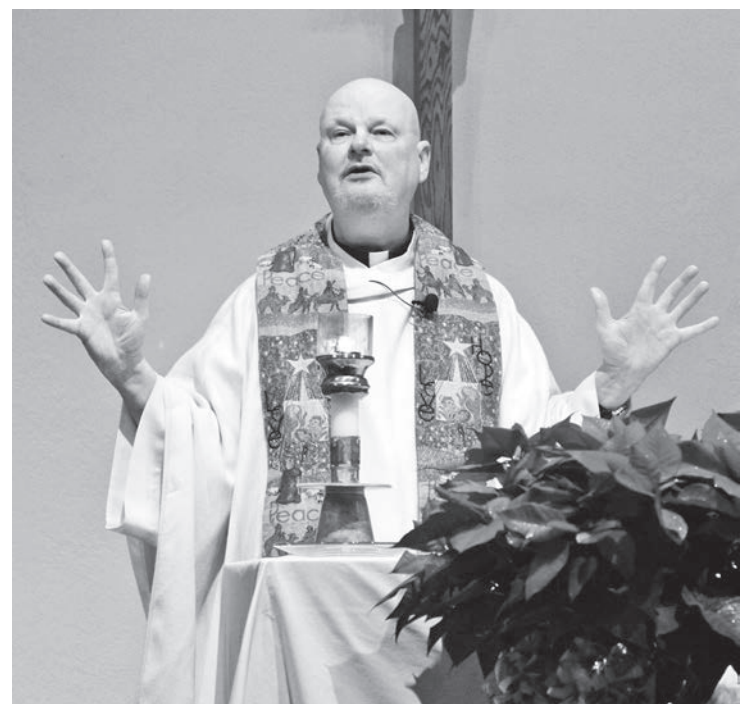
"This has certainly been a trying experience," he stated. "But to suffer with and for our Blessed Lord has been and continues to be a tremendous grace, as well as gift."

He's deeply grateful for all the encouragement he has received and for all the prayers that have been raised up to God on his behalf.

He emphasized that others have suffered far more than he has and that things could have been much worse for him.

"I have been spared in many ways by God's Divine Grace, for this blessing, unworthy as I am, I am most grateful," he said.

## Fr. Coleman offers Mass on Christmas Eve



Father Michael Coleman, pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Centralia and part-time chaplain of Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School in Columbia, celebrates Mass on Christmas Eve in Holy Spirit Church. He has been steadily recovering following the surgical removal of a cancerous tumor in his chest last summer and an aggressive regimen of follow-up radiation and chemotherapy. A recent PET scan found there to be no recurrence of the cancer. "I can't even express the emotion I felt tonight celebrating Christmas Eve Mass," he stated. "I am exhausted emotionally and physically but I am so spiritually fulfilled. A Christmas I will never forget. I took one look at the beautiful Holy Spirit congregation and I couldn't stop the tears. I am so grateful and blessed." — Photo by Shawn Carrico

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Volunteers help carry food, water and Christmas gifts into St. Joseph Parish's Monsignor Farischon Hall for distribution on Dec. 22. The Palmyra Area Ministerial Alliance provided gifts, food and household items to 44 families, including 108 children, through its 2020 "Adopt a Child" program.

— Photos by Andrea Barnes

## Palmyra parishioners coordinate 2020 Christmas "Adopt a Child"

By Jay Nies

Monsignor Farischon Hall and the street running past St. Joseph Church in Palmyra were bustling with activity three days before Christmas.

The parish hall was the staging area and distribution hub for the Palmyra Area Ministerial Alliance's (PAMA) 2020 Christmas "Adopt a Child" Program.

Member congregations helped 44 local families, including 108 youngsters.

"We primarily focus on the children," stated St. Joseph parishioner Cathy Fohey, the program's 2019 and 2020 coordinator.

"We also do cleaning baskets for adults, personal-care items and things that are practical," she said.

People throughout the area also donate money, which goes toward

buying pantry staples to fill food baskets.

"It's a really wonderful program," said Mrs. Fohey, director of religious education and youth ministry for St. Joseph Parish.

Each of PAMA's member congregations takes a turn hosting and coordinating the "Adopt a Child" program for two-year terms.

The second year of St. Joseph Parish's term coincided with a deadly pandemic.

"At first, there were questions about whether we should even have it this year," said Mrs. Fohey. "I said, 'Let's go for it! There are people who really need it.'"

She and co-coordinator Pam Hess planned and choreographed every step in the process.

They sent out applications and garnered publicity from local media.

Each member congregation "adopted" families, bought gifts and brought five or six

a process that maintains their anonymity.

Mrs. Fohey said the St. Joseph parishioners were particularly generous this year.

When a family came forward at the last minute to ask for help, parishioners quickly grabbed the extra ornaments off the giving tree and shopped for more gifts.

At noon on Dec. 22, representatives of each of the churches began bringing the wrapped gifts with numbers on

them, corresponding to a family and its needs.

"The families are coded with numbers, so no one knows who they're shopping for," said Mrs. Fohey.

In the parish's Farischon Hall, across the street from St. Joseph Church, organizers set up 44 tables —

one for each "adopted" family.

"That's where the gifts get dropped off," said Mrs. Fohey.

A member of one of the churches orders food in bulk each year, based on the number of families and the amount of money collected.

Volunteers divided the pallets of food among the 44 tables.

At 3:30 p.m., Lane Street became a pick-up lane, with adults greeting the recipients and teens from St. Joseph and

other congregations carrying the gifts and food out to the cars.

"We would usually have people come in and pick up

More photos from this event will be posted in *The Catholic Missourian's* online edition, [cathmo.com](http://cathmo.com). Select "Photo Galleries" from the "Multimedia" tab on the menu bar.

their gifts, so we could greet them, wish them a Merry Christmas, see how they're doing and find out if there's anything else we can do for them," said Mrs. Fohey.

"But with COVID, we decided to make those connections with them in their cars," she said.

The families pulled into the

church parking lot, where the young people retrieved their gifts, opened the car trunks and placed the gifts inside.

"We worked to keep it very private, so people wouldn't see anyone they know," said Mrs. Fohey.

### Love thy neighbor

Mrs. Fohey said there were plenty of opportunities to stop and reflect in the midst of all the hustle and bustle.

Right before the gift recipients began arriving, the volunteers gathered to pray.

"We asked God to help us be joyful in our work and for the gifts these people receive to lead them closer to Christ," she said.

At the end of the distribution, they gathered for a communal prayer of thanks and blessing.

See PALMYRA, page 18



volunteers to help sort everything out.

About 40 volunteers carried out the impressive task of sorting and distributing the gifts to the children and their families.

### Christian unity

PAMA includes churches in the Palmyra, Philadelphia and Taylor/Maywood areas.

As in years past, families and children in need are "adopted" by churches and businesses to receive Christmas gifts through

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# Martinsburg missionary's tale of a fourth, very Wise Man

**"Kingdom Without Gunpowder"**  
— Chow Kung's original gift suddenly seemed inappropriate

Bishop Adolph J. Paschang (1895-1968) was born and raised in Martinsburg and graduated from St. Joseph School and later from Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis. He became a Maryknoll missionary, ministered in China and served as bishop of Jiangmen. 2021 will mark the 100th anniversary of his priestly ordination. He wrote the following Christmas/Epiphany story for Maryknoll magazine:

By Maryknoll Bishop Adolph J. Paschang

Chow Kung, personal geometer, astronomer, expounder of dreams, and general wise man for the Han emperor, was alone in his gloomy study, preparing an important experiment.

He put certain proportions of saltpeter, sulfur and charcoal dust in the crockery jar, filled the jar with pebbles, and in-

serted a rice-straw fuse.

Then he touched a flame to the fuse and ran to cover behind a wooden cabinet in a far corner of the room.

There was a shocking blast. Shards of the wine jar scarred the walls, and pebbles crashed against the roof tiles. The experimenter fanned the acrid smoke from his face and smirked with satisfaction.

"It can do," he muttered. "It is as I thought. It is good!"

After the smoke had cleared away, Chow Kung carefully inscribed the measures of the ingredients of his explosive mixture on a little plaque of bamboo and hid it inside his robes.

"Now," he said, "my theory has proved itself. It is time I was on my way."

The wise man walked through a series of courtyards and halls, to the private apartments of his master and pa-



The adoration of the Magi is depicted in this icon by artist Ayman Favez. The feast of the Epiphany is observed Jan. 3 in Latin-rite churches in the U.S.  
— CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

tron, the emperor of China. (Because of his position on the palace staff, he had the privilege of audience with the ruler at any hour.)

He knelt before the lounging emperor and tapped the brick floor with his forehead.

"Great Man," Chow Kung said, "this unworthy one craves leave to remove himself for a time from the radiance of Your Presence."

"For what reason?" asked the emperor, languidly sipping tea. "To travel far under the sky in search of wisdom, and to bring it back for the glory of the Great Man's realm."

The "Great Man" grunted assent and lazily motioned with his long-nailed fingers for the petitioner to depart.

Chow Kung went from the royal presence gladly.

He felt no compunction for not having stated the true reason for the intended journey. He knew that no good, and perhaps some harm, would result if he were rash enough to tell his dissipated master that he was going to join a caravan of wise men from countries outside the Middle Kingdom — wise men who were following a strange, new star.

The shallow-minded emperor had no interest in the Sacred Books of the Jews or the tradition, much discussed among scholars of distant nations, which held that a Prince would be born who would conquer all

within the four seas.

The Chinese wise man certainly could not tell his royal master about the secret discovery that would give the new Prince a new power, a new weapon, an explosive



Bishop Adolph Paschang MM (1895-1968)

that would make his armies invincible. The Han emperor would want this weapon for himself and would use it for wicked purposes. But the expected Prince, the tradition said, would do only good to mankind.

Chow Kung intended to put his newly invented weapon in the newborn Prince's hands, and to offer himself to be his wise man.

"What shall I take on my journey?" the Chinese wise man considered. "Gold or silver I need little of. There are

sick people everywhere; my knowledge of healing herbs will secure from them, in return, the simple food I need. Ah, but I must take my sleeping-mat — that excellent, thick mat of fine grass, soft as hair, which I myself wove and which can be folded into a small package."

The caravan followed the star, whiling away the days in earnest discussion of wisdom. When they entered the stable, the sight of the Child, lying in the manger, reassured them.

They knelt and performed acts of worship, each one according to the customs of his own nation. They offered their gifts to the Child, and they understood then the symbolical meaning of what they had been inspired to bring.

Chow Kung tapped the earth three times with his forehead, then gazed long upon the face of the Child.

At last he spoke to his companions:

"Among my people I am said to be wise in the reading of faces, and in the foretelling of human destinies. This Infant is, indeed, a Prince Who will conquer the world. But He will not do it by means of the weapon that was to be my gift for Him."

The Chinese wise man then drew from within his garments the bamboo plaque inscribed with the secret formula of the explosive. With no hesitation, he took the plaque to the fire that was smoldering in a corner of the stable, and dropped his former treasure into the flames.

"But I have a better present for this newborn Prince — a present that is fitting for the kind of life that He will lead. Many a night this will ease his weary body."

Chow Kung unfolded the sleeping-mat, soft as hair, which his own hands had woven, and gently spread it over the straw on which lay the smiling Prince of all mankind.

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# A season like none other: Catholic high schools across diocese end on a winning note

By Eddie O'Neill

In the world of high school sports, a team always needs a sense of unity, a hard-work ethic and a desire to succeed.

Those are key in a normal year. However, the fall of 2020 was anything but normal.

Perhaps, the abnormal challenges of a pandemic proved to be even more of an impetus for the Jefferson City diocese's three Catholic high schools — Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School in Columbia, Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City and Sacred Heart School in Sedalia — to work even harder.

These three schools posted an impressive four state titles in a variety of sports and a number of second-place finishes.

## Helias Crusaders

For the captain of a Missouri state champion football team, the fall of 2020 will go down as an unforgettable experience.

"The greatest sports moment in my Helias career has to be lifting the state championship trophy with my brothers all around me," said Helias Catholic senior Isaac Lopez, captain of the Crusaders football team. "It was a moment that I had been dreaming of doing my entire football career. It's a memory I will never forget."

Is was also quite an experience for longtime Crusader football head coach Chris Hentges. Not only did the Crusaders take the Class 4 title but they went undefeated at 14-0.

It was their first state championship since 1998, when Mr. Hentges father, Ray Hentges, was head coach.

