

Christmas collection

Each year, the people of this diocese get a chance to help seminarians as well as priests who are infirm, through the annual Christmas Collection. Please give generously.

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The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

December 16, 2022 • Vol. 66 No. 13

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

“And we have seen His glory!”

“... the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.” — John 1:14



Mary and the Christ Child with angels are depicted in a painting titled "Holy Night" by Carlo Maratti. —CNS/Bridgeman Images

MOVING? If you are moving or changing parishes, please fill out information below. Clip and mail to THE CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN, 2207 W Main St, Jefferson City, MO 65109-0914. Or email changes to dbarnes@diojeffcity.org. Allow two weeks.

NEW ADDRESS

NAME _____

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CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

NEW PARISH _____

OLD PARISH _____

12/16/22

Our Lady of Lourdes in Columbia to change Mass times in January

Beginning the weekend of Jan. 14-15, 2023, the weekend Mass schedule for Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Columbia will be: 5:30 p.m. on Saturdays and 8, 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. on Sundays.

Pray for deceased priests

Dec. 19 — **Fr. Guido M. Nardoni**, Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Vienna (1962); **Fr. Leo G. Oligschlaeger**, Assumption, Morrison (1972)

Dec. 21 — **Msgr. Gerold J. Kaiser**, Holy Family, Freeburg (1987); **Fr. Patrick J. Shortt**, Our Lady of Snows, Mary's Home (2017)

Dec. 22 — **Fr. Stephen J. Carew**, St. Aloysius, Baring (1970)

Dec. 26 — **Fr. Robert J. Arnold**, St. Anthony of St. Padua, St. Anthony (1989)

Dec. 27 — **Fr. John W. Buchanan**, Holy Guardian Angels, Brinktown (1984)

Dec. 28 — **Fr. Gottlieb V. Steinwachs**, Holy Spirit, Centralia (1989)

Jan. 1 — **Fr. Robert J. Dwyer**, Immaculate Conception, Montgomery City (1982)

Jan. 4 — **Fr. Edward M. Owens**, Chaplain, Pershing Memorial Hospital, Brookfield (1997)

Jan. 7 — **Fr. Michael N. Schaller**, St. Margaret of Antioch, Osage Bend (1980)

Senior Bookkeeper



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking a full-time senior bookkeeper with advanced bookkeeping and elementary accounting work in the maintenance, review and analysis of detailed financial records throughout the entire accounting cycle. This individual will perform a variety of moderately complex to advanced bookkeeping/accounting tasks and procedures. Experience with general ledger, investments, insurance administration and payroll is strongly desired. Employer offers a comprehensive benefit package including health, dental, vision, and matching 403b retirement plan.

Experience with Sage Intacct accounting system would be considered a plus. Knowledge and preparation of worksheets and financial statements and general ledger account classification is required.

Qualified candidates should send their resume to HRDir@diojeffcity.org.

Pope: "Keep the creche in Christmas"

Catholic News Service

Vatican City

Stopping to gaze at and perhaps pray before a Nativity scene is one of the best ways to remember the real meaning of Christmas, Pope Francis said.

"In its genuine poverty," the pope said, "the creche helps us to rediscover the true richness of Christmas and to purify ourselves of so many aspects that pollute the Christmas landscape."

Pope Francis met Dec. 3 with the artisans who carved the 18-piece Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square; the donors of the white pine Christmas tree; the residents of a psychiatric rehabilitation center who, along with a group of students and grandparents, created the ornaments; and with representatives of the government of Guatemala, which set up another Nativity scene in the Vatican audience hall.

"Simple and familiar, the Nativity scene recalls a Christmas that is different from the

consumerist and commercial Christmas. It is something else. It reminds us how good it is for us to cherish moments of silence and prayer in our days, often overwhelmed by frenzy," Pope Francis told them during a midday gathering.

The group was scheduled to gather in St. Peter's Square

in the evening for the official unveiling of the Nativity scene and the lighting of the Christmas tree. But a major rainstorm with a forecast for more caused the Vatican to move the evening festivities indoors, although hundreds of people still were in the square for the lighting.

Newspaper schedule

This is the final print edition of *The Catholic Missourian* for 2022. Publication dates for all of 2023 are as follows:

January 6	May 12	September 1
January 20	May 26	September 15
		September 29
February 3	June 9	October 13
February 17	June 23	October 27
March 3	July 7	November 10
March 17	July 21	November 24
March 31		
	August 4	
April 14	August 18	December 8
April 28		December 15

The deadline for article and photo submissions is 15 days prior to the issue date. Submissions can be sent to Jay Nies, Editor, at editor@diojeffcity.org.

Advertising requests for events can be made by completing the form at diojeffcity.org/event-listing. The deadline for requesting a display ad is 10 business days in advance of the issue. Any questions regarding advertising can be directed to Kelly Martin at advertize@diojeffcity.org.

Advent organ recital

DATE: December 18
TIME: 4 pm

Internationally-renowned organist Katelyn Emerson will give an Advent recital at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 18, in St. Peter Church, 206 Broadway in Jefferson City.

Ms. Emerson has been hailed as "one of the world's most promising organists."

The Catholic Missourian

Official newspaper — Diocese of Jefferson City
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"A diocesan paper serves as a bond of unity by publishing diocesan happenings and promulgating official regulations and decrees. It also plays a teaching role by reporting notable events of a religious and secular nature, and interpreting them in the light of Christian principles."

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

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Communal Advent reconciliation services

Advent is a good time for an examination of conscience and to receive the sacrament of reconciliation in preparation for the celebration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Here is a partial list of Advent communal reconciliation services in the Jefferson City diocese. Most services will include a short prayer service followed by individual confessions. Extra priests from neighboring parishes are typically present to help out.

Canton — Tuesday, Dec. 20 at 7 pm, St. Joseph Church

Ewing — Monday, Dec. 19 at 7 pm, Queen of Peace Church

Jefferson City — Tuesday, Dec. 20 at 7 pm, St. Peter Church

Laurie — Sunday, Dec. 18 at 2 pm, St. Patrick Church

Marceline — Sunday, Dec. 18 at 7 pm, St. Bonaventure Church

Pilot Grove — Wednesday, Dec. 21 at 7 pm St. Joseph Church

St. Martins — Wednesday, Dec. 21 at 7 pm, St. Martin Church

Sedalia — Sunday, Dec. 18 at 4 pm, St. Patrick Chapel

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MAKING CONNECTIONS

Bishop McKnight

May the light of God's grace shine brightly this Christmas

I pray that this Christmas season is a time of peace and joy for you, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior — when the light of God's grace shone brightly on the human family.

As St. John writes in the prologue to his Gospel: *“through Him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*

Our Catholic priests manifest the light of Christ through their dedicated lives of leadership, in offering the sacraments, and in promoting the works of charitable service.

They carry this grace into the world, inspiring entire communities with God's word and bringing hope for salva-

tion.

This is an incredible responsibility, and I ask that you please keep our priests always in your prayers and remember them during this holy season of giving.

Our diocese is currently conducting a special collection for the education of our seminarians and for the care of our infirm priests. These are two very important needs.

We are blessed to have seven seminarians who are in formation to serve our diocese in priestly service. Please keep them in your prayers — and also pray that more men will hear God's call to join them on the path to the Priesthood.

Today, two-thirds of the priests in our diocese are 55

or older — and nearly a quarter of our diocesan priests are more than 65 years old.

While we are fortunate to have good health among our priests, we also have priests in our diocese who are

ailing.

Our special Christmas collection will help care for the needs of our priests when they are infirm. I thank you for your continued generosity and support for them.

Looking ahead, please also continue to pray for our priests as they lead our parishes during an exciting time of transformation for our diocese, following the Holy Spirit and reflecting the light of God across our di-

cese.

In the coming year, we will fully unify our approach to stewardship — helping us grow in our faith through greater participation and the sharing of our many gifts.

Our deaneries are also moving forward with Shaping our Future Together, a process that will help ensure that every Catholic belongs to a thriving parish — setting us on a solid foundation for our future.

We also look forward to the reopening of our great Cathedral of St. Joseph in the next year — a symbol of our transformation as a Catholic community.

The renovation of our spiritual home represents our work to grow in faith as we follow the Holy Spirit and reflect the light of Christ throughout our beloved Diocese of Jefferson

City.

We have so much to look forward to in the coming year — and we thank God for what will bring us closer together as a diocese: the promotion of the spirituality of stewardship; the deanery discernment process, Shaping our Future Together; and the celebration this spring of the dedication of the newly renovated Cathedral.

We are indeed Better Together.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, I pray that every one of you may experience the light of God — and also share that light with others.

Thank you for all you do as members of our Catholic community.

Be a light in the darkness.

May God bless you, and Merry Christmas to you and your families.

Bishop prayed, offered Mass at holy sites with ties to Christmas

By Jay Nies

Bishop W. Shawn McKnight celebrated Christmas on Oct. 23 this year.

Christmas Mass, that is, at the place of Christ's birth in Bethlehem.

“Whenever you visit one of the sites in the Holy Land, the Mass for the corresponding feastday is offered there,” the bishop explained.

What's more, the prayers and readings for that Mass include the word *“hic”* — Latin for “here” — whenever appropriate.

As in: “While they were *here*, the time came for (Mary) to have her child, and she gave birth *here* to her firstborn Son.”

“That really drives home that something very important happened, and you're standing right where it took place,” said Bishop McKnight.

“It makes the historicity of our faith really stand out,” he asserted. “As a pilgrim, it helps you encounter the mystery all the more fully.”

“It's not just a myth, it's not just some moral story. It's reality,” he said.

To Jesus through Mary

Bishop McKnight led an Oct. 17-28 pilgrimage to the



Bishop W. Shawn McKnight visits the place where Jesus was born, indicated by the star in the floor, during a recent pilgrimage to the Holy land.

land of Jesus's birth, ministry, passion, death and resurrection.

The pilgrimage afforded him, as a bishop, several opportunities to pray alone at holy sites, including the Grotto of the Annunciation, the Grotto of the Nativity, and the Milk Grotto in Bethlehem.

The latter commemorates where the Blessed Mother fed and took care of the Savior of the World while He was a baby.

“Mary is a fellow disciple to all of us, but as mother of our Lord, she stands out from the

rest,” the bishop noted.

“In our Catholic faith tradition, we see that Mary's role continues today, showing a mother's concern for all, especially those who are suffering,” he said.

In the Church of the Nativity, Bishop McKnight knelt and prayed at the place where Jesus was born.

He also offered Mass on the Plane of the Shepherds, outside Bethlehem, where the men tending their flocks heard the angels' hymns on


See HOLY LAND, page 4

Bishop McKnight's December prayer intention for our Local Church

During the holiday season, may our self-centeredness be replaced with generosity; our frustration with compassion; our anxieties with patience; and our intolerance with understanding. We pray to the Lord.

Intención del mes de diciembre del Obispo McKnight por nuestra Iglesia Local

Durante la temporada navideña, que nuestro egocentrismo sea reemplazado por generosidad; nuestra frustración con compasión; nuestras ansiedades con paciencia; y nuestra intolerancia con comprensión. Roguemos al Señor.



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



Bishop McKnight's Calendar

DECEMBER

Dec 20 Seminarian Dinner, 5 pm, Bishop's Residence

Dec 22 Chancery staff holiday luncheon, noon, Chancery

Dec 25 Solemnity of Christmas Mass, 8 am, Cathedral of St. Joseph Parish

Dec 25 - Jan 18 Mission trip to Africa/Archdiocese of Kampala, Uganda

CREANDO CONEXIONES



obispo McKnight

Que la luz de la gracia de Dios brille intensamente esta Navidad

Pido a Dios que esta temporada navideña sea un momento de paz y alegría para ustedes, mientras celebramos el nacimiento de nuestro salvador, cuando la luz de la gracia de Dios brilló intensamente sobre la familia humana.

Como escribe San Juan en el prólogo de su Evangelio: *En [la Palabra] estaba la vida, y la vida era la luz de los hombres. La luz brilla en las tinieblas, y las tinieblas no la percibieron.*

Nuestros sacerdotes católicos manifiestan la luz de Cristo a través de sus vidas de liderazgo comprometido, al ofrecer los sacramentos y al promover las obras de servicio caritativo.

Llevan esta gracia al mundo, inspirando a comunidades enteras con la palabra de Dios y trayendo la esperanza de salvación.

Esta es una responsabilidad increíble, y les pido que mantengan a nuestros sacerdotes siempre en sus oraciones y los tengan en mente durante esta temporada sagrada de generosidad.

Nuestra diócesis actualmente está realizando una colecta especial para la educación de nuestros seminaristas y para el cuidado de nuestros sacerdotes enfermos. Estas son dos necesidades muy importantes.

Tenemos la bendición de

tener siete seminaristas que están en formación para servir a nuestra diócesis en el servicio sacerdotal. Por favor, manténgalos en sus oraciones, y oren también para que más hombres escuchen el llamado de Dios para unirse a ellos en el camino hacia el sacerdocio.

Hoy, dos tercios de los sacerdotes de nuestra diócesis tienen 55 años o más, y casi una cuarta parte de nuestros sacerdotes diocesanos tienen más de 65 años.

Aunque somos afortunados de tener buena salud entre nuestros sacerdotes, también tenemos sacerdotes en nuestra diócesis que están enfermos.

Nuestra colecta especial de Navidad asistirá en la atención de las necesidades de nuestros sacerdotes cuando estén enfermos. Les agradezco su continua generosidad y apoyo para con ellos.

Mirando hacia el futuro,

también les pido que sigan orando por nuestros sacerdotes mientras que ellos lideran nuestras parroquias durante un tiempo emocionante de transformación para nuestra diócesis, siguiendo al Espíritu Santo y reflejando la luz de Dios en toda nuestra diócesis.

En el próximo año, unificaremos completamente nuestro enfoque de la buena administración, ayudándonos a crecer en nuestra fe a través de una mayor participación y compartiendo nuestros muchos dones.

Nuestros decanatos también están avanzando con el proceso *Dar forma a nuestro futuro juntos*, un proceso que ayudará a garantizar que cada católico pertenezca a una parroquia próspera, colocándonos sobre una base sólida para nuestro futuro.

También esperamos con ansias la reapertura de nuestra gran Catedral de San José el próximo año, un símbolo de nuestra transformación como comunidad Católica.

La renovación de nues-

tra casa espiritual representa nuestro trabajo para crecer en la fe mientras seguimos al Espíritu Santo y reflejamos la luz de Cristo en toda nuestra querida Diócesis de Jefferson City.

Tenemos mucho que esperar en el próximo año, y damos gracias a Dios por lo que nos unirá más como diócesis: la promoción de la espiritualidad de la buena administración; el proceso de discernimiento por decanatos, *Dar forma a nuestro futuro juntos*; y la celebración esta primavera de la dedicación de la catedral recién renovada. Ciertamente, somos Mejores Juntos.

Mientras celebramos el nacimiento de Jesús, pido a Dios que cada uno de ustedes pueda experimentar la luz de Dios — y también compartir esa luz con los demás.

Gracias por todo lo que hacen como miembros de nuestra comunidad católica.

Sean la luz en las tinieblas.

Que Dios los bendiga y Feliz Navidad para ustedes y sus familias.

HOLY LAND

From page 3

the night of Jesus's birth.

In Nazareth, the bishop got to lead prayers in the Basilica of the Annunciation, built at the place where Mary said "yes" to being the mother of the Messiah.

The bishop and his fellow pilgrims arrived at the basilica shortly before the praying of the "Angelus," which calls to mind Mary's obedient "yes."

"I was invited to go down into the grotto and lead the praying of the 'Angelus' from there, and to give the final blessing to all the pilgrims," he stated.

It was quite an experience, he said, to stand and pray "where it all began with Mary's 'fiat' and her openness to the will of God in her life."

That "yes" led her to Bethlehem and eventually to Jerusalem, where her Son would suffer, die and rise from the dead.

Above the valley

The first place Bishop McKnight and the pilgrims visited was Mount Carmel, where God in the time of the proph-

et Elijah had proved Himself to be the one and only God.

Bishop McKnight celebrated Mass in a small church on the mountain.

"The view was breathtaking," he recalled. "I can see why the Lord always wanted to go back to Galilee. It was His home, but it's also very scenic, very beautiful terrain."

The bishop pointed out that pilgrimages often call for sacrifices.

"It's hard work, even with our modern conveniences and how we travel," he said. "I marvel at pilgrims back in the Middle Ages. It was quite the penance for them in terms of making the physical trip."

Waiting to get into various holy sites can be a vivid exercise in patience.

"But all of a sudden, you're there and it's overwhelming, and you realize it was worth whatever you had to do to get there," he said.

He's convinced that anyone who makes a Holy Land pilgrimage is changed forever.

How they celebrate Christmas, Easter and the other im-



Bishop W. Shawn McKnight offers Mass at the cave of the Shepherds near Bethlehem.

portant feasts of the year is noticeably different.

"Before you go, your imagination is at work when you listen to the Scriptures being read," he noted.

"But once you've been to the Holy Land, you've actually seen the place and you now have a historical frame of reference."

Assurances of faith

Memories of the pilgrimage are helping Bishop McKnight cope with the recent death of his mother, Mary Schaffer.

"The whole devotion to our Sorrowful Mother, who witnessed the death of her Son, takes on added significance," he noted.

"And the article of faith that we as Catholics uphold about the Communion of Saints is much more poignant when we've lost a loved one," he said.

"I see more clearly now in our celebration of the Eucharist the connection we have with those who have gone before us," he added.

'Jared's Jams' started with a drive to give thanks, give back

**Edina parishioner
deeply grateful
to Special Olympics,
his parish and his community**

By Jay Nies

It was the middle of the Christmas rush, so Jared Niemeyer worked while he spoke.

He talked about how a tasty breakfast spread figures into his sense of purpose and gratitude and his relentless desire to give back.

"Courage and inclusion, all around," said Jared, founder of Jared's Jams in Edina.

"I'm thankful for how good God has been to me," he stated. "My spirit is bright and happy with how the business has grown."

Jared, 31, a lifelong member of St. Joseph Parish in Edina, has Down syndrome, a genetic condition that often leads to physical and intellectual disabilities.

He began to tune-in to his potential at age 9 when he started training for and competing in Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO).

His progress on the field set him on a course for more success at Kirksville High School, in his job at a local grocery store, in leadership within the SOMO organization, and as an advocate for independence and inclusion.

"Special Olympics has made me a better me," he said.

Jared's life has been too good to keep it all to himself. In 2014, he was invited to speak at an international conference at the United Nations on the rights of people with disabilities.

"He was part of a panel asked to discuss how disability had affected their lives," said his mother, Brenda Niemeyer.

"He shared how an inclusive education, being actively involved in his community and having meaningful employment had impacted his life," she recalled.

"He shared that his Special Olympics opportunities had

helped him grow skills, gain confidence, and understand how everyone has value and has something to give," said Brenda.

"Those experiences have allowed Jared and athletes, like him, to become empowered and learn to be self-advocates; naturally becoming contributing and active members of their communities," she said.

Special Olympics was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968 to provide individuals with intellectual disabilities opportunities to recognize their potential, promote physical fitness, and build up the courage to strive to achieve their dreams.

As a civil society, Special Olympics has a global presence and impacts countless lives.



Jared Niemeyer competes in the 2010 Special Olympics National Games.

While in high school, Jared served as a member of the Special Olympics Youth Activation Committee (YAC), first for Missouri and at the national level.

This committee is made up of young people leading youth to inclusive living by promoting awareness of disability and potential.

The committee occasion-



Jared Niemeyer, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Edina, displays some of the products he originally developed to raise money to build Special Olympics Missouri's Training for Life Campus in Jefferson City.

ally worked with the U.S. Department of Education and other federal organizations to promote awareness, develop materials, or represent views.

Jared's opportunities with Special Olympics have included participating in Special Olympics Capitol Hill Day in Washington D.C.; being invited to the White House in 2014 as part of the "Unified Generation"; speaking to representatives of other countries at the United Nations in 2014 and 2019; and recently completing eight years as an athlete representative to the Special Olympics Missouri Board of Directors.

"Serving as a Special Olympics representative has been incredibly rewarding!" he stated.

Friendly smiles

Jared has been working for 11 years as a courtesy clerk at the Hy-Vee store in Kirks-

ville.

He bags groceries, gathers shopping carts, helps set up seasonal displays and assists customers.

Many customers and their children know him by name.

"Jared's job fits his personality," said Brenda. "He's all about caring for others!"

This time of year, Jared also enjoys making Santa Claus

their farm to make and sell jams to raise money for Special Olympics.

At that time, Special Olympics Missouri had started a capital campaign to build its state of art Training for Life Campus in Jefferson City.

Jared donated 100 percent of the proceeds from jam sales to the cause, raising about \$6,000 in two years.

Jared was honored to stand next to the Knights of Columbus Missouri state deputy while taking part in the ground-breaking for the training facility in 2018.

He also attended the dedication the following November.

In 2016, Jared transitioned his jams to a small business, with the blessing of Special Olympics.

For the next six years, Jared's Jams was a regular presence at Kirksville's Farmers Market, numerous festivals and events.

However, without an FDA inspected kitchen, the family could not ship or go out of Missouri with their products.

See JARED'S JAMS, page 15



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More than 100 vintage blow-mold Santas join a cavalcade of other Christmas characters in the yard of Jim and Georgia Fick, who are members of Visitation Parish in Vienna. Each of the figures lights up at night. — Photo by Richard Riley

Couple's decorations celebrate the season, highlight the Nativity

By Jay Nies

Darkness doesn't have a prayer when it comes to Jim and Georgena Fick's yard at Christmastime.

The couple has amassed dozens of large, illuminated Santas, elves, snowmen, candy canes, reindeer and other nostalgic emblems of this most wonderful time of the year.

The heavy plastic luminaries, known as blow molds, give the luster of mid-day along the Ficks' stretch of U.S. 63 in Vienna.

A matching Nativity scene shines alone inside the couple's arc-shaped driveway — including the Holy Family, angels, shepherds, wise men, and farm animals — clearly set apart from all the rest.

"I'm an old-time religious man. That's why I don't put Santa Claus up in front of the Holy Family," said Mr. Fick, a Brinktown native who has been a member of Visitation Parish in Vienna for 65 years, and whose wife has been a Visitation parishioner her whole life.

"That's the way I was brought up and the way I'm going to be until I die," Mr. Fick stated.

Inner light

Blow molds, illuminated from the inside by old-school incandescent lightbulbs, were once a mainstay of American Christmas décor, reaching their peak of popularity in the 1950s through 1970s.

The Ficks began collecting the mid-century artifacts at flea

markets and rummage sales around 30 years ago. "We have contacts at some of these flea markets," he noted. "We have friends who are on the lookout for them. They buy them and resell them to us if they find them at yard sales."

At last count, the couple had 105 Santa Clauses and 30 snowmen to display in their yard.

Their vintage illuminated Nativity set includes about 25 pieces, including carolers, angels, sheep, cattle and a donkey.

Mr. Fick replaced all the retro incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs, saving money and tamping down the display's environmental impact.

"Most don't go more than 10 or 12 watts," he noted. "Everything has a light in it, but my electric bill is nowhere as big as an air-conditioner."

All the figures have outdoor wiring and are hooked up to switches on timers.

"I have nothing that you would have on an indoor lamp cord outside," said Mr. Fick. "Otherwise, you run the risk of burning the house down."

Lighting the way

Mr. and Mrs. Fick met in

high school and were both 20 when they got married in Visitation Church.

They bought their home in Vienna a few years later and have lived there for all but seven years of their married life.

"Back in '63, you could play ball out on the highway," Mr. Fick recalled. "Nobody came by but the mail carrier and the milkman. Now it's a major north-south route for trucks."

Like the traffic, the Ficks' collection started out low, and it started to grow.

"I always put Christmas lights up on the outside of the house, even way back when the kids were growing up," Mr. Fick recalled.

That tradition followed the family for the five years they lived in Meta after Mr. Fick got promoted with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT).

They acquired their blow mold Nativity set after moving back to Vienna in 1982, with the other characters following.

"We started with one big old Santa Claus from the Rolla Kmart," Mr. Fick recalled.

The winter hobby flourished after he retired from MoDOT in 1998.

"My wife and I would go out on Saturdays," said Mr. Fick. "We started seeing these things sitting around for little or nothing, and we started buying them."

Over time, they filled up their front yard and started decorating the neighboring lot, down to the home where one of their sons now lives.

People are often amazed when they drive by.

"Sometimes, someone will

send me a Christmas card, saying they enjoy the lights," said Mr. Fick. "Or if they see you outside, some people will stop and talk to you."

"You also see a lot of cell phones sticking out of people's car windows," he observed.

Light burden

The hard work of putting up the display lies not in carrying the figures from storage into the yard and wiring them up.

"The wind here blows all the time," Mr. Fick noted. "You have to stake them and post them and tie them down. Otherwise, if you get a good west wind, they'll wind up on the other side of the highway."

Maintenance is pretty simple.

"The bulbs will sometimes get loose just from the vibration of having them turned on," said Mr. Fick. "The wind can shake them up some, too, outside of getting blown over in a storm."

"Sometimes if they crack, I hot-glue them," he said. "If a piece breaks out, I cut up a milk carton and patch it up."

Central figure

Several of their grown sons and daughters and grandchildren, some in Jefferson City, have taken up the blow mold tradition and are decorating their yards with similar abandon.

"If you see a lot of them in one yard, you can figure we gave them to them," said Mr. Fick.

As for the display on Highway 63, "we cut back some

See DECORATIONS, page 8



The Fick family's vintage blow mold Nativity scene stands apart from the legions of other characters in their Christmas wonderland yard. — Photo by Jim Fick

markets and rummage sales around 30 years ago.

"Some from Springfield ... we went to Joplin a couple of times when we were younger ... Belleville, Illinois, and a few others," said Mr. Fick, adding that his wife "probably bought most of them."

Artwork testifies to deacon's and child's prayerful friendship

By Jay Nies

People who saw Deacon Christopher Wickern often mistook him for another fellow with a long white beard and enough radiant joy to fill a sleigh.

But Deacon Wickern's affinity for Christmas was much deeper than that.

"It all begins at the beginning," he wrote on Nov. 15, 2021. "The Creator of the Universe knows us from the beginning. Out of all time, He created us to be here and now to fulfill His will for us.

"And in the fullness of time, God the Son came to offer Himself as ransom so we may share in eternal life," he wrote.

Deacon Wickern, who was assisting the pastor of St. Ann Parish in Warsaw and Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Cole Camp, had been battling liver cancer and uniting his own tremendous pain to Christ's.

Deacon Ray Purvis was coordinator of diaconate formation in the time leading up to Deacon Wickern's ordination in 2016.

They had become friends, as had their wives and families.