"The foundation for our success was laid in our summer program," Chris Hentges stated. "We had a great turnout as I think the kids were dying to get out and do something."

He said the team won in so many different ways.

"Despite the adversity we



**LEFT: The Sacred Heart High School Gremlins golf team gathers on the green after winning the Class 1 State Golf Championship on Oct. 21, 2020.**



**RIGHT: The Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School Trailblazers girls' softball team gathers for a team photo after winning their first state championship on Oct. 31, 2020.**

had to face every day, the kids came to practice and gave it their all," he said. "I've never seen a group of kids work this hard."

Mr. Lopez said that he plans on furthering his education and athletic career in col-

lege.

He is particularly proud of the cross country team and the girls' softball team which both won state titles.

"We have been very, very fortunate that all 10 of our fall sports were able to play 'til the end," he said. "As well, we were able to play enough games to compete in districts."

While the Trailblazers had games canceled, none of them were because their own student athletes were sick.

In fact, their annual homecoming football match-up between Duschene High School had to be canceled while their team was getting

on the bus.

"I got the call from the Duschene coach that one of his players was showing COVID symptoms, and I told their coach to stay home," said Mr. Link. "Talk about a tough decision! However, on Monday, their coach called me and said it was the right decision as the player had tested positive."

He said the success of the school's athletic programs began in July with a school-wide meeting among faculty and administrators on how to promote academic and athletic success.

"We put together a plan that would minimize (COVID-19) risk and everyone

bought into it," he said. "We followed the rules and they worked. It was that simple."

Trailblazer softball head coach Taylor Bartlett was one who bought into the program, and it worked. He and his players set a goal, fought hard and reached it through the thick and thin of the pandemic.

"We realized from the start that we might not get all of our games in," he said. "We were able to navigate a lot of uncertainty and reach our goal of being state champions. Along the way, we did everything we could to maintain social distancing to avoid a shutdown. None of our players tested positive."

Coach Bartlett added that he had four girls make first team all-state. Among them was pitcher Paige Bedsworth who became the all-time high school strikeout leader for all Missouri high school divisions. She is headed to Drake University on a scholarship next fall. Mr. Bartlett said she and the other seniors really led the team.

"The best moment ever was

running to my teammates after the final out of the state championship game," said Ms. Bedsworth, "and knowing that we finally accomplished our goal of the last four years. The community of Tolton is such a great atmosphere and it is easy to get to know everyone, and they are the most welcoming people. My teachers and coaches to incorporate our faith and allow us to see that in almost everything we do. Before games, just like before every class, we would pray."

As fall turned into winter, Mr. Link and the Tolton coaches weren't resting on their laurels.

"We're rolling into our winter sports schedule," he said. "It's amazing what we are doing here. We are in a horrific time in a world-wide pandemic, but we are making it in our little corner of the world."

## Sacred Heart Gremlins

For Sacred Heart High School Athletic Director Amanda Blackburn, the fall of

See CHAMPIONSHIPS, page 11

## Championship season

**Tolton Catholic**  
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State title in Girls Softball

**Sacred Heart**  
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**Helias Catholic**  
State title in Football

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## QUESTION CORNER

## Is 'purgatory' in Bible? / How to 'bless the Lord'?

By Father Kenneth Doyle  
Catholic News Service



**Q. Some 50 years ago, I converted to the Catholic Church. But one question has always bothered me: Where will I find the word "purgatory" in the Bible? (Elmer City, Washington)**

**A.** This is a question I am often asked. The answer is that you won't find the specific word "purgatory" in the Bible. But the concept is surely there — the notion of a period of purification after death before one is worthy to enter heaven.

In fact, even before Christ the Jewish people recognized that there could be such a need and believed that the prayers of those still living could aid in that cleansing. In the Second Book of Maccabees (12:39-46), Judas Maccabeus prays for his fallen comrades who had died in battle while wearing amulets dedicated to pagan idols.

That Old Testament passage tells us that Judas turned to prayer as an expiatory sacrifice and "thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin" — showing his belief that the deceased could still be helped by the intercession of the living.

In the New Testament, arguably the clearest reference to purgatory comes in Matthew's Gospel (12:32), where Jesus states that "whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" — implying that there are at least some sins that can be forgiven in the next life.

Such scriptural references leads to the Church's belief, stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, that "all who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven" (No. 1030).

**Q. Please clarify something that I don't understand when I am praying. In the Gloria at Sunday Mass, we say, "We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you." In Psalm 63, we pray, "I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands, calling on your name." And in Psalm 103, we say, "Bless the Lord, my soul; all my being, bless His holy name!" My question is this: What does it mean for us to "bless the Lord"? How can we do that? (Indiana)**

**A.** Your question makes sense: How can we, who have received all that we have from the Lord, bless God who possesses everything already? And the answer has to do with the Hebrew word for "bless." It has the same root as the word for "kneel," and it really means to "adore" God, to praise Him for His magnificence and thank Him for His abundant favors.

Psalm 103, for example, whose opening verse you quote, goes on to say: "Bless the Lord, my soul; and do not forget all His gifts, Who pardons all your sins, and heals all your ills ... and crowns you with mercy and compassion, Who fills your days with good things."

When God blesses us, we are helped and strengthened and made better off than we were; but when we "bless" God, that adds nothing to God's greatness but simply indicates our wholehearted gratitude for His divine favors.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.

Papal Audience  
December 30, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters:

As part of our continuing catechesis on prayer, we now turn to the prayer of thanksgiving. St. Luke tells us that of the 10 lepers healed by Jesus, only one came back to thank the Lord. This passage reminds us of the importance of gratitude. It shows the great difference between hearts that are thankful and those that are not; between people who see everything as their entitlement and those who receive everything as grace. As Christians, our prayer of thanksgiving is inspired by gratitude for the love of God revealed in the coming of Jesus, His Son and our Savior. The Gospel accounts of Christ's birth show us how the coming of the Messiah was welcomed by hearts that trusted and prayed for the fulfillment of God's promises. May our celebration of this Christmas season be marked by fervent prayer of thanksgiving for the outpouring of God's redemptive grace upon our world. May these prayers enlarge our hearts and enable us to bring the hope and joy of the Gospel to all around us, especially to our brothers and sisters most in need.

I cordially greet the English-speaking faithful. May each of you, and your families, cherish the joy of this Christmas season and draw near in prayer to the Savior Who has come to dwell among us. God bless you!

Sedalia Sacred Heart Key Club  
makes stockings for military

By Faith Bemiss

Stockings were hung with care at Whiteman Air Force Base (WAFB) a week before Christmas by students from Sacred Heart High School (SHS) in Sedalia.

Several students in the Sacred Heart Key Club Chapter worked together the afternoon of Dec. 18 to stuff around 100 Christmas stockings for the WAFB 509th Military Police Division.

The Key Club is sponsored by Kiwanis International. The local chapter was started a few years ago by Sedalia Kiwanis member Bob Milner.

Coordinating the project was Key Club President Amelia Schott and helping her was Megan Wingerter.

"We're stuffing stockings with things like food and watches and gloves," Schott explained. "Some of them will get multi-tools, and we're going to go to Whiteman Air Force Base and actually put it on the doors for those who can't go home for the holidays."

Schott added the project is a community service project for the club.

"Our chapter is doing it this year for the first time," she



**Amelia Schott, left, president of the Sacred Heart Key Club Chapter, and members Tania Bhardwaj, center, and Megan Wingerter place treats into stockings for Whiteman Air Force Base's 509th Military Police Division on Dec. 18. They gave the stockings to military members who couldn't go home for Christmas. — Photo by Faith Bemiss, courtesy of the Sedalia Democrat**

noted. "Usually it's the Student Council, but we're doing it this year."

Wingerter said being in the club is a good opportunity to serve her community. Schott added the Key Club is sponsored by SHS Counselor Sheri Buckley.

The stocking project was coordinated by the Sedalia Area Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee that organized sponsor donations.

Sedalia Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Debra Andresen said the committee got together and planned out the project. In all, 31 individuals and businesses donated money for the items included in the stockings.

Andresen added Military Affairs member Mykel Schlotterbeck was overseeing the Sacred Heart Key Club volunteers.

See STOCKINGS, page 23



## In hopeful anticipation of 2021

By Brett Robinson  
Catholic News Service



covering or revealing.

Many things were revealed about the fragility of our political and health systems and will likely bring even more change in the years to come. This column has focused on our relationship to technology in light of our faith and something is being revealed there as well.

## Love is a balm for our suffering

By Edith Avila Olea  
Catholic News Service



went untouched by the pandemic and its economic impacts. We all have a 2020 story to share.

Though the pandemic surpassed borders and class, its effects have lasted longer for some compared to others. For the uninsured and underinsured, the underemployed and unemployed, health care and essential workers, among others, the pandemic has created deep wounds.

This year has shown us how inter-related our inequities are in society. We saw how the pandemic devastated communities of color because of high risk factors related to general employment industries, crowded housing conditions, lack of appropriate access to health care, lack of child care, and more.

We also saw the unjust burden that health care workers were forced to carry with limited personal protective equipment, limited staff and technology. All this while political leaders refused to provide a consistent plan of action for relief and certain faith leaders offered controversial opinions on the role of the Church during such a time.

I've been asking myself, Why is it so hard for us to understand the concept of solidarity and creating a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable? Why do people believe in conspiracy theories more than experts and public

The lack of human presence we have experienced due to quarantines and lockdowns has taken a toll on mental and spiritual health. Loneliness and lack of social connection has been compared to smoking, obesity and lack of physical activity in its effects on the human body. The loneliness epidemic did not come out of nowhere in 2020; it was a troubling trend even before the pandemic.

Lack of presence was not new to 2020. As MIT professor and psychologist Sherry Turkle put it prior to the pandemic, friends and families were often "alone together" as they spent more time on screens and social media than with each other.

Turkle's phrase, which was meant to rouse us from our technological stupor,

servants who have dedicated their lives to serving us?

For nearly a decade, I've worked as an advocate of vulnerable communities along with other nonprofits, government entities and health care providers. In my experience, we are most successful when we work together, not against one another.

Even if we may have fundamental disagreements, say on a topic like immigration, we still must have a dialogue and find a solution we can agree on. We use facts, research and people's experiences to make our recommendations.

Solutions don't come overnight, and the process can be cumbersome and frustrating. Even then, we choose to continue the dialogue. We come back to the table.

However, is it just me, or does it seem like people just quit on one another when it came time to discuss the pandemic? I often heard phrases like, "Do what's best for you." Yet, this method doesn't work for a crisis. It doesn't bring solutions to the table. It brings confusion.

I wish I could say I had a plan or a solution to share. I don't. I only have my reflections as I work to bring this year to an end.

Perhaps because we have so much in the U.S., we struggle to understand the concept of solidarity with those who have less. Perhaps because we live in an age of relativism, where everyone is right in their own way, we struggle to understand when things are truly wrong and unjust.

In the end, you may agree 2020 was a dark year, but it wasn't pitch black. There were glimpses of light shining through.

I witnessed so much hope. I saw hope in the doctors, nurses and health

actually became a COVID-19 ad slogan encouraging people to stay home, complete with its own hashtag and website, [alonetogether.com](http://alonetogether.com).

Catholics felt the lack of presence acutely as liturgies were moved online and the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist was relegated to being viewed through a screen. Spiritual Communion prayers were uttered worldwide to keep the faithful connected to the sacrament by other means.

What was uncovered, by God's grace, was a eucharistic hunger that may have been laying dormant in many hearts that had grown cold or taken the availability of the Mass for granted.

It is in these moments that we are better able to see the way in which God helps us experience the greater good, even in the midst of suffering. A deeper appreciation for the true power and mystery of Christ's Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist gives us the means for initiating a revival in the year to come.

The cycle of the liturgical year is a revelatory sign of hope as one calendar year passes into another. The Church, in her wisdom, has given us periods of fasting and feasting so that we become attuned to the sense of anticipation and mystery that comes with Advent and Lent, and the sense of unveiling and fulfillment that comes with Christmas and Easter.

The same can be said of our presence with one another. The "fasting" from human and liturgical presence that we have endured for more than a year will ultimately give way to a deeper reunion with our faith and with one another; a reunion that prefigures that which is to come when we are united with God in the most real and lasting presence of eternity.