Deacon Purvis's granddaughter, Claire Huntley, was dealing with her own health problems. Among other things, she was diagnosed with stomach migraines, had recently recovered from eye surgery and was trying to navigate a frustrating litany of food allergies.

Deacon Wickern was quite familiar with suffering, so Deacon Purvis's wife, Donna, asked her whiskered friend to offer Claire some encouragement.

They began corresponding by mail, praying for each

other and offering up some of their suffering for one another.

"Deacon Chris would write some explanation of prayers and things like that for her," said Deacon Purvis. "She would always write back with an acknowledgement."

A gifted artist, Claire often included a detailed line drawing of something uplifting or reminding Deacon Wickern of her prayers.

"When Chris was dealing with cancer, I would open all the cards he got and read them," Mrs. Wickern recalled. "It was wonderful to get those cards with the prayers."

One time, Claire sent a silly get-well card that gave Deacon and Mrs. Wickern a good laugh. But not for long.

"She had included a drawing and letter that made us both cry," Mrs. Wickern recalled. "I don't remember the words but I still cry when I



Claire Huntley's pencil drawing of a rosary and flowers has been reproduced and incorporated into Deacon Christopher Wickern's headstone.

remember it. It was like it was her turn to comfort him in his suffering."

The drawing was of a rosary, adorned with flowers.

"That was the one that



Patsy Wickern and Deacon Christopher Wickern, now deceased, borrow the persona of Christmas's most famous couple in this file photo.

meant the most to him," said Mrs. Wickern.

Christmas was their favorite time of year, and Deacon Wickern loved everything about it.

Starting in 2010, he and Mrs. Wickern volunteered throughout the Sedalia area at Christmastime in the role of the season's most recognizable husband and wife.

The deacon had been Catholic his whole life.

"I did wander away from the faith for several years, but my faith never left me," he wrote at the time of his ordination. "It was always calling me to come home."

He said he believed that his call to be a deacon was less about

bringing people to Christ than "bringing Christ to the people in all that we do — at work, at home and in ministry."

to be," he posted on social media. "The scans show extensive damage to the liver. There are no treatments to try. Today our hospice provider came to get us started on this journey. A journey of final things."

"What's to fear?" he posted. "Life is changing but not ending. Life is always in the hands of God. In His Love."

He died a week later.

When Mrs. Wickern ordered a headstone for him, she asked for Claire's rosary image to be etched into it.

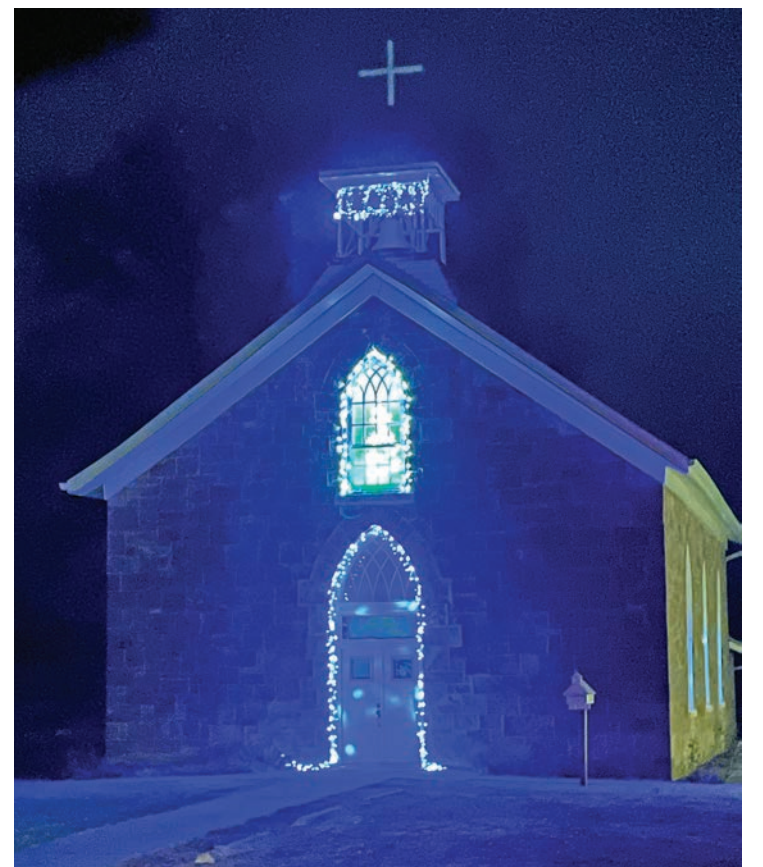
The headstone was installed on Aug. 8 of this year.

"I think the etching in the center of a rosary by a special young lady, Claire, turned out beautiful," Mrs. Wickern stated at that time. "Chris would be pleased."

Claire and her mother, Laura Purvis Huntley, saw a picture of the headstone on the one-year anniversary of Deacon Wickern's death.

"There are no words," Mrs. Huntley stated.

Blue Christmas



Historical St. Paul Church in rural Center has a Christmas glow, thanks to members of St. William Parish in Perry and the Mission of St. Frances Cabrini in Paris. The well maintained church, restored in the 1990s, was built in the 1860s and served the Center parish until it was closed in 1969.

QUESTION CORNER

Keeping Lord's day holy / Positives in the Church

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service



Fr. Doyle died Oct. 28, 2022. This column originally ran in 2016.

Q. I write to ask for guidelines on the Third Commandment — keeping holy the Lord's day. I do not consider some of the things that I do to be work — cooking, for example, minor cleanups, mowing, trimming, weeding. Does the Church look upon all chores as work? I find it very hard not to do some of the things that need to be done around the house. I am thankful that God did give us this commandment, for I certainly do look upon Sunday as a day of rest — to spend with family when possible and to simply enjoy the day. My husband (who is not a Catholic) is a business owner who can work from home. He is in a very challenging situation right now, without sufficient staff. On Sundays, he puts in a good six to eight hours of office work before he rests — otherwise the remainder of the week's schedule would be overwhelming. (Chestertown, New York)

A. I credit you for your sincere desire to set Sunday aside as a special day, which honors the fact that even the God of all creation rested on the Sabbath. You have captured the spirit of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that says, "Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life" (No. 2186).

Basic household maintenance is exempted from the prohibition against "servile work" on that day; doing the dishes, preparing a meal and what you describe as "minor cleanups" are certainly permitted. A modest amount of gardening or lawn cultivation can be recreational and surely not "servile." What the Sabbath command means to avoid is unnecessary shopping or heavy housekeeping that could be deferred.

Employment needs or economic circumstances may prevent one from observing the Sabbath rest, and this the *Catechism* envisions and exempts. Your husband's current challenge, in my mind, fits in here.

I would hope, though, that his circumstance will only be temporary; while I don't know his religious history or principles, wisely does the *Catechism* note, "The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life and health" (No. 2185).

I might point out that, among American males, there can be a slavish addiction to Sunday televised sports, doing damage to the Sabbath goals of family time, reflection and rest.

And finally, nowhere does your question mention Sunday Mass, which must always be the central feature of a Catholic's Sabbath observance. For 2,000 years, followers of Jesus have come together as a family of faith to celebrate the day of Christ's resurrection and to be nourished by His Body and Blood.

Q. I am grateful for the work you do with your question-and-answer column. Your responses reflect both wisdom and patience. And this prompts me to ask the following: What are some of the things in today's parish or Church that you find exciting? Or, to put it another way, what are some changes that you have been happy to see over your years in the ministry? (Virginia Beach, Virginia)

A. Normally I would not choose to answer an open-ended

See QUESTION, page 23

Papal Audience December 14, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters:

In our catechesis on discernment, we have considered its various elements, including prayer, self-knowledge, spiritual experience and the signs assuring us of the rightness of our decisions. A fundamental attitude that must guide the entire process of discernment, however, is that of vigilance. Jesus often warns His disciples of the need to be watchful, lest the enemy take advantage of our distraction and bring our good efforts to nought. The Lord gives the example of an unclean spirit who, chased from a house, returns to find it clean but empty, since its owner is absent, and then comes back with seven of his companions. Like that owner, we too can fail to guard our house and keep our hearts pure as a dwelling for the Lord. When we trust excessively in ourselves and not in the Lord's grace, our presumption can open a door to the evil one and can find ourselves "worse than before" (cf. Lk. 12:45). In our exercise of discernment, may we always remain vigilant, for vigilance is a sign of spiritual wisdom and of the humility that is at the heart of the Christian life.

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims taking part in today's audience, especially those from the United States of America and from the Australian Catholic University. I pray that each of you, and your families, may experience a blessed Advent in preparation for the coming, at Christmas, of the newborn Jesus, Son of God and Savior of the world. God bless you!



Candlelight Mass before dawn in J.C.

DATE: December 22
TIME: 6 am

Father Jeremy Secrist will celebrate a Rorate Mass by candlelight at 6 a.m. on Thursday,

Dec. 22, in St. Peter Church, 216 Broadway in Jefferson City.

The Rorate Mass is an ancient Catholic tradition for the longest night of the year.

In the dimly lit pre-dawn

setting, priests and the faithful prepare to honor the Light of the world, Who is soon to be born, and offer praise to God for the gift of the Blessed Mother.

Tasty gifts for the neighbors



Young people from the Mission of St. Joseph at Hurricane Branch assembled fruit baskets for some of their neighbors in the community near Mendon, "just to let them know we were thinking of them." — Photos by Deb Seyler

DECORATIONS

From page 6

this year," he said.

"I'm going to be 86 years old next year. If it weren't for my son and grandson from Jefferson City coming down and the boy next door helping, I wouldn't be able to get it done anymore."

He hopes that people who drive by and no-

tice the display will pray for him and his family to stay well, and for the Church to be strong in its witness throughout the year.

He prays that people will take the layout of display to heart.

"The Nativity is in the center of everything," he noted.

A special slice of Extra-Ordinary Time

By Lucia A. Silecchia



This past year, several couples near and dear to me welcomed new infants to their delighted families. Each time, I wrote a note to welcome the child, congratulate the parents, and wish the happy family much joy and love in their lives together. I always end these notes with a wish that the family enjoys this very special time in their lives as they get to know each other.

The day an infant is safely delivered from womb to world is a day of great rejoicing. It is that day when a mother who has carried a child hidden within her for nine months can, for the first time, gaze into his or her eyes. It is that

Living well

By Maureen Pratt

Catholic News Service



A blessed, light-filled Advent to you! I am certainly enjoying my Advent wreath, the warm glow from the first-week, first-lit purple candle, and the sparkle of votives on either side of my creche.

Because of some scheduled eye surgery, I put up my Christmas tree early, blending ornaments from childhood with those I've acquired as an adult. The added glitter and variety, along with the many-colored lights, add a profound sense of home.

It is not an easy Advent. Despite the light, there is illness, challenge and, sadly, the end of my column with Catholic News Service. But through it all, there is a constant refrain in my heart, that simple, beautiful prayer, "My Jesus, I trust in you." (Along, of course, with a hearty dose of "be not afraid!")

And there is a core certainty, a peace beyond "all measure" that with every flare of illness something good results and for every difficult ending, something good emerges, too. From this time of waiting and endings, new Holy Spirit-inspired surprises will appear and carry life forward along the unfolding new pathways.

Pathways are already unfolding. I will update my website (maureenpratt.com) regularly about planned new books and speaking engagements (caregivers, I'm here for you, too!), a new column, and more unique jewelry and other pieces reflecting faith and the beauty of God's world (through Galilee

day when a father can hold his child in his protective embrace for the very first time. It is that birthday that will have pride of place on the family's calendar for years to come.

Yet ... the days that follow the date of birth are special too. Those are days that I truly hope that new parents will savor and enjoy. The day their child first comes home is a cherished milestone. The day their child first falls asleep in a lovingly prepared crib, or smiles for the first time, or grips a parent's finger, or makes a sibling smile are all special days. The day the child meets eager grandparents or doting aunts and uncles and the day the child is Baptized are all also special times in that earliest season of life.

So it is that I hope the new parents I love will cherish not just the child's birthday but all those special days that

Road Jewelry). A recent visit to a museum inspired thoughts of designing monstrances and chalices — and my pencil is already busy!

Perhaps most exciting is the emergence of an answer to long-lifted prayer, years in the waiting — development of parish-based, small, spiritual and faith support group for persons living with chronic pain and illness.

Not long ago, I was contacted by someone looking for my out-of-print book, *Beyond Pain: Job, Jesus, and Joy*. Pat Calanca had assembled a wellness group at her parish (St. Aloysius in New Canaan, Connecticut) and, with the support of the parish's parochial vicar, Father David Roman, had used my devotional *Peace in the Storm: Meditations on Chronic Pain and Illness* (Image/Penguin Random House) as their discussion and prayer resource for nearly a year and a half! Now, they were going to start on *Beyond Pain* but needed copies.

I had to know more! So, across miles and time zones, Pat, Fr. David and I emailed and met via Zoom. I have learned much from them about their nurturing the group and am greatly encouraged by what they have witnessed.

Starting small, the wellness group has grown and flourished. Each meeting blends prayer, faith sharing and selections from *Peace in the Storm*, with occasional healing masses led by Fr. David.

The blessings, I'm told, are abundant, as members come closer to Jesus and Mary, our Church and our faith family. This, I was grateful to hear, not only benefits the individuals, but the parish. Truly, the stronger we are in

soon follow.

This is on my mind as I think ahead toward Christmas and our joyous celebration of the birth of a child. The joy that wraps December 25th is filled with that blessed hope of a long-awaited birthday.

Alas, all too quickly, December 26th dawns.