*Robinson is director of communications and Catholic media studies at the University of Notre Dame McGrath Institute for Church Life.*

### REFLECTION

## Winter garden

By Mark Saucier

The New Year arrived with an entourage of snow, freezing rain, and bone-chilling fog.

Of course it did! What else would you expect after a year that defied an arsenal of adjectives; a year crammed with grievance and grief, fear and frustration?

Still, we answered the call of the woods. The cold morning was swaddled in silence.

The ice-barked limbs of trees reached out like crystal sculptures.

Cedars stood proud in their snow-white robes. Bushes bowed in frozen reverence.

It was a winter feast for the eyes, with tiny twigs and sweetgum balls frosted for dessert.

If you listened, you could hear a deep murmur in it all — not the groaning of age or effort, but an earthly sigh at the splendor of it all.

In such arctic elegance, seeing all the beauty left in the wake of a winter weather watch, my thoughts turned to the previous year.

I searched for signs of grace and comeliness I may have missed in my rush to be rid of it.

The year forced unwanted isolation upon us, but I was fortunate to be quarantined with a friend. We spent more time walking, talking and working together than we ever have.

I learned that even after all these years, the other is still a boundless mystery, and, with a little attention, love will always grow.

We were gifted with another grandchild. Born in the shadows of the COVID count, Penelope is cute and cuddly. She is, like all the little ones born last year, a sign of God's continuing faith in us.

With no social calendar, I've had more time for prayer and contemplation. Actually, I've probably always had the time, but over the past months, I've found myself making it, wanting it, and, most definitely, needing it.

We just ate the last fresh tomato from 2020. While that may say more about climate change, we did have more time to tend the garden and care for the flowers. We were rewarded with vibrant colors to ward off the dismal gray of the soul, as well as tasty delights to entice us to the sacrament of the table.

We all lost a lot in the past year, some much more than others, but one day we will return to a world of hugs and handshakes, movies, meetings and unmasked faces.

Until then, it is good to count our blessings so that the inevitable shadows of life cannot hide them.

## R.I.P. Sr. Nadine Luebbert CCVI, formerly of J.C.

Sister Nadine Luebbert of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word was quick to remind people that her name meant “hope” in Russian.

“Indeed, she was a most hopeful, upbeat person, always saying, ‘All will be well, my dear,’” recalled Incarnate Word Sister Margaret “Peggy” Bonnot. “And she loved the color green — also saying that it was a color of hope.”

Sr. Nadine, 91 — who had served on the faculties of Mary Immaculate School in Kirksville and Immaculate Conception School in Jefferson City and as principal of St. Francis Xavier School in Taos — died on Dec. 8, 2020.

She was living in retirement at The Village at Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas.

She was born on Nov. 20, 1929, in Brinktown, a daughter of Phil and Catherine (Brandel) Luebbert.

The family later moved to Jefferson City, where she attended Immaculate Conception School.

After graduating from St. Peter High School in 1947, she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio.

She professed first vows in 1950 and perpetual vows in 1955.

### Vibrant ministry

Sr. Nadine served as a Catholic school teacher in Jefferson City, Kirksville, Old Mines and St. Louis, Missouri; and in Dallas, El Paso and Pampa, Texas.



**Sr. Nadine Luebbert CCVI  
(1929-2020)**

Teaching in Jefferson City from 1987-91, she was one of 266 Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word who have served at Immaculate Conception Parish and School since 1914.

She spent 22 years in administration, including as principal of St. Francis Xavier School in Taos; St. Dismas School in Florissant; St. Frances of Rome School in Cicero, Illinois; and as administrator of Dunne Memorial Home for Boys in Dallas, Texas.

She held a bachelor's degree in education from Fontbonne College in St. Louis; a master's degree from the University of Missouri—St. Louis; and a master's degree in religious studies from Incarnate Word College in San Antonio.

A second career brought her back to St. Louis in

1991, where she served as a chaplain at Southgate Care Center.

In 1996, she joined the retirement community at The Village at Incarnate Word, San Antonio.

She served as a volunteer in the gift shop and crafted many beautiful items to sell there. Her computer-crafted greeting cards were in constant demand.

### “Best poker face”

Sr. Peggy, a Jefferson City native who also graduated from I.C. School, noted that Sr. Nadine had a special interest in the history and charism of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

She researched the archives and writings of the congregation's founders and early mothers.

Sr. Nadine served for many years on the congregation's Heritage and Charism Committee and was the author of *Tidbits*, a collection of stories that she gleaned from the writings of the early sisters.

“She emphasized in her writings what Mother St. Pierre repeatedly mentioned in her letters — that a ‘spirit

of prayer and charity’ must be always present in the congregation,” said Sr. Peggy.

Sr. Nadine also organized groups to play cards, especially poker, and according to Sr. Peggy “had the best poker face of all!”

Incarnate Word Sister Cathy Vetter, also a Jefferson

to us all,” said Sr. Cathy. “She is very much missed.”

She remembers Sr. Nadine as always being positive and supportive.

“Her smile was a delight, and she had special ways of letting each person know how special they are,” said Sr. Cathy. “Her faith was strong and almost matter-of-fact — ‘God is good and wonderful and loves us, so there is nothing to worry about.’”

### Into Paradise!

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated privately at The Village at Incarnate Word in San Antonio.

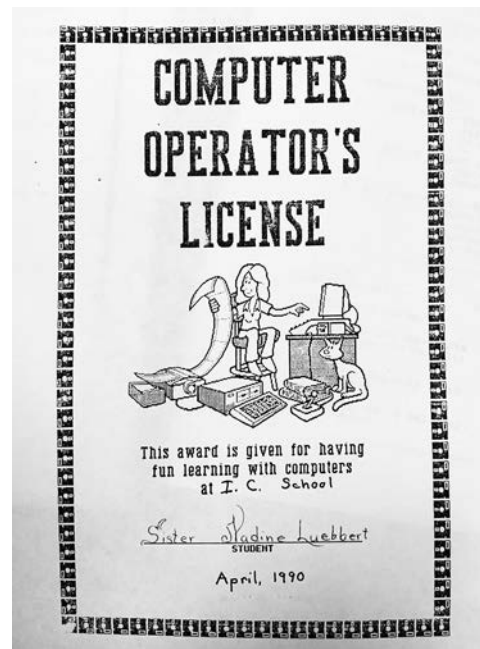
Burial was in the convent cemetery.

Preceding Sr. Nadine in death were her parents; a sister, Bee Luebbert Rackers; and her brothers, Don, Eddie, Sam and Phil.

Surviving are her sisters-in law, Elaine, Darla, and Angie Luebbert and Jane Szabados; several nieces and nephews; and her fellow Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate

Word.

Condolences may be sent to the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, 4503 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209.



**Heather Schrimpf, principal of Immaculate Conception School in Jefferson City, where Incarnate Word Sister Nadine Luebbert taught from 1987-91, found this certificate in her file.**

City native and I.C. graduate, said Sr. Nadine was gracious and generous and kept other people in mind right up to the day before she died.

“Her death was sudden and even at her age a surprise

## Prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for Protection from the Coronavirus

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, we entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross, you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

Patroness of the Diocese of Jefferson City, you know what we need.

We are certain of the power of your intercession, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who taught us to “love one another, as I have loved you”

took our sufferings upon Himself and bore our sorrows

to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection.

Bring under your mantle of protection all who provide care for the sick and minister to their needs, as your Son implores us to do for one another.

V. We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

R. Do not despise our pleas and deliver us from every danger,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

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## Mokane parishioners step-up for Toys for Tots



Christmas gifts donated by members of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish and the greater Mokane community to Toys for Tots are placed before the altar in church. The parish has been collecting gifts for Toys for Tots at Christmastime for several years. Motivated by the difficulties many families are experiencing due to the coronavirus pandemic, the parish decided in October to continue the tradition this year, not knowing what to expect. Donations began flooding in, to the tune of \$1,140 in cash and bags of toys, including four bicycles. “What we truly expected to be our smallest donation instead became our largest,” parishioners stated. “As hard as this year has been, our parish family and our community truly embraced and embodied the spirit of Christmas.”

— Photo from the St. Jude Thaddeus Catholic Church-Mokane Facebook page

## CHAMPIONSHIPS

From page 7

2020 was baptism by fire.

Not only was this her first job as an A.D., but she had to navigate a nasty pandemic.

“My first impression of the staff and coaches here was that they go above and beyond any expectations we have,” she explained. “During the fall, I saw coaches and student athletes shine in adversity due to the COVID situation. No one allowed it to bring them down.”

She added that there were cases of COVID among the various sports teams, but teammates kept their heads high and remained a team first and foremost.

“They did Zoom practices at times to keep going, and when they came back, they came ready to compete,” Ms. Blackburn added.

Most impressive was the Gremlins girls’ golf team. They won a state title under the leadership of head coach Carla Luchessi. It was a first for girls’ golf in school history.

She quipped that golf by nature is a good social distancing sport.

“We had four seniors on



**The seniors of the Helias Catholic High School Crusaders state champion football team gather in the Crusader Commons during their end-of-the-year banquet on Dec. 6.**

— Photo from the Helias Catholic Football Facebook page

the team,” she told *The Catholic Missourian*. “So we had a lot of experience. These girls had played together all four years and kept working and working on it.”

Caten Luchessi was one of those seniors.

“We won the state championship as a team,” she stated. “Many people consider golf an individual sport so it was very exciting to work together and win as a team this year. My greatest moment was getting second at state individually. It was something that I had never even dreamed of happening.”

Ms. Luchessi added that she and fellow teammate Kelsey Hudson had a tradition of reciting a special prayer together before each test and before any matches or tournaments.

“This is our final way to prepare ourselves for whatever we are doing and to calm our nerves,” she said.

On the volleyball court, senior Kiley Beykirch shared a similar sentiment.

“Not only did we pray before every volleyball game, but we are constantly being encouraged to have good sportsmanship and attitudes,” she said.

Prayer and hard work paid off as the Gremlins had a very successful season, according to their coach, Marlo Siron. They took second place in state as they lost to Santa Fe.

“I was almost certain that we would get a month into the season and COVID would shut everything down,” she noted. “But we got through the season with just one



**The Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School Trailblazers boys’ cross country team gathers for a team photo after winning their first state championship.**

— Photo from the Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School Facebook page

match that we couldn’t play. But otherwise we played our full season which was pretty awesome.”

### “Before all else ...”

Father Stephen Jones, chaplain of Helias Catholic, said state championships are exciting and that he’s super-proud of all the student athletes at Helias and elsewhere who have achieved that level of success.

“It showcases what is most important about sports: hard work, perseverance, trust in teammates and coaches, and the willingness to give of yourself for the betterment of others,” he said. “These qualities reflect so well the life of faith that we are all called to share and put at the center of our lives.”

Father Michael Coleman, a chaplain at Tolton Catholic, thought back to a moment in 2016 when he prayed in the

school’s chapel with the boys’ varsity basketball team before they left for Mizzou Arena to win the state championship.

That team included Michael Porter Jr., who now plays professionally for the Denver Nuggets.

“After that game, Michael told the press that ‘before all else we play for God,’” Fr. Coleman recalled. “That is truly the theme of our sports at Tolton Catholic.”

This year, when the girls’ softball and boys’ cross country teams both won state championships, players on both teams echoed the same thing.

So have student athletes on teams that competed at state in past seasons.

“Win or lose, prayer is at the heart of all our sports at Tolton Catholic,” said Fr. Coleman. “Everything we do is so that we can use all our gifts and talents for His glory.”

# National Prayer Vigil for Life will be virtual this year

Catholic News Service

Washington, D.C.

Each year on the night before the annual March for Life, at least 10,000 people have filled the Great Upper Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington for the National Prayer Vigil for Life.

This year, due to local restrictions on attendance sizes because of the pandemic, the prayer vigil will be virtual.

Catholics across the country are instead being encouraged to take part in a nationwide prayer vigil from Jan. 28 through Jan. 29, marking the 48th anni-

versary of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions legalizing abortion.

The vigil will begin with a live broadcast at 7 p.m. central time on Thursday, Jan. 28, from the basilica, starting with the praying of the Rosary followed by Mass. Bishops from across the country will lead Holy Hours throughout the night in the livestreamed vigil.

The service can be viewed on EWTN or livestreams from the basilica or from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The principal celebrant and homilist

for the opening Mass will be Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, USCCB's chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities. The vigil will end at 8 a.m. Jan. 29 in a closing Mass celebrated by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore.