As a young child I thought this was among the saddest days of the year. Today, still, I am dismayed to see Christmas trees unceremoniously thrust out on the curb a mere day or two post-Christmas. Today, still, I am annoyed when the Christmas music that has been on the radio non-stop since Halloween is taken off the air on December 26th — just as the Christmas season is beginning, not ending.

Perhaps this year, my perennial wish that families enjoy the special season when they are getting to know their beloved newborn child is advice I should take myself.

Maybe it is the time of year to take time, after the birthday enthusiasm of Christmas day, to take some quiet time to get to know the Christ child better.

Maybe it is the time to contemplate His birth with that wonder that families have when they gaze on a new infant in the early season of their child's life.

Maybe it is the time to think of the day after Christmas as the start of a season of special days — and not the end. The Feast of the Holy Family, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, the Feast of the Epiphany, and the celebration of the Baptism of Christ, to name but a few, are all special celebrations after Christmas. They are opportunities to slow down and recall with continued joy those early days of Christ's life on earth.

All appearances to the contrary, perhaps those like me who drag our heels in taking down the last vestiges of

See SILECCHIA, page 23

REFLECTION

Weary souls rejoice

By Mark Saucier

On Dec. 24, 1914, small Christmas trees and lanterns appeared on the parapets of the muddy German trenches of the western front.

In the darkness, voices of scared and homesick young men joined in the prayerful strains of "*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht.*"

A few hundred yards away, across barbed wire and no-man's land, British soldiers in their own soggy ditches responded with "Joy to the World."

Down the line, on their own soil but just as forlorn as the others, French soldiers caroled their "*O peuple fidèle.*"

An English soldier heard a voice from the other side shout "Tomorrow, you no shoot and we no shoot."

And they didn't shoot along many sections of the front on that Christmas Day.

Instead, they observed an informal truce, meeting in the middle, talking, joking, exchanging sweets, cigarettes and drinks.

They took the time to clean up, bury their dead and even have a friendly football kickabout.

It only lasted a day-and-a-half before commanders on both sides ordered an end to the "comfort and joy," and pressed the men back into conflict.

But why did it happen at all? How could these men be trying to kill each other one day and then embracing one another the next?

Perhaps it was because those trenches were so close. Hearing one another gave flesh and blood to the foe — an enemy just as scared, just as lonely, just as fragile.

Maybe, in the middle of that miserable French winter, far from the warmth of hearth and kin, just one night, "calm and bright" is what they all yearned for.

But how, in all this blood and death, could they ever feel "faithful, joyful and triumphant"?

Maybe, for the first time, they really understood the words the Brits sang: "Let every heart prepare Him room."

That's what they did that Christmas Eve — prepared Him room by letting go of their fears, their animosity, their lethal self-survival.

We sing those same lyrics a century later, but can we hear them as those soldiers did? Can we prepare Him room?

We go to great efforts for that Hallmark Christmas — perfect gifts, kitchen miracles and holiday parties, but that's the easy part.

Can we do the hard work of making space? Can we surrender those things that clutter our everyday hearts — the righteous anger, the long-held hurt, the petty grievance?

The Talmud says, "God requires the heart." I'm pretty sure this means our whole heart.

See PRATT, page 23

Encounter

AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Awaiting Christmas with grateful hearts



“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18d)

By Dan Lester

2022 was a year of transition for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri. As we approach the end of the calendar, I am grateful for this opportunity to reflect on both the challenges and successes of another year providing care and creating hope for our neighbors in need. This year, I am especially grateful for:

— a hardworking, talented, professional, diverse, and committed team of staff at Catholic Charities. We come from a variety of backgrounds, locations, and experiences but we are drawn together by the desire to serve and to work every day to make the world a kinder, safer, and more equitable place. Together, we create a whole that is greater than the sum of our parts, and I am blessed to be surrounded by such a fine group of people.

— our volunteers, who have selflessly dedicated over 20,000 hours of service this year alone. From accompanying refugees to doctors' appointments to stocking food pantry shelves to filing, answering phones, and taking care of all of the administrative tasks that keep an office functional, we could not do what we do without volunteers. We cannot thank

them enough for all they do to expand our capacity to serve those in need.

— donors who continue to support our work and see the value of giving to an organization that serves all, regardless of faith, culture, and situation. The economic fluctuations of the last year have influenced both for profit and nonprofit businesses large and small, and Catholic Charities is no exception. We know that continuing to give can be challenging, and we will never take for granted the immense generosity of our community of donors.

— and finally, I am most grateful for those who come seeking help at Catholic Charities. They provide us with the opportunity to serve, to live out our Gospel call to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to be reminded that to care for one another is the highest expression of God's unending love for each of us. Some highlights of our services in 2022:

- We continued to welcome Afghan allies and their families to mid-Missouri, and rejoiced as families built their lives anew in this supportive community. We also began to connect with new neighbors fleeing the war in the Ukraine, many of whom came to join family and friends who had previously settled in Sedalia, Mo. We will continue to be there for all of our new friends in 2023 and beyond.

- Our client choice food pantry opened in early 2022,

and over the last year has provided healthy food to thousands of people who otherwise would go without. Our model provides dignity and respect to

lies seeking to escape the trap of predatory lending. Through the program, participants can take back control of their financial lives, and set out on a

to the Wooldridge community fire in Cooper County, we continue to provide financial support and case management services for long-term recovery to survivors. While the events may not get the attention of hurricanes and tornados, for those families impacted, the results can be devastating. We are proud to be one of the few providers committed to continuing to provide long-term assistance, regardless of the size of the disaster.

These are just a few of the ways that Catholic Charities answered the call in 2022. We are grateful for the opportunity to continue to share stories of our work in *The Catholic Missourian*, and look forward to continuing to provide care and create hope in 2023. Blessings to you and your family from everyone at Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, we are grateful for the continued prayers and support of all people of good will throughout the Diocese of Jefferson City.



The above Advent Wreath is a gift of the Carmelites of the Diocese of Jefferson City created by Mother Therese for Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, and resides in the Central Office's chapel for staff, volunteers, and visitors to pray with. Connect with Catholic Charities and learn more about our programs and services online at ccnmo.diojeffcity.org.

those who come through our door, and we have built wonderful relationships with many of our neighbors who come to shop. Our pantry is about more than food, it is about community.

- 2022 saw the launch of our payday loan relief program, assisting individuals and fami-

path to financial freedom and success. We are grateful for our partnership with Mid-America Bank to make this program a reality.

- Our efforts to assist those in our service area impacted by natural disasters continued unabated in 2022. From flash flooding in Pettis County

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Fr. Schrader's book sheds light on primacy of Jesus as redeemer

By Jay Nies

From the early days of the Church, theologians have been vigorously debating how and why God chose to send His only begotten Son into the world.

Was it something He planned to do from the beginning, or was it a response to humanity's persistently sinful behavior?

The answer to these questions sheds light on the nature of God and His purpose for creating humanity.

"It matters! The truth about Jesus matters! It affects the way we live, and that has eternal consequences," said Father Dylan Schrader, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Westphalia and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Folk.

Fr. Schrader is moderator of religious education for the Jefferson City diocese. He is author of a scholarly book titled, *A Thomistic Christocentrism: Recovering the Carmelites of Salamanca on the Logic of the Incarnation*.

Published in 2021 as part of The Catholic University of America's Thomistic Resource Series, the book was subject to intensive peer review and criticism.

"It's definitely an academic book," Fr. Schrader noted. "It's not a casual read."

First and foremost

Fr. Schrader broke some of the book's key points down into simpler terms.

Thomism refers to the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas and his followers.

"Christocentrism means a focus on Jesus," he said. "Not just on Jesus as God but on Jesus as man — Jesus of Nazareth."

The Church has always taught and upheld the centrality of Christ.

"The Second Vatican Council calls Him 'the center of human history'" Fr. Schrader

er noted. "But what does that mean exactly?"

Theologians have taken various approaches to answering that question.

"One of the big conversations in the history of theology is about how to talk about the place of Jesus in God's plan for the world," said Fr. Schrader.

"When you think about God planning, in His providence, for human history, for the history of the whole world: Where does Jesus feature in that plan?" he asked.

Some people emphasize Jesus being the first and foundational part of God's plan — "such that everything else is made for Him."

Others focus on numerous biblical references to Jesus as the redeemer of humanity — "about His coming being connected to saving us from our sins."

"Seen in that light, His place is primarily about rescuing us from something gone wrong, from sin entering into God's creation," said Fr. Schrader. "Jesus came to rescue us from that."

Differences arise when people see these two approaches as canceling each other out.

"Some theologians say you can't have it both ways: that He's either the first thing or a response to something that happens," Fr. Schrader noted.

Enter the community of

Discalced Carmelite Priests who in the 1600s were studying and teaching in community at the University of Salamanca in Spain.

The Salamanca Carmelites spent about 80 years prayerfully scrutinizing this question and honing a theology that

reconciles both approaches.

"I believe that what they taught is basically right and that they articulated the best way to talk about God's plan for sending Christ into the world," said Fr. Schrader.

Specifically, the Salamanca Carmelites emphasized the primacy of Christ as Redeemer.

"So, Jesus is the first thing that God wants in His plan, the first thing that God intends, for Him to be our redeemer, and for everything else to be for Him," said Fr. Schrader.

God, by giving free will to humans so that they can love Him freely, also permitted sin to enter the world by allowing people to reject Him.

He did this for the sake of Christ, Who would come into the world and be its redeemer.

"So, Jesus is not a backup plan — not a Plan B because something has gone wrong and God has to fix it," Fr. Schroder explained. "But what God always wanted from the beginning is Christ the Redeemer."

With good reason

The priest pointed out that God is all-knowing, "so He doesn't have to go through a decision-making process like we do."

"So by planning, we're not saying that God is changing His mind and having to think it through, step-by-step," he said.

Nonetheless, God's plan is full of different kinds of connections, with some things being dependent on other things.

"For example, God could create a skyscraper all at once, but the top floor would still depend on the floor below it, and that floor would depend on the one below it, all the way down to the foundation," said Fr. Schrader.

"So, there would be relationships of dependence within that plan," he said. "In that sense, the foundation is more basic than the top floor, and the top floor depends on it."

With that understanding,

does the coming of Christ into history depend on the need for redemption?

More specifically, would Jesus have come into the world if there were no sin?

"The Carmelites of Salamanca say He would not have come if there were no sin — but that doesn't mean His coming is secondary or a backup plan," said Fr. Schrader.

are true."

How people understand Jesus's role as redeemer has bearing on how they choose to follow Him.

"Jesus gives Himself to us as our Savior, but we don't want to think of Him as simply a means to end," said Fr. Schrader.

"God didn't just send His Son into the world so His Son could do something for us — but so His Son could be glorified by us," the priest stated.

"It's both: He's for us and we're for Him. Yet, we are more for Him than He is for than for us."

Fr. Schrader pointed to St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, in which he writes: "I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God Who has loved me and given Himself up for me." (2:20)

"It's not that Jesus just does something for us and we're forgiven and can just do whatever we want," Fr. Schrader noted.

"Jesus saves us not by leaving us alone and just giving a pass, but by coming to us and integrating us into Himself, which means our life isn't ours anymore."

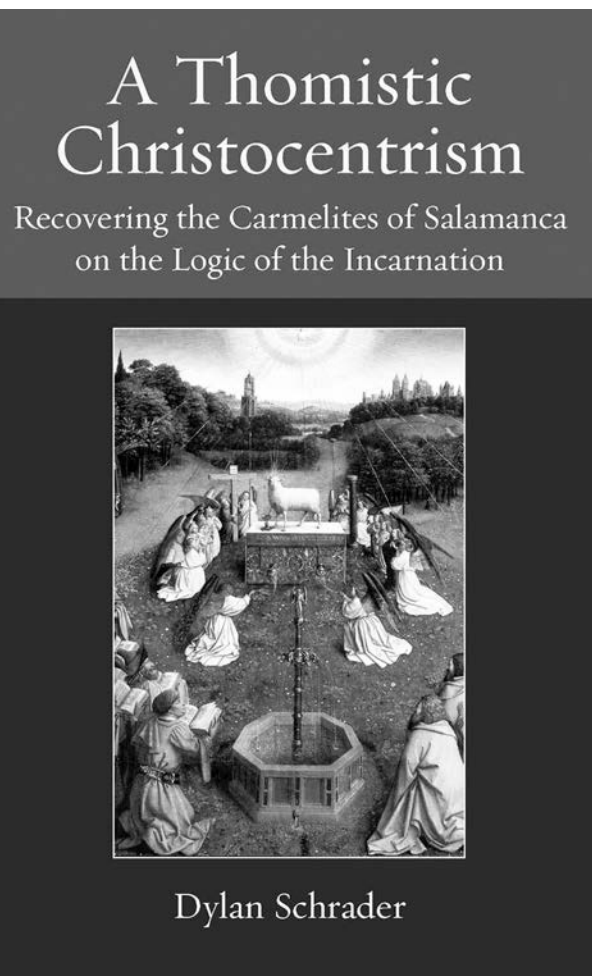
Being redeemed means being transformed.

"Being saved means being rescued from sin, it means being taken out of it," the priest explained. "He saves us by taking us out of ourselves and integrating us into Him."

"When you understand that, you begin to live a new life, a new creation."

Never enough

Fr. Schrader holds a doctorate in systematic theology with an emphasis in catechesis from The Catholic University of America.



Dylan Schrader

"It means that God permitted sin in the first place with a view toward redemption — that Jesus is the greater good that God brought out of sin," the priest stated.