"Now, more than ever, our nation is in need of prayer for the protection of the unborn and the dignity of all human life," Archbishop Naumann said in a statement. "I am happy to be joined by bishops in dioceses across the country who are hosting pro-life prayer events including during the overnight hours of Eucharistic

adoration. I invite all Catholics to spend time with our Lord and join in this nationwide vigil for life."

The National Prayer Vigil for Life is hosted by the USCCB's Pro-Life Secretariat, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and The Catholic University of America's Office of Campus Ministry.

The closing Mass for the vigil Jan. 29 will be open to the public, but because of attendance restrictions allowing only 100 people inside the basilica, admission will be allowed on a first-come, first-served basis.



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# Students of S.H. School in Rich Fountain present Journey to Bethlehem




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Students of Sacred Heart School in Rich Fountain present a live performance of the Journey to Bethlehem on Dec. 17. Nearly 100 people drove through the Sacred Heart churchyard to see the student's reenactments of important moments leading up to and right after the Birth of Christ. — Photos by Karen Goodenough



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# Deceased priests remembered as ministers, mentors, friends

By Jay Nies

The priests of this diocese share tight familial bonds with one another and with those who have gone before them.

“They’re not strangers, they’re not ancient memories,” Father Louis Dorn said of the priests who are awaiting the Resurrection. “They’re people we’ve known! People we’ve worked with. People we’ve been inspired by. People we’ve been surprised by, seeing them and their abilities manifested.”

Fr. Dorn, a retired priest of the Jefferson City diocese, preached the homily at this year’s diocesan Mass for Deceased Priests.

About 30 fellow presbyters gathered with Bishop W. Shawn McKnight Nov. 6, during the Octave of All Souls, in St. Andrew Church in Holts Summit to remember and pray for the priests who ministered in this diocese before their death.

“We share stories, we share life, we share memories,” said Fr. Dorn in his homily. “We especially share the gift of God and of God’s love shared with each of us, always.”

Fr. Dorn pointed to the reading from the Eighth Chapter of the Letter to the Romans, in which St. Paul reminds the early Christians that they are children of God, brothers of Christ and heirs to the gift of eternal salvation.

“Therefore, we have the courage to listen to Jesus when He tells us to call God ‘Abba,’” said Fr. Dorn. “‘Father’ is not a good translation for that word. It’s too weak. It should be ‘Daddy!’”

“And that’s what He taught us. That’s what He’s shown us. So that’s the way it ought to be,” said Fr. Dorn.

He spoke of the Gospel reading from John 17, in which Jesus prays for His followers and recalls that they are the Father’s gift to Him and will be filled with the same love the Father has for the Son.

That has been the Father’s desire since before He created the world.

“Do we really think of ourselves as being a gift of God the Father to Jesus?” Fr. Dorn asked. “We should! We’re supposed to. That’s what He told us.”

All of the gifts, talents and potential that each person re-



**TOP:** Father Louis Dorn, who has been a priest of the Jefferson City diocese for 50 years, preaches a homily at a Mass offered in memory of priests of the diocese who have died in the past 64 years. **BOTTOM:** Concelebrating priests process out of St. Andrew Church in Holts Summit at the end of a Mass offered in memory of priests of the diocese who have died since its founding. — Photos by Jay Nies

ceives is part of that gift from the Father to the Son.

“We embody today that love that the Father has for Jesus, which He shares with us in the gift of grace,” the priest said, “in order that we may become better representatives, embodiments, spokesmen for Jesus Christ.”

“That is our work: to proclaim the Gospel, to announce His Good News to the people,” he said.

He spoke of having known many of the priests who have served in this diocese since its founding in 1956.

“For me, after 48 years of Priesthood, when we read that list of names, faces come to mind as men I have known,” he commented.

Several of them ministered to Fr. Dorn and his family before he answered his own priestly calling.

“And like them, through the laying on of hands, we have all received this gift of God’s love

that sends us forth to proclaim, announce and celebrate the love of God,” he said.

And just as the priests of old manifested that reality to the world, “may we continue to build on their efforts, continue that life of sharing the goodness and love and concern God has for everyone. And may it receive full expression in our love for the people and in our fellowship as the priests of this diocese.”

Fr. Dorn called on all of his fellow priests to continue supporting and strengthening one another, so they may continue to celebrate God’s love and help reveal it to the world.

“May we be those instruments of God who know His presence and His goodness, who make His presence known to all people,” he said.

## One in the Resurrection

The priests and people prayed for the deceased priests: “May God in His infinite mer-

cy blot out all of their offenses, establishing them in light and peace, together with the company of all the saints to sing the heavenly Liturgy.”

They also prayed for more priestly and religious vocations, especially in this diocese, and “that our lives, our preaching and our outreach may serve as inspiration and invitation.”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the priests did not join the bishop in the sanctuary but stood at least six feet from one another in the pews.

They prayed the Eucharistic Prayer together, including the passage: “Remember Your servants, the deceased priests of the Diocese of Jefferson City, whom You have called from this world to Yourself. Grant that they who were united with Your Son in a death like His may also be one with Him in His resurrection.”

After Holy Communion, Father Daniel J. Merz and Monsignor Robert A. Kurwicky took turns reading the names of

priests of the diocese who had died since its founding in 1956.

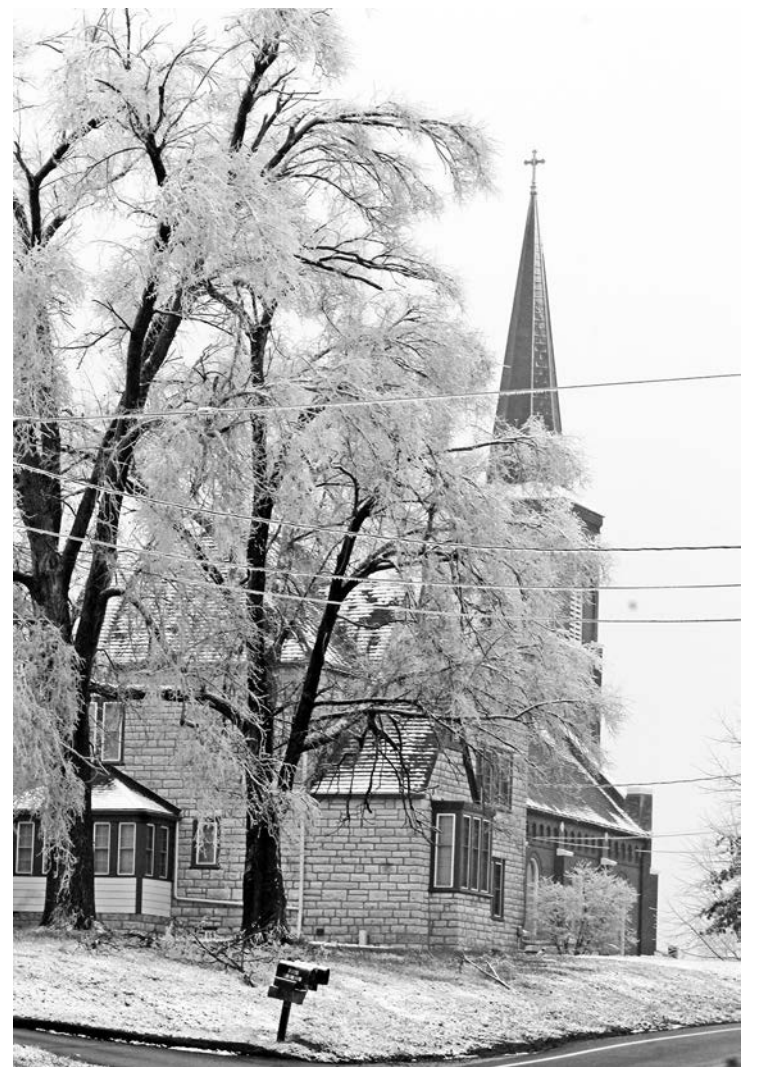
After each group of names, cantors Chris and Laura St. Clair led the singing of a prayer of saintly intercession: “Receive their souls, O holy ones. Present them now to God Most High.”

The priests and people then chanted in Latin an ancient funeral hymn, which means in English: “May the angels lead you into Paradise. May your arrival be greeted by the martyrs, and may they lead you into the Holy City, Jerusalem. May choirs of angels sing to you, and with Lazarus, who was once a beggar, may you have eternal rest.”

At the end of Mass, the priests processed out of the church while chanting the “*Salve Regina*” — “Hail, Holy Queen” — which they traditionally sing during Funeral Masses for fellow priests.

Afterward, they shared a meal and fellowship in the parish gathering space, at a safe distance from one another.

## Dazzling white



**Snow and ice cover a tree near St. Francis Xavier Church in Taos on Jan. 2.** — Photo by Jay Nies

## ST. JOSEPH

From page 1

anniversary of that declaration by calling for an entire year dedicated to St. Joseph.

St. Joseph.

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight accordingly approved a slate of monthly themes for the diocese's observance of the Year of St. Joseph:

•**January:** those working to support their families — especially those seeking work

•**February:** family as the domestic Church

•**March:** St. Joseph's primary feast day March 19; protector of children

•**April:** Protector of the vulnerable; patron saint of foster parents

•**May:** Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1

•**June:** Father's Day on June 20

•**July:** Patron of travelers

•**August:** St. Joseph as the first teacher of Jesus (along with Mary); return to school

•**September:** highlighting men's ministries in the diocese

•**October:** Patron of immigrants

•**November:** Patron of a happy death (All Souls Day), adoptive fathers and stepdads

•**December:** St. Joseph proclaimed Patron of the Universal Church on Dec. 8, 1870

The diocesan communication team will help bring light to each of these monthly themes through various communication channels, including social media, the diocesan and parish websites and *The Catholic Missourian*.

### Hope and gratitude

In his Christmas homilies, Bishop McKnight encouraged the faithful to be like St. Joseph by overcoming any fear of their calling from God.

The bishop said the Mystery of Christmas has the power to lift people up and change their lives, especially at times like these in which a pandemic that has brought heartbreak and loneliness to many.

"Because of the severe isolation, some of us are tempted to depression, despair and discouragement," he said. "In these dark times, Christmas restores our sense of hope and our sense of gratitude."

The bishop cited as an ex-

ample how the marriage of Joseph and Mary was nearly broken before Jesus's birth, for Joseph at first could not understand what was happening.

God provided the necessary inspiration.

"Their plans and their dreams were for the birth of the child," the bishop stated.

Even the frustrating circumstances the couple endured in Bethlehem resulted in "the most beautiful birth ever."

"Who is not moved by the simple and humble manger scene, which depicts so eloquently God reaching as far down as possible in order to raise us up?" Bishop McKnight asked.

He said St. Joseph's trepidation was real and well placed.

"He had almost given up because of Mary's pregnancy," the bishop noted. "He had a reverential fear for the great mystery of her child, not anger for Mary being pregnant, as is sometimes thought."

But the angel visited Joseph in a dream and said, "Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home."

The angel was actually urging him not to be afraid of his own calling from God — "his appointed task as son of David, spouse of the Virgin, and father to Jesus," the bishop said.

As a devout Jew, Joseph knew the messianic sign that had been prophesied by Isaiah: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a Son, and they shall name Him Emmanuel," (Isaiah 7:14).

"Now, seeing Mary as both virgin and mother, he stands before the fulfillment of that prophecy," said Bishop McKnight. "He feels his own unworthiness, and holy fear overcomes him."

The angel keeps Joseph from allowing that laudable reverence to detour him from his appointed task.

"And so, the mystery of Christmas changed Joseph into SAINT Joseph, Husband of Mary and Foster Father of Jesus!" the bishop stated.



This image of St. Joseph and the child Jesus adorns the reredos above the Altar of Answered Prayers in the Shrine of St. Joseph in St. Louis.

— Photo from the Shrine of St. Joseph Facebook page

In like fashion, as God's people continue to face unprecedented challenges together in the Church, in this country, within families and in this time of pandemic, "we have the message of the angels, reminding us to be not afraid, for God is always with us," said Bishop McKnight.

"In this special year devoted to St. Joseph, may we follow his saintly example of humble trust and confidence in the merciful providence of God," he exhorted.

### Prayer and action

The Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience also issued a decree Dec. 8 stating that plenary indulgences will be granted to Catholics not only through prayer and penance, but also through acts of justice, charity and piety dedicated to the foster father of Jesus.

By God's grace, participation in a prayer or action that has an indulgence attached to it brings about the necessary restoration and reparation without the suffering that would normally accompany it.

It frees a person from the punishment their sinfulness warrants as it is a remission of the temporal punishment a person is due for sins that have been forgiven.

Among the conditions for receiving an indulgence are a spirit detached from sin, receiving sacramental confession as soon as possible, receiving

is the law of mercy."

"Therefore, those who, following the example of St. Joseph, will perform a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, will also be able to obtain the gift of the plenary indulgence," it said.


Indulgences will also be granted to families and engaged couples who pray the Rosary together and thus imitate the "same climate of communion, love and prayer lived in the Holy Family."

Other acts of devotion include entrusting one's daily activities and prayers for dignified em-

ployment to St. Joseph, reciting the litany or any "legitimately approved" prayer to St. Joseph.

During this time of pandemic, the Apostolic Penitentiary also decreed that special indulgences will be granted to the elderly, the sick and all those who "for legitimate reasons are prevented from leaving their home" by "reciting an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph and commit to fulfilling the conditions as soon as possible."

*Junno Arocho Esteves and Carol Glatz of Catholic News Service contributed to this report.*



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By Father Don Antweiler

### ACROSS

1. This puzzle includes a \_\_\_\_ of the interesting and/or notable persons buried in Catholic places in Mo.
4. Speaking Eagle was a Nez Perce Indian warrior who with 3 others traveled 2,000 miles from Idaho to meet with explorer Wm. Clark (of Lewis & Clark fame) in St. Louis. They wanted to know about \_\_\_\_\_. He died a few weeks later receiving Catholic Last Rites and was buried in 1831 in Calvary Cem. in St. Louis along with fellow warrior Black Eagle. They rest beneath the Nez Perce monument which marks many unknown graves of native Ams. (2 wds.)
10. "For this \_\_\_\_\_, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife..." (Matthew 19:5).
13. The gar, a common fish in Mo., goes back 300 millions ago (!). It saw the dinosaurs evolve, flourish and go extinct. Their amazing survival might be due to their ability to rise to the surface and gulp \_\_\_\_\_ into a special bladder, like a primitive lung. Thus they could survive in oxygen-deprived waters in which other fish could not.
14. Abbr. for each.
15. "Ignorance or \_\_\_\_\_ concerning invalidating or incapacitating laws does not prevent the effect of those laws," —*Code of Canon Law*, Canon #15.
16. Mo. has a reputation as a very \_\_\_\_\_-life State.
17. "A word out of season may \_\_\_\_\_ a whole lifetime," — Greek proverb.
18. "Midnight at the \_\_\_\_\_"; 1973 hit song by Maria Muldaur; nominated for Record of the Year and Song of the Year.
20. "Notice the ravens: they have neither storehouse nor \_\_\_\_\_, yet God feeds them," (Luke 12:24).
21. Most Rev. Peter Richard Kenrick became the first Catholic Archbishop west of the Mississippi. He founded Calvary Cem. (one of the largest in the country) from a farm he himself bought. He was a Bishop at the First Vatican \_\_\_\_\_ in 1869 which defined papal infallibility. He was Archbishop of the vast St. Louis Archdiocese for an unprecedented 52 years. The major diocesan seminary is named for him. He died in 1896 and is buried in the cemetery he founded.
23. When it \_\_\_\_\_, it pours.
24. 60 mins.
25. With #33 DOWN, a border city on the Rio Grande.
26. To end or terminate, as a mission, project or the life of a child in the womb.
27. Gene Clark was an innovative folk-rock singer-songwriter, in the vanguard of popular music during much of his \_\_\_\_\_. He was with the New Christy Minstrels and a founding member & main songwriter of The Byrds. He died in 1991 and is buried in St. Andrew Cath. Cem. in Tipton, Mo.
30. The Cure of \_\_\_\_\_ is the patron saint of diocesan priests.
32. Minimum goal for a golfer.
33. Prefix for cure or cab.
35. Movie house.
38. Letters for the Univ. of Mo. campus in Columbia, Mo.
39. The Jefferson Landing State Historic Site in Jefferson City preserves a rare Mo. River landing. The centerpiece of the landing is the 1839 stone \_\_\_\_\_ Bldg., which earned a reputation as a meeting place for rivermen & legislators. It was added to the Nat. Register of Historic Places in 1969 and was the State's official bicentennial project in 1974.
41. St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, first female saint west of the Mississippi, was a Sister of the \_\_\_\_\_ Heart. From France, she founded the Am. branch of that order in St. Charles, Mo. She est'bd. a convent & Catholic Academy for young women in a log cabin, the first free school west of the Mississippi. She always felt a special mission & passion for ministry to African Ams. and native Ams., esp. the Potawatomi. Canonized by St. John Paul II in 1988, she is buried in a shrine on the convent grounds in St. Charles, Mo.
43. Comparative suffix.
44. Appropriate.
45. Gastineau Log Homes in New Bloomfield, north of Holts Summit, is the world's largest producer of precut \_\_\_\_\_ log homes; product has been used to build homes in all 50 States & 11 other nations around the world.
46. The Empire State (abbr.).

### DOWN

1. The oldest cemetery in our State is the St. Genevieve Mem. Cem., founded in 1787. Most of its grave markers (wooden crosses) are gone and there are many unknown graves. It is known that buried there are the earliest \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic settlers; African Ams, both slave and free; at least 50 Am. Indians. There are at least 3,500 graves, & possibly hundreds more. The oldest grave is that of Louis Le Clere who was buried in 1796, possibly the oldest known burial in the State.
2. Suffix for auction and profit.
3. Mexico, Mo. was a major stop in the middle 1830s for settlers headed for the southwest, esp. Texas. Orig. called New Mexico, "New" was dropped from the town's name after the U.S. Mexican \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Elvis's Graceland State (abbr.).
5. "Even before the \_\_\_\_\_ of corn had reached their full growth, the squirrels completely ruined the cornrows next to the woods unless they were decimated every day by the gun," — *Longer Than a Man's Lifetime in Mo.*, by Gert Goebel, memoirs of a German immigrant to Mo., 1830s-1880s. Ch. 17: "The Squirrel as a Plague of the Land."
6. Short life story.
7. Prefix for regular or responsible.
8. Live and \_\_\_\_\_ or crash and burn.
9. He \_\_\_\_\_ his wings tomorrow if he passes his solo flight.
11. Nickname for an Okie.
12. Prophecy or divine utterance; see Numbers 23:7.
16. Traditionally St. James the Apostle made it to Spain where the Virgin Mary appeared to him on a pillar. She is known there in Saragossa, Spain as Maria del \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Tropical rum cocktail.
19. Juan's yes.
20. "...they met a magician named \_\_\_\_\_-Jesus who was a Jewish false prophet," (Acts 13:6).
22. A killer whale.
23. Most Rev. Michael Francis McAuliffe, a priest of the Dio. of Kansas City, Mo., was ordained the 2nd Bishop of Jefferson City, Mo. in 1969. He encouraged Catholic ed., the permanent diaconate, est'bd. the Dio. Pastoral Council. He was known for promoting the \_\_\_\_\_ of women in the Church. He died in 2006, a bishop for 36 years. He chose to be buried in the priest's section of Resurrection Cem. in Jefferson City.
28. St. Louis has a big one.
29. In Mo., there are several managed deer hunts specifically for the disabled. The Mark Twain Lake hunt near Monroe City, begun in 1988, is the longest running \_\_\_\_\_ of its kind in the State. Managed disability hunts in Mo. serve over 200 hunters annually.
31. "Ezra had set his heart on the \_\_\_\_\_ and practice of the law of the Lord," (Ezra 7:10).
32. "The dead were really buried too soon. A person was already considered dead if he looked \_\_\_\_\_ and no longer moved. I have heard people say that the deceased had not looked right at the funeral but no one had dared to interrupt the funeral proceedings. It's just possible an unfortunate person was buried alive," — *Longer Than a Man's Lifetime in Mo.*, by Gert Goebel, Ch. 12: "The Americans as Neighbors."
33. With #25 ACROSS, a border city on the Rio Grande.
34. Mo.'s history of \_\_\_\_\_ decoy production is primarily defined by a few factories, most in the Jeff. City area. One old decoy factory building still exists there today as a Fraternal Order of Eagles club.
36. \_\_\_\_\_ little teapot, short and stout, here is my handle, here is my spout...(2 wds.)
37. Rip Van Winkle took a long one.
38. "There exist also sinful inequalities that affect millions of \_\_\_\_\_ and women. These are in open contradiction of the Gospel," — *Catechism of the Cath. Church*, #1938.
40. Mount Hood is a volcano in this State (abbr.).
42. The original 12-step program.

ANSWERS on page 19



# 10 COUNTIES

From page 1

all parishes and missions in the diocese at their current level, doing so would not be prudent in light of demographic shifts and other factors.

“How the Church is present in these 10 counties will change,” he stated. “Indeed, it must change in order for the Church to continue to be present in these 10 counties.”

Since 2002, parishes’ self-reporting of Mass attendance has shown a nearly 30-percent decrease in Catholics meeting their Sunday obligation in the diocese.

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), a Catholic research agency, has seen Catholics self-reporting that they attend Mass every week decline from 30.8 percent to 21.1 percent in the past two decades.

Bishop McKnight pointed out that the sharp decline in the number of available priests as well as in the number of some parishes’ communicants and in the physical condition of several church properties is not unique to this diocese.

“From coast to coast, dioceses large and small are wrestling with these issues,” he said.

## Questions and answers

Renee Hanrahan, who has conducted several parish-needs assessments in her home Diocese of Wichita, Kansas, crafted the 14-question survey and interpreted the data.

Adult members of the parishes and missions in Boonville, Bourbon, Brunswick, Clarksville, Crocker, Cuba, Dixon, Fayette, Glasgow, Hurricane Branch, Indian Creek, Indian Grove, Louisiana, Marshall, Monroe City, Perry, Pilot Grove, Richland, Rolla, Rosati, Salisbury, Slater, St. Clement, St. James, St. Robert, Steelville, Sweet Springs and Wien participated in the survey.

Questions focused on the

level of growth and engagement in their parish, preferred models of combination and

## Something to say

Postcards, e-mails, pulpit announcements and articles in *The Catholic Missourian* invited parishioners in the 10 counties to go online last September and answer the survey questions.

Paper copies of the survey were made available to people without internet access and in Spanish to people who understand that language better.

Survey respondents were given the option of leaving open-ended comments. More than 1,300 people did so.

Most of those comments focused on the status and structure of individual parishes.

“However, 20 percent focused on the importance of having Catholic schools to instill religious values and the importance of religious vocations,” said Mrs. Hanrahan.

Other comments pertained to the need to connect better with young people who may no longer participate in PSR and to teens and young adults who have fallen away as they leave high school.

“Several respondents stressed the positive impact that having a Newman Center on college campuses has for students in growing their spiritual life,” said Mrs. Hanrahan.

A few respondents raised the issue of co-responsibility, saying it is important for pastors to allow laypeople “to give them a helping hand to lighten their load,” she said.

Many respondents said they were grateful to be asked for their opinion.

## Things in common

In analyzing the responses, Mrs. Hanrahan found stark contrasts between perceptions and the reality of parish numbers and population figures.

“A lot of people suggested that their parish is growing, but the census data is telling us

otherwise,” she said.

While the overall population in the diocese has grown slightly in the past 20 years, the Catholic element of that population has declined overall from 10.26 percent to under 8 percent. And for some of the communities in the 10 counties, the decline is even more significant.

Several distinct themes permeate the responses.

For instance, many respondents believe parishes with schools with increasing enrollment should have resident pastors.

Of the nine Catholic schools in the 10 counties, St. Peter School in Marshall, St. Joseph School in Pilot Grove, St. Joseph School in Salisbury and Holy Rosary School in Monroe City have increased enrollment. St. Patrick School in Rolla is holding steady.

Many respondents wrote of the role viable parishes have in helping sustain the health and success of smaller communities — all the more so if the parish maintains a Catholic school.

Common concerns included “the elderly and families with small children if local parishes are closed, as many feel these populations won’t drive far to attend Mass or other parish activities, especially during winter months,” said Mrs. Hanrahan.

Another common theme included figuring out which parish administrative tasks could be taken up by qualified deacons or laypeople, freeing up priests more for spiritual and sacramental duties.

A significant number expressed concerns about the long-term effects the COVID

pandemic will have on parish participation in the future.