Why it matters

Fr. Schrader believes such questions are worth considering as Catholics prepare to celebrate Christmas — the Word of God taking on flesh and making Himself part of human life.

"Everything is for Jesus. That's what it's about," he said. "And yet, at the same time, He gives Himself entirely for us as our Savior. So it's two sides of the same coin."

"Jesus is for us and we are for Him," the priest continued. "He came to save the world, and the world is made for Him. Both of those things



Father Dylan Schrader

Celebrate Christmas 'with Ukraine in your hearts,' pope says

Urges aid for Ukrainian people

Catholic News Service

Vatican City

Celebrating Christmas is important and beautiful, Pope Francis said, but he asked people to spend less on their cel-

ebrations this year and donate the savings to help the people of Ukraine.

As he has done at his general audiences since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, the pope asked pilgrims and visitors Dec. 14 to express their "closeness to

the martyred Ukrainian people, persevering in fervent prayer for these brothers and sisters of ours who are suffering so much."

"Brothers and sisters, I tell you, they are suffering so very, very much in Ukraine," the pope said.

"I want to draw your attention to Christmas, which is

coming, and to the festivities," he said. "It's beautiful to celebrate Christmas and have parties, but let's reduce the level of Christmas spending a bit; let's have a simpler Christmas with more modest gifts."

And, the pope said, "let's send what we save to the people of Ukraine, who are suffer-

ing so much."

People in the country are hungry and cold, he said.

"And many die because there are no doctors and nurses available," the pope said.

Celebrate Christmas "at peace with the Lord," he said, and "with Ukraine in your hearts."

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USPS 'Virgin and Child' stamp

Catholic News Service

Boston

Every two years, the U.S. Postal Service issues a traditional first-class Christmas stamp showing Mary and Jesus, and this year's stamp features an oil-on-panel painting from the first half of the 16th century titled "Virgin and Child."

Attributed to a Florentine artist known since the late 1960s as the Master of the Scandicci Lamentation, the painting is in the Robert



Dawson Evans Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

The stamp was designed by Greg Breeding, co-founder and creative director of the Journey Group design firm in Charlottesville, Virginia. He is one of four art directors who regularly work with the USPS.

The painting depicts Mary gazing downward at the Christ child, with one of her arms holding Him protectively at His waist and the other tenderly touching His arm, while the Christ child turns His head to look out of the frame to the left.

The Postal Service has released religion-themed stamps since the 1960s. The 2022 religious Christmas stamp is "a beautiful piece of art, with particular meaning this time of year," Utterback said.

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Bazaar caps off an active year for Russellville parish's POM

St. Michael Parish in Russellville held its annual Parish Outreach Ministry (POM) Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 10.

The event was a resounding success, with all proceeds going to meet the needs of the Russellville community and specific needs of parish members, as well.

The POM was formed in February 2018, with the sole mission of providing support to St. Michael families with specific needs and the larger Russellville community.

Parishioners built a Blessing Box on parish property in the Fall of 2020. The box is filled twice a week with food from the St. Michael food pantry, all donated by parishioners.

The POM has also held five benefit events for parish families with significant medical needs over the past several years and through the COVID-19 pandemic, raising a total of \$35,000 for those families.

The ministry has provided funds to help local residents with utility bills; given gas cards for people in need of transportation; and donated money to local schools for specific, identified needs of children and youth.

This year's Christmas parade in Russellville was an opportunity for parishioners to reach out to the entire community by offering free food and drink in the St. Michael Parish Hall.

"This small but mighty parish really understands steward-



— Photo by Leigh Tenkku Lepper

ship in terms of being a center of charity and mercy," said St. Michael parishioner Leigh

Tenkku Lepper. "It is a great opportunity for our parish members to get in-

involved in serving our community and we have a wonderful

fellowship together as we work to serve," she said.

Planning for death is as natural for the Christian as planning for life. Having a will is good stewardship and planning of your assets. Remember to always take care of your family, and consider taking care of your parish family long after you are gone.

Have you already remembered your parish or school in your estate plans? Please let us know!

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Make this Advent season a spiritually fruitful time

By Mike Krokos

Catholic News Service

When the church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long prepara-

tion for the Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for His second coming.

By celebrating the precursor's birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to His

desire: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #524, Jn 3:3).

We've entered the season of Advent, a time in which the Church encourages us to

listen actively, to prepare our hearts, to form our minds and improve our lives with the help of God's grace in anticipation of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and His ultimate coming again in glory.

It is the beginning of a new liturgical year, a time we can use to reset how we live as disciples of Christ. It also offers a stirring call to stay awake, to be vigilant for the presence of the Lord.

Because of the secular influences around nearly every corner we turn, there are distractions. And they come at us full force without hesitation — whether intentional or not — and offer materialistic things to divert us from centering our lives on the upcoming birth of our Savior.

In a season where people of faith want to be centered on the awareness that God is coming into the world as a babe in a manger, the temptations to focus on anything but Christ's birth seem to never end.

As we move ahead through Advent in the weeks leading to Christmas, we need to block out the noise and ask: what is the Lord calling me to do? Focusing on prayer, Scripture and the sacraments are among the opportunities that come to mind as ways to grow in our lives of faith.

We must keep prayer at the center of this season. As disciples of Christ, we are called — day in and day out — to offer petitions for those in need.

The hungry, the homeless, the unborn, those in war-torn countries and all our brothers and sisters in need should be at the top of our list. It is paramount to remember those who will go without life's basic needs and be the hands and feet of Christ to them.

Make time for spiritual reading. Pick up a Bible and study in-depth the readings during Advent that will lead to the Nativity of our Lord.

Why not volunteer at your parish, at a shelter or food pantry — or at any facility — that offers assistance to those in need? Families who do this together offer a beautiful witness of faith — especially during this time of year. Our faith teaches us that Christ makes disciples through other disciples.

Finally, make time to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Confession cleanses our souls and renews and restores us to receive God's gift of grace.

Mr. Krokos is editor of The Criterion, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Heisman winner is much loved, respected alum of D.C.-area Catholic schools

By William Murray

Catholic News Service

Washington, D.C.

Caleb Williams, the star quarterback at the University of Southern California who won the Heisman Trophy Dec. 10, earlier made his mark at two Washington-area Catholic schools he attended for middle school and high school.

Before graduating from Gonzaga College High School in Washington in 2021, Williams attended St. Pius X Regional School in Bowie, Maryland, a D.C. suburb.

"We love Caleb!" a group of purple-clad Gonzaga students chanted during a Heisman Trophy watch party at the Jesuit boys' high school, with some of them jumping up and hugging each other after Williams had accepted his award.

Williams had just become the first Washington-area native to win the Heisman Trophy.

Four years earlier in November 2018, Williams, as Gonzaga's sophomore quarterback, had lifted the Eagles to their first Washington Catholic Athletic Conference football title since 2002 with an improbable 46-43 win over DeMatha.

The stunning game included a last-second 53-yard "Hail Mary" touchdown pass from Williams to leaping wide receiver John Marshall to seal the victory at The Catholic University of America's Cardinal Stadium.

After a yearlong stay at the University of Oklahoma, where Williams led the Sooners to a come-from-behind win over archrival Texas, Williams transferred to USC. This season, he threw for more than 4,000 yards with a 66% pass completion rate, 37 touchdowns and only four interceptions in leading the Trojans to a No. 8 AP ranking and an 11-2 record.

During this, his first year at USC, he helped restore some of the glory to a Pac-12 program that had struggled to meet its formerly elite status after Coach Pete Carroll left in 2009 to lead the Seattle Seahawks.

Williams had transferred from Norman, Oklahoma, home of the Sooners, to USC in Los Angeles, after former OU coach Lincoln Riley took the top job at USC in 2021. The Heisman Trophy victory likely took away some of the pain of the Trojans' 47-24 loss to Utah in the Pac-12 title game on Dec. 2, which cost USC a



Caleb Williams, then a 2018 sophomore quarterback on the football team at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C. poses for a photo near the Lincoln Memorial's Reflecting Pool. Williams, now a star quarterback for the University of Southern California, won the 2022 Heisman Trophy Dec. 10.

— CNS photo/ courtesy Gonzaga College High School via *Catholic Standard*

spot in the College Football Playoff.

Debbie Corradini, a resource teacher at St. Pius X Regional School, remembers Williams for his qualities off the gridiron from when he attended St. Pius in the seventh and eighth grade.

"We taught him, but in a lot of ways, he taught us (more) about being hard-working, kind and humble," she told the *Catholic Standard*, Washington's archdiocesan newspaper. "He was very well-mannered and kind to his peers."

A 36-year veteran of the St. Pius X Regional School staff and the mother of four children, Corradini cried during the Heisman presentation, feeling proud of Williams.

She recalled Williams during his middle school years as "having the drive to be the very best at everything he did."

He enjoyed other activities, such as biking, fishing and swimming, but ironically found relaxation in the rough and tumble contact sport of football, she recalled.

Corradini remembered him overcoming doubts about whether he was big enough to be an effective quarterback.

During his middle school years, Wil-

liams decided to focus on football as a sport, and he and his father, Carl Williams, would venture out for 5:30 a.m. workouts at the Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex in Landover, Maryland, not far from FedEx Field, the home stadium of the Washington Commanders.

"He has a great mom and dad," Corradini said. "They did a great job keeping him humble."

Even in middle school, Williams had set his sights on winning a Heisman Trophy and eventually becoming a professional football player, something she sometimes hears from young students, Corradini recalled.

During recess, she remembers Williams "throwing the football with his buddies," including a couple who matriculated to Gonzaga and played football with him there.

Luke Casey, a fifth-grade teacher at St. Pius and an assistant football coach at DeMatha, helped privately coach Williams in the quarterback position, which requires a great deal of athleticism, leadership and mental dexterity.

In an interview with WTTG-TV Channel 5 after the Heisman Trophy award presentation, Randy Trivers, the football coach at Gonzaga, praised Williams' athletic ability, saying: "He has exceptional arm talent ... and exceptional foot speed. ... he has the right amount of poise and confidence."

Trivers paid tribute to Williams' preparation for games as being part of what sets him apart from other quarterbacks.

Jesuit Father Joseph Langan, who became president of Gonzaga in 2021, paid tribute to "Caleb's leadership both on and off the field, his charitable nature, and his gracious and humble character," in a statement the school released after the Heisman Trophy announcement.

"Caleb and his parents embraced all that Gonzaga has to offer," the priest said. "He graduated as an integral community member who both contributed to and benefited from our extraordinary school."

"On behalf of the entire Gonzaga community, congratulations Caleb! You will always be an Eagle! Continue to make us proud!" Father Langan added.

Murray writes for the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington.

JARED'S JAMS

From page 5

In 2020, as his parents approached retirement from their careers, they began considering building an FDA kitchen in order for Jared to expand his business.

"We also saw it as a way for Jared to give back to the community," said Brenda, "because he's all about giving back."

Edina, like many other small, rural communities, is facing many of the same economic issues due to declining population and limited employment opportunities.

"We wanted to build our kitchen here to bring something to our community that hopefully would not only generate a customer base but perhaps also spark hope," said Brenda.

"This is where our sons grew up," she noted. "We've lived here for 35 years. The community has shown tremendous support of Jared's Jams and we're delighted to be here."

Writing on the wall

"We bought an 86-year-old building," said Jared. "And we knocked down walls." Their brick structure faces the Court House Square.

Jared and his parents worked with the construction manager (one of Brenda's former students) and a few others to complete a full interior demolition and begin rebuilding their dream.

Jared's brother, Josh, ran computer wires, devised a security system and set up a network for the sales and the shipping stations.

Josh has also been the "coffee" contributor of Jared's Jams.

He provided Jared with the idea and recipes to make specialty coffee blends. This allowed Jared to add coffees to his jam baskets in order to offer "breakfast baskets" to his customers.

Gift baskets continue to be a significant part of Jared's year-round business.

"And people wrote Bible verses," Jared noted.

The family invited the community to visit the building and inscribe their favorite tidbits and wisdom from Scripture on the unfinished walls.

The electrical contractors even surrounded the power

box with their favorite prayers and verses.

"God led us to the people that helped us with the construction, helped us put things together and come up with a plan to make it work," said Brenda.

"Our expertise is not kitchens!" she noted. "It took a lot of people having a wonderful heart and intentional desire to help Jared succeed in this for it all to come together."

During the heat of summer construction, a fellow St. Joseph parishioner quietly purchased cases of bottled water and stealthily delivered them to our building.

"She did it several times before we caught her in the act," said Brenda. "That's the kind of spirit in which our community welcomed Jared when they learned that he was renovating this building."

With heaven's help

Most of the space is devoted to a large kitchen, with a small storefront at the entrance.

"We make jams, jellies, vanilla extract, coffee blends and fruit syrup in the kitchen and sell them in the storefront," said Jared.

People can also rent the kitchen to make and sell their own products. The kitchen is also used for community "classes" such as cookie decorating, "instant pot," and 4-H foods activities.

"We taught a 4-H foods class how to make vanilla extract," Jared noted.

Jared's Jams opened a coffee shop in their kitchen and Jared has learned to use the espresso machine.

In his shop, local artisans display and sell their wares.

The family hopes in the spring to begin another initiative. The Knox County School District and Kirksville High School will offer an opportunity to their high school students with disabilities, a "work experience" class in order to develop skills to allow them to be more prepared for employment upon graduation.

"God is guiding us through every single step of the way," Brenda stated.

"In the building and at home," said Jared.