## Mashed potatoes

Monsignor Robert A. Kurwicky, vicar general for the diocese and pastor of St. Michael Parish in Russellville, is the bishop’s liaison to the 10 County Initiative.

From both the field and central command, he sees firsthand the dilemma vexing bishops throughout most of North America.

“We can wish we had more priests or that they were younger or what have you,” he said. “But the fact is, this is what we have right now.”

“And we have to use them in the best way possible for the building up of the Kingdom of God without ruining their health, so they can continue to minister in the future,” he stated.

There are currently 63 priests in active ministry in the Jefferson City diocese.

Five of them will be eligible to retire within the next five years. Another 10 will be eligible within the five years after that.

Of the 63, 36 will be retired or eligible for retirement in 20 years.

Fifteen of the 63 are priests from dioceses all over the world who are serving here temporarily.

The diocese currently has seven seminarians in various stages of priestly formation, with no guarantee that all will be ordained.

“We cannot deny the facts,” said Mrs. Korsmeyer. “Take all the emotion away, and that is

See PROCESS, page 23



The 10 shaded counties on this map of the Jefferson City diocese have been part of a process of gathering input from parishioners on options for staffing parishes in light of diminished Mass attendance and a steep decline in the number of priests.

collaboration with neighboring parishes, the number of recent priestly, diaconal and religious vocations from each parish, and the respondent’s own level of involvement.

Mrs. Hanrahan also reviewed U.S. Census figures for each county to find population trends.

She submitted reports and statistical analysis by parish and by county.

Local pastors and parish representatives have reviewed the reports and hammered out proposals for making the best use of fewer available priests to serve each county.

Dec. 31 was the deadline for submitting those proposals.

Working with his priest advisors on the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and his lay advisors on the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Bishop McKnight intends to give clear direction to the Priest Personnel Board when it begins its deliberations this month.

Most changes in status for parishes and missions will likely coincide with the priest assignments that will take effect July 1.

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## Things To Do

### Fundraisers & Social Events

Jan. 12

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate School "Give Back" night, 5-9 pm, Bellacino's Pizza & Grinders

Jan. 16

Linn, St. George Parish "Taste of Italy" drive-thru dinner, 4-8 pm, for details visit "StGeorgeHomeSchoolAssn" on Facebook

### Meetings & Conferences

Jan. 8-Jan. 26

Jefferson City, Free nutrition counseling, co-sponsored by Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, Tuesdays 5-6 pm, the LINC,

to register, visit [www.jcparksregistration.com](http://www.jcparksregistration.com) and search "nutrition"

Jan. 13

VIRTUAL, "Copyright Compliance: What you need to know," lunch & learn presented by the Jefferson City diocese's chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians in conjunction with OneLicense.net, for info email [npmjeffcitydio@gmail.com](mailto:npmjeffcitydio@gmail.com)

### Youth & Young Adults

Jan. 13

Sedalia, Freshman orientation for inquiring families and students who will be freshmen in the 2021-2022 school year, 5:30-7:30 pm, Sacred Heart School

Feb. 16-18

Sedalia, Kindergarten readiness screenings for children who will be 5 years old by July 31, 2021, Sacred Heart School, call 660-827-3800 to schedule an appointment

### Health & Wellness

Jan. 13

St. Robert, Blood drive, 2-6 pm, St. Robert Bellarmine fellowship hall gym

Jan. 19

Hermitage, Blood drive, noon-5 pm, St. Bernadette parish center

Jan. 24

Columbia, Blood drive, 8 am-1 pm, St. Thomas More Newman Center MPR

## COVID-19 and Contemplative Outreach

By Jim Penfold

Contemplative Outreach of Central Missouri, often known as COCEMO, is an organization that began activities seven years ago within the Diocese of Jefferson City.

Its purpose is to promote contemplative prayer practices. COCEMO does this through retreats, days of recollection and guidance in the method of Centering Prayer, also known as the prayer of silence or the prayer of consent, prayer without words.

COCEMO was started by Father Matthew Flatley, now pastor of Holy Family Parish in Hannibal and St. Joseph Parish in Palmyra. Fr. Flatley was aided by a small group of lay leaders.

Prior to the formation of COCEMO, Precious Blood Sister Joanne Rataj, now deceased, was involved in encouraging and supporting Centering Prayer groups in central Missouri.

During the past 10 months, COCEMO leadership has cancelled a Silent Saturday and two retreats and has not presented an in-person Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop because of concerns about COVID-19 and risks associated with indoor gatherings.

COCEMO is anticipating and planning for times when in-person gatherings are again safe.

In the meantime, the organization and its members are using available technology to keep

prayer groups in regular contact.

The organization has presented a Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop via Zoom video and audio conferencing.

The prayer group at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Columbia has resumed its monthly meetings via Zoom.

The monthly prayer group at Broadway Community Christian Church in Columbia has been meeting via Zoom.

With the cooperation and encouragement of Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Ozark, COCEMO used Zoom to present the four-part Centering Prayer Introductory Workshop on consecutive Thursdays in September.

### What is Centering Prayer?

Centering Prayer is a contemporary form of prayer based on practices of very early Christians from the desert communities and the monastic and scholastic periods.

It does not replace other forms of prayer; rather it casts new light and meaning on them.

Centering prayer is designed to lead to a renewal of the Christian contemplative tradition. It is based on the format Jesus suggested in Matthew 6:6: "... When you pray, enter your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you."

In Centering Prayer, a per-

son consents to God's activity within them. Centering Prayer helps the person become more aware and welcoming of the Divine Indwelling.

Regular practice of Centering Prayer can result in a person becoming less anxious and angry, calmer, more patient and accepting of issues and worries of daily life.

### Getting connected

Centering Prayer Introductory Workshops via Zoom are available through COCEMO.

The workshops can be presented to churches, other groups and individuals. On-line via Zoom, the workshop can be presented in a single session lasting about three hours, or in two or three separate sessions.

For individuals expressing interest, COCEMO can gather them into a virtual group based on availability and scheduling needs.

COCEMO is also planning a daylong retreat via Zoom in February 2021.

Follow COCEMO and its sponsored activities at [cocemo.org](http://cocemo.org) or on Facebook at "Contemplative Outreach of Central Missouri."

For specific information about Centering Prayer Workshops, email [cocemowrkshp@gmail.com](mailto:cocemowrkshp@gmail.com), or call or text 573-645-0406. If calling, please leave a voice message.

## Despite hardships, pope says there is much for which to be thankful

Catholic News Service

Vatican City

The notable absence of Pope Francis at the final liturgical celebration of 2020 in St. Peter's Basilica capped off a difficult year for the Vatican and for the world.

Yet Pope Francis, in remarks read by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, urged people to find meaning in the pandemic.

The pope said giving thanks to God after such a year may

seem "forced, almost jarring" especially for those who have lost loved ones, have fallen ill or have lost their jobs.

God, he stated, is not someone "Who would sacrifice human beings for a grand design," but instead a compassionate and paternal shepherd. "God is a shepherd, and what shepherd would give up even one sheep, thinking that in the meantime he has many others left? No, this cynical and ruthless god does not exist," the pope stated.

## PALMYRA

From page 5

Because the distribution takes place at the beginning of Christmas break, St. Joseph parishioner Andrea Barnes, who is a teacher in Hannibal, brings her sons to help out each year.

"I have a fifth-grader and a ninth-grader, and I want them to realize that they are blessed and they have a lot to be thankful for and that there are children who are not as fortunate as they are," she stated.

"I want them to see that there is a need in this community and we can be the presence of Jesus to people," she said.

Mrs. Barnes hopes the experience opened her sons' eyes and helped them see what Jesus sees.

"We're all human, and we all want to be loved, and Jesus tells us to love one another," she said. "So it's not just about us. And you find that sometimes, it's more fun to give than to receive."

She said Palmyra and the surrounding communities are small and are accustomed to stepping up to help whenever there's a need — "whether they're parishioners or not."

"That's what ties us together — a willingness to step up and help your neighbor," she stated. "We are a part of the same community."

### "Seeing Jesus"

Mrs. Fohey said God made Himself abundantly known throughout distribution day.

"He was everywhere — in the receivers, the givers, the

workers, the ministers, the poor," she said.

"When you look at someone's eyes when they're in need for this year and they have tears in their eyes and they're overwhelmed, that's where you see Jesus at that time," she said.

She recalled how last year, a mother of five came to pick up her family's gifts. She did not have a car and had no way to bring everything home.

"Every single volunteer stopped what we were doing, picked up her gifts and walked with her to her house," said Mrs. Fohey.

"She stood inside her door, and we handed her gifts to her," she recalled. "That was a moment of such glory. She and the workers and volunteers had tears in their eyes."

Another local congregation will take the baton and coordinate the 2021 Christmas gift distribution.

"But our facility — the location and the way it's set up works really well," said Mrs. Fohey. "So we might continue to have the distribution center here, but under new leadership."

The whole experience got Mrs. Barnes thinking about the Corporal Works of Mercy — "feeding the hungry and helping people in need, showing love to God and your neighbor, and treating people as you would want to be treated."

"That is what the 'Adopt a Child' is," she said.

## Anniversaries

### Boonville, Ss. Peter & Paul

Ralph & Milly Rapp, 68 years  
 Dean & Marie Oerly, 66 years  
 Lyndel & Marilyn Adkins, 64 years  
 Gene & Marjorie Walje, 53 years  
 Ron & Rita Rapp, 44 years  
 Rusty & Christy Linhart, 43 years  
 Hoke & Christie Eichelberger, 42 years  
 Barry & Patty Price, 41 years  
 Paul & Janet Milne, 37 years  
 Warren & Debbie Kraus, 35 years  
 Chuck & Genola Hodge, 29 years

### Brinktown, Holy Guardian Angels

Tim & Dana Simmons, 24 years

### Jonesburg, St. Patrick

Bob & Pat Geisz, 65 years  
 Ken & Laura Hocke, 26 years  
 Chad & Linda Stewart, 19 years

### Kahoka, St. Michael

Adrian & Mary Rose Meierotto, 49 years

### Kirkville, Mary Immaculate

Larry & Madonna Sorrell, 63 years  
 Clayton & Janet Dillavou, 57 years

### Lake Ozark, Our Lady of the Lake

Deacon Paul & Marilee Poulter, 53 years

### Marceline, St. Bonaventure

Reid & Melinda Fessler, 30 years

### Marshall, St. Peter

Percy & Eleanor Willis, 60 years

### Martinsburg, St. Joseph

Dale & Donna Isgrig, 50 years  
 Mike & Vicky Duenke, 28 years

### Milan, St. Mary

Bill & Barb Phillips, 54 years

### Mokane, St. Jude Thaddeus

Kevin & Mary McDonald, 28 years

### Montgomery City, Immaculate Conception

Jeff & Julie Porter, 36 years  
 Dion & Cindy Thurman, 29 years  
 John & Tudie Simpson, 28 years  
 Matt & Karen Milner, 27 years  
 Greg & Kate Healy, 10 years

### Palmyra, St. Joseph

Grant & Joyce Hess, 69 years  
 W.T. & Cynthia Johnson, 45 years  
 Jeff & Nancy Keim, 28 years

### Russellville, St. Michael

John & June Riegel, 48 years  
 Galen & Debbie Meller, 45 years  
 Rodney & Lucy Schulte, 36 years

### St. Patrick, Shrine of St. Patrick

Earl & Carol Huston, 48 years

### Vienna, Visitation

Mick & Debbie Byrd, 41 years  
 Ron & Judy Mitchell, 41 years

### Wien, St. Mary of the Angels

Kenny & Connie Clark, 10 years

## Baptisms

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **August Bunten, Leona Huckla**

Frankenstein, Our Lady Help of Christians — **Granger Michael Starke**, son of Brian & Michelle Starke

Hermann, St. George — **Tanner Everett Heying**, son of Shaun & Taylor Heying

Jefferson City, Cathedral of St. Joseph — **Elizabeth Grace Hildreth**, daughter of Aaron & Lauren Hildreth; **Anita Rose Wiskirchen**, daughter of Keyvn & Ashley Wiskirchen

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Logan Raven Blume**, son of Joe & Destiny Blume; **Ryan Joseph Mullen**, son of Richard & Alicea Mullen

Kirkville, Mary Immaculate — **Eva Roselyn Costello**, daughter of Joe & Ashlea Costello

Moberly, St. Pius X — **Ripp Christopher Meyer**, son of Christopher & Abby Meyer

Mokane, St. Jude Thaddeus — **Camille Marie Lauf**, daughter of Justin & Kelsey Lauf

Rich Fountain, Sacred Heart — **William Gerhard Mebruer**, son of Brandon & Samantha Mebruer; **Joscelin Jade Scheulen**, daughter of Jeff & Catherine Scheulen

Salisbury, St. Joseph — **Boebe Tate Fuemmeler**, son of Derek & Gina Fuemmeler; **Kimber Jean Meissen**, daughter of Timothy & Devon Meissen

## Birthdays

Argyle, St. Aloysius — **Rita Kampeter**, her 100th on Jan. 9

Mexico, St. Brendan — **Edith Healy**, her 101st

St. Martins, St. Martin — **Mary Ann Holzer**, her 90th on Jan. 8

## Marriages

Freeburg, Holy Family — **Cara Falter & Alan Dickneite**

Jefferson City, Cathedral of St. Joseph — **Julianne Stockbauer & Adam Suarez**

Rich Fountain, Sacred Heart — **Caley Kramer & Clayton Libbert**

## Elections

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **Brett Geger**, Parish Pastoral Council member

Rolla, St. Patrick — **Trisha Butz, Pat Emmett, Connie Shanks**, Parish Pastoral Council members

## Deaths

Bonnots Mill, St. Louis of France — **Shirley Eichholz**

California, Annunciation — **Juan Carlos Aquado Vasquez, Rose L. Weingartner**

Canton, St. Joseph — **Dorothy Ellison**

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **Dr. Richard Wolken**

Cuba, Holy Cross — **Carrick Wigger III**

Freeburg, Holy Family — **James M. Dyke**

Fulton, St. Peter — **Doris A. Crump, Lucille L. McGrath**

Hermann, St. George — **Willard "Wiff" Kotthoff**

Holts Summit, St. Andrew — **James Evers, Julie A. Hentges**

Jefferson City, Cathedral of St. Joseph — **Margaret D. Loethen, Norbert H. Luebbering, Vernon L. Nesheim**

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Pauline L. Gentges**

Jefferson City, St. Peter — **Henry V. Dahl, Dr. Richard F. Emslander**

Lake Ozark, Our Lady of the Lake — **Francisco Garcia-Guzman**

Laurie, St. Patrick — **Michael Fees, Donna Hutton, Raymond M. Hutton, Theresa L. Tanner**

Linn, St. George — **Jerry R. Nilges**

Loose Creek, Immaculate Conception — **Virgil "Butch" F. Mengwasser**

Marceline, St. Bonaventure — **Sandy Hoskins**

Monroe City, Holy Rosary — **James Blair, William Pfanner, Velma Price**

Palmyra, St. Joseph — **Don Krekemeyer, David Miles**

Rhineland, Church of the Risen Savior — **Leo Pottebaum**

Rolla, St. Patrick — **Mary A. Krause**

St. Elizabeth, St. Lawrence — **Martha L. Bax**

St. Martins, St. Martin — **Juliann Rockers, Brian W. Smith**

St. Robert, St. Robert Bellarmine — **Linda Flanagan, Rosemary Kremer**

St. Thomas, St. Thomas the Apostle — **Celeste E. Suthoff**

Taos, St. Francis Xavier — **Ruth J. Schaefer**

Tipton, St. Andrew — **Richard J. Cotriss, Robert Schuster**

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus — **Harry W. Kliethermes**

Westphalia, St. Joseph — **Mary L. Weber**

Wien, St. Mary of the Angels — **Anna A. Kunkel, David H. Wilson**

## Names for the People Page

Information for the People Page comes from parish correspondents and individual parishioners, as well as bulletins and newspapers. Submissions for anniversaries (10 years or more), birthdays (90 years or more), and baptisms, deaths, marriages and initiations of local parishioners may be e-mailed to [editor@diojeffcity.org](mailto:editor@diojeffcity.org); faxed to 573-635-2286; or mailed to: *The Catholic Missourian*, 2207 West Main Street, Jefferson City, MO 65109-0914.

## Crossword puzzle answers

A	N	K	V	L	A	R	E
D	E	R	C	V	S	N	A
U	M	U	V	M	E	N	I
J	I	E	A	R	V	A	P
S	R	L	R	E	R	A	V
L	R	O	B	E	L	R	H
S	N	I	V	R	T	I	C
N	R	V	B	S	I	S	A
R	V	M	O	R	P	R	R
V	E	R	I	V	N	O	S
E	I	B	H	T	W	E	F

## SUFFERING

From page 9

care staff who opened their doors to all who needed them. I saw hope in the immigrant farmers working through clouds of smoke to make sure we had fresh fruit and vegetables on our tables. I saw hope in grocery store workers who put themselves at risk so that we could have food and other necessities at home.

I saw courage in the marchers who risked it all so that Black voices would finally be heard. I saw strength in the immigration advocates and attorneys who worked to reunite separated families. I saw life in all those who chose selflessness this year.

As I think about this Christmas season, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude to all who lived through 2020 with great bravery and humility. I once read that love is a balm for our suffering. May we all choose to be love for others.

Mother Mary, cover us with your mantle and bring us healing in 2021.

*Edith Avila Olea works in immigrant advocacy. The 2015 winner of the Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award, she holds a master's degree in public policy and a bachelor's degree in organizational communication.*



## Honorable honor guard



**LEFT:** Boy Scout Troop 29 of St. Bernadette Parish lead the Heritage Christmas Parade as the official Honor Guard.

**RIGHT:** Pre-schoolers from St. Joseph School in Salisbury sing carols to a resident of a nursing home on Dec. 17. Having teamed up with AirLink Broadband for an Advent Service project, the children collected money and purchased every resident of Bristol Manor and Chariton Park a gift bag full of goodies, including lotion, shampoo and conditioner, lip balm, a blanket, non-skid socks, candy and chips. Each employee received a soda, compliments of R&R grocery store, a candy bar, compliments of The Bottle, and a gift certificate to R&R. Along with the gift bags, they were able to provide both facilities with a large basket full of games to share. They also had enough employee gifts to provide the Chariton County Ambulance District and Police Department in Salisbury with a little Christmas cheer!

## A pre-school project in Salisbury



— Photo from the St. Joseph School-Salisbury Facebook page



## Red-letter day

Second- and third-graders at Visitation Inter-Parish School in Vienna spell out the meaning of Christmas on Dec. 17, during their last school Mass of 2020, accompanied by their home-room teacher, Sammie Elliott.

## Helping out around church



For a December service project, members of the high school youth group of St. Peter Parish in Marshall bought and laid mulch around trees on the parish grounds, then wrote greetings to parishioners who are homebound.

— Photo by Carol Wolfe

## Baby shower for Jesus



Students of St. Joseph Cathedral School in Jefferson City gather up the items collected for the Cathedral parish's and school's annual "Baby Shower for Baby Jesus," to benefit the residents of the St. Raymond's Society, which provides housing for mothers of pre-born and newborn babies in Jefferson City and Columbia. "This collection keeps our small residents in diapers for the whole year!" the organization stated.

— Photo from the St. Raymond's Society Facebook page

# Peter tells Cornelius about Jesus

By Jennifer Ficaglia  
Catholic News Service

A devout, God-fearing centurion named Cornelius lived in Caesarea.

One day, Cornelius saw an angel of God in a vision. The angel told him to send some men to Joppa to summon Peter, who was staying there.

The next day, as Cornelius' friends neared Joppa, Peter also had a vision.

He saw a large sheet being lowered to the ground. In it were all the creatures of the earth.

He heard a voice telling him to kill and eat the animals.

"Certainly not, sir," Peter said. "For never have I eaten anything profane and unclean."

"What God has made clean, you are not to call profane,"



the voice said.

As Peter wondered what the vision meant, Cornelius' friends arrived.

The Holy Spirit told Peter to accompany the men without

hesitation. So Peter welcomed the men, showed them hospitality and left with them the next day.

A day later, Peter and the men arrived in Caesarea. Cor-

nelius was expecting them, so he had invited his family and close friends to be there.

"You know that it is unlawful for a Jewish man to associate with, or visit, a gentile, but God has shown me that I should not call any person profane or unclean," Peter told Cornelius and his family and friends. "And that is why I came without objection when sent for."

Cornelius then described his vision.

"Now, therefore, we are all here in the presence of God to listen to all that you have been commanded by the Lord," he said.

Peter looked at those gathered before him.

"In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather,

in every nation, whoever fears Him and acts uprightly is acceptable to Him," he said.

Peter told them about Jesus' life, ministry and death, and how the apostles were commissioned to preach to the people that Jesus is the Messiah.

"To Him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins through His name," he said.

As Peter spoke, the Holy Spirit fell upon the people, and they were baptized in Jesus' name.

### Read more about it...

#### Acts 10

1. What did the angel tell Cornelius to do?
2. Who did Peter say was acceptable to God?

## Bible Accent

In the Gospel of Mark, we read about another time the Holy Spirit descended upon a person.

John the Baptist was preaching in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

This fulfilled a prophesy about the Messiah found in the Book of Isaiah: "Behold, I am sending My messenger ahead of you; Me will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His

paths.'"

People from all around Judea came to be baptized by John in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

"One mightier than I is coming after me," John told them. "I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of His sandals. I have baptized you with water; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

One day, Jesus came to be baptized by John.

When Jesus came out of the water after being baptized,

John saw the heavens being torn open and the Holy Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Jesus.

And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased."

## Essay

Describe a time when you trusted God.

## Saint Spotlight

St. Francis de Sales was born in 1567 in the Duchy of Savoy, which is now France. He studied at Annecy, Paris and Padua, and he was ordained a priest in 1593. For four years, he reconverted Catholics who had become Calvinists and wrote tracts to explain the basics of the faith. He also preached in Paris and wrote two devotional books that are still read today. In 1602, he was named bishop of Geneva and set about reforming and organizing his new diocese. He also founded the Order of the Visitation with his friend, St. Jane Frances de Chantal. St. Francis died in 1622, and we remember him on Jan. 24.



## Puzzle

Unscramble the letters in each word and arrange them to form a quotation from the children's story.

ihm seengisovrf veebslie niss

yoveerne liwl ni vicreee how fo

Sentence:



Answers: him, forgiveness, believes, everyone, will, in, receive, who, sins, everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins.



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## Coach's story not just about basketball but about faith, love, God

*All In: Driven by Passion, Energy and Purpose, by Porter Moser. Loyola Press (Chicago, 2020). 200 pp. \$18.95.*

Reviewed by Brian T. Olszewski  
Catholic News Service

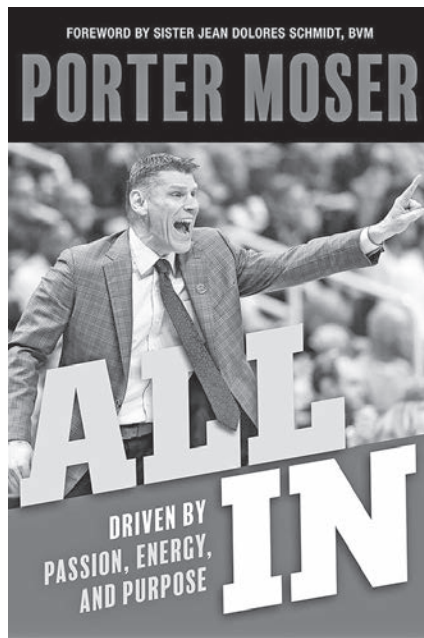
It is not unusual for winning coaches of college and professional sports teams to write books that mix autobiography with a focus on how readers can be successful.

Thus, it is no surprise that Porter Moser, coach of the Loyola University Chicago men's basketball team since 2011, has followed suit.

However, what makes his contribution to the genre unique is that his autobiography/success story includes 34 references to God, 87 mentions of love, 23 for faith and 71 for family.

Oh, he writes a lot about basketball — his “passion” — but it is frequently accompanied by a mention of at least one of those elements.

Moser came to the atten-



tion of a mass audience in 2018 when the Loyola Ramblers made it to the NCAA Final Four. Dramatic wins over higher-seeded teams put him in the national spotlight.

For those looking for words-to-live-by and quote-of-the-day material, Moser provides it:

•“No complaining, no ex-

cuses, no entitlement,” which he terms “our team rule.”

•“Choose faith instead of fear.”

•“How you think is how you feel, how you feel is how you act, and how you act is what defines you.”