Jared Niemeyer, Knights of Columbus Missouri State Deputy Joseph Rosenthal, and Lou Holtmann of the Knights of Columbus participate in ground-breaking ceremonies for Special Olympics Missouri's Training for Life Campus in Jefferson City on May 4, 2017. — Photo by Jay Nies

people to know that they're loved and valued."

Jared's father, Dan, spoke clearly of the family's gratitude.

"We're thankful for the support of our church family and our community for our endeavor here," he said.

"We're thankful that they received us when we moved here 35 years ago, and we continue to be happy in our parish as a community and family."

"It's all love," said Jared.

Something to give

Jared asked for prayers for all who are involved with Special Olympics and for the success of his business.

"I think we also need to pray for all individuals to recognize their value and who they are in Christ," said Brenda. "As Jared has said so many times, 'everyone has something to give.'"

Jared believes people can help God answer that prayer. "Open your heart to including and helping others," he said.

Jared's kitchen and storefront are located at 106 N. Fourth St., Edina, MO 63537.

Visit Jared's website jareds.jams.com for information, or call 660-341-0358 or email Jared at jaredniemeyer@gmail.com.

"It's all love"

The Niemeyers have a U.S. map in the store; one color pin noting where they've shipped merchandise, another color designating where their in-store customers reside.

"I just packed three online orders; one to Massachusetts, one to Idaho and one to Pennsylvania," Brenda stated on Dec. 10.

"And we had customers from New Jersey, in town today, who came by to shop with us!" she said.

Jared's dream is unfolding while St. Joseph Parish and its members are adopting the stewardship way of life.

The Niemeyers' small group for studying the spirituality of stewardship actually meets at Jared's Jams. "It's centrally located for everyone in our group," Brenda noted.

She added that through discovering and appreciating his gifts from God, Jared has learned to stand up for what's right for himself and other people.

Jared reflects the belief "that all people are loved by God and should be included."

"That's part of why he was so determined to give back," said Brenda. "What started with jam got to be about creating opportunities for other

Pope is asking governments to grant clemency to prisoners at Christmas

Catholic News Service

Vatican City

Pope Francis is writing to all the heads of state around the world, asking them to consider granting some prisoners clemency at Christmas.

The Vatican press office said Dec. 12 that the pope is asking government leaders to consider freeing or reducing the sentences of men and women they believe would benefit from such a gesture of mercy "so that this time marked by tensions, injustices and conflicts may be opened to the grace that comes from the Lord."

The Vatican did not release a copy of the let-

ter or explain what prompted it besides the approach of Christmas.

From his days as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and continuing after his election to the papacy, Pope Francis has made a special effort to maintain regular contact with prisoners, to meet them in Rome and on his trips around the world and to phone and write them.

At the end of his Angelus address Dec. 11, the pope gave a shout-out to "the detainees in the Due Palazzi prison of Padua: I greet you affectionately!"



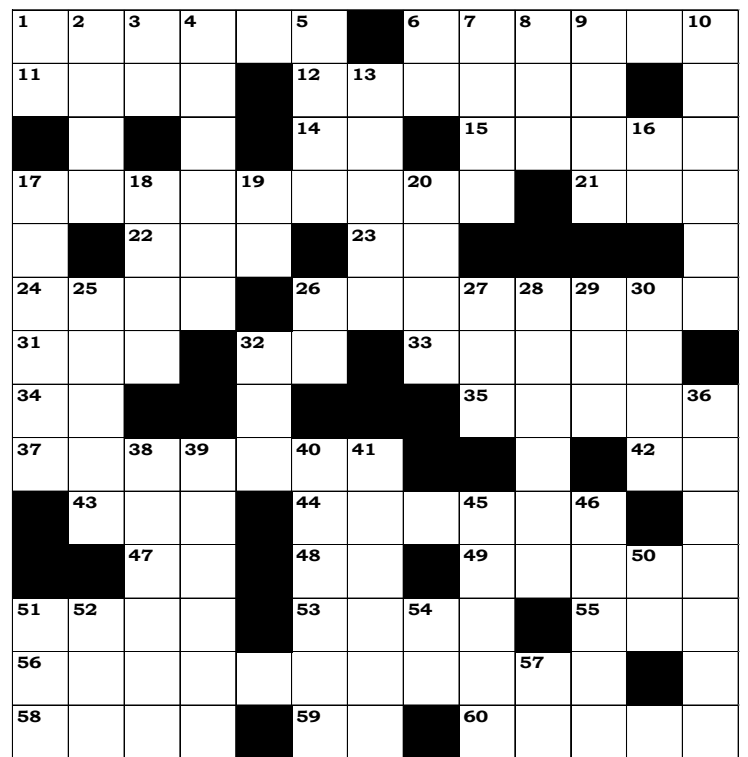
By Father Don Antweiler

ACROSS

1. Translated into at least 300 languages, designated by UNESCO as a treasured item of Intangible Cultural Heritage, arranged in dozens of musical _____, from heavy metal to gospel, "Silent Night" has become a perennial part of Christmas.
6. A repeated word to rid the mind of distractions & to help focus, esp. in Buddhist meditation or as a prayer word in Christian Centering Prayer.
11. Sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 11:1-2).
12. Fr. Mohr's congregation was _____ poverty-stricken, _____ and traumatized. So, he crafted a set of six poetic verses to convey hope that there was still a God who cared.
14. _____ *cum spiritu tuo*.
15. "Heaven and _____ will pass away, but my words will not pass away," (Matthew 24:35).
17. In the fall of 1816, Fr. Mohr's congregation in the little Austrian town of Mariparr was reeling. 12 years of war had _____ the country's political and social infrastructure.
21. Letters meaning "outside of"; used before words such as skeleton or biology.
22. Halloween month (abbr.).
23. Abbr. meaning in English, for example.
24. Friends.
26. Fr. Mohr, a gifted violinist and guitarist, could have composed the music for his poem. Instead he sought help from his friend Franz Gruber, a local schoolteacher and _____, to write the music for the six verses.
31. Actor Danson; politician Kennedy; newsman Koppel.
32. Lions' den prophet; 34th book of the Bible (abbr.).
33. "Monsieur Mandy, the mayor (of Ars), said point-blank with obvious satisfaction, "They have sent us a _____," —*The Secret of the Cure d'Ars*, Henri Gheon.
34. Land _____!
35. One who might receive an Oscar.
37. The song of calm and hope was well received by Fr. Mohr's beleaguered parishioners. But its wider popularity grew through two traveling families of folk _____, became popular across Europe and eventually America; was sung on Wall St. in NYC in 1839.
42. "_____ find in the 7 petitions in the Lord's Prayer all the good things...which our heavenly Father wants to grant us," —*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #17.
43. Letters for United Arab Republic, a sovereign political union between Syria and Egypt from 1958-1961. Egypt retained the name until 1971.
44. Choosing (e.g., They seem to be _____ out of the agreement.).
47. 7th note.
48. Green Jeans or Clean.
49. Yogi _____; native of The Hill in St. Louis, Mo.; played 19 seasons in the MLB; later became a manager and coach; famous for his malapropisms (e.g., "When you come to a fork in the road, take it.>").
51. Baptist or Apostle/Evangelist.
53. Prefix relating to aviation (e.g., nautical or dynamic).
55. Letters for Associated Press International.
56. The words of "Silent Night" flowed from the _____ of a modest curate. The music was composed by a musician who was not known outside his village. Yet its powerful message of heavenly peace has crossed all borders and language barriers giving hope to all the world.
58. Hand in Spanish; shark in Hawaiian.
59. Pierre is this State's capital (abbr.).
60. He is part of the crew that _____ cargo onto the ships in the harbor.

DOWN

1. Abbr. for the 9th & 10th books of the Bible.
2. "..._____ and eat; this is my body," (Matthew 26:26).
3. 52 wks. make a _____.
4. The _____ of "Silent Night" were originally written in German just after the end of the Napoleonic Wars by a young Austrian priest named Joseph Mohr.
5. This NYC stadium was the former home for the NY Mets from 1964-2008 as well as the NFL Jets from 1964-1983. It was demolished for additional parking for the new adjacent CITI Field, new home of the Mets.
6. Land of 10,000 Lakes State (abbr.).
7. A good wine must be _____ to perfection.
8. Gun Club.
9. Pagan city just west of Israel on the Mediterranean coast, often paired with Sidon (Matthew 11:21).
10. "...the Devil has come down to you in great fury, for he knows he has but _____ time," —Revelation 12:12 (2 wds.)
13. "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to _____ words, but to live by them," —John Kennedy.
16. Lone Star State (abbr.).
17. "Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a person. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his _____," —Second Vatican Council.
18. Added to the political collapse, the previous year had been catastrophically _____. A monster volcanic eruption in Indonesia had spewed ash in the atmosphere causing almost continuous storms, even snow, in the middle of summer. Crops failed and there was widespread famine.
19. The Treasure State; also called Big Sky Country (abbr.).
20. Don't put all your _____ in one basket!
25. The full-time vowels.
26. _____ Christmas Eve, in 1818, the two friends sang "Silent Night" together for the first time in front of Fr. Mohr's congregation, with Fr. Mohr playing his guitar.
27. Car Club.
28. The _____ Creed at Sunday Mass follows the homily.
29. In construction and architecture, abbr. for interior.
30. "...as Miles leaned to _____ the clothes under the blanket, the cart tilted, and the boots fell to the cobbled paving," —*The Rose Rent*, Ellis Peters.
32. "So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in _____ time," (1 Peter 5:6).
36. "Solitude with God _____ the damage done by the fret and noise and clamor of the world," —Oswald Chambers.
38. Prophet who denounced King David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel, Ch. 12).
39. Derogatory term for an American in Chihuahua, perhaps.
40. St. Paul's letter to the _____ follows the Acts of the Apostles in the NT.
41. Also German-speaking missionaries _____ the song from Tibet to Alaska, translating it into local languages.
45. Not being an energetic cook or fussy eater, _____ nearly everything I cook (2 wds.).
46. A _____ is slang for \$1,000.
50. Short for role play (i.e., acting out or performing the part of a person or character, on stage or in a psychotherapy session).
51. Actor/comic Carrey; puppeteer Hensen with his Muppets; rocker Morrison of the Doors.
52. Suffix meaning a swelling or tumor; can be a suffix for lymph or lip.
54. Letters for Russia Today, a Russian gov't. controlled and funded TV news network.
57. Letters for Overeaters Anonymous; support group for help with compulsive eating.



ANSWERS on page 19

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Las Posadas: Setting aside a prominent place for the Lord

By Jay Nies

The search for shelter, warmth, safety and hospitality is as old as humanity.

So it may not have seemed extraordinary for a man and his wife, about to give birth, to crisscross the streets of a strange village late at night, knocking on barred doors in the hope of finding a place to rest and give the baby a proper welcome into this world.

The shreds of compassion and hospitality they finally encountered left them quartered with livestock in what somehow became a sufficient birthplace for the Word Made Flesh, the Savior of all humankind.

That is the story not only of how the Son of God first set foot upon the earth, but of how He takes up residence every day in the hearts and minds and communities of the people He came to save.

All who hear the Gospel are innkeepers who must decide whether to make room for Him.

That is the basis for a time-honored Advent tradition that is observed each year in millions of households in this hemisphere.

“*Las Posadas*” — the word means “The Inns” in Spanish — is a communal celebration that takes place throughout most Latin American countries in the nine days leading up to Christmas.

“It is a tradition of reenacting Mary and Joseph’s long and frustrating search for a place to rest and to have a baby,” stated Deacon Enrique Castro, diocesan director of Hispanic and Cross-Cultural Ministries and executive director of faith formation, including marriage preparation and family life.

Rooted in movement and active participation, Las Posadas appeals to people of all ages, especially children.

Each evening, participants go from home to home, knocking on doors and singing.

“Those outside walking represent Mary, Joseph and Jesus going and trying to find a place to rest,” said Deacon Castro.

At each, they experience rejection, just as they did in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago.

“They do this until they get to a house where they are welcome,” Deacon Castro stated. “They open their doors and let

them in.”

Once inside, people venerate on image of Jesus while raising their prayer toward heaven: “This Christmas, Jesus, I offer You room in the inn of my heart. Make it a manger where You can be born.”

It is a celebration that combines hospitality and reverence, Deacon Castro noted.

“It is also a time of prayer as we reflect on the uncertainty of Mary and Joseph as they desperately search for a place to give birth to their child, the Son of God,” he said.

In addition, participants reflect on the joy and awe of the shepherds, who, guided by the angel’s tiding, rushed from the fields into Bethlehem to adore their newborn Savior.

Most parishes with large Hispanic populations in the diocese offer some sort of communal observance of Las Posadas.

People of all ethnic, linguistic and cultural traditions are urged to participate in this tradition communally or in the home, as an aid to their preparation for Christmas.

Children are especially encouraged to take part, to help them understand and stay focused on the true meaning of Christmas.

“Together on the journey”

This year, Deacon Castro has distributed to parishes throughout the diocese several resources — some in Spanish, some in English, some bilingual — for observing and celebrating Las Posadas.

One contains Scripture passages, prayers and meditations for each of the nine days leading up to Christmas, beginning on Dec. 16.

Another is a solemn prayer service for immigrants from Latin America, with the theme, “*Estamos juntos en el camino*” — “We are together on the journey.”

In words and movement, those who take part in this service stand in solidarity with the Holy Family and with all whose circumstances have them “on the move.”

Many who celebrate Las Posadas have experienced some

aspect of the Holy Family’s journey — either looking for room at the inn or fleeing to another country for theirs and their children’s safety — or have friends or relatives who have.