•“Humility is a way of life.”





•“Adversity is just another name for opportunity.”

But *All In* is not just a collection of motivational sentences. It is a story of faith. Why did he choose to attend Creighton as a walk-on (i.e., no scholarship) basketball player? “My Catholic faith was — and still is — important to me, so I wanted to go to a school that lived that faith.”

Not getting significant playing time at Creighton for his first season and a half, he prayed to the Holy Spirit for guidance. “I kept saying to myself, ‘God has a plan.’ I had faith that at some point, there would be a breakthrough,” he writes. “I didn’t know what that breakthrough would be or when it would come, but I trusted that God had a plan and that I would eventually figure it out.”

He calls being fired from his second head coaching job at Illinois State in 2007 “the worst day of my life.” Yet he prayed not to feel bitter about what happened. “‘God has a plan,’ I kept repeating to myself,” he

## Movie Ratings

 General Patronage	Gunda (G)
 Adults and Adolescents	The Croods: A New Age (PG)
 Adults	All My Life (PG-13) Half Brothers (PG-13) The Last Vermeer (R) Monster Hunter (PG-13) News of the World (PG-13) Soul (PG)
 Limited Adult Audience	Fatale (R)

Ratings are supplied by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Film and Broadcasting Office. Visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) for current reviews.

writes. “I realized that whatever God’s plan was, it did not include feelings of bitterness, resentment and anger.”

Each chapter concludes with a section titled “Creating Culture” in which he asks four groups of questions. With Moser’s focus on God and faith, it is no surprise that they read like an examination of conscience:

•What do you truly want for your life?

•What does it look like?

•Do you see accountability as an expression of love?

•How did you make a positive impact on someone today, the past week, or the past month?

Every chapter provides inspiration and encouragement, but the chapter titled “Giving Gratitude” is the basis of a spiritual retreat. Consider how many presentations could be based on these sentences: “Gratitude is a faithful way of thinking. I know it’s difficult to be grateful when things get messed up. It takes faith that despite the problems you might be facing, God has a plan.”

Given how Moser has lived and how he encourages others to live, it is fitting that his list

of acknowledgments begins: “First and foremost, I’d like to thank God for the many blessings He has given to me in life, starting with my faith. The strength He has provided me has allowed me to persevere and thrive in my journey. All glory goes to Him.”

Is this book for you? Coaches at various levels will find it useful, as will parents whose children are involved in sports, as well as the children themselves.

Those seeking a good dose of Catholic affirmation and inspiration will not be disappointed. Why?

One need only consider the words of the team’s chaplain, Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt, a Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who became a national celebrity in her own right during the Ramblers’ 2018 finish. She writes in the introduction: “This is easy reading, but it’s deep. Porter writes it that way because it comes from his heart.”

A lot of heart.

*Olszewski is an alumnus of Loyola University Chicago and the editor of The Catholic Virginian, newspaper of the Diocese of Richmond, Virginia.*

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## STOCKINGS

From page 8

“The donors, a lot of them just gave monetary donations,” Andresen explained. “Then we took that and bought all the stuff.”

She added that Schlotterbeck and the Key Club students actually went to the stores to purchase the stocking-stuffer items.

“It was a way for them to kind of figure out budgets,” Schlotterbeck said. “So, we had \$500 and they had to figure out how many of this in this packaging could make enough stockings.

“We had three girls on the shopping crew,” she continued. “And then we have six delivering to the base. They’ll get to go on base and hang them from the doorknobs of their dorms.”

She added that Karl Kramer, the chair of the

Military Affairs Committee, planned to meet them at the base to help with delivery.

Andresen said she was pleased with how the community “stepped up” and gave donations for the project.

Schlotterbeck noted that art students from Sacred Heart and Applewood Christian School made Christmas cards and residents from Cedarhurst made thank you cards to be placed in the stockings.

*Mrs. Bemiss is a reporter for the Sedalia Democrat newspaper (sedaliademocrat.com), which published this article Dec. 18 and gave permission to republish it here.*

## PROCESS

From page 17

the reality we are facing.”

Father Gregory Meystrik likened the situation to a kitchen conundrum.

“It’s almost as if we have 12 people coming over for dinner and only have six potatoes,” said Fr. Meystrik, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Rolla, Immaculate Conception Parish in St. James and St. Anthony Parish in Rosati.

“You can cut them in half, mash them, mix in some onions or fix some mac ’n cheese for the kids,” he said. “But there’s got to be some kind of a change.”

At the same time, the Church must focus on growing by leading people to Christ, together.

“This is an opportunity for us to work on making our parishes into what we consistently hear people say they want their parishes to be,” Mrs. Korsmeyer said. “Lay-people need to be trained in the various roles they’re being called to serve in. We all need to work together to help make our parishes true centers of charity and sanctuaries of mercy.”

They also need to be welcoming communities.

Some may need to “widen their tables” in order to welcome more people from surrounding parishes and missions.

This can include a growing number of Spanish-speaking Catholics. It could also require parishes to encourage divorced and separated Cath-

olics to find a place at that table.

Others may need to reconsider youth ministry so that young people feel that their unique gifts and needs are appreciated, instead of expecting them to take part in programs

**“If we also see this as an opportunity to say ‘yes’ to God and to grow in faith and grow our membership, then some of that fear will go away.”**

**— LeAnn Korsmeyer, diocesan director of parish and charitable services**

that are no longer effective, or to serve the expectations of older parishioners.

“When people feel welcome, they’re going to feel comfortable inviting other people to join them,” said Mrs. Korsmeyer.

### A place for everyone

Mrs. Hanrahan was impressed by how many parishioners “really, really know and love the history” of their parish.

“When you have young people who write in the survey that they moved back to their roots so their kids could have a good Catholic education, you see what an important part that was of them growing into who they are today,” she said.

She suggested that the stalwart leaders in every parish must work harder on drawing more people, especially young people, into the process.

“We need everyone to

know that they belong and that their God-given gifts are essential for carrying out the mission of the Church, which is the mission of Christ,” she said.

Mrs. Korsmeyer said now is a great time to talk about vocations and the role every family plays in promoting them.

“Just being open to God’s will — are we having those conversations?” she asked. “Are we open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our family, introducing the faith to our family in a way that they ask God what His will is for them in their life?”

She acknowledged that fear and sadness often come with times of change.

“But if we also see this as an opportunity to say ‘yes’ to God and to grow in faith and grow our membership, then some of that fear will go away,” she said.

She believes the 10 County Initiative and the concurrent pastoral planning process for parishes and the diocese will bring historic opportunities for collaboration among parishes and communities.

“When our parishes can work together for the greater good, then our whole community is blessed by that,” she said.

### Destination

Fr. Meystrik made a clear distinction between the ministry of priests and the ministry of the Church.

“The Priesthood is impor-

## Daily Readings

### Sunday, Jan 10

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD  
Is. 42:1-4, 6-7  
Ps. 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10  
Acts 10:34-38  
Mk. 1:7-11

### Monday, Jan 11

Heb. 1:1-6  
Ps. 97:1, 2b, 6, 7c, 9  
Mk. 1:14-20

### Tuesday, Jan 12

Heb. 2:5-12  
Ps. 8:2ab, 5, 6-7, 8-9  
Mk. 1:21-28

### Wednesday, Jan 13

St. Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church  
Heb. 2:14-18  
Ps. 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9  
Mk. 1:29-39

### Thursday, Jan 14

Heb. 3:7-14  
Ps. 95:6-7c, 8-9, 10-11  
Mk. 1:40-45

### Friday, Jan 15

Heb. 4:1-5, 11  
Ps. 78:3, 4bc, 6c-7, 8  
Mk. 2:1-12

### Saturday, Jan 16

Heb. 4:12-16  
Ps. 19:8, 9, 10, 15  
Mk. 2:13-17

### The Holy Father’s prayer intentions for January:

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

### Sunday, Jan 17

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
1 Sm. 3:3b-10, 19  
Ps. 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10  
1 Cor. 6:13c-15a, 17-20  
Jn. 1:35-42

### Monday, Jan 18

Heb. 5:1-10  
Ps. 110:1, 2, 3, 4  
Mk. 2:18-22

### Tuesday, Jan 19

Heb. 6:10-20  
Ps. 111:1-2, 4-5, 9, 10c  
Mk. 2:23-28

### Wednesday, Jan 20

St. Fabian, pope and martyr; St. Sebastian, martyr  
Heb. 7:1-3, 15-17  
Ps. 110:1, 2, 3, 4  
Mk. 3:1-6

### Thursday, Jan 21

St. Agnes, virgin and martyr  
Heb. 7:25-8:6  
Ps. 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 17  
Mk. 3:7-12

### Friday, Jan 22

Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children (USA)  
Heb. 8:6-13  
Ps. 85:8, 10, 11-12, 13-14  
Mk. 3:13-19

### Saturday, Jan 23

St. Vincent, deacon and martyr (USA); St. Marianne Cope, virgin (USA)  
Heb. 9:2-3, 11-14  
Ps. 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9  
Mk. 3:20-21

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tant, but it’s certainly not the whole thing,” he said. “Some people might not have access to a priest at all times. But all of us need to be ministering to one another, and in that way, the ministry of the Church will continue.”

Andrew Miller, a member of the St. Patrick Parish Pastoral Council in Rolla, wrote of his hope for the outcome of the bishop’s 10 County Initiative.

“I would propose that we

should be asking ourselves how much more we can do to ensure that every Catholic in Phelps County feels a part of the Church here, every possible act of charity and mercy is provided for, and that we are a Catholic community that people would drive anywhere in the county to be part of for Mass, for a feastday celebration or parish event because the parish is that alive in the Spirit and full of Christ’s love,” he said.

# In new year, share the blessing of your time, pope writes

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

Vatican City

At the beginning of a year people hope will mark the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis urged them to create a “culture of care,” including by sharing the gift of their time with others.

Despite suffering from a bout of sciatica, nerve pain, that left him unable to preside over Mass Jan. 1 in St. Peter’s Basilica, the pope sent a homily focused on God’s blessings

and on sharing those blessings with others.

Consecrating the new year to Mary, the pope prayed that she would “care for us, bless our time, and teach us to find time for God and for others.”

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, read the pope’s homily as he celebrated the Mass for the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and for the Catholic Church’s celebration of World Peace Day.

Only about 100 people, all wearing masks, were in the so-



**Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, swings a censer over a statue of the Christ Child as he celebrates Mass on the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day Jan. 1, 2021, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.**

— CNS photo/Vatican Media

to speak well — Pope Francis wrote that “we, too, are called to bless, to ‘speak well’ in God’s name.”

“Our world is gravely polluted by the way we speak and think badly of others, of society, of ourselves,” he said. But complaining and denigrating others “corrupts and decays, whereas blessing restores life and gives the strength needed to begin anew.”

The blessing of Jesus’ birth, he wrote, is all the more amazing because God sent the Savior into the world as a baby, Who was formed in the flesh within the womb of Mary.

“The heart of the Lord began to beat within Mary; the God of life drew oxygen from her,” the pope wrote. “Through Mary, we encounter God the way He wants us to: in tender love, in intimacy, in the flesh.”

As 2021 begins, he said, people should make a commitment to finding time for others.

“Time is a treasure that all of us possess, yet we guard it jealously, since we want to use it only for ourselves,” he wrote. “Let us ask for the grace to find time for God and for our neighbor — for those who are alone or suffering, for those who need someone to listen and show concern for them.”

cially distanced congregation for the Mass at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica. Two dozen cardinals, also wearing masks, concelebrated.

In the homily he wrote, Pope Francis returned to themes from his World Peace Day message — “A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace” — and a recent general audience talk about prayers of blessing.

“This year, while we hope for new beginnings and new cures, let us not neglect care,” the pope wrote. “Together with a vaccine for our bodies, we need a vaccine for our hearts. That vaccine is care. This will be a good year if we take care of others, as Our Lady does with us.”

“The Lord knows how much we need to be blessed,” the pope wrote. “The first thing He did after creating the world was to say that everything was good and to say of us that that we were very good.”

But with the birth of Jesus, he said, “we receive not only words of blessing, but the blessing itself: Jesus is Himself the blessing of the Father.”

“Every time we open our hearts to Jesus, God’s blessing enters our lives,” he said.

The example of Mary, blessed in a special way, he wrote, “teaches us that blessings are received in order to be given.”

Referring to the Latin roots of the word “benediction” —

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