This and other prayer resources for Las Posadas have been posted on the diocese’s Hispanic Ministry Facebook page “Ministerio Hispano - Diócesis de JC.”

Advent by Candlelight



About 175 people attended St. Andrew Parish’s ninth annual Advent by Candlelight event Dec. 4 in Tipton. The event was held in the St. Andrew School Gym. Father Anthony Viviano, pastor of St. Andrew Parish and of Annunciation Parish in California, was the speaker for the evening and provided the music.

— Photo by Peggy Huhmann

CHRISTOLOGY

From page 11

He is convinced that quests for faith-oriented knowledge and understanding are worthwhile and have bearing on people’s wellbeing in this life and in the next.

He called to mind St. Thomas Aquinas’s assertion at the end of his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*:

“An infinity of human words cannot grasp God’s only Word. For from the Church’s beginning there have always been writings about Christ — and never enough. In fact, even if the world lasted a hundred thousand years, books could be written on Christ and not fully unpack the meaning of His words and deeds.”

“The point is, we can never say enough about Christ,” said Fr. Schrader. “Our words will never be adequate to the reality of Jesus and the Incarnation.”

“But that doesn’t mean we should keep silent about Him,” the priest asserted. “We’ve got to do what we can, and most importantly is that we live according to His word and follow His example.”

Some people are called to study and learn and teach these things in greater depth for the sake of all of God’s people.

“There’s a place in the Church for serious reflection on the trueness of our faith,” Fr. Schrader noted. “A place for asking, ‘Can these truths hold up to scrutiny? What is the best way to talk about God

and the things of God?’”

That’s what the Carmelites of Salamanca devoted the better part of a century trying to discern.

“It basically took three generations to finish what they started,” said Fr. Schrader. “I think about that in terms of the legacy they were building. Imagine starting a project you know you won’t live to see finished!”

“Pick up and read”

Fr. Schrader’s passion for learning dates from his childhood and grew with his parents’ help and encouragement.

Taking a high school Latin class from Father (now Monsignor) Marion Makarewicz at St. Thomas Seminary in Hannibal broadened Fr. Schrader’s horizons a thousand-fold.

“I continued to study Latin, and I was then able to read books in Latin,” said Fr. Schrader. “That opens up tremendous possibilities if you’re studying theology of philosophy.”

Nearly countless books from the first 1,900 years of Catholic history were written in or translated into Latin.

“If I hadn’t studied Latin, I would not have been able to study any of these things,” he said.

He is grateful to Bishop Emeritus John

R. Gaydos, Bishop W. Shawn McKnight and the people of this diocese for allowing him to pursue and complete his doctorate in theology and put it to good use.

He will teach a class on Christology next year to the men in formation for the Permanent Diaconate.

He plans to start teaching adult faith-formation classes at his parishes in January, just as he did at St. Brendan in Mexico.

There, he also led a 94-part livestreamed journey through the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He also worked with Knights of Columbus Council 1529 in Columbia to teach classes on various Church doctrines through the council’s AED (Adult Education and Devotion) program.

He’s convinced that helping people understand the deeper foundations of their faith will help them live better and convincingly answer questions from people who are curious and open to learning about God.

Toward that end, Fr. Schrader offers this advice from his studies on why Jesus obediently came to share in our human experience:

“Invite Jesus into every part of your life and begin thinking about your life as being for Him, even as He was sent for you.”

Christmas crèches from around the diocese



To submit **Baptisms, Birthdays** for ages 90 and older, **Anniversaries** of 10+ years in increments of 5 ONLY (e.g., 15, 25, 45 years, etc.), **Elections, Honors and Appointments**, please go to:

diojeffcity.org/parish-correspondence

For marriages and deaths, please use the form at diojeffcity.org/update-information/ so that we may update our mailing lists and records.

Anniversaries

Dixon, St. Theresa
Jim & Shirley Wodohodsky, 61 years

Marshall, St. Peter
Albert & Alice Markes, 69 years

Sedalia, St. Vincent de Paul
Michael & Joy Simon, 45 years

Birthdays

Argyle, St. Aloysius — **Dorothy Juergensmeyer**, her 90th on Dec. 18

Jefferson City, St. Peter — **Rita Dampf**, her 90th on Dec. 22

Deaths

Chamois, Most Pure Heart of Mary — **Doug Sieg**

Mary's Home, Our Lady of Snows — **Henry Schulte**

St. Martins, St. Martin — **Bernard Lueckenotte**

Salisbury, St. Joseph — **George Stallo**

Baptisms

Fulton, St. Peter — **Charlotte June Salmons**, daughter of Alex & Kathryn Salmons

Rest in peace, Bishop McKnight's mother

Mary Elizabeth (O'Reilly) Schaffer, 73, mother of Bishop W. Shawn McKnight, died peacefully at her home on Dec. 8.

The Mass of Christian Burial was to be celebrated on Dec. 16 in St. Francis of Assisi Church in Wichita, Kansas. Burial was to be in Resurrection Cemetery in Wichita.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 20, in St. Andrew Church in Holts Summit.

Mrs. Schaffer was born in Arlington,



Mary E. Schaffer (1949-2022)

Massachusetts, a daughter of Peter J.F. and Mary L. (Keane) O'Reilly.

In 1967, she was married to William T. McKnight, who died in 1970. They had one son, Bishop McKnight.

On June 5, 1971, she was married to Gary Francis Schaffer. They had seven children.

The Catholic faith, love and prayer were the bedrock for their strong marriage. They were active stewards in the various parishes where they lived throughout the country.

Surviving are her husband, seven sons, one daughter, 21 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, including two who are pre-born, and her brothers and sisters and numerous nephews, nieces and cousins.

Need more info about an event or want to see more events?
Visit the diocesan EVENT CALENDAR at diojeffcity.org/events.
Want your event listed?
Fill out the ONLINE FORM at diojeffcity.org/event-listing.

Fundraisers & Social Events

Jan. 8
Jefferson City, "Bells of Christmastide," Jefferson City Community Handbell Concert, 2-3:30 pm, Wesley United Methodist Church

Meetings/ Workshops

Dec. 20
VIRTUAL, Marriage Prep Facilitators' evening refresher, 5:30-6:30 pm, for info or to RSVP email faithformation@diojeffcity.org

Jan. 2-6
St. Louis, SEEK23 event, sponsored by FOCUS, America's Center convention complex, for info or to register visit seek.focus.org

Jan. 3
VIRTUAL, Marriage Prep Facilitators' morning refresher, 10:30-11:30 am, for info or to RSVP email faithformation@diojeffcity.org

Jan. 17
VIRTUAL, Marriage Prep Facilitators' evening refresher, 5:30-6:30 pm, for info or to RSVP email faithformation@diojeffcity.org

Jan. 25
Columbia, Cursillo Grand Reunion, 8:30 am-4 pm, Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School, for info visit diojeffcity.org/cursillo/

Eventos del Ministerio Hispano

diciembre 17
Jefferson City, Formación de Ministros de Comunión, 9 am-3 pm, oficinas de las cancillería, favor de registrarse por medio del siguiente link: diojeffcity.org/ministerio-hispano/formacion-de-ministros-de-comunion/. También puede registrarse por teléfono llamando al diácono Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650.

enero 14
Jefferson City, Encuentro de Liderazgo Diocesano, 8:30 am-3:30 pm, contacte a Diácono Enrique Castro al 573-680-3650 por su celular o en WhatsApp o por correo electrónico a ecas-tro@diojeffcity.org

Faith Formation & Spiritual Renewal

Jan. 10
St. Martins, "Praise, Pizza and Pitchers" evening of prayer and fellowship for adults 40 and older, second Tuesday of each month, 5 pm Rosary and Mass at St. Martin Church, followed by dinner at Pizza Haus, for info visit Facebook @Praise, Pizza and Pitchers

Liturgical

Dec. 18
Jefferson City, Advent sacred music & Sunday Vespers, 4-5 pm each Sunday, St. Peter Church

Youth & Young Adults

Dec. 18 & Jan. 15
Jefferson City, Young Adult Mass, third Sunday of each month, 5 pm, Immaculate Conception Church

Dec. 20
VIRTUAL, Young Adult Evening Prayer with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, 7 pm, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/events/12-20-22/

Jan. 4
Jefferson City, Rooted/Connected/Searching in Community young adult group, first Wednesday of each month, 5-8 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish's Pleus Hall, for info visit icangels.com/youngadults

Jan. 28
Jefferson City, "With Great Power," Confirmation Retreat, 10 am-3 pm, Alphonse J. Schwartze Memorial Catholic Center, for info or to register visit diojeffcity.org/confirmation-retreat-2023

GOD OF LOVE, FATHER OF ALL, THE DARKNESS THAT COVERED THE EARTH HAS GIVEN WAY TO THE BRIGHT DAWN OF YOUR WORD MADE FLESH. MAKE US A PEOPLE OF THIS LIGHT. MAKE US FAITHFUL TO YOUR WORD, THAT WE MAY BRING YOUR LIFE TO THE WAITING WORLD. GRANT THIS THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

Crossword puzzle answers

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

Capitol Nativity



Second-, third- and fourth-graders from Our Lady of the Snows School in Mary's Home gather on the stage in the Rotunda of the State Capitol in Jefferson City after taking their turn singing during this year's Nativity at the Capitol event on Dec. 6. — Photo from the Our Lady of the Snows Catholic School Facebook page

A bit of Italy in Advent for Hannibal



Second-graders at Holy Family School in Hannibal have been learning about Christmas traditions around the world. They recently "visited" Italy and learned about the Italian tradition of Blessing of Bambinelli (baby Jesus) on the Third Sunday of Advent. Each student made his or her own Nativity set and got to bring the baby Jesus to church to be blessed that weekend.

— Photo from the Holy Family School – Hannibal Facebook page

Cookies and carols from young people in Wien

The St. Mary of the Angels Parish Youth Group in Wien made Christmas cards and sugar cookies Dec. 11 to deliver to some nearby parishioners. They delivered 20 boxes of cookies and sang "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" at each home they visited.

Story time in Westphalia

Father Dylan Schrader, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Westphalia and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Folk, reads *The Legend of the Candy Cane* to kindergartners, then to first-graders before handing out candy canes at St. Joseph School on Dec. 6, the Feast of St. Nicholas.

— St. Joseph School, Westphalia

An evening to remember



Students of St. Joseph School in Salisbury have a "Magical Night with Santa," including crafts, snacks and a visit with Santa Claus.

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



An angel tells shepherds about Jesus' birth

By Jennifer Ficaglia
Catholic News Service

When Mary was near the end of her pregnancy, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that everyone in the Roman Empire had to be counted in a census.

Since Joseph, Mary's husband, was of the house of King David, he and Mary had to travel from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea to be enrolled.

While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, it came time for Mary to have her baby.

She gave birth to her first-born son, and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes. She laid Him in a manger, because there was no room to stay at the inn.

At the same time as the census, there were shepherds living



in the fields around Bethlehem who were keeping watch over their flocks at night.

Suddenly, an angel of God appeared to them, and God's glory shone all around them.

The shepherds were surprised and struck with great fear. The angel sought to calm them.

"Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be

for all the people," the angel said. "For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you Who is Christ and Lord."

The angel also told the shepherds how to recognize the Savior.

"And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger," the angel said.

After the angel finished speaking, suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel. They were praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests."

When the angels left, the shepherds were excited to find the Savior who had been born.

"Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us," they said.

When they came into the city, they found Mary and Joseph, as well as the infant lying in the manger.

Upon seeing them, the shepherds made known the message that the angel had told them about the child. All who heard it were amazed.

Then the shepherds returned to the fields, glorifying and praising God.

Read more about it... Luke 2

1. Where did Mary place the infant?
2. Who told the shepherds about the infant's birth?

Bible Accent

We read in Luke 2:22 that Mary and Joseph presented the infant Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem.

On the day that Mary, Joseph and Jesus came to the Temple, there was a righteous and devout man there named Simeon.

The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah that God had promised.

The Holy Spirit was with Simeon in the Temple. When Simeon saw Mary, Joseph and Jesus, he went up to them.

"Now, Master, You may let

Your servant go in peace, according to Your word," Simeon said as he took Jesus into his arms, "for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the gentiles, and glory for Your people Israel."

Mary and Joseph were surprised by what Simeon said.

Simeon blessed them, and then he turned to Mary.

"Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will

pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed," he said.

Trivia

What is another name for Bethlehem? (Hint: Luke 2:4)

Answer: The City of David.

Puzzle

Using the hints provided, place a T next to the sentences that are true and an F next to the ones that are false.



1. ___ An angel told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Judah. (Matthew 2:13)
2. ___ Mary reflected on the shepherd's actions in her heart. (Luke 2:19)
3. ___ Jesus was circumcised six days after being born. (Luke 2:21)
4. ___ The prophetess Anna was at the Temple when Mary, Joseph and Jesus came. (Luke 2:36)



Answers: 1. F, 2. T, 3. F, 4. T.

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Saint Spotlight

St. Marguerite Bourgeoys

St. Marguerite Bourgeoys was born in 1620. Growing up in Troyes, France, she formed a special relationship with Our Lady. After being turned away by two religious communities, she met the founder of Montreal, Canada, when he returned to France for a visit. He invited Marguerite to come to Canada to open a school. Although she had misgivings, she prayed to Mary and decided to go. Her first school was in an abandoned stable. Her ministry grew to include teaching women crafts and founding the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Marguerite, who became Canada's first female saint, died in 1700. We remember her on Jan. 12.

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New children's books highlight Catholic missionaries, Legos, mystery

By Regina Lordan
Catholic News Service

The following children's books are suitable for gift-giving at Christmas.

• *The Curious Christmas Trail*, by Haley Stewart, illustrated by Betsy Wallin. (Pauline Books & Media, 80 pp., \$24.95) has all the makings for an epic — if somewhat unexpected — mystery.

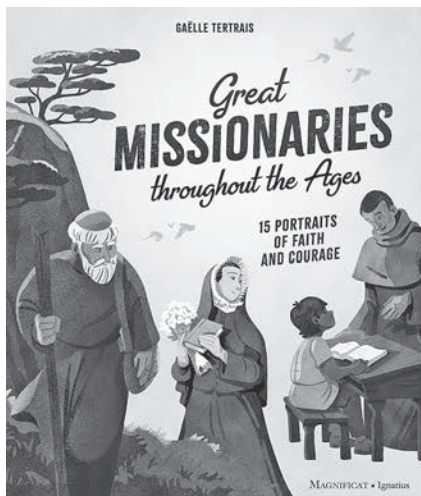
The author of an irresistible read, Haley Stewart tells the tale of a search party of brave mice on the hunt for a missing elderly nun, who also happens to be a mouse, on Christmas Eve.

The crew must uncover the clues hidden underneath G.K. Chesterton's home to find their missing friend. The book includes directions for making paper snowflakes and a readers' theater script.

The Curious Christmas Trail is one of two installments of the Sister Seraphina Mysteries, inspired by the Father Brown Mysteries (ages 4-8).

• *Sarah and Simon Seek and Find: The Life of Jesus* by Geert de Sutter. Magnificat (New York, 2022). 32 pp., \$14.99.

Fans of the "Where's Wal-

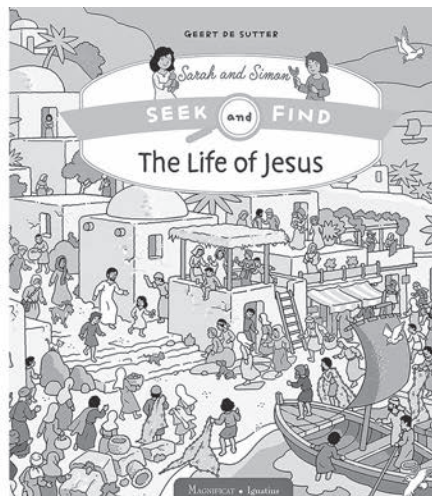


do" series, or any search-and-find book, will certainly get hooked on *Sarah and Simon Seek and Find: The Life of Jesus*. Even young pre-readers can participate in the hunt for the characters who encounter 12 major events in the life of Jesus.

Brimming with fun illustrations, this one is hard to put down. Can't find your targets right away? No problem. There is plenty to discover and learn about the life of Jesus while you are searching (ages 4 and up).

• *Our Lady of Guadalupe and Her Dear Juanito*, by Sister Marlyn Evangelina Monge, FSP, illustrated by Amy Rodriguez. Pauline Books & Media. (Boston, 2022). 56 pp., \$15.95.

Beautifully illustrated with



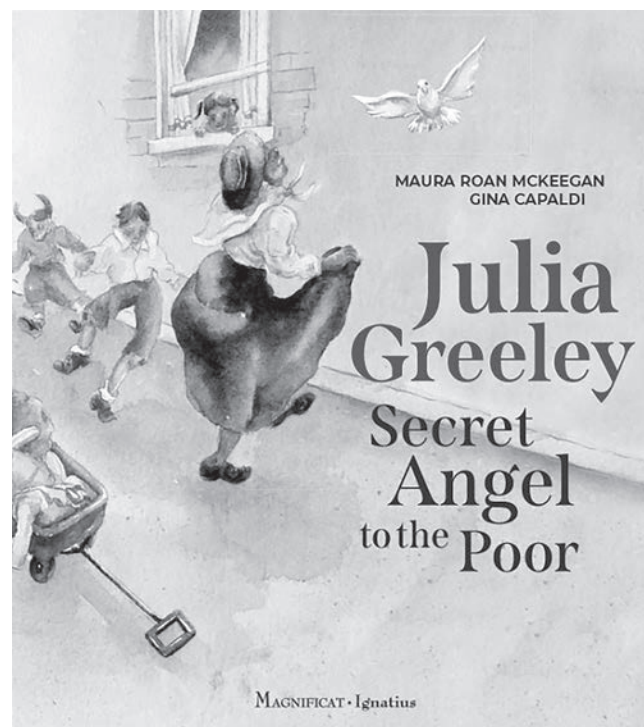
the brightly colored landscape of the Mexican countryside, *Our Lady of Guadalupe* tells the all-too familiar, yet continually inspiring, story of the lowly Juan Diego's encounter with Mary.

Mary's tenderness and forgiveness shines through in the book's text and images.

At the end of the book, readers get an in-depth description of the symbolism behind the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, perhaps giving fresh insight into a frequently shared story (ages 4-8).



McKeegan, illustrated by Gina Capaldi. Magnificat (New York, 2022). 40 pp., \$15.99.



• *Julia Greeley: Secret Angel to the Poor* by Maura Roan

Born into slavery and beaten as a child, Julia Greeley spent her years of freedom selflessly serving the poor of Denver, even though she herself lived in poverty.

With an injured eye from the beating and limping from severe arthritis, Greeley was met with distrustful curiosity by some fellow parishioners.

Regardless, Greeley would deliver goods to these very neighbors during the cover of night to keep intact their dignity and reputations. Greeley died in 1918 and her cause for sainthood was introduced in 2016 (ages 8-12).

• *A Joyful Noise One Silent Night*, by Madeleine Carroll, illustrated by Randy Friemel. Isaiah Books (Little

Bookham, United Kingdom, 2022). 28 pp., \$15.38.

• *A Joyful Noise*, tells the story of a curious boy journeying from his hometown to Bethlehem to be counted in the census. Young Eliakim keeps himself busy on the long journey by gently drumming to the rhythm of the donkey's hooves taking them closer to their destination.

Upon their arrival, he hears the cry of a newborn baby, and that little drummer boy knew exactly how to calm the child (ages 3-7).

• *Great Missionaries Throughout the Ages: 15 Portraits of Faith and Courage*, by Gaëlle Tertrais, illustrated by Arnaud Clermont. Magnificat/Ignatius (New York, 2022). 96 pp., \$18.99.

Cover-to-cover text, interesting illustrations and maps, and fascinating factual sidebars make *Great Missionaries* a stand-out hardcover for elementary and middle school

students as well as anyone interested in the church's universal history and missionary ministry.

Readers will journey through time to explore the bravery and adventures of St. Paul to modern-day John Bradburne, the so-called vagabond of God who was martyred while devoting his life to the lepers of Africa (ages 10 and up).

• *The Holy Mass: On Earth as It Is in Heaven*, by Kevin and Mary O'Neill. Sophia Institute Press (Manchester, New Hampshire, 2022). 240 pp., \$34.95.

The newest addition to the Building Blocks of Faith

See BOOKS, page 23

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QUESTION

From page 8

question like this one. Readers, I believe, are more interested in factual answers than in my musings. But since I have just celebrated my 50th anniversary of ordination, I welcome this chance to share a few thoughts about those years.

Space constraints limit me to two developments that I view as great blessings in Catholic life. First is the broader involvement of laypeople in the work of the Church.

When I was ordained a half-century ago, many parishes had two lay organizations: a rosary society, which consisted of several women who offered prayers for the parish and helped out with church decorations, and a Holy Name Society, men who would make a yearly retreat and sponsor an annual parish smoker.

In the parish from which I just retired, there are now more than 400 lay parishioners who help with the work of the Church — lay catechists; lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion; those who visit and take Holy Communion to shut-ins, patients in hospitals and residents of nursing homes; men and women who staff a parish food pantry and host homeless families overnight in a parish facility, etc.

The other is the 2013 election of Francis as pope. As the editor of *Time* magazine put it, “He has not changed the words, but he’s changed the music.” Whereas many may have associated the Church in the past with rules and prohibitions, some of those same people now link the Church first of all with help to the poor, mercy and forgiveness.

PRATT

From page 9

faith, the more we want and are able to serve!

My conversations with Pat and Fr. David have resulted in a joy-filled fellowship as only the Holy Spirit can bring.

They have also sparked a plan for the growth of the ministry to more parishes in Connecticut and beyond.

A group discussion guide and more information will be available in early 2023.

Please email me — maureen@maureenpratt.com — if

you would like more information or are interested in starting a group at your parish.

Our dear Lord lavishes us with opportunities to live well.

So, we are hopeful that endings, although difficult, do not end with sadness, but become beginnings with blessings, grace and goodness, and always abundant light!

Maureen’s website is maureenpratt.com.

SILECCHIA

From page 9

Christmas decorations are not merely lazy. We may simply be waiting to celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (“Candlemas”) — a holiday that does not come until a full forty days after Christmas!

As I look ahead toward Christmas, I hope that this year I will do what my younger self could not do and see the deep joy in the special days that follow Christmas — those days that are truly the Christmas season. I hope that you might join me and, with the unique wonder that greets a new child, enjoy this special slice of an extra-ordinary time.

BOOKS

From page 22

series, *The Holy Mass* cleverly presents to readers some of the most profound ideas of the Catholic faith with some of the tiniest building blocks.

Married authors Kevin and Mary O’Neill re-create biblical scenes and the teachings of the Church with

creatively dressed Lego figurines and scenes. Some of the most abstract teachings of the Church come to life with these tangible Lego pieces, which will be sure to inspire little builders to re-create their own understanding of the faith right at home (ages 4 and up).

Daily Readings

Sunday, Dec 18

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Is. 7:10-14
Ps. 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
Rom. 1:1-7
Mt. 1:18-24

Monday, Dec 19

Jgs. 13:2-7, 24-25a
Ps. 71:3-4A, 5-6ab, 16-17
Lk. 1:5-25

Tuesday, Dec 20

Is. 7:10-14
Ps. 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
Lk. 1:26-38

Wednesday, Dec 21

St. Peter Canisius, priest and doctor of the Church
Sg. 2:8-14 or Zep. 3:14-18a
Ps. 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21
Lk. 1:39-45

Thursday, Dec 22

1 Sm. 1:24-28
(Ps.) 1 Sm. 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd
Lk. 1:46-56

Friday, Dec 23

St. John of Kanty, priest
Mal. 3:1-4, 23-24
Ps. 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10, 14
Lk. 1:57-66

Saturday, Dec 24

Morning:
2 Sm. 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Ps. 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29
Lk. 1:67-79

Sunday, Dec 25

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (Christmas)
Vigil:
Is. 62:1-5
Ps. 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Mt. 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Night:

Is. 9:1-6
Ps. 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13
Ti. 2:11-14
Lk. 2:1-14

Dawn:

Is. 62:11-12
Ps. 97:1, 6, 11-12
Ti. 3:4-7
Lk. 2:15-20

Day:

Is. 52:7-10
Ps. 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6
Heb. 1:1-6
Jn. 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Monday, Dec 26

St. Stephen, The First Martyr
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Ps. 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17
Mt. 10:17-22

Tuesday, Dec 27

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
1 Jn. 1:1-4
Ps. 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12
Jn. 20:1a, 2-8

Wednesday, Dec 28

The Holy Innocents, martyrs
1 Jn 1:5-2:2
Ps. 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8
Mt. 2:13-18

Thursday, Dec 29

St. Thomas Becket, bishop and martyr
1 Jn. 2:3-11
Ps. 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6
Lk. 2:22-35

Friday, Dec 30

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Sir. 3:2-6, 12-14 or Col. 3:12-21 or 3:12-17
Ps. 128:1-2, 3, 4-5
Mt. 2:13-15, 19-23

Saturday, Dec 31

St. Sylvester I, Pope
1 Jn. 2:18-21
Ps. 96:1-2, 11-12, 13
Jn. 1:1-18

Sunday, Jan 1

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD
Nm. 6:22-27
Ps. 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8
Gal. 4:4-7
Lk. 2:16-21

The Holy Father’s prayer intentions for December:

We pray that volunteer non-profit organizations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

The Holy Father’s prayer intentions for January:

We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.

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JEFFERSON CITY

Lordan, a mother of three, has master’s degrees in education and political science and is a former assistant international editor of Catholic News Service. She currently teaches and is a court-appointed advocate for children in foster care.

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL COLLECTION

During this holy time of giving, please remember our clergy



Christ was born to share God’s Good News. Today, our Catholic clergy dedicate their lives to sharing this same message with the world. In this issue of *The Catholic Missourian* you will find a special collection envelope. Your gift will help us educate our seminarians and provide for the needs of our infirm priests. With your gift enclosed, please place the envelope in your parish’s collection basket or give it to your local parish office.

The priests—and future priests—of the Diocese of Jefferson City thank you for your generosity!



Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight
Bishop of Jefferson City

Our Seminarians

Christopher Hoffmann
St. Vincent de Paul, Sedalia

Gregory Clever
St. George, Hermann

Jacob Hartman
St. Andrew, Holts Summit

Bryce Smith
St. Clement, St. Clement

Shane Kliethermes
Immaculate Conception, Jefferson City

Gage Neisen
Queen of Peace, Ewing

John Paul McGuire
St. Brendan, Mexico



Father Paul Clark
Director of Vocations



DIOCESE OF
Jefferson City



Vocations
CALLED TO SAINTHOOD

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR OUR SEMINARIANS
AND FOR AN INCREASE IN VOCATIONS TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD
IN THE DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY!