



The Criterion

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Seminarians and deacons process in for the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 23. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Below, teens show their joy during the opening evening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 21. (Photo courtesy of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry)

NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUTH CONFERENCE
INCYC
NOVEMBER 21-23, 2019 INDIANAPOLIS, IN





Youths from the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa, worship in song during a session at the National Catholic Youth Conference at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Nov. 22. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

NCYC teens offer promise for the present, future of the Church

“Viva Cristo Rey! Long live Christ the King!”

Those words from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s homily during the closing Mass for the biennial National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 23 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis punctuated a three-day gathering of faith for 20,000 teenagers, chaperones, clergy, religious, speakers and volunteers. The liturgy celebrating the Solemnity of Jesus Christ as King of the Universe ended the pilgrimage of faith.

And the fact that a 2012 film, *For Greater Glory*, recalled the brutal

martyrdom of 14-year-old Jose Luis Sanchez del Rio of Mexico during the *Cristero* movement where many were killed for being Catholic, as Archbishop Thompson noted, opened the eyes of teens to learn of someone their age who literally died for his faith.

See related editorial, page 4B.

Though the young people who attended NCYC will, God willing, not suffer the same as now-St. Jose Luis (canonized by Pope Francis in 2016), the teens were encouraged to have the courage to live out their lives of faith in all they say and do.

In today’s world, we know that is no easy task.

Their charge as they returned home was to harness the energy and excitement that resulted from the gathering, which offers so much promise for the present and the future of the Church. This year’s theme, “Blessed, Broken, Given” (“*Bendito, Partido, Entregado*” in Spanish) encouraged teens to use God’s gifts, not be afraid of life’s challenges, know they are never alone, and live out their vocation as missionary disciples.

We hope the stories and photos featured on pages 1A-12A in this week’s special keepsake issue of *The Criterion* paint a portrait of a young Church that is serving as a beacon of light in a troubled world.

The regular Nov. 29 issue is included as the center 12 pages of this keepsake edition. Although they are in the center, the pages are designed to be pulled out.

For more photos from the conference, visit www.CriterionOnline.com.

The regular section is labeled page 1B to 12B. Our regular features are included there: Archbishop Charles C. Thompson’s column, “Faith Alive!,” Calendar of Events, Opinion, Obituaries and other local news. We hope you enjoy the young people’s stories, their enthusiasm and their passion for our shared faith.

—Mike Krokos, editor



Teenagers show their joy dancing in a conga line during the opening evening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 21. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

‘I bless you with all my heart,’ pope tells youth in message to NCYC

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS)—Here is the text of Pope Francis’ videotaped message to the 20,000 youths and chaperones attending the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis on Nov. 21-23. It was the pope’s first recorded message to the biennial conference.



Pope Francis

Released by the Vatican in Spanish while the pope was in Thailand, the video was played with English subtitles for the youths during NCYC’s opening session:

“Dear young people of NCYC, “I send you an affectionate greeting and my prayers at this moment of encounter that you are living. May it

be an opportunity to deepen your faith and communion. May it light your missionary hearts with the courage and strength to live in and with the Lord always as a Church sent forth.

“Today, as in the beginning, we need to go out to meet each person, as it is our mission to do so, especially with those most separated and those who are suffering most. We must meet the existential peripheries of our world.

“You know from your everyday life that many are alone, that many do not know Jesus. Go, go and take the world with you. Go and fill your surroundings, even the digital ones. Not of convictions. Not to convince others. Not to proselytize. But to bear witness of the tenderness and mercy of Jesus.

“I bless you with all my heart. [Blesses viewers with the sign of the cross.] And don’t forget to pray for me. Thank you.” †

Youths share how theme of 'Blessed, Broken, Given' reflects their lives and their relationships with God

By John Shaughnessy

For 15-year-old Tabitha Njoroge, being together with 20,000 Catholic youths from across the country is a revelation, especially considering how much her life has changed in three years.



Tabitha Njoroge

Back then, Tabitha, her parents and her three sisters had left their homeland in Kenya to come to the United States.

"Back there, we were struggling to have a meal," Tabitha recalls.

It's partly why the theme of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 21-23—"Blessed, Broken, Given"—resonates so much with her.

"I'm blessed with my family. I really couldn't be myself without them. They help me a lot in my life," said Tabitha, a member of Holy Angels Parish in her new home, Indianapolis. "And 'given'—I was given a chance to come here to the United States to have a new life. It's a huge opportunity."

She paused before adding, "It's not like I'm broken, but leaving my family members at home—like my cousins—it's kind of lonely sometimes."

Tabitha's insights about her life show the dual nature of the mindset of the youths who participate in the National Catholic Youth Conference.

For three days, the 20,000 teenagers form a joyful, energetic and unifying representation of how much their Catholic faith means to them, of how much they have to offer the Church.

At the same time, all of them come with their own stories of how the theme of the conference—"Blessed, Broken, Given"—personally reflects their own lives and their ever-developing relationship with God.

Consider the story of 16-year-old McKayla Ewing.

"In early October, my grandpa had two hemorrhaging strokes," says McKayla,

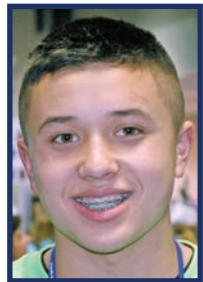


McKayla Ewing

a member of the youth group from the Diocese of Saint Cloud, Minn. "After the second one, he couldn't communicate. He's still in the hospital.

"He's a deacon, and he's always showed us how to live our faith every day.

Everyone is praying for him. To see how God is working through him—through the power of prayer—I feel so blessed by that. He's still struggling, but he's still fighting, too."



Bryce Kuo

Fifteen-year-old Bryce Kuo chose "Broken."

"That's because I want to be better at sharing God with other people," said Bryce, part of the youth group from the Diocese of Albany, N.Y. "There are a lot of people outside the

Church who aren't connected to God, and they could be if they had someone who could influence them.

"I'm blessed to have a connection with God and be here. This will help me be closer to God, and then I can help other people."



Alejandra Aguilar

Eighteen-year-old Alejandra Aguilar sees all three themes flowing through her life.

"I'm very thankful for everything I've been given," said Alejandra, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis. "I thank God for the

health of my family and my friends. I just hope I can give everything I can to others



Youths from the Diocese of Joliet, Ill., exude joy during the opening evening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 21 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

for all the things he has blessed me with.

"When I think about 'broken,' I think of all the battles he puts in front of you, but he knows you'll be able to conquer anything that comes your way with his help."

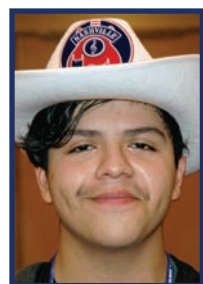
She's relying on her faith and God as she gears up for the latest challenge in her life—a challenge that she knows is also a blessing.

"I'll be the first one in my family to go to college. It's a whole new world for me. A lot of my friends have older siblings and parents who have gone through it. I have older siblings, but none of them have gone through this. My parents are from Mexico City. For me, it's all very new.

"I want to give back to the community with the degree I get. I hope to be an immigration lawyer and help people through the immigration process."

For 17-year-old Angel Rizo, there's the knowledge of just how blessed he is.

"So many of us take the things we have for granted," says Angel, part of the youth group from the Diocese of Nashville, Tenn. "We usually get things, but we never think about what God gives



Angel Rizo

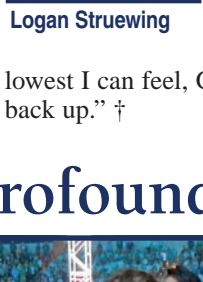
us and how we need to give back. I try to do that by going to adoration, praying for others and doing community service."

Logan Struewing focused on "Broken" as the theme that resonated most with him.

"For me and a lot of people, we all have ways we are broken," said Logan, 17, a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis. "None of us is perfect.

God knows we are broken, but he still believes in us, and he still wants us to be the best we can be.

"That gives me a lot of hope. Even when I'm feeling the lowest I can feel, God is there to pick me back up." †



Logan Struewing

Teens say youth conference impacted their lives in profound ways

By Mike Krokos

Megan Davis, Elizabeth Eberhard and Allison Dible were fired up after the opening evening session of the biennial National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 21 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Forty-eight hours later at the end of the three-day pilgrimage of faith, the teenagers from the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, admitted that their excitement had reached another level.

"It's been amazing!" said Allison, a high school senior, after the closing Mass on Nov. 23 in Lucas Oil Stadium. "It's just so incredible to see so many young people, all in one space, praising God. It's just really inspiring."

"It took my breath away. I can't begin to explain how much love there is [here]—and such beautiful community," noted



Caden Sova, left, and Reece Donahue, both of the Diocese of Helena, Mont., offered to do back flips in exchange for prayer in the thematic village during the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 23.

Elizabeth, a junior, of her fellow teens.

"Now that it's all over, I want three more days—at least," added fellow junior Megan. "I want more. I am super excited to go home and keep my faith up and help it continue to grow. It's going to be an adventure."

For the teenagers, who are members of St. John Neumann Parish in Sunbury, Ohio, the weekend included opening their hearts to God's word and taking time to listen to the messages shared by speakers.

It was the second time Elizabeth was attending NCYC, and she was eager to share the experience with new people.

Both Megan and Allison were "excited" about seeing so many young people together living out their Catholic faith.

"I hope they go home changed,"

Elizabeth added.

She was not alone in that sentiment.

"The best weekend of my life"

Karle Kramer arrived at NCYC not sure what was in store for her.

She left with a sense of how to better live out her faith.

"I think this is the best weekend of my life," said the sophomore from the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa. "I've met so many people, and I've gone to so many sessions about forgiveness. It really changed my perspective on forgiving people, not holding things in my heart, but opening myself up to [others'] perspective."

Bren Peters, a high school senior from the Diocese of Salina, Kansas, who attended NCYC two years ago, said she too wanted to use the opportunity to "grow in my faith."

So did Matthew Uhlenkamp, a junior from the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

"I came two years ago, and it was just as amazing," he said.

"You learn so much and you meet amazing people."

Area code 406 and a Bible verse

Caden Sova and Reece Donahue literally "flipped out" at this year's NCYC.

The high school seniors from the Diocese of Helena, Mont., attended the youth gathering in 2017, but this year decided that their time in the air would literally continue inside the thematic village at the youth gathering.

They both sported signs around their neck that read: "Wanna see a flip?" If a passerby said "yes," they would do a back flip for them.

But there was also a catch: They asked each person to stop what they were doing and set their alarms to pray at 4:06 p.m. later that day.

"406 is the area code for the entire state of Montana," Caden and Reece explained, "and there's a Bible verse [Phil 4:6] about praying and giving thanks



Megan Davis, left, Allison Dible and Elizabeth Eberhard, all from the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, put their hands on a Bible during the opening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 21.

(Photos by Mike Krokos)

at all times. Hopefully, we're going to have phone alarms going off all over Indianapolis."

Both teenagers were moved during adoration, seeing everyone go down to the floor on their knees in worship.

Reece admitted he was looking forward to the closing Mass on Nov. 23 as well.

"It's just so beautiful seeing 20,000-plus youths going down and receiving the Eucharist all at one time. It's the best!" he said. †





Soulful symphony of young Catholic joy soars at NCYC

By John Shaughnessy

The opening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference began with a blast of music, but not from the expected source of For King & Country, the high-energy, power-rock Christian band from Australia.

Instead, the first musical strains came from thousands of teenagers outside Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on the night of Nov. 21, as they waited in a damp drizzle for the security-checkpoint entrances on one side of the stadium to open.

The singing began with a growing serenade of “Happy Birthday” for two people in the crowd, followed by several uninhibited choruses of the lyrics, “We love Jesus deep down in my heart!”

And so the soulful symphony of young Catholic joy that always soars when 20,000 youths come together at NCYC was in full swing once again.

High notes had already been sounded earlier in the day in the conference’s thematic village in the Indiana Convention Center, a multi-sensory scene of music, games and activities for the teens from 145 dioceses across the United States and also from Australia, Canada and England.

Elle Scarborough, Morgan and Lauren Stanislav, and Abby, Ava and Kate Hughes from the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa, drew smiles and rave reviews in the karaoke area, especially when they ended their performance with an exuberant “Woo, woo!”

At 17, Hannah Renslow of the Diocese of Saint Cloud, Minn., struck a softer note as she stood with several friends and said, “If you had told me two years ago that I’d be here, I wouldn’t have believed you. I feel the friends I’ve been given have led me into the faith life I have today. Now, my faith is almost over the roof. I just want to keep it going.”

And 17-year-old Angel Rizo of the Diocese of Nashville provided a sacred chord when he shared the difference that eucharistic adoration has made in his life, “I feel blessed when I’m sitting down and talking to God, and he’s there to help me.”

‘I’m really shocked by this’

That blending of spirituality and high spirits continued into the evening when the stadium doors finally opened and the 20,000 youths came together for the first time.

Almost immediately, the teens flowed to the floor of the stadium, forming an

ever-growing conga line as they anticipated For King & Country to take the stage. Adding his own moves to the music being piped through the stadium, 16-year-old Brendan Fix of the Archdiocese of Detroit used his phone to capture the scene on video for posterity.

“I’m really shocked by this,” he said. “They always tell you there are going to be a lot of people here, but I never imagined seeing this many Catholics in one place. This gives me hope for the world that there are still so many people who care about their faith all over the country.”

Up in the stadium seats, adults Laura Zapanta and Christine Colcombe also joined in the festivities—after riding on a bus for nearly seven hours from Greensburg, a Pennsylvania community near Pittsburgh.

They were among the chaperones for the 150 youths from Greensburg who filled four buses for the trip to Indianapolis. Getting into the spirit of the evening, Zapanta and Colcombe wore glow-in-the-dark tubes of green, blue and pink in their hair. Their smiles also glowed as the two friends watched the youths on the stadium floor.

“It’s just amazing to see this many young people excited and happy,” said Zapanta.

Colcombe nodded and added, “It’s energizing and encouraging to see so many young people involved in the Catholic Church.”

Soon, For King & Country took the stage, performing a 45-minute, high-energy, power-rock set of Christian music marked by strobe lights, a burst of confetti and singer Luke Smallbone leaving the stage and going into one section of the seats, high-fiving his way through the stunned, delighted, amped crowd.

A message from the pope and a soul-stirring scene

Another surprise came from Pope Francis—a video message from him displayed on the stadium’s huge overhead screens, marking the first time that a pope has shared his wishes with the youths at NCYC. Among his brief remarks, the pope said about the youths and the conference, “May it be an opportunity to deepen your faith and communion. May it light your missionary hearts with the courage and strength to live in, and with, the Lord—always as a Church sent forth.”

The pope’s message set the stage for the praise-and-worship part of the



Youths from the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa, have a good time together performing karaoke in the thematic village in the Indiana Convention Center at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 21. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

evening—and one soul-stirring scene that left the crowd in reverent silence.

In that moment, youths from across the country ringed the stadium floor holding lit candles. At the same time, a procession—with a crucifix held high at the forefront—led a Bible to the stage for a reading from St. Luke’s Gospel, the one about Jesus’ encounter with two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

From the stage, Cleveland Bishop Nelson J. Perez reflected on the reading.

As he spoke at one point, all the lights in the stadium were on the stage, leaving the seating sections in a shroud of darkness. Bishop Perez asked everyone there to take out their cell phones and turn on its flashlight. The rest of the stadium suddenly became like a night sky pierced by thousands of points of light.

“Everybody look around at all these lights,” he said. “Remember what Jesus said: You are the light of the world. Do not, do not, do not let anybody put your light under a bushel basket. Do not let anybody extinguish your light. Do not let anybody rob you of the gift and the treasure of your faith and your dignity and your love.”

‘He restores our hope’

The theme of that gospel also became a focal point for Mary Quirk as she took the stage alone to talk with her fellow teenagers, knowing the challenges they often face.

“When we walk our hardest paths in life, God is still with us,” said Mary, a youth from

the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky. “On the road to Emmaus, the two disciples were battling with mourning, with disappointment, with fear. And still, they encountered Jesus. And he spoke God’s word to them directly, and they had their hope restored.

“Similarly, we walk long roads, hard roads, roads where we feel broken, we feel lost, we feel nervous, we feel guilty, we feel that maybe we can’t go on. But we do. Because it’s in these times that God comes to us. He speaks his word, and he restores our hope.”

As the opening session of NCYC neared its end, the house band led the crowd in the repeated singing of the musical verse, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”

The impact of music even continued for many of the youths as they left the stadium to head to their hotels in a cold rain.

On one street near the stadium, a group of youths walked and sang, “I’ve got that joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart!”

On another corner in front of the stadium, a street musician blew his trumpet to the tune of “When the Saints Come Marching In,” leading the passing youths to clap and sing along.

The soulful symphony of Catholic youths sharing their joy for their faith echoed into the night and continued throughout the conference, sounding a hopeful note for the future.

(Natalie Hoefler contributed to this story.) †

Apostolic nuncio exhorts young people at NCYC to know that Christ is alive

By Sean Gallagher

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, told the 20,000 young people attending the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 22 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis that Pope Francis had shared with him his desire to be in Indianapolis with them.

The only problem was, the pope was scheduled to visit Thailand and Japan during the biennial youth conference.



Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, speaks on Nov. 22 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis to the 20,000 people attending the National Catholic Youth Conference. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

“So, he said to me, ‘Go to Indianapolis and speak in my name,’” Archbishop Pierre recalled.

The nuncio then shared with his listeners a message for them from the pope given to him by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State.

“The Holy Father asks young people to discern—that’s a very important word—prayerfully—another important word,” Archbishop Pierre said. “When you pray, you ask the Lord what he wants for you today, how the Lord is calling you to a way of life marked by generous self-giving and faithful discipleship so that you may serve the Church and those most in need with joy and love.”

After sharing this message, Archbishop Pierre reflected on Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation released earlier this year, “*Christus Vivit*” (“Christ is Alive”), on youth and vocational discernment.

During his remarks, he interacted often with his listeners, asking them questions, making jokes, often to much cheering.

Describing his young listeners as “the now of God,” Archbishop Pierre exhorted them to be missionaries.

“You are the most

important part of the Church,” he said to cheers. “You are the missionaries of the Church, missionaries to your friends, missionaries to your families, missionaries to the old people, missionaries to the priests. You know, the priests, they need to have you on their side, and also the bishops.”

Archbishop Pierre reflected on a quote from St. Francis de Sales, a French saint who died in 1622. “Be who you are and be that well to give honor to the Master Craftsman whose handiwork you are.”

“You are all beautiful people,” Archbishop Pierre said. “You know, you are not beautiful because of you, but because God made you beautiful. This is the difference. So, we are proud to be who we are, because God made us who we are. And we are faithful to the will of God, to honor the Craftsman whose handiwork you are.”

He later spoke about the three primary truths of the faith that Pope Francis said in his exhortation that young people should remember for themselves and proclaim to others through their lives: God love you; God is your Savior; God is alive.

“God loves you,” Archbishop Pierre said, later quoting the exhortation. “He loves you even if, at times, you sin and disappoint him or others. Pope Francis asks you to ‘trust that the memory of God is not a hard disk that saves and archives all your data.’ No. This is not the mindset of God. His memory is a heart filled with tender compassion, one that finds joy in

deleting every trace of evil” (#115).

In sharing with his listeners the importance of knowing God as our Savior, Archbishop Pierre said that the pope wants them to have their “eyes fixed on the outstretched arms of the Crucified One. He reconciles and saves.”

“So spend time watching him, contemplating him,” Archbishop Pierre said. “Your prayer should be just looking at the cross, because from the cross comes love. And we all need to be loved and saved.”

Finally, the nuncio turned to the truth that Christ is alive.

“This is the essence of Christian faith,” Archbishop Pierre said. “Death does not have the last word. Jesus is risen. He is alive. He is alive in your life—in your life.”

In his parting words, he complimented those attending NCYC and had a message for the Catholics of central and southern Indiana.

“My young friends, I’m impressed because you are here, because the Church is here,” Archbishop Pierre said. “And the Church is the body of Christ. It is the sacrament of his presence in this place.”

“I would like to say to the archbishop of Indianapolis [Charles C. Thompson] that we are blessed today. So also are you a blessing for the Church in this archdiocese.

“So, something is happening here. You can feel it in the air. Christ is here. He is alive in you. May he live always in you. And may you be blessed, broken and given to our world so that it may be more merciful.” †

Shouts of ‘Viva Cristo Rey!’ mark NCYC closing Mass

By Natalie Hoefler

A spirit of joy permeated Lucas Oil Stadium as the call-and-response rang out. But it was not the typical call heard in the stadium home of the Indianapolis Colts. Nor was it led by any ordinary fan.

“Viva Cristo Rey!” shouted Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

“Viva!” cried 20,000 Catholic youths, chaperons, volunteers, youth ministers and seminarians, priests and bishops.

It was the call of a shepherd during the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) on Nov. 23 in Indianapolis. And it was the response of the faithful—as well as several hundred priests and six bishops concelebrating the Mass on the Solemnity of Christ, King of the Universe, the feast ending the 2019 liturgical year.

In his homily, Archbishop Thompson explained that “Viva Christo Rey,” meaning “long live Christ the King,” became the cry of the *Cristero* movement fighting for religious freedom in Mexico in the 1920s when the Mexican government severely persecuted the Catholic Church in the country.

During the war, the archbishop explained that Jose Luis Sanchez del

Rio, “refused to denounce Jesus Christ as King, even to the point of death. Just before being shot, he is said to have shouted out ‘Viva Cristo Rey!’ ”

Jose Luis Sanchez del Rio was just 14 years old.

“[He] was canonized a saint by Pope Francis in 2016,” Archbishop Thompson told the youths. “Yes, he was one of you.”

The leader of the Church in central and southern Indiana expounded on the topic of king to the youths on this special feast day.

“The idea of a king tends to conjure up notions of power, royalty, prestige, wealth, crowns, thrones, castles, servants and privilege,” he said.

But “no such notions” are associated with Christ, King of the Universe, he noted.

“Our Scripture readings, particularly Luke’s Gospel account of the crucifixion, depicts one who is declared a king in ridicule, persecution and death,” Archbishop Thompson explained. “He is taunted, made to suffer and condemned as a criminal. Made to wear a crown of thorns. Thrust upon a cross as his throne. Bloodied, bruised, beaten and stripped of every thread of human decency.”

And yet we worship him today as our king and Savior, the archbishop said. “Christ and his young Church are indeed alive!” he exclaimed, noting that at NCYC “grace has flowed abundantly in various ways, and hopefully we will all leave here richer for the time spent in relation to God and one another.”

He encouraged the youths to “remain Christ-centered ... and trust in the grace of the Holy Spirit that has signed, sealed and claimed you as a beloved child of God. No power in the world can take that from you.

“You have been called to holiness and mission, claiming your place in the Church, claiming your place in the Kingdom of God. ...

“Until next NCYC or we meet in Paradise, may each of us exude the joy of the Gospel proclaiming, ‘Viva Cristo Rey! Viva Cristo Rey! Viva Cristo Rey!’ ”

Franciscan Friars of the Renewal Father Agustino Torres and Katie Prejean McGrady, emcees for this year’s NCYC, introduced the emcees for NCYC 2021 before the final blessing at Mass.

Raucous cheers rang out as they called out the names of Society of Our Lady of the Holy Trinity Sister Miriam James Heidland and Brian Greenfield as the two ran up the ramp to the altar.

Father Agustino and McGrady prayed over the next two emcees. Then author and Catholic radio co-host Sister Miriam announced the theme for NCYC 2021: “Ablaze.”

“That means the Holy Spirit is going to come into your life, transform your life [and] set you on fire so you can preach Christ to the ends of the world!” she cried.

Campus minister, author and national speaker Brian Greenfield added that the 2021 theme comes from chapter two of the Acts of the Apostles, “when the Holy Spirit came upon the upper room and blessed and empowered the Apostles. ...

“We’ve got two years to get ready for this, two years for what the Holy Spirit wants to do. So what does that mean?”

“It means this: read Acts, chapter two,” he said, following on a call throughout NCYC 2019 for youths to read the Scripture daily. “Prepare your hearts. ... Pray every day with all your hearts. Pray for one another, pray for us, pray for the Church.”

Archbishop Thompson also called for the youths to pray for their bishops, and also for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis as it prepares for the next biennial conference.

“Dear young people, brothers and sisters in Christ, your witness of being blessed, broken and given is essential to the Church, the mission of the Lord,” he said. “Now you can applaud yourselves.”



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson serves as the principal celebrant for the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 23.

(Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Society of Our Lady of the Holy Trinity Sister Miriam James Heidland shares some remarks with the 20,000 youths, chaperones and youth ministers in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the conference’s closing Mass on Nov. 23. Near the end of the Mass, she and Brian Greenfield were announced as the emcees for NCYC 2021. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in Indiana gives Communion to an NCYC participant at the Nov. 23 closing Mass. (Photo by Mike Krokos)

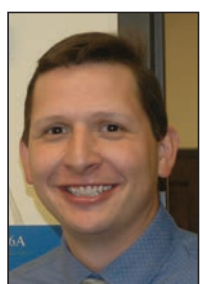


Youths from around the country hold hands for the Our Father during NCYC’s closing Mass in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 23. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Powerful moments during conference lead teens to closer bond with Christ

By John Shaughnessy

Two powerful moments stand out to Paul Sifuentes as he recalls the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis.



Paul Sifuentes

The first one occurred on the evening of Nov. 22 when the 20,000 youths from across the country once again came together in Lucas Oil Stadium, this time for eucharistic adoration.

“They had rushed the stage earlier to get closer to bands,

but this time they rushed the stage to get closer to the Lord in the Eucharist,” said Sifuentes, the director of youth ministry for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. “It was powerful seeing them try to get closer to Christ.”

The second special moment for

Sifuentes happened on the closing night of the conference on Nov. 23, as Mass was celebrated for the youths from 145 dioceses across the United States and also from Australia, Canada and England.

“Leading up to the conference, we had talked about the highlight of the week needing to be the Mass, and the climax of the Mass needing to be the receiving of the Eucharist. And it was.

“It was beautiful because everyone has a different experience of NCYC, and everyone is on their own pilgrimage, but we all come together at the end, and we all receive Jesus Christ. He’s the one who unites us. He is who empowers us. And he is who sends us forth. And all those youths are going to receive Christ again when they go home.”

Sifuentes hopes the beauty and power of those encounters with Christ stay with the 20,000 youths into the future. He especially hopes that connection continues to shape the lives of the 1,456 youths from the archdiocese who participated in NCYC.

“My hope for them is that they had

a powerful experience, an enriching pilgrimage, and that they see their life as a larger pilgrimage that they’re always journeying. There may not be the crazy hats and the crazy experiences of NCYC, but there are opportunities to encounter Christ and draw closer to Christ” in their families, parishes and communities.

He also sees the youths’ experiences at NCYC as an opportunity for their parishes to make a special effort to learn more about the faith-filled moments their youthful members had during the three-day conference.

“These youths who had these encounters with Christ at NCYC need to come back to their parishes and share their powerful moments,” Sifuentes noted. “Adults should ask them, ‘What were the powerful moments? Where did you see Christ?’ ”

Sifuentes also expressed his appreciation for the more than 900 volunteers who worked to help create a safe environment for the youths and the adult chaperones who accompanied them.

“I am personally thankful for each of them. Their involvement allowed our youth to encounter Christ. And I think those volunteers would say they had a powerful experience themselves.”

He hopes the number of volunteers increases even more in the years ahead when NCYC is scheduled to return to Indianapolis in 2021, 2023 and 2025.

“The more people we can have at NCYC having a powerful experience, the better it is for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church in central and southern Indiana.”

Sifuentes says that’s the ultimate goal for the archdiocese in serving as the host for the most recent NCYC and the ones in the future.

“It says we’re committed to youth, that we place a priority on helping teenagers encounter Jesus Christ. We’re a welcoming community, and we’ll work hard and roll up our sleeves for people to join us here.” †



Blessed • Broken • Given



Above, young Catholics from around the country encircle the floor of Lucas Oil Stadium holding candles during the opening session of NCYC on Nov. 21. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Above, Congregation of Mary Queen Sister Faustina Le of the Springfield-Cape Girardeau Diocese in Missouri and Sara Brown of the Archdiocese of Atlanta share a joyful moment playing a game before a session on Nov. 22 during NCYC. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Above, a spotlight shines through the smoke of burning incense while Father Josh Johnson of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, La., celebrates Benediction on Nov. 22 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during NCYC. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



Left, wearing big foam cowboy hats representing their roots in Texas, youths from the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston compete in a game of Jenga in the thematic park of NCYC in Indianapolis. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Above, youths and chaperones from St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis pose for a group photo in the thematic park at NCYC on Nov. 21. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

NCYC 2019



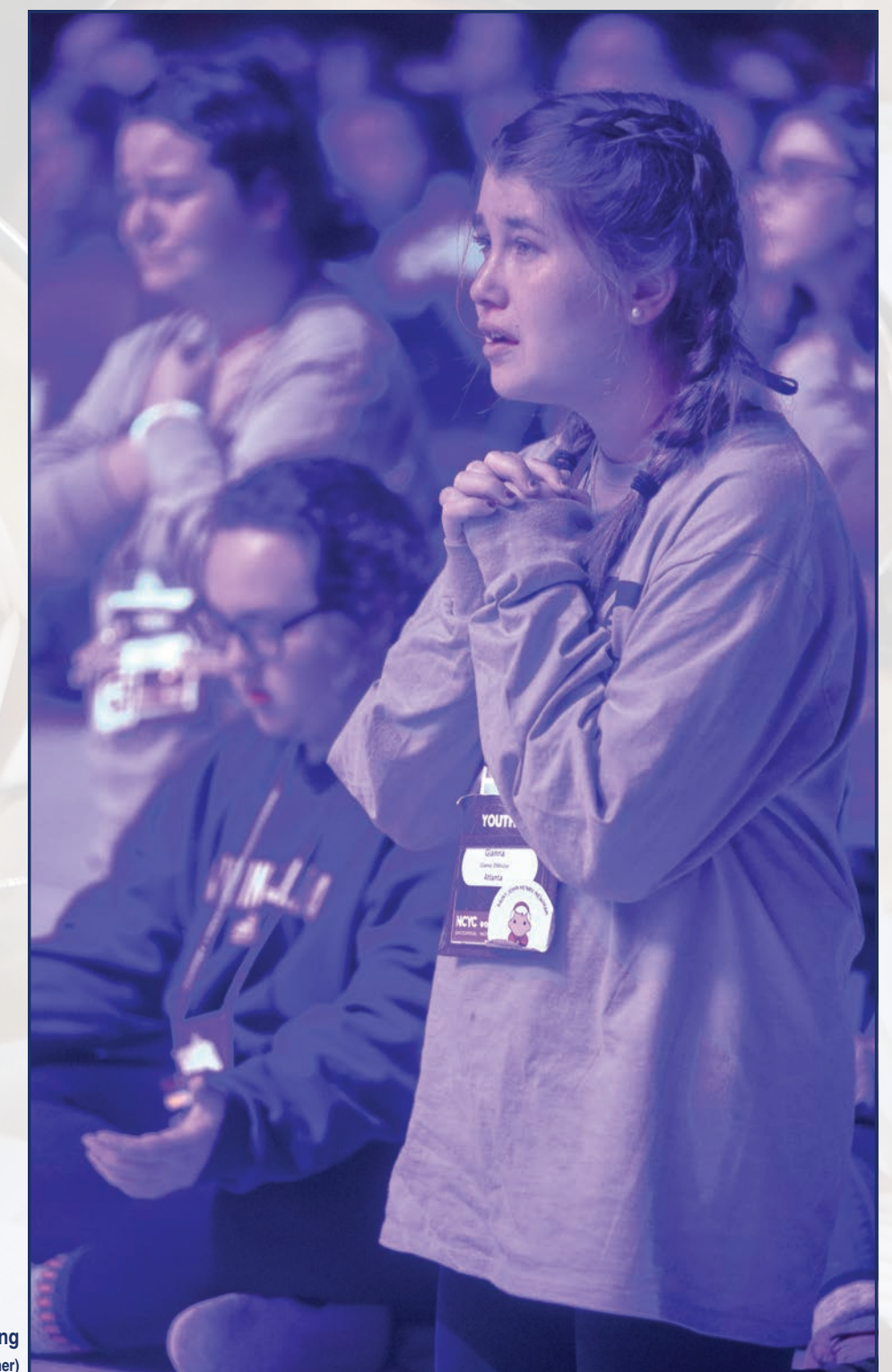
Above, confetti floats down on the crowd and the Christian rock band For King & Country during the opening night of NCYC at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 21. (Photo courtesy of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry)



Left, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson shares his homily during the closing Mass of NCYC at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 23. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Above, the youths who participated in NCYC's Top Talent show line up for a photo after the contest. Miley Azbill of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati holding a plaque in the center, was the winner. (Photo by Mike Krokos)



Right, Gianna DiMuzio of the Archdiocese of Atlanta cries while kneeling in prayer during eucharistic adoration on Nov. 22 in Lucas Oil Stadium during NCYC. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)



The

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Faith and family

Find joy and hope in life's trials through Jesus during Advent, page 8B.

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Pope Francis names Detroit priest as new bishop of Gary Diocese

Criterion staff report

Pope Francis has named Msgr. Robert J. McClory, rector of the National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica in Royal Oak, Mich., to head the Diocese of Gary, Ind.



Bishop-designate Robert J. McClory

He succeeds Bishop Donald J. Hying, who was installed as the bishop of Madison, Wis., on June 25 after serving as the bishop of Gary since 2015.

The appointment was announced in Washington on Nov. 26 by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Bishop-designate McClory, 56, has been shrine rector since 2017. A native of Detroit, he was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit in 1999.

"I am honored and humbled that the Holy Father has appointed me as the bishop of Gary," said Bishop-designate McClory in a prepared statement. "During this week in which we celebrate Thanksgiving, my heart is full of thanksgiving that he has entrusted me to serve the people of northwest Indiana.

"I look forward to getting to know the needs of our local Church and, together, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ."

His ordination and installation as the fifth bishop of Gary is scheduled for Feb. 11, 2020.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was glad for the news of the appointment.

"We are most grateful to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for this timely appointment," he said. "On behalf of the Province of Indianapolis, which comprises all of Indiana, I congratulate and welcome Bishop-designate Robert McClory. The Indiana bishops and members of the Indiana Catholic Conference look forward to serving with Bishop-designate McClory as he shepherds the Diocese of Gary."

The bishop-designate currently serves on the Archdiocese of Detroit's episcopal council, college of consultors and priest assignment board. He has also taught canon law part time at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit.

He previously served in different capacities in the chancery of the Detroit Archdiocese and in its parishes.

See GARY DIOCESE, page 11B



The archdiocese's Catholic Charities executive director David Bethuram, left, Catholic Charities USA president and chief executive officer Dominican Sister Donna Markham, and Archbishop Charles C. Thompson are all smiles in the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis after the 100th anniversary celebration dinner on Nov. 20 for Catholic Charities in the archdiocese. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

'Be the Light': Catholic Charities celebrates 100 years of hope with a promise to continue to help others

By John Shaughnessy

During a night of eloquent tributes celebrating 100 years of Catholic Charities in the archdiocese, the most moving words came from people whose lives have been touched by its Christ-like compassion and care.

Wiping away tears, a woman said, "Everything that they've ever been able to do for me was greatly appreciated—with diapers, formula, helping with my grandson. I had nothing. Absolutely nothing. And I was thankful for what they did."

A man who has turned his life around after being homeless shared this thought about the time he and his family spent at Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis, "[The shelter] has taught me to, 'Just be patient, just take your time, get up and do what you need to do. We're not going to do it for you.' That's what I love about them. They are not going to do it for you."

Referring to the help given to his family, a refugee who is also a father noted, "I attribute what we have today through our faith, through the Catholic Church bringing us over and helping us

along the way."

These three humble tributes were part of a video presentation during the 100th anniversary celebration dinner on Nov. 20 at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis—a celebration that had the theme, "Be the Light."

Catholic Charities has been a light to these three people and more than 210,000 others in the past year, according to its executive director, David Bethuram.

See 100 YEARS, page 11B

During Japan visit, pope calls people to live with gratitude and compassion

TOKYO (CNS)—Beauty, creation and each human life are gifts of God to be treasured and shared, not enslaved to current societal ideas of what is valuable, perfect or productive, Pope Francis said at a Mass in the famous Tokyo Dome.

"We are invited as a Christian community to protect all life and testify with wisdom and courage to a way of living marked by gratitude and compassion, generosity and simple listening," the pope told an estimated 50,000 people gathered in the stadium for Mass on Nov. 25.

At the Mass, with young people earlier in the day and later during a meeting with government officials and cultural leaders, Pope Francis shared his concern about the high rates of suicide in Japan and about the enormous pressure the culture places on young people to succeed.

In his homily, the pope said the freedom people should enjoy as children

of God "can be repressed and weakened if we are enclosed in a vicious circle of anxiety and competition," or if people are convinced that what they produce or consume determines their worth.

When Jesus tells his followers not to be anxious, Pope Francis said, he's not saying basic necessities like food and shelter are unimportant, but he is telling them that a single-minded focus on success and individual happiness "in reality leaves us profoundly unhappy and enslaved, and hinders the authentic development of a truly harmonious and humane society."

Catholics need to embrace and teach others to embrace "things that are not perfect," particularly by demonstrating that all human beings are deserving of love, he said. "Is a disabled or frail person not worthy of love? Someone who happens to be a foreigner, someone who

See JAPAN, page 12B



Pope Francis greets the crowd before celebrating Mass in Tokyo Dome in Tokyo on Nov. 25. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Judge blocks scheduled executions of federal death-row inmates in Terre Haute

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A federal judge on Nov. 20 temporarily blocked the executions of four federal death-row inmates scheduled for December and January at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, saying the lethal injections they were to receive goes against the Federal Death Penalty Act (FDPA).



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and other death penalty opponents applauded U.S. District Court Judge Tanya Chutkan's decision.

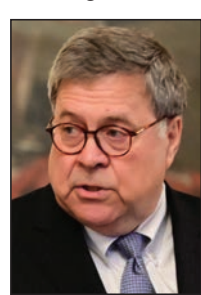
"This is indeed, at least for the moment, most welcome news!" the archbishop said on Nov. 21. "We continue to pray for them [those on death row], for their victims and their families, and to promote the dignity of life."

Providence Sister Barbara Battista, Justice Promotor for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, said, "We applaud the judge's decision to grant this preliminary injunction. We continue our work to abolish the death penalty, knowing that there's never justification for the state to take another person's life. We won't rest until the death penalty is abolished in every state in this country, as well as the federal government's use of the death penalty."

The men who were facing execution in December and January include: Daniel Lewis Lee, Wesley Ira Purkey, Alfred Bourgeois, and Dustin Lee Honken. A fifth inmate, Lezmond Mitchell, saw his scheduled December execution stayed last month by the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals.

When U.S. Attorney General William Barr announced in July that the government was reinstating the federal death penalty after a 16-year hiatus, he said the executions would use a single drug instead of a three-drug protocol used in recent federal executions and used by several states. Several of the inmates have challenged the use of the single lethal injection.

In her ruling, Judge Chutkan of the District of Columbia said that since the inmates were likely to win their case, their executions should be blocked until their legal challenge is resolved. The 1994



Attorney General William Barr

FDPA says federal executions should be carried out "in the manner prescribed by the law of the state in which the sentence is imposed."

Shawn Nolan, an attorney for the inmates facing execution, praised the judge's decision, saying it "prevents the government from evading accountability and making an end-run around the courts by attempting to execute prisoners under a protocol that has never been authorized by Congress."

He said in a Nov. 21 statement that the preliminary injunction makes clear "that no execution should go forward while there are still so many unanswered questions about the government's newly announced execution method."

In her ruling, Chutkan said "requiring the federal government to follow more than just the state's method of

See DEATH, page 11B

Anti-death penalty convocation, march, prayer vigil set for Dec. 8 in Terre Haute

Criterion staff report

In opposition to the death penalty, an International Human Rights Day Death Penalty Convocation will be held in Hellmann Hall at St. Benedict Parish, 111 S. 9th St., in Terre Haute, from 1-5 p.m. on Dec. 8.

At 6 p.m., a march will process one block to the Federal Courthouse, 921 Ohio St., in Terre Haute, where a prayer vigil for all victims of violence will be held until 7 p.m. Participants are then invited back to St. Benedict for food and fellowship.

At the conference, experts and leaders of state and national organizations will address the many ways the death penalty is counter to the teaching of many faith practices—including that of the Catholic Church—and fails society morally, economically and socially.

Among the speakers will be:

- Providence Sister Barbara Battista, Justice Promotor for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.
- Abraham Bonowitz of Death Penalty Action.

- Karen Burkhart of the Indiana Abolition Coalition.
- Robert Dunham of the Death Penalty Information Center
- George Kain, professor of justice and law administration at Western Connecticut State University.
- Bill Pelke, founder of Journey of Hope ... From Violence to Healing.
- Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy of Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty.

For a complete list of speakers and sponsors, to register for the free event or go to deathpenaltyaction.org.

Opponents of the death penalty can also sign a petition to Congress online at bit.ly/NoToDeathPenalty. Signers may list their first and last name, but are only required to enter their e-mail address and zip code. (To sign the petition while opting out of receiving updates from Death Penalty Action, click on "Edit Subscription Preferences" below "Add Your Name," then unselect the check box). †

Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

December 2 – 5, 2019

December 2 – 10 a.m.
Mass for high school seniors at St. Malachy Church, Brownsburg

December 3 – 9:45 a.m.
Clergy Advent Day of Prayer at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

December 3 – noon
Mass for Feast of St. Francis Xavier at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

December 3 – 3:30 p.m.
Indiana Bishops' Province meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

December 4 – 9 a.m.
Indiana Catholic Conference meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 4 – 1:45 p.m.
Ascension Annual Report meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 5 – 10 a.m.
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 5 – 2 p.m.
Mass at Marian University, Indianapolis

December 5 – 3:30 p.m.
Catholic Community Foundation Advisory Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

December 5 – 6 p.m.
Catholic Community Foundation Evening of Lights in Assembly Hall at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

(Schedule subject to change.)

Donors can still make contributions to Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship program

Criterion staff report

The opportunity still exists for people who want to get the double bonus of helping children attend Catholic schools and maximize the tax benefits of making a contribution to that effort before the end of 2019.

Starting on July 1, the Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship program opened with an available \$15 million in funds to support the effort of helping students attend a private school—an option that may not have been possible for their families without the program.

There was more than \$9.6 million still available as of Nov. 20. This year's

program runs through June 30, 2020.

A Tax Credit Scholarship of at least \$500 per child, given for one year, allows an eligible student to receive the state school voucher the following year and for up to 12 years of Catholic education in a Catholic school—a potential of \$60,000 in state voucher assistance.

When donors make a contribution to the program, they will receive a 50 percent state tax credit—and possibly federal tax savings, depending upon an individual's overall charitable contributions.

To learn more about giving to a scholarship granting organization or to donate securely online, visit www.i4qed.org/sgo/donors. †

What was the best Christmas gift you ever received—or gave? Share it with our readers



The best gift that God ever gave the world arrived on Christmas. Beyond the gift of Jesus in our lives, *The Criterion* is asking readers to share the stories of the best Christmas gifts they have ever received—or given.

Please send your responses by

Dec. 12 to *The Criterion's* editor Mike Krokos by e-mail at mkrokos@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime number where you can be reached. †

Official Appointment

Effective Immediately

serve the Korean Catholic Community.

Rev. Jinsung Pius Park, Diocese of Busan, Korea, to parochial vicar at St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis

(This appointment is from the office of the Most Rev. Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis.) †



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Want to add to hope, joy, reflection and healing? You can do Advent

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Compared to Christmas, Easter and Lent, Advent is the Maytag repairman of liturgical seasons. Hardly anybody calls on it.

To many, Advent may seem like four weeks of the priest wearing purple vestments at Mass, while people are otherwise hurtling about trying to get ready for Christmas. The sentiment is understandable, since Walmart posted Christmas displays in stores even before Halloween was over, and some radio station in virtually every city of any size has been playing nothing but Christmas songs since before Veterans Day.

But if Catholics do take time for Advent, which begins on Dec. 1 this year, they can find it to be a meaningful season.

“I love Advent!” said Kim Smolik, CEO of the Leadership Roundtable. “I love that Advent is a time that we have an opportunity to reflect on the many blessings in our life and to show our gratitude.

“I know we get pulled in other directions,” Smolik added, but Advent is for her “a time to slow down and to be with people. That’s what I think the season is about.

“And hope. Hope. It’s a season of hope.”

Given the scandals that have scarred Catholicism in the U.S. over the past year and a half, Smolik said, Advent can be the time for Catholics to ask themselves, “How can I contribute to the healing in our Church? What new life can I bring to the Church and how can I bring that forward in the next year?”

Smolik said one help for her is a Nativity scene. “I think that is putting our focus on Jesus, on healing, on light, on hope,” she added. “I think we can use that Nativity scene in our home. We can sit and be present at a place of meditation and prayer.”

Joe Boland, vice president of mission for Chicago-based Catholic Extension, also finds great comfort in the crèche.

Catholic Extension, which provides material and spiritual assistance to mission territories in the Church in the U.S., promotes a concept called “Meet Your Crèche,” catholicextension.org/nativity. “The way that I’m going to meet my crèche through the lens of Catholic Extension and as a Catholic is really through an encounter with the poor,” Boland told Catholic News Service.

“Pope Francis keeps calling us to this idea of encounter. For me, for us, the

crèche and the Nativity scene is a moment of encounter. It’s Christ encountering the world in a very unique and special way now,” he said.

“It’s going to be my moment with my own kids—they’re 10, 8 and 6. They know their dad goes out around the country and meets a lot of kids. [It’s] really important to think about the crèche. Jesus is born into poverty, and from poverty, we learn a lot.”

He spoke of the hope people in Puerto Rico have despite the devastation they have suffered. Catholic Extension has ministered in Puerto Rico for a century, yet many are “recovering from the still-devastating effects of Hurricane Maria. Two years later and still absolutely no rebuilding yet,” Boland said.

“But people still talk about their hope and God’s solidarity with them as a people,” he said, and “a sense of joy that God has given them life and they’re going to use the best of their ability to help them and their neighbor.”

The destruction there includes hurricane damage to 20 churches, yet people are “going out and still meeting their neighbors.”

He recounted the tale of a Puerto Rican boy whose father has to work far away from home to earn money for the family. When the subject of Christmas came up, the boy’s idea, according to Boland was: “We can put our gift in the front, and Dad will come home.”

De La Salle Christian Brother Javier Hansen, a religion teacher at Cathedral High School in El Paso, Texas, sets out to instill habits his students may not have in cultivating Advent customs.

“A lot of our students cross the border [with Mexico] every day. I envy them in some sense because they go home and pray the rosary together,” said Brother Javier, adding that earlier in November, he “went over with them.”

He noted that various institutions have their own calendar—the school year, the monthly calendar and “the Church also has a liturgical year that begins in Advent.”

A big fan of Advent music, Brother Javier said he’ll sit with his students and sing Advent songs with them.

“Advent tells a real story of our faith,” he added. “Part of my job is to write reflections to the parents and the



The sequence of lighting the candles on an Advent wreath is to light the first purple candle on the first Sunday of Advent, which is on Dec. 1 this year. Then move clockwise and light a second purple candle for the second Sunday of Advent, Dec. 8. On the third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 15, also known as *Gaudete* Sunday, the pink candle is lit. The last purple candle is lit on the fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 22. (CNS photo/Ann M. Augherton, *Arlington Herald*)

larger school community on virtues such as patience. That’s a big virtue that’s associated with the season.”

Students, he said, “need a small reminder at times that secular society’s not helping us

all the time when they’re putting Christmas ornaments in stores and everything, and [make it seem] that Advent doesn’t exist. That’s not their main intention, but that’s kind of what it’s doing to us.” †

Pope Francis’ prayer intention for December



• **The Future of the Very Young**—That every country take the measures necessary to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering.

(To see Pope Francis’ monthly intentions, go to www.archindy.org/popessintentions.) †

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Editorial



A teen from Waukee, Iowa, in the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa, raises her hands in praise in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Nov. 23 during the National Catholic Youth Conference. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

NCYC participants confirm 'Christ is alive' in young people

As we mark the long Thanksgiving holiday this weekend, many of us will gather with family to celebrate life's blessings.

But here in central Indiana, faith, spiritual food, fellowship and fun were front and center for 20,000 teenagers, chaperones, speakers and volunteers who celebrated during the biennial National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) at the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 21-23. And what a celebration of faith it was!

The conference's theme was "Blessed, Broken, Given" (*"Benedito, Partido, Entregado"* in Spanish).

Presented by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and hosted by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the three-day pilgrimage of faith reminded young people that "Christ is Alive" in the world, the title of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation to young people released earlier this year.

And as in years past when the gathering was held here, we came away from the weekend with great hope for our Church as we saw young people energized to embrace Christ and be beacons of light in a world where darkness has become much too prevalent.

In NCYC's first-ever videotaped message from a pope, shown during the first night of the event, Pope Francis reminded the teens that the gathering was "an opportunity to deepen your faith and communion. May it light your missionary hearts with the courage and strength to live in and with the Lord always as a Church sent forth."

The Holy Father implored the teens "to go out to meet each person, as it is our mission to do so, especially with those most separated and those who are suffering most. We must meet the existential peripheries of our world.

"You know from your everyday life that many are alone, that many do not know Jesus. Go, go and take the world with you. Go and fill your surroundings, even the digital ones. Not of convictions. Not to convince others. Not to proselytize. But to bear witness of the tenderness and mercy of Jesus."

The call to go, to be sent forth and to be a missionary disciple is a message that Pope Francis has constantly delivered throughout his pontificate. And as emcee Katie Prejean McGrady said on the opening night, the pope's

exhortation to young people tells them, "we need your momentum, we need your energy, we need your insight. That's why we're here!"

Conference attendees were asked to bring a Bible to Indianapolis, and Prejean McGrady and co-emcee Father Agustino Torres, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, led the youths in a commitment to spending time with God in his word every day during NCYC.

"All of you who pledge to read the Bible every day, stay standing ... and raise your Bibles high," said Prejean McGrady.

Besides the workshops and seminars that young people attended, prayer and the sacraments were also an integral aspect of the gathering. Masses were celebrated every day, lines to receive the sacrament of reconciliation were lengthy, and the teens showed great reverence during eucharistic adoration. Some were even moved to tears as they reflected on the great gifts our faith offers us.

Cleveland Bishop Nelson J. Perez opened the conference reminding young people that they would receive our faith's greatest gift during the conference. "Bread will be blessed, will be broken, and will be given. No ordinary bread, though. It will be Jesus himself, who comes to nourish you, nurture you, strengthen you, heal you, save you and love you," the bishop said.

Participants like Megan Davis, Elizabeth Eberhard and Allison Dible, all teenagers from the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, came away from the weekend energized, inspired and eager to go home and let their faith shine.

"It's been amazing!" said Allison, a high school senior, after the closing Mass on Nov. 23 in the Lucas Oil Stadium. "It's just so incredible to see so many young people, all in one space, praising God. It's just really inspiring."

"It took my breath away. I can't begin to explain how much love there is [here]—and such beautiful community," noted Elizabeth, a junior, of her fellow teens.

"Now that it's all over, I want three more days—at least," added fellow junior Megan. "I want more. I am super excited to go home and keep my faith up and help it continue to grow. It's going to be an adventure."

The Nov. 21-23 celebration of faith indeed confirmed that "Christ is alive" in young people's hearts.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Greg Erlandson

Advent: Can we do it?

How is your supply of Christmas cheer doing these days? Mine is in rather short supply.



Every year around this time, I grouse about the Christmas ads in September and the Christmas music in October, the carefully crafted marketing intended to prompt a Pavlovian response of debt-fueled consumerism.

William Wordsworth wrote, "The world is too much with us; late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." Getting and spending, that is par for the course during what passes for Advent in our society. But this year, I'm focused on "the world is too much with us."

I want very much to be in a positive frame of mind since, generally speaking, we Americans are—so the world thinks—naively and sunnily optimistic. Ah, if only it were so.

No, the world is too much with me. Our politics are a shambles. We've taken the two-party system and turned it into World War I and trench warfare. No one trusts anyone, and whoever I might be for or against, I have grown weary of the endless and inconclusive battles.

Our Church seems often to be no better. Once it was only fundamentalist bigots who made hyperbolic charges about Catholics. Today we do it ourselves. With the energy Catholics once expended missionizing continents and building cathedrals, we now expend berating each other. Who needs the Inquisition? We have social media. We are all little popes now, self-bestowed with the gift of infallibility.

And in my chosen profession of journalism, we are watching the deconstruction of an entire industry, with newspapers collapsing and opinion replacing reporting. Hedge funds gobble up profitable enterprises, plunder the assets to reward investors and discard the human beings like so much slag from a strip mine.

Everywhere I turn, "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity," as W.B. Yeats wrote. We increasingly resemble this remark.

And yet here we are in Advent, slouching toward Bethlehem. For four weeks, we travel with Mary and Joseph. The Church invites us to slow our pace, setting aside all that disturbs us and calming our unquiet hearts. Can we do it?

"Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain," (Is 2:3) Isaiah says in week one. Let us beat our swords into plowshares. Indeed, this is the time when we "throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light," (Rom 13:12) in St. Paul's words.

Isaiah predicts in week two that when the Messiah comes, "the wolf shall be the guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid" (Is 11:6). We are living in the age of the Messiah, and St. Paul urges us to "think in harmony with one another" (Rom 15:5) so that with one voice we can glorify God.

In week three, Isaiah promises that "the desert and the parched land will exult" (Is 35:1). Our souls seem barren now, but James writes that we "must be patient" (Jas 5:8) He urges us not to complain about one another "that you may not be judged" (Jas 5:9). It may feel at times that this will take more patience than is possible, yet James urges us to be strong "because the coming of the Lord is at hand" (Jas 5:8).

And in week four, if we have heeded the words of the Apostles and prophets, we are assured that "the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Mt 18:21), and he will "save his people from their sins" (Mt 18:21).

The Advent liturgies are speaking to us, if only we have ears to hear their messages of reform and hope. So let us put down our brickbats and stay away from our keypads. At least until New Year's.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.) †

Letter to the Editor

Veterans Day story brings back memories and treasure of receiving, writing letters

I truly enjoyed the article by John Shaughnessy in the Nov. 8 issue of *The Criterion* about Sophia Egold and the friendship she developed through writing letters to World War II veteran Frank Barbour. It brought back many memories.

I was 7 and 8 when my dad was serving in England with the Army Air Corp during World War II in 1943 and 1944.

He wrote us many letters (V-mail, which could be censored) and that is probably where I got my enjoyment of letter writing. I wonder if my dad crossed paths with Frank Barbour while in England?

I was also born and raised in Boston, but lived in New Hampshire with my

mom and two brothers while Dad was serving in England.

My brothers, husband and grandson are also veterans. I'm very proud of them and all those serving our country.

Another memory—back when having pen pals was in vogue—was the pen pal I had in England for many years.

Handwritten letters are always enjoyed. As Sophia said, "There is nothing like getting a letter."

Thanks to John Shaughnessy for his interesting articles.

Jane Wilson
Speedway

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit

letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to "Letters to the Editor," *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †



Christ the Cornerstone

Let Advent be a time of hope and forgiveness

“Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come” (Mt 24:42-44).

Yesterday we celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday, a time to express our gratitude for all God’s blessings. This weekend, we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent, a season of joyful anticipation for our Lord’s coming again. Both should be occasions of great joy!

But Advent is also a penitential season. It’s a time when we prepare ourselves for the gifts of forgiveness and mercy that Christ will share with us when he comes again. During this holy season, we purify our hearts and our lives in eager anticipation of our Lord’s return.

Forgiveness was God’s motive for sending his only Son to be born among us as a man. As a result of human

sinfulness, we were cut off from God’s goodness and exiled from the garden of peace and prosperity. By God’s grace, we have been saved in Christ, and our sins have been forgiven.

As Christians, we believe in the forgiveness of sins. We believe that the grace of Christ has opened the way for us to repent and be transformed. The season of Advent, which is characterized by St. John the Baptist’s call to *metanoia* (profound personal conversion), is a time of expectation and of hope. Nothing we can do—as individuals or as the people of God—can totally alienate us from God’s love and forgiveness.

We believe that Jesus Christ has triumphed over sin and death. As a result, human death has lost its permanence. We believe that Christ will come again. “We do not know on which day the Lord will come,” St. Matthew’s Gospel tells us (cf. Mt 24:42), but our faith assures us that if we die in God’s grace, we will all rise again on the Last Day and, by the mercy of God, be united with Christ in the joy of heaven.

The child lying in the manger at Bethlehem is God incarnate (in the

flesh). His human body is sacred because it is intimately and indissolubly united with his divine nature.

Our human flesh is sanctified by the Lord’s incarnation. Because we are his sisters and brothers, made in the image and likeness of God, our bodies are also holy. Sin is the cause of our suffering and death, but Christ has triumphed over all evil, including death. We believe in the resurrection of the body, because Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us in the realm of everlasting life.

Christmas is not just a fond remembrance of the Christ Child’s birth. It is a joyful affirmation that he is the blessed hope who will come again at the end of time. We believe in Christ’s coming again because we know that he is always faithful to his promises.

Forgiveness is an Advent theme because we are a people of profound hope. And what is more hope-filled than the assurance that our sins can be forgiven, and that we can overcome the cruelty and apparent finality of death?

I hope you will make time this Advent season to go to confession and

seek God’s forgiveness. It is readily available in the sacrament of penance, and the Lord is never stingy in sharing with us the richness of his mercy.

I hope you will attend Mass regularly this Advent season. The Eucharist is where we experience Christ most intimately in his word and in the sacrament of his body and blood. At Mass, we thank God for his presence among us, but we also pray for his coming again at the end of time. We have no idea when the Last Day will be, but we know with the certainty of faith that it will involve each one of us (“all the living and the dead”) in a moment of reckoning that will determine how we will spend eternity.

Thank God, we are people of hope who believe in the forgiveness of sins! That’s why we look forward to Christ’s second coming with the same joyful expectation and longing that Mary and Joseph and the shepherds experienced at the first Christmas.

Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus! May this Advent be a time of hope and forgiveness for each of us and for our Church. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Que el Adviento sea una época de esperanza y perdón

“Estén, pues, vigilantes ya que no saben en qué día vendrá el Señor. Piensen que si el amo de la casa supiera a qué hora va a llegar el ladrón, vigilaría para impedir que le perforen la casa. Así pues, estén también ustedes preparados, porque cuando menos lo piensen, vendrá el Hijo del hombre” (Mt 24:42-44).

Ayer celebramos la festividad del Día de Acción de Gracias, un momento para expresar nuestro agradecimiento por todas las bendiciones de Dios. Este fin de semana celebramos el Primer Domingo de Adviento, una temporada de alegre expectativa ante la llegada de nuestro Señor. ¡Ambas deben ser ocasiones de gran alegría!

Pero el Adviento también es una época de penitencia ya que nos preparamos para recibir los dones del perdón y la misericordia que Jesucristo compartirá con nosotros cuando vuelva nuevamente. Durante esta temporada santa, unificamos nuestros corazones y nuestras vidas con ansiosa expectativa por el regreso de nuestro Señor.

El perdón era el motivo de Dios para enviar a su único hijo para que naciera entre los hombres. A consecuencia del pecado humano nos separamos de la bondad de Dios

y sufrimos el exilio del jardín de la paz y la prosperidad. Por la gracia de Dios, hemos sido salvados en Cristo Jesús y nuestros pecados han sido perdonados.

Como cristianos, creemos en el perdón de los pecados y que la gracia de Jesucristo nos ha abierto el camino para arrepentirnos y transformarnos. La temporada del Adviento se caracteriza por el llamado de san Juan el Bautista a la *metanoia* (una profunda conversión personal), una época de expectativa y esperanza. Nada de lo que hagamos como personas o como pueblo de Dios puede enajenarnos completamente del amor y el perdón divino.

Creemos que Jesucristo ha triunfado sobre el pecado y la muerte y en consecuencia, la muerte humana ha perdido su cualidad de permanencia. Creemos que Jesús vendrá otra vez. “No saben qué día vendrá el Señor,” nos dice el Evangelio según san Mateo (cf. Mt 24:42), pero nuestra fe nos asegura que si morimos en la gracia de Dios nos levantaremos nuevamente en el Día Final y, por la misericordia de Dios, nos reuniremos con Cristo en la alegría del cielo.

El niño acostado en el pesebre en Belén es Dios encarnado; su cuerpo

humano es sagrado porque está íntima e indisolublemente unido a su naturaleza divina.

Nuestra carne humana ha sido santificada por la encarnación del Señor. Puesto que somos sus hermanos, hechos a imagen y semejanza de Dios, nuestros cuerpos también son sagrados. El pecado es el motivo de nuestro sufrimiento y muerte, pero Jesucristo ha triunfado por encima del mal, incluida la muerte. Creemos en la resurrección de la carne porque Jesucristo se levantó de entre los muertos y ascendió al cielo para prepararnos un lugar en el reino de la vida eterna.

La Navidad no es solamente un recordatorio afectuoso del nacimiento de Jesús niño sino una afirmación alegre de que él es la Sagrada esperanza que volverá nuevamente al final de los tiempos. Creemos que Jesucristo volverá porque sabemos que siempre cumple sus promesas.

El perdón es un tema del Adviento porque somos un pueblo de profunda esperanza ¿y qué mayor esperanza que la seguridad de que nuestros pecados pueden ser perdonados y que podemos superar la crueldad y la aparente rotundidad de la muerte?

Ojalá pueda usted apartar un tiempo en esta época de Adviento para acudir al confesionario y buscar

el perdón de Dios que se encuentra a disposición de todos en el sacramento de la penitencia y el Señor jamás es avaro en cuanto a compartir con nosotros la abundancia de su misericordia.

Ojalá acudan periódicamente a la misa en esta época de Adviento puesto que en la Eucaristía es donde vivimos una conexión más íntima con Jesucristo a través de su Palabra y en el sacramento de su Cuerpo y su Sangre. En la misa damos gracias a Dios por su presencia entre nosotros pero también rezamos por su venida otra vez al final de los tiempos. No sabemos cuándo vendrá el Día Final, pero sabemos con la certeza de la fe que nos involucrará a cada uno de nosotros (“a todos los vivos y los muertos”) en un momento de evaluación que determinará cómo pasaremos el resto de la eternidad.

¡Gracias a Dios, somos un pueblo de esperanza que cree en el perdón de los pecados! Por eso esperamos la segunda venida de Jesucristo con la misma expectativa y anhelo que sintieron María, José y los pastores en la primera Navidad.

Maranatha! ¡Ven, Señor Jesús! Que esta época de Adviento sea un momento de esperanza y perdón para cada uno de nosotros y nuestra Iglesia. †

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

December 3

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota St., Indianapolis. **Senior Discount Day**, every Tuesday, 30 percent off clothing, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., Carmel (Lafayette Diocese). **Indiana Right to Life Christmas Gala**, proceeds benefit, Indiana Right to Life Education Fund, lead actress of movie *Unplanned* Ashley Bratcher speaking, 6:30 p.m., \$50 per person, \$400 table of eight, reservations requested but not required, walk-ins welcome. Reservations, program advertising rates and sponsorship opportunities: www.irtl.org/gala. Information: Mary Williams, mwilliams@irtl.org, 317-413-9123.

December 4

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

December 6

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., Father Rick Ginther presiding, optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, www.womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday** celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9 p.m., sacrament of Reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or info@olgreenwood.org.

December 7

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteer Opportunity**, ages 12-18, sharing time and talent with retired Providence sisters, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (first of several teen volunteer opportunities through April 2020). Registration and parent/guardian waiver: www.spsmw.org/event/teen-volunteer-opportunity/all Information: Providence Sister Joni Luna, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, devotional prayers, rosary, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

John Paul II Parish, St. Paul Chapel, 216 Schellers Ave., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Marian Devotion**, 8 a.m. rosary, meditation, prayer; 8:30 a.m. Mass with confessions prior. Information: 812-246-3522.

December 7-8

St. Mary Church, 512 N. Perkins St., Rushville. **Rush County Chorale Christmas Concert**, motets, hymns, carols and brass ensemble featuring Rushville native Terri (Wiley) Ewigleben on trumpet, Sat. 7 p.m., Sun. 2:30 p.m., \$5 tickets available at the door or from any chorale member. Information: Carolyn Sorber, 765-561-4958, rushcountychorale@gmail.com.

December 8

St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-627-7729 or acfadi2014@gmail.com.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Class of '63 monthly gathering**, 6 p.m. Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396.

Monastery Immaculate Conception, 802 E. 19th St., Ferdinand (Evansville Diocese). **Sundaes with the Sisters**, sponsored by the Sisters of St. Benedict, receive input on discernment, visit and meet with the sisters, 1-3 p.m. Information: vocations@thedome.org, 812-367-1411.

December 10

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild**, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-223-3687, vlgmimi@aol.com.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **"Be Light" Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

December 12

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian

St., Indianapolis. **Caregiver Support Group**, sponsored by Catholic Charities, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, mwoodsworth@archindy.org.

December 15

St. Christopher Church, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. **Christmas Choral Concert**, 3 p.m., freewill offering to benefit the Sr. Marie Wolf fund. Information: 317-241-6314, ext. 142, pschaefer@stchrisindy.org.

December 16

St. Mark the Evangelist Parish Cenacle House, 6118 Smock St., Indianapolis. **Caregiver Support Group**, sponsored by Catholic Charities, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: Monica Woodsworth, 317-261-3378, mwoodsworth@archindy.org.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Leave the Light On**, reconciliation available 9 a.m.-7 p.m., no appointment necessary. Information: Jennifer Burger, 317-545-7681, jburger@archindy.org, www.archindy.org/fatima.

December 16-24

Simbang Gabi novena of Masses in anticipation of

Christmas, sponsored by archdiocesan Filipino and intercultural ministries, during regularly scheduled parish Masses as follows: Dec. 16, 6 p.m., **St. Louis de Montfort Church**, 11441 Hague Road, Fishers (Lafayette diocese); Dec. 17, 5:30 p.m., **St. Monica Church**, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis; Dec. 18, 6 p.m., **St. Gabriel the Archangel Church**, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis; Dec. 19, 6 p.m., **St. Jude Church**, 5353 McFarland Ave., Indianapolis; Dec. 20, 6 p.m., **St. Simon the Apostle Church**, 8155 Oaklandon Road, Indianapolis; Dec. 21, 4 p.m., **St. Ann Church**, 6350 S. Mooresville Road, Indianapolis; Dec. 22, 11:30 a.m., **St. Luke the Evangelist Church**, 7575 Holliday Dr., E., Indianapolis; Dec. 23, 5:45 p.m., Extraordinary Form (Latin), **Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church**, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis; Dec. 24, 10 p.m., **SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral**, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Information: Maria Solito, 317-201-0196, mariasolito@yahoo.com. †

Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

December 17-20

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Advent Days of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$35 per day, includes breakfast and lunch, room to use throughout the day, access to common areas and grounds. Depending on availability, overnight stay costs additional \$28, \$9 light dinner plate and \$6 light breakfast available for extended stay. Information and registration: Jennifer Burger, 317-545-7681, jburger@archindy.org, www.archindy.org/fatima.

December 19

Providence Hall, Havlick Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Memory Café**, 2-4 p.m., third Thursday of the month, for those living with moderate dementia, caregivers and friends, Katie Harish presenting, freewill offering. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

January 8

Providence Hall, Havlick

Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Sunday at the Woods: Dementia Basics and Helpful Tips**, Katie Harish presenting, 1:30-3:30 p.m., freewill offering. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

Jan. 9, Jan. 10

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods,

St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Art to Lift your Spirit!**, Wed., 9:30 a.m. or Thurs., 6:30 p.m., Providence Sister Rosemary Schmalz presenting, \$30 membership fee to join group, \$5 per session after. Contact Jeanne Frost, 812-535-2952 to request a brochure. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

January 11

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

Coffee with the Mystics, Providence Sister Jan Craven presenting, 10 a.m.-noon, \$10, register by Jan. 10. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

January 14

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Coffee with the Mystics**, Providence Sister Jan Craven presenting, 9:30-11:30 a.m., \$10, register by Jan. 11. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event.

Feb. 5, Feb. 6

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Art to Lift your Spirit!**, choose between 9:30 a.m. first Wed. of the month or 6:30 p.m. first Thurs. of the month, Providence Sister Rosemary Schmalz presenting, \$30 membership fee to join group, \$5 per session after. Contact Jeanne Frost, 812-535-2952 to request a brochure. Registration and information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or www.spsmw.org/event. †

Sisters of Providence to host annual Christmas Fun at the Woods on Dec. 7

The Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, will host Christmas Fun at the Woods from 1-4:30 p.m. on Dec. 7.

The event will feature rides by carriage, bus, wagon and trolley; a display of Nativity sets and a miniature Christmas village; plus, cookie decorating, face painting, caricature drawing, Christmas sing-alongs, storytelling, Christmas

bingo, a bake sale, arts and crafts and the opportunity to visit with Santa at the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice.

Tours of the St. Mother Theodore Guérin Shrine will also be available throughout the day.

The cost is \$5 per person, and free for children 3 years and younger.

Tickets are available at the door or can be purchased in advance at www.spsmw.org/events.

For more information, call 812-535-2952 or e-mail jfrost@spsmw.org. †

Longest Night service to be held at Saint Meinrad on Dec. 14

Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad will offer a Service of the Longest Night at the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guest House Chapel, 200 Hill Dr., in St. Meinrad, at 6 p.m. CT on Dec. 14.

Benedictine Father Adrian Burke will lead the service, which will include prayer and Scripture that acknowledges

those who mourn and struggle with loss during the Christmas season. All are welcome.

Light refreshments will follow.

Reservations are requested by e-mailing info@abbeycaskets.com or by calling 800-987-7380.

Parking is available in the Guest House parking lot. †

St. Joan of Arc Parish to highlight church restoration during open house on Dec. 11

All are invited to view the interior restoration of the 100-year-old St. Joan of Arc Church, 4217 Central Ave., in Indianapolis, during a community open house from 6-8 p.m. on Dec. 11.

Tour guides will be available, and refreshments will be served.

For additional information, contact Melinda Rivelli at 317-283-5508 or e-mail mrivelli@sjoa.org.

To view a photo montage of the restoration process, visit www.sjoa.org/restoration-open-house and click on the Centennial Capital Campaign Restoration Progress link. †

St. John the Evangelist Christkindl Village Christmas Festival set for Dec. 12-15

St. John the Evangelist Parish, 126 W. Georgia St., in Indianapolis, will host its annual Christkindl Village Christmas Festival on Dec. 12-15.

The free three-day holiday event will include indoor and outdoor heated activities for all ages including artisan vendors, craft-making for children, a live animal Nativity, 2-story alpine slide, sacred

music festivals, church tours, photos with St. Nicholas, German food, beer and wine.

The hours are: 5-9 p.m. on Dec. 12; 5-10 p.m. on Dec. 13; 11 a.m.-10 p.m. on Dec. 14; and 11 a.m.-6 p.m. on Dec. 15.

For a complete list of scheduled activities, visit www.stjohnsindy.org/christkindl-village.

To learn more, call 317-635-2021. †

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to www.archindy.org/events/submission, or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Cindy Clark, or by fax at 317-236-1593.

Faith *Alive!*

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‘Stay awake’ to the presence of God during Advent

By Effie Caldarola

“Stay awake” (Mt 24:42).

With this terse command, the Gospel of St. Matthew begins our season of Advent on Sunday, Dec. 1. How rich and rewarding will be the 24 days of this season if we keep those words in our heart each day.

Stay awake, “for you do not know on which day your Lord will come” (Mt 24:42).

December is a busy, hyperactive month, and maybe we’d rather hear Jesus say, “Take a snooze.” Of course, the Lord is not urging us to forgo healthy sleep or to live out the busy month of December in a caffeine-induced stupor, something we’re prone to do during the holidays anyway.

On the contrary, the Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Advent is an invitation to slow down and be present to what’s important.

To do this in the midst of the holiday frenzy, we need a game plan for Advent.

Perhaps those two simple words, “stay awake,” can serve as a prayer commitment each morning. It’s an invitation to be present to the Lord and to the poor among us, a simple prayer that will lead us to an awareness of the God who waits to encounter us each day.

That little phrase could follow us through the day, in the midst of rush hour traffic, squabbling children, holiday preparations, too many to-dos. Simply return to that prayer. “Help me stay awake to your presence, Lord.”

Since Jesus is truly present to us in the Eucharist, perhaps we could make a commitment to daily Mass, or at least an extra Mass each week. Give up a lunch hour or rise early for Mass on the way to work or school.

Jesus is present to us in Scripture. Reading the daily Scripture readings for Mass is a beautiful Advent commitment. Rather than a cursory reading, be open to which text most touches you and spend time there. Read and reread it, slowly and prayerfully. Where is God being revealed to you there?

The rich readings of Advent—the beauty of Isaiah, the lyricism of Luke—can be savored with early morning candlelight and hot coffee. This will help you carry Jesus’ presence through the day.

Always remember that Jesus is present to us in the poor. As Pope Francis tells us, “The poor save us because they enable us to encounter the face of Jesus Christ.”

No one is more helpless than a baby, one born to the underclass, to people unimportant in the eyes of the world. Jesus was such a child, called to be a refugee, seeking asylum in a journey into Egypt. His whole life revealed a compassion for and communion with the poor. He calls us to be awake to the poor.

During Advent, reread the last judgment scene in Matthew’s Chapter 25. Ask yourself, when have I seen Jesus hungry or thirsty and given him food or drink? When did I visit the prisoner or the sick, clothe the naked? In a world where millions upon millions are fleeing war, poverty and terror, when did I attempt to welcome the stranger?

Matthew’s Gospel states that our lives will be judged based on how we answer these questions.

During Advent, consider how you encounter and perceive the poor. Writing a check is great—Catholic Relief Services,



A volunteer serves a meal at a soup kitchen in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Oct. 4. A way to stay awake to the presence of God during Advent is to seek his presence in people who are in need. (CNS photo/Agustin Marcarian, Reuters)

Jesuit Refugee Service, your local Catholic Charities—these and many more need your help. But try to find a way to actually be present to the poor.

Sometimes shelters and food kitchens are overwhelmed by helpers during Advent. But call them during December and ask when they might most need help in the coming year.

And remember poverty comes in many forms. Each day, we encounter the poor among us, and in times of sadness or illness or even economic distress, we are the poor. We should always remember our unity with the poor, our need to see Jesus in ourselves and in those who struggle around us daily.

Bring a smile and a kind word to the overworked store clerk; say a prayer for those you encounter who are rude. Remind yourself—stay awake—that you don’t know how people are struggling. Tip generously, smile often, hold the door for someone.

Stay awake to little opportunities. Think of someone who may receive no Christmas cards and send one. Visit a lonely neighbor or relative. Stay awake to need, and be grateful for those who are present to your needs.

The 24 days of Advent this year will be busy. But it would be tragic to let consumerism and consumption overtake our encounter with Jesus.

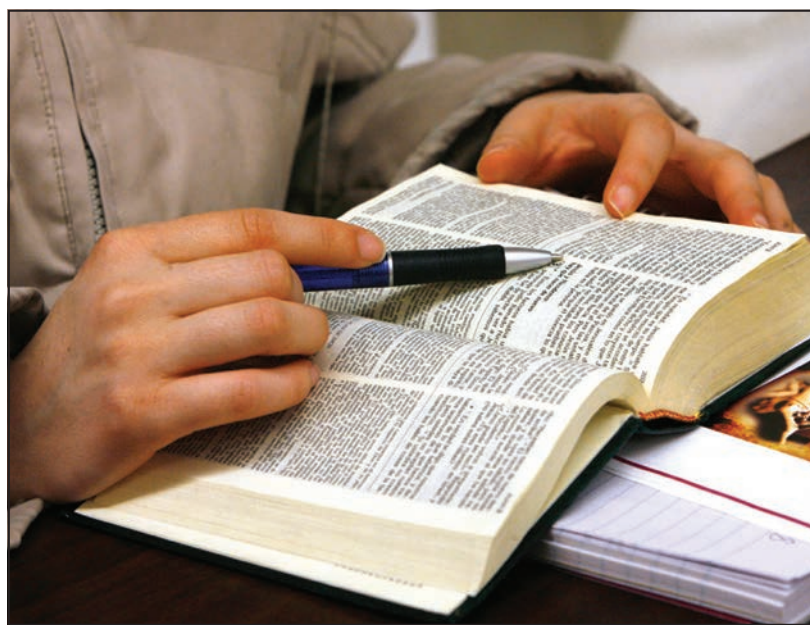
Mass, Scripture, an encounter with the poor—these are channels of grace that bring us to God’s presence.

Review each day as part of an examination of conscience and make note of where you encountered Jesus. Begin each day as part of a morning offering, being open to the voice of Jesus asking you to stay awake and prepare a way for the Lord.

(Effie Caldarola is a freelance writer and a columnist for Catholic News Service.) †



A woman prays before Mass at St. Pius X Church in El Paso, Texas, on Sept. 24. Attending Mass more frequently during Advent is a way to be spiritually awake to the presence of God in the days leading up to Christmas. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)



A young woman studies the Bible at St. Mary of Celle Parish in Berwyn, Ill. Prayerfully reading Scripture readings for daily Mass is a way to be open to God’s presence during Advent. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, *Catolico*)

Living Well/Maureen Pratt

Tips for attaining domestic peace during the holidays

As family members gather for the upcoming holidays, there might be more than sugarplums dancing in their heads. Some, perhaps many, might be inwardly anxious about the potential for hurtful arguments that can erupt among multigenerational clans.



Of course, Christmas and the other fall/winter holidays are not supposed to be times

of anger or argument, especially not within our families, which are centers of love.

But with public discourse becoming increasingly fractious and families straddling ever-widening gaps of age, experiences and opinion, fear about holidays-gone-contentious probably have more than a little merit.

Manners and manners of speaking that aren't critical or dismissive are becoming rarer. The intensity of technology use among some generations can create wide deficits in the ability to converse in a meaningful way. People who have not seen one another in months or years might have changed in ways that can be difficult for some to understand.

The holiday season itself can heighten negative emotions along with extra stresses on budgets, time and energy. Pervasive advertisements and superficial "trappings" all around might raise expectations about gifts, what others are supposed to do or say ("We always have Christmas Eve at ..."), or not to or say ("She/He told me there'd be no arguments this year ...").

Many online resources provided by psychologists and others offer good suggestions on ways to defuse or avoid fractious family situations during the holiday season.

These include limiting alcohol available at gatherings (substance abuse can bring on familial problems that reverberate for a long time after sobriety sets in), setting boundaries about what you will and will not discuss (and abiding by them), not taking others' comments, ill-meaning or otherwise, personally, and communicating about concerns (budgets, family obligations, "who should visit who when") before the holidays, so a happy compromise can be reached.

There are additional suggestions that I have found helpful, too.

Stay true to the meaning of the holidays. Be grateful in Thanksgiving, full

of wonder at Christmas and eager to start afresh in a New Year.

Pray for peace and courage to embrace family members whose ideas or attitudes might not be our favorite things; we do not have to bend our values or abandon our beliefs, but simply, kindly, love.

Engage in the exchange of ideas and opinions respectfully; a family gathering is not a debate stage, but much more meaningful—and fleeting. We never know what the year between this and next holiday season will bring, nor who will be with us and who will not.

Although I have experienced a few unfortunate holiday gatherings, they pale against the warm memories of others where faith (Mass, prayer, sharing faith experiences), festive food prepared with care and the blessing of time helped me appreciate other members of my family, close and extended.

Against the backdrop of today's world, these good memories and yours, too, help urge us onward into this season and the next, bringing peace, shining light, making it home.

(Maureen Pratt's website is www.maureenpratt.com.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Find joy and hope in life's trials through Jesus during Advent

Sometimes, I think I'm becoming a bit of a humbug.

When I was younger, there was always an excitement that built up within me as the days of Advent led up to Christmas.

As I've grown older, however, the daily weight of the responsibility of being a husband and father and the sadness of loss among my family

and friends have often been the focus of my heart and mind.

The heavy thoughts and emotions that these aspects of adult life bring can at times crowd the joy of Advent and Christmas out of my heart.

Our Catholic faith, however, can give those who bear heavy burdens in life a perspective on our troubles that can lead to a happiness that keeps a humbug attitude at bay.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (before he was elected pope and chose the name Benedict XVI) once reflected on the connection between love and suffering:

"Anyone who really wanted to get rid of suffering would have to get rid of love before anything else, because there can be no love without suffering, because love always demands self-sacrifice."

This is a profound truth at the heart of the human condition and of our faith.

We can make it a more meaningful part of our daily lives during Advent.

The Church invites us in the days leading up to Christmas to focus our hearts and minds on Christ's first coming as a child in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, and his glorious second coming, which we should prepare ourselves for as if it will happen soon.

Consider how almighty God—the creator of the universe, of all that is, was or will be—sacrificed himself out of love for humanity to take on flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a helpless child, opening himself to the suffering that is unavoidable in our broken world.

And it will be God's love for humanity that will lead him to return in glory to bring all suffering to an end in the new Jerusalem where our Lord will "wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain" (Rev 21:4).

Until that blessed moment, though, it is our lot to live in a world marred by the ongoing effects of original sin, where suffering is unavoidable.

Despair in the face of inevitable suffering is not unavoidable. Christ fully embraced suffering and conquered it in his passion, death and resurrection.

The fact that he did this is wondrous enough. But that he did it *out of his love for us* gives us tremendous hope.

This life-changing reality can lighten our hearts when life's burdens weigh us down. It can also help parents with the daily call to self-sacrificial love for their children and spouses.

Every day, they're called to put aside their own desires to care for the needs and wishes of others in their families. This can be hard when their desires are put aside so often and when the demands from other family members increase.

Knowing what Jesus went through for love of us, and realizing that he is so close to us because of his suffering, can strengthen parents when giving of themselves to their family becomes so difficult.

Jesus, then, comes to us in Advent and then Christmas to help us find joy and hope in his love in the middle of the trials of life. †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Dialogue provides a great service in the name of unity

Recently, I looked back through the 57 previous "That All May Be One" columns. I found one topic glaringly missing: an overview of official dialogues.



The word "dialogue" has appeared to date in 31 of my 57 columns (54 percent). It was used 126 times, from one time in a column to as many as 19 times.

Three times, specific official dialogues have been noted: Anglican/Catholic, Lutheran/Catholic, and Methodist/Catholic. But there are more.

Official dialogues are commenced and overseen by the Vatican and by bishops' conferences.

Vatican-sponsored ecumenical dialogues and dialogues with Jews (religious relations with Judaism) are overseen by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU).

Vatican-sponsored interreligious dialogues are overseen by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID).

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) follows the same division of oversight as the Vatican.

The USCCB website outlines the breadth of its official ongoing dialogue work. At the bottom of its home page is a listing of the varied offices and programs. Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (EIA) is this office's official site.

The left banner notes the many dialogue partners. Ecumenical includes Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Polish National Church, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Evangelical and Southern Baptist.

Other varied ecumenical ties are through organizations: Christian Churches Together (e.g., American Baptist and Evangelicals, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, etc.); Faith and Order (National Council of Churches); and Friends of EIA (African-American Churches, Pentecostal, Holiness and Evangelical Churches, Mennonite, Brethren, Friends Brederhof Community, and Disciples of Christ).

Jewish includes the National Council of Synagogues and Orthodox Union.

Interreligious includes Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Multilateral Dialogues (Shoulder to Shoulder and Religions for Peace USA).

There are some Christian, Jewish and other religious sects that to date have not entered formal, or even, informal dialogue. Let us pray for the day when such relationships begin.

International (Vatican-sponsored) and national (USCCB-sponsored) dialogues typically are convened by a representative of the Roman Catholic Church and a like representative from the other church or religion.

These representatives are individuals who are well-versed and educated in their own traditions. They are trusted by their religious peers. They are appointed for a term of service to the official dialogue.

prominence Rich wears.

"That's a chain of office you are wearing. May I see it?" More requests and observes, "The red dragon. What's this?"

He is told that Richard has been appointed attorney general for Wales.

More exclaims, "For Wales? Why Richard, it profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world. ... But for Wales!"

The dialogue between More and Richard portrays a lost soul selling out a friend for gain.

No matter where we look, we find lost souls. They may have lost faith in God, may be considered the black sheep of the family, may have cheated to achieve prominence or let chemical substances ruin their lives. The list is unending. And yet, many of them wish to be found, but most often no one is willing to take the chance to come to their aid.

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein was for years the Church's international dialogue representative to the Disciples of Christ. The latter, internationally headquartered in Indianapolis, was represented by Rev. Robert Welsh.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin is the official national dialogue representative to the Orthodox Churches. His counterpart is Metropolitan Methodios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Metropolitan of Boston.

There is not enough room here to describe the inner workings of the EIA office, but they do a great service in the name of unity, religious understanding, and religious freedom.

This brief outline of the many dialogue partnerships is overwhelming for me! I can only imagine it is for you, too.

But beyond overwhelmed, I am thankful. I am thankful for living in this age of outreach and mutual understanding. I am thankful for each moment I learn more from other Christians or other religions. Through them, I grow ever stronger in understanding and embracing my own Catholic faith.

And I am told by these other "friends" that they in turn are strengthened in their faith and religion due to my witness.

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

The Human Side/Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Advent is an opportunity to examine our ultimate purpose in life

A scene from the play *A Man for All Seasons* contains a wonderful way to celebrate Advent. The play is about



St. Thomas More's duel with King Henry VIII that leads to More's beheading.

In the play, Richard Rich, who is envious of More's renown, pleads with More for a prominent court position.

"Why not be a teacher?" More implores him.

"And if I was, who would know it?" Rich responds.

"You, your pupils, your friends, God. Not a bad public, that ... oh and a quiet life," More says.

Later, Rich betrays More. While on trial, More notices the chain of

Once I told a Franciscan friend I desired to dedicate my life to working with the destitute. "Eugene," he warned, "that life is not for everyone."

This is true. It is extremely difficult to forgive a family black sheep, to reach out to lost souls living in the gutters, to befriend a drunk or drug addict, to be kind to a cheat or to forgive an injustice.

It's easy to feel justified in walking away from these situations.

Advent is an opportunity to examine our ultimate purpose in life—a time to focus on Christ returning a lost sheep to the fold; to experience the happiness of going out on the limb and walking him or her back on our shoulders and experiencing Advent joy at its best.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for *Catholic News Service*.) †

First Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, December 1, 2019

- Isaiah 2:1-5
- Romans 13:11-14
- Matthew 24:37-44

With this weekend, the Church begins its new liturgical year. In so doing, it also begins to use the A Cycle of readings at Sunday Masses.



This weekend's first reading is from the first section of the Book of Isaiah. Isaiah is one of the most important books of prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures. Inevitably, it is eloquent and profound.

It also is one of the longest books in the Old Testament, although in fact it is a collection of three distinct works.

As is often the case with other prophetic books, Isaiah at times warned the people that if they did not return to heartfelt religious fidelity their doom was on the way. Certainly, this is a theme of the section of Isaiah.

No prophet, however, including Isaiah, spoke warnings without expressing a most hopeful and faith-filled thought that God, the almighty and merciful, would protect the people in the end.

After all, such was the promise of the covenant. God had pledged to safeguard and secure the people, despite their stubbornness and fascination with sin, in spite of the catastrophe brought upon them by sinning.

This weekend reading, the first Scriptural proclamation for Advent 2013, is a testament of this confidence and faith. God will judge the good and the bad. Such is the divine right. It is logical. Human behavior must be balanced against the justice and love that perfectly are in God.

It is not a tale of gloom. Sin is to be feared. Human faithfulness to God brings peace and reward.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the source of the second reading.

Always, Paul called upon Christians to live as authentic followers of Jesus. While stressing their need to be faithful models of Christ in human living, the great Apostle urged disciples to set their priorities by making eternal life with the Lord their uncompromised goal.

Paul also bluntly said that earthly life can end at any time for anyone.

The Gospel of St. Matthew provides the last reading this weekend. It foresees the final coming of Jesus. In reading this passage, it is important to remember that the Catholic Church teaches that proper reading of the Gospels requires realizing three perspectives: 1) The Gospel event in the actual time of Jesus; 2) The event as its implications came to be understood in the time when the Gospels were written, likely decades after Jesus; and, 3) The place that the event occupies in the general literary structure of the individual Gospel.

This is important when considering this weekend's passage from Matthew. Likely composed many years after Jesus ascended to heaven, Matthew was written for Christians who yearned to be relieved of the burden, and indeed peril, of living amid harshly antagonistic circumstances. They pined for the second triumphant coming of Jesus, recalling the Lord's own words. They earnestly believed that they would be vindicated when Jesus would come again in glory.

Reflection

Advent, begun with this weekend's liturgies, calls us to prepare for Christmas. Preparation is more than addressing Christmas cards and decorating Christmas trees. It means actually working with God's grace to make the coming of Jesus real in our daily lives, a personal event because we admit the Lord into our loving hearts.

Especially in Advent, the Church calls us to be good Christians, ridding ourselves of anything standing in the way.

It calls us to set priorities. Regardless of Christmas 2019, Jesus will come again to us at the moment of our earthly death. He will come as the triumphant Lord of life, the supreme standard of what is right or wrong. What appearance shall we make? Will we stand in the aftermath having been in life wholeheartedly devoted to Christ, just occasionally, or maybe never? The choice among these options belongs to us now. †

Daily Readings

Monday, December 2

Isaiah 4:2-6
Psalm 122:1-9
Matthew 8:5-11

Tuesday, December 3

St. Francis Xavier, priest, principal patron of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
Luke 10:21-24

Wednesday, December 4

St. John Damascene, priest and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 25:6-10a
Psalm 23:1-6
Matthew 15:29-37

Thursday, December 5

Isaiah 26:1-6
Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a
Matthew 7:21, 24-27

Friday, December 6

St. Nicholas, bishop
Isaiah 29:17-24
Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14
Matthew 9:27-31

Saturday, December 7

St. Ambrose, bishop and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26
Psalm 147:1-6
Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Sunday, December 8

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

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Judas may not have been present at the institution of the Eucharist

At the Last Supper, Jesus told the Apostles to eat and drink his body and his blood. But Christ knew that Judas Iscariot was in a state of serious sin. So how could he have let him receive? (Louisiana)



A Scripture scholars indicate that there is room for debate as to whether Judas was

still present at the Last Supper after Jesus had instituted the Eucharist. St. Luke's account (Lk 22:17-23) would lead one to believe that Judas did share in consuming Christ's body and blood.

In Luke, after blessing the bread and wine and indicating that it was now his body and blood, Jesus says: "Behold, the hand of the one who is to betray me is with me on the table; for the Son of Man indeed goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed" (Lk 22:21-22).

The other evangelists, though—especially St. John—seem to indicate that Judas may have already exited before the Eucharist was celebrated and shared.

In John (Jn 13:21-30), the Apostles are greatly troubled at Christ's announcement of his betrayal and, in response to their question as to the betrayer's identity, Jesus says, "It is the one to whom I hand the morsel after I have dipped it" (Jn 13:26).

Then, after Jesus had handed the morsel to Judas, Judas "took the morsel and left at once. And it was night" (Jn 13:30). There is no indication that this took place after the institution of the Eucharist, or that that particular morsel was different from the other food consumed at the supper.

But if Judas did in fact receive the Eucharist that night, why would Jesus have permitted it? One possibility is that Jesus left Judas free to make the choice and that the burden for the decision would have been on Judas for sharing that sacred food unworthily, since he had already been plotting Christ's betrayal.

Another explanation might be that Judas was already feeling remorse for what he had done, although he clearly chose the wrong way to demonstrate that remorse when, "flinging the money into the temple, he departed and went off and hanged himself" (Mt 27:5).

My wife and I married 53 years ago and have had nine children. Some of them

served at the altar, and all of them went to Catholic schools. Our ninth child was refused for baptism because the priest insisted that my wife had to go to classes first.

I was not a Catholic at the time (I have since converted), and it bothered me a lot. How, I thought, could anyone deny a child the love and protection of God? I felt then that it was wrong, and I still do. Can you help me to understand? (Lincolnshire, England)

The Church's *Code of Canon Law* indicates that for a baptism "there must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion." This same canon goes on to say that "if such a hope is altogether lacking, the baptism is to be delayed ... after the parents have been advised about the reason" (#868.1.2).

My own view is that the benefit of the doubt should always go to the parents, and I feel supported by the wording of the canon. (To warrant a delay, says the canon, the hope of a Catholic upbringing must be "altogether lacking.")

In your own situation, I don't think there was any doubt at all: You were already, in fact, sending your other children to a Catholic school. As for the baptismal preparation classes, they are surely worthwhile, especially for first-time parents. But for the ninth child, I would guess that your wife already knew a bit about the sacrament.

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

My Journey to God

A Thanksgiving Day Prayer

By John Gin-Daffron

Dear God,

Thank you for all you give us.
Thank you for the sun's bright light,
Thank you for the stars at night.
Thank you for our life on Earth,
Thank for our gifts at birth.
Thank you for the gifts you give,
Thank you for our friends that live.
Thank you for the air we breathe,
Thank you for the wind and seas.
At the center of this is you, yourself,
Your life, your death, your sacred birth.
Your love for us is oh, so bright.
Never ceasing, never entering
The darkness of night.



(John Gin-Daffron is an eighth-grade student at St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis. He is the son of Dianna Gin. Both are members of St. Barnabas Parish. Photo: A young boy prays at the Father Usera day care center in Havana on Sept. 4, 2015.) (CNS photo/Enrique de la Osa, Reuters)

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The *Criterion* invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. "Poems should be no longer than 25 lines (including lines between stanzas if applicable) of either 44 characters (including spaces) to allow room for a staff-selected photo, or 79 characters (including spaces) if no photo is desired." Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to "My Journey to God," *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to nhoefler@archindy.org. †

Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

DELUCIO, Marco, 75, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Nov. 15. Husband of Judy DeLucio. Father of Tamara English, Carmella Merriman, Raymond and William DeLucio. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of six. Step-grandfather of one. Step-great-grandfather of four.

DUNCAN, Emma Jean, 94, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, Oct. 29. Mother of Karen Dearing, Jack, Keith and Kenny Duncan. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of several.

FISCHER, JoAnn, 91, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 7. Mother of Carolyn Herrmann. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of two.

HERBERT, Donna S., 84, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 16. Wife of Lotus Herbert. Mother of Marian Fisse, Janet Jones, Debbie, David and Lotus Herbert, Jr. Sister of Patricia Logan, Roberta and Steven Miller. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 12.

JOHNSON, Ronald R., 80, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 12. Husband of Margaret Johnson. Father of Christopher, Donald and Ronald Johnson, Jr. Stepfather of Joseph Shields. Stepson of George Hendrickson.

Brother of Patricia Laux, Myrtle Vaughn and Herb Kearns. Grandfather of four.

KENNEY, Susan M. (Keefe), 58, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Nov. 5. Mother of Allison and Lauren Kenney.

MAYER, Richard A., 68, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Oct. 31. Brother of Pamela Mayer Davis and Patricia Mayer Ketchmark. Uncle and great-uncle of several.

MOLANO, Jose M., 42, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Nov. 4. Husband of Genova Maria Tolentino-Compres. Brother of Katy Ferdinand.

MOSBY, Shelley, 49, St. Paul, Tell City, Nov. 11. Mother of Brandon Mosby. Stepmother of Vanessa Barger. Daughter of Sandra Davis. Sister of Brian and Scott Boehman. Grandmother of five.

PARKER, Patrick J., 85, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Nov. 17. Husband of Beverly Parker. Father of Lisa Cox, Hilary Wheatley and Kira Frankenfeld. Brother of Mary Lee Thompson. Grandfather of five.

POPP, Robert J., 86, St. John Paul II, Sellersburg, Nov. 5. Father of Cheryl Freiberger, Brenda Robertson,

Karen Schueler, David and Gary Popp. Brother of Albert and Charles Popp. Grandfather of 20. Great-grandfather of six.

RAVER, Hubert L., 96, St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, Nov. 14. Father of

Kate and Mary Bedel, Sara Hermes, Monica Neuman and Michael Raver. Brother of Dorothy Scheidler. Grandfather of 18. Great-grandfather of 34.

SCHEIDLER, Juanita L., 95, St. Mary, Greensburg, Nov. 14.

Mother of Mary Miers, Joe, John, Ken and Phil Scheidler. Sister of John and Wayne Springmeyer. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of six.

WILLCOX, Marilyn, 68, St. Mary, New Albany, Oct. 16.

Wife of Paul Willcox.

WISSEL, Matthew H., 56, St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, Nov. 14. Son of Elvera Wissel. Brother of Alyssa Dickey, Monica Hooten and Sheila Kieffer. Uncle of several. †



Praying for migrants

Women hold candles during a service at a church in My Khanh, Vietnam, on Oct. 26 for 39 Vietnamese migrants found dead in the back of a truck at the Port of Tilbury in Essex, England. In a message to young Catholics in Vietnam, Pope Francis offered prayers for the migrants, who died while being smuggled into Great Britain in late October. (CNS photo/Kham, Reuters)

Come experience the magic of

An Evening of Lights

ARCHDIOCESAN CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING and PRAYER SERVICE

Thursday, December 5, 2019
Catholic Center Assembly Hall
1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202
Prayer service begins at 6:30 p.m.
Doors will open at 6:00 p.m.
Reception to follow

**FREE TO ATTEND!
FAMILIES WELCOME!**

Scan Here to RSVP



www.archindy.org/CCF/EveningOfLights2019

Just as the Vatican in early December lights the Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square and the Holy Father reflects on the Nativity, so, too, will Archbishop Thompson lead an Archdiocesan Christmas tree lighting and prayer service. At this special event, we will prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming as the Light of the World and celebrate those who have shared their own light by establishing memorial endowments in the names of loved ones. For a donation of \$10 or more, you can dedicate a luminaria in memory of a loved one, which will be lit at the prayer service. Their legacy will live on as the gifts will be invested in the Catholic Community Foundation to support the growth of parish, school, and agency ministries.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, INC.

For any questions regarding your RSVP or online donation, contact Amy Higgins at ccf@archindy.org or (317) 236-1482.



100 YEARS

continued from page 1B

To gain a small perspective on the difference that Catholic Charities has made throughout the archdiocese in this “century of hope,” consider that more than 1 million people have been helped in the past five years. Yet Catholic Charities hasn’t made that impact alone, Bethuram insists. Instead, it’s a tribute to everyone throughout central and southern Indiana who supports its mission.

“Ever since our founding in 1919, Catholic Charities has been tremendously blessed with hard-working and talented staff, advisory members, dedicated volunteers, parish support, generous donors and partners like you,” Bethuram said to the people who came for the celebration.

“It is because of the people that came before us—and you—that we have been able to act as a Good Samaritan, helping all who turn to us in need. For Catholic Charities, charity is not just about providing material assistance, but acting with the same love and mercy that Jesus showed to restore people’s dignity and give them hope for the future.”

‘The light of faith, hope and charity’

Befitting the faith-filled approach of Catholic Charities in the archdiocese, the celebration began with a Mass of Thanksgiving at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

The celebration’s central themes of “being the light” and leading lives “centered in Christ” echoed through the homily shared by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

“Radiating the light of Christ to others, especially those in need, is rooted in our baptismal call to holiness and mission,” the archbishop noted during the beginning of his homily.

He also stressed that Catholic Charities’ commitment to serve people in need represents the “witness of courage and devotion, persevering faith and virtuous stewardship.”

“It is by means of a Christ-centered witness that the light of faith, hope and charity has radiated in the lives and selfless witness of those who have served on behalf of Catholic Charities throughout central and southern Indiana. It is the light

of Christ that ultimately overcomes the darkness of injustice, the veil of ignorance and the chaos of evil.

“Looking back over these last 100 years, we are reminded of the impact of Catholic Charities on the lives of so many—caring for the poor, the homeless, the immigrant, the refugee, the abused, the addicted, the environment and many more—that have been impacted by the generosity of staff, volunteers and benefactors.

“Looking forward to the next 100 years, we call upon that same generosity to continue among current staff, volunteers and benefactors as well as those yet to be realized. At the center of it all, we must remember that it is in the name of Jesus Christ that we most effectively serve and make the difference.

“We do not serve because someone in need is Catholic. Rather, with the Beatitudes as our identity card, we serve because we are Catholic.”

‘If you need a listening ear, you come’

Catholic Charities’ “long history of extraordinary dedication to people who are suffering” in the archdiocese was praised during the dinner celebration by Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president and chief executive officer of Catholic Charities USA.

“We couldn’t be more proud of what happens in this Catholic Charities agency,” said Sister Donna, noting in her keynote talk that it has excelled in upholding the goals and standards of the national agency for a century.

“We don’t discriminate against people. We don’t ask questions. We don’t care if they’re Catholic or not Catholic. If you’re hungry, you come. If you need a place to stay, you come. If you need a job, you come. If you need a listening ear, you come. That’s who we are, and that’s the work that we’ve been doing and that you’ve been doing for 100 years.”

She also put the contributions of archdiocese’s Catholic Charities into the context of the nationwide effort to help people who are vulnerable.

“There are 167 Catholic Charities agencies in 167 dioceses and about 3,000 sites across the U.S. and the U.S. territories. We serve annually together over 12 million people every year, people who are falling by the wayside.

criminal proceedings, the eight years that it waited to establish a new protocol undermines its arguments regarding the urgency and weight of that interest,” she wrote.

When Barr announced the end to the moratorium on executing federal inmates this summer, many Catholic leaders spoke out against it, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; the Catholic Mobilizing Network, a group that works for an end to the death penalty; the Mercy sisters; and Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille, who is a longtime opponent of capital punishment.

Indiana bishops added their objection to the federal government’s decision, calling it “regrettable, unnecessary and morally unjustified.”

(Reporter Natalie Hoefler contributed to this story.) †

in Rochester Hills, Mich., a master’s degree in public policy and administration from Columbia University in New York and a law degree from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Bishop-designate McClory will be the second priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit to serve as bishop for the Gary Diocese. Bishop Dale J. Melczek, who led the diocese from 1992 until his retirement in 2014, was also a priest of the Detroit Archdiocese before being named its shepherd.

Established in 1956, the Gary Diocese encompasses 1,807 square miles in Lake, Porter, LaPorte and Starke counties in northwestern Indiana. †

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CELEBRATING
100 YEARS



Loraine Brown, president of the board of advisors of Catholic Charities in the archdiocese, addresses those in attendance at the 100th anniversary celebration dinner on Nov. 20 for Catholic Charities. (Submitted photo by Eric Sarlitto)

“These days, one of the populations that we’re most concerned about are the migrants and the refugees because Catholic Charities was founded because of the immigrants coming into the country back in 1910, when there was a huge wave of migration. So that’s part of the fabric of our identity.”

She also noted how Catholic Charities is taking up Pope Francis’ challenge “to make sure we were in the streets, dealing with the people who were most left out, most ignored or perhaps most shunned.”

Using the theme of the story of the Good Samaritan, she told the audience that Catholic Charities has accepted the pope’s challenge by making an even greater commitment to serve “the homeless, the migrant and the refugee, the mentally ill, the jobless, people coming out of prison.”

“All of the people that it’s tempting to want to ignore or walk on the other side of the road, those are our people,” she said. “Those are the folks we’ve spent our lives trying to serve the best we can. We can’t do it alone. We depend on all of you as our partners in the mission of compassion as we face the crying needs of some of the most vulnerable, fragile people in our country.”

In closing, she expressed hope that Catholic Charities [in central and

southern Indiana] thrives well for the next 100 years, because you’re great.”

‘The calling to be Christ-like’

A video tribute to Catholic Charities’ century of hope concluded the program, including words of praise from Indiana politicians and professional athletes, plus a heartfelt message from Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, former archbishop of Indianapolis.

Archbishop Thompson ended the celebration with a blessing from God that stressed how all lives are changed when we see each other through the eyes of Christ—a theme that has guided Catholic Charities in central and southern Indiana for 100 years.

“We ask your blessing on all those you place in our path, those who you give us the opportunity to serve,” the archbishop prayed.

“May we, as Pope Francis reminds us, not only seek to reach out to them but to listen to them, to learn from them, and through that encounter allow our hearts and our minds to grow in the gift and the grace of conversion.

“That we may more fully appreciate not only the calling to be Christ-like, but to allow you to continue to guide us ever more deeply into the mission of your Son. We seek always to glorify you in word and in deed.” †

DEATH

continued from page 2B

execution is consistent with other sections of the statute and with historical practices. For all these reasons, this court finds that the FDPA does not authorize the creation of a single implementation procedure for federal executions.”

She added that there is no statute that gives the Bureau of Prisons or the Department of Justice the “authority to establish a single implementation procedure for all federal executions.”

The judge disputed the Justice Department’s claim that reinstating the federal death penalty should not be delayed, pointing out that nothing had been done about the federal death penalty protocol for years after shortages developed of at least one drug used in the previous protocol.

“While the government does have a legitimate interest in the finality of

GARY DIOCESE

continued from page 1B

Bishop-designate McClory received priestly formation at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, the Pontifical North American College and the Pontifical Gregorian University, both in Rome. He later earned a graduate degree in canon law at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome in 2000.

Prior to becoming a seminarian, Bishop-designate McClory earned a bachelor of arts degree in political science and communications from Oakland University

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Be brave enough to dialogue, pope tells Thai religious leaders

BANGKOK (CNS)—Meeting Thai religious leaders and then celebrating Mass with Catholic young adults, Pope Francis encouraged them to strengthen a culture that treasures the past, holds fast to faith, is unafraid of differences and always seeks a way to promote dialogue and cooperation.

No single nation or religious or ethnic group can guarantee itself a future “in isolation from or immune to others,” the pope told Thai Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh and Muslim leaders at Chulalongkorn University on Nov. 22.

The global migration phenomenon, climate change, technological advances, conflict and war all “require us to be bold in devising new ways of shaping the history of our time without denigrating or insulting anyone,” Pope Francis insisted at his meeting with the religious leaders.

An “insular” way of thinking and acting will not work, he said. “Now is the time to be bold and envision the logic of encounter and mutual dialogue as the path, common cooperation as the code of

conduct, and reciprocal knowledge as a method and standard.”

At the university named for King Chulalongkorn of Siam, who reigned from 1868 to 1910 and abolished slavery, Pope Francis asked all religions in Thailand to work together to end “the many present-day forms of slavery, especially the scourge of human trafficking,” which in Thailand includes trafficking both for prostitution and cheap domestic labor.

With dialogue and cooperation, the pope said, “we can provide a new paradigm for resolving conflicts and help foster greater understanding and the protection of creation.”

By promoting justice and peace, he said, the religions of Thailand will give their younger members “the tools they need to be in the forefront of efforts to create sustainable and inclusive lifestyles” based on respect for human dignity and concern for the environment.

Pope Francis ended his day celebrating Mass with representatives of the country’s young adult Catholics in Bangkok’s Cathedral of the Assumption. He read the

Mass prayers in English, but preached in Spanish; a Thai priest provided a successive translation.

For the Mass on the feast of St. Cecilia, a martyr, the pope and concelebrants wore bright red silk vestments sewn for the occasion by Thai Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and volunteer seamstresses.

In his homily, Pope Francis urged the young people to keep their faith alive and strong, being on guard so that disappointments and suffering do not cause their faith to weaken or grow cold.

“You need to be deeply rooted in the faith of your ancestors—your parents, grandparents and teachers,” he said. It’s not about being stuck in the past, but about having roots that reach deep and provide stability.

“Without this firm sense of rootedness, we can be swayed by the ‘voices’ of this world that compete for our attention,” the pope told them. “Many are attractive and nicely packaged; at first they seem appealing and exciting, but in the long



Pope Francis greets religious leaders during a meeting with Christian leaders and the leaders of other religions at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, on Nov. 22. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

run they will leave you only empty, weary, alone and disenchanting and slowly extinguish that spark of life that the Lord once ignited in the heart of each of us.” †

JAPAN

continued from page 1B

made a mistake, someone ill or in prison: Is that person not worthy of love? We know what Jesus did: he embraced the leper, the blind man, the paralytic, the Pharisee and the sinner.”

In a long and lively dialogue with young people that morning in St. Mary’s Cathedral, Pope Francis talked about how many people in Japan and in other countries are materially rich, “but live as slaves to unparalleled loneliness.”

Excessive wealth, he said, can numb young people. “Everything bores them; they no longer dream, laugh or play. They have no sense of wonder or surprise. They

are like zombies,” he said.

The pope said “*zombis*” in Spanish; when he strayed from his prepared text, which he did often, he would nod to Jesuit Father Renzo De Luca, his former student and current provincial of the Jesuits in Japan. Father De Luca was his official translator during the trip.

Before meeting the young people, Pope Francis had a 20-minute private meeting with Japan’s Emperor Naruhito at the Imperial Palace. Afterward, a palace spokesman said the pope told the emperor that he remembers as an almost 9-year-old seeing his parents crying after they heard about the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

His parents’ crying, he said, left a big impression of him.

After the Mass, the pope met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and then both of them spoke to government officials, civic leaders and members of the diplomatic corps.

Abe thanked the pope particularly for his long attention to the evils of the nuclear arms race.

“I am at a loss for words at the weight of the sorrow and pain wrought by the atomic bomb, and also at the profundity of the prayers offered by Pope Francis, who shows his compassionate consideration of this and whose heart goes out in such great sympathy for it,” the prime minister said.

Pope Francis told the prime minister and his guests that one reason he came to Japan was “to implore God and to invite

all persons of good will to encourage and promote every necessary means of dissuasion so that the destruction generated by the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never take place again in human history.”

But the pope also spoke about the people of Japan, especially those who feel excluded from the country’s economic and technological advancement.

“I think particularly of the young, who so often feel overwhelmed in facing the challenges of growing up, the elderly and the lonely who suffer from isolation,” he said. “We know that, in the end, the civility of every nation or people is measured not by its economic strength, but by the attention it devotes to those in need and its capacity to be fruitful and promote life.” †

“Live with good humor and just do the Lord’s work,” says Franciscan Sister de Lourdes Okoniewski (left), 87.

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Hundreds of priests share God's mercy at NCYC

By Sean Gallagher

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) drew 20,000 youths from across the country to Indianapolis to be inspired by a wide variety of speakers, to be energized by lively, faith-filled music and to share in fun fellowship with smiling, happy Catholic peers far from their homes.

All of this often happened in the conference's large and loud general sessions in Lucas Oil Stadium where all conference participants gathered several times from Nov. 21-23.

But some of NCYC's most moving moments were more intimate—moments shared among youths, priests and God in the sacrament of penance.

A large room in the Indiana Convention Center was dedicated to the sacrament. It had chairs where youths could sit facing a priest or have a screen separating them. For 15 hours during the conference, hundreds of priests were able to share God's mercy with a steady stream of NCYC participants who stood in line for the sacrament.

It was also celebrated during the Friday evening general session in Lucas Oil Stadium where priests heard confessions in the arena's concourses and on its floor as youths stood in long lines for the sacrament.

Father Timothy Wyciskalla, administrator of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, said the sacrament of penance "is one of the greatest things they offer at NCYC."

"This is one of the highlights of the whole thing," he said after hearing confessions for two hours. "You normally don't see this. Thousands of kids and hundreds of priests all doing that together.

"It's quiet and they experience the sacrament of confession, some of them for the first time in a very long time. It's an intimate, private moment with them and God."

For Allie Hale, a 17-year-old from



Father Carlton Beever speaks on Nov. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis with a National Catholic Youth Conference participant during a celebration of the sacrament of penance. Father Beever is pastor of St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Westphalia, Mo., in the Jefferson City, Mo., Diocese, experiencing the sacrament of penance at NCYC was moving.

"It had been a while," she said as she walked out of the confession room, her voice filled with emotion. "It always makes me so happy. It's a feeling I don't get anywhere else. It's so powerful. Every time I've gone, even when I was little, I just remember that feeling—and I wanted that back."

Celebrating the sacrament of penance at NCYC was also moving for the priests who sat for hours in the confession room.

"It's one of the main reasons I come," said Father Jeremy Thies, a priest of the Saint Cloud, Minn., Diocese. He has

attended NCYC three times as a priest.

"It fills me with joy in my priesthood," he said. "I've seen so many kids come that maybe haven't gone to confession in a while, or just really want to unload some powerful and painful woundedness and sinfulness.

"It fills me with hope, because these are young people who have personal encounters with Christ. That's what it's all about—a personal encounter with Christ."

Assisting in the confession room were several volunteers who directed penitents to priests ready to hear their confession. Many were archdiocesan seminarians.

"I can't imagine how the Lord feels to have so many people coming so

much closer to him in this sacrament," said archdiocesan seminarian Benjamin Popson, a senior at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis.

"I would imagine that it would be overwhelming for a priest in a good way, hearing so many confessions in a day. Confession is one of the more tender aspects of the priesthood."

Popson also appreciated seeing the sheer numbers of priests in the confession room.

"There were so many different priests, from across the country, from across cultures, wearing anything from jeans to a cassock and surplice," he said. "But each priest is a tender model of Christ." †

Vocations at NCYC: Joyful priests, religious encourage youths to discern

By Sean Gallagher

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) held on Nov. 21-23 in Indianapolis was one of the first events that Father Michael Keucher participated in as the new archdiocesan vocations director.

Manning a booth for the National Conference of Diocesan Vocations Directors outside a room in the Indiana Convention Center where hundreds of priests heard thousands of confessions during the three days, Father Keucher said NCYC is great for encouraging young people to begin considering God's call in their lives.

"There's a beautiful Catholic culture here that encourages these kids, who clearly have such a beautiful faith, to think about what God's dream might be for their lives, what his plan is for them," said Father Keucher. "You can see that the faith is alive in their hearts. So, it's neat to

see their hunger to discern God's will."

In the conference's thematic park in another part of the convention center, members of several religious communities from across the country spent time with NCYC participants, answering their questions, sharing rosaries and holy cards with them and encouraging them to pray about their vocation.

"It really is amazing," said Mother Christina Murray, superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker in Walton, Ky., about the conference. "It shows how big the Church is and how young the Church is. There are kids out there who are on fire with their faith. But I think they don't get much credit sometimes.

"When I was growing up, I didn't know that religious life was an option. They have to know that it's an option, it's out there and that we're happy with it. We need to plant those seeds and let them think about it."

Not far from the booth where Mother Christina helped teens have photos taken of them behind life-size cutouts of nuns and priests, Holy Cross Brother Jimmy Henke interacted with youths attending the conference.

He attended NCYC in 2011 as a student at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis and a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. This year, he was glad to return as a

Holy Cross brother in the second year of temporary vows.

"Planting seeds is exactly what it is," said Brother Jimmy. "The students here are just beginning to think about vocational questions. I might be the first person who has ever asked them, 'Have you ever thought about being a priest or brother?'"

"Sometimes, I talk about Holy Cross. But a lot of it is just inviting them to begin that discernment question."

Franciscan Sister Kathleen Branham, vocations director for the Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg, had many similar conversations at a booth for her community in the thematic park.

"It opens a door for these young people so they can think about religious life," she said. "When you ask some of these young people if they've thought about religious life, a lot said they didn't until they came here."

Zander Jez, a teen from Houston attending his second NCYC, said the teens appreciated the presence of so many seminarians, priests and religious at the conference.

"It helps me to know that our Catholic faith is alive in so many different ways," Zander said. "There isn't just one way of being a Catholic. You can help in many different aspects through the Franciscans or the Basilians or being a sister.

"And when you hear about discernment, you think it's about becoming a priest or a sister. But it doesn't necessarily mean that. It could mean being married and having kids."

Archdiocesan seminarians have volunteered at NCYC while the conference has been held in Indianapolis. Some assist in the confession room. Others facilitate breakout sessions or just help direct the sometimes massive pedestrian traffic at the conference.

Archdiocesan seminarian James Hentz, a freshman at Bishop Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, was excited to volunteer at NCYC. Two years ago, he attended it as a junior at Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis.

"I remember talking with the seminarians at NCYC then," Hentz said. "Now I'm in the position where I saw them at."

He volunteered in the confession room and was impressed by the pastoral care given by the many priests ministering there during the conference.

"It's one of the greatest things that I've seen in years," said Hentz, a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield. "One person is balling their eyes out. The next person is ecstatic.

"You see them at the highest and lowest points in their lives. Seeing people how they come in compared to how they leave—they walk lighter. I can't imagine how the priests are feeling, seeing such a radical transformation."

Father Jerry Byrd, pastor of St. Mary Parish in North Vernon and St. Joseph and St. Ann parishes, both in Jennings County, volunteered at NCYC as a seminarian. Now he's happy to serve at it as a priest.

"You come to this and see all the young people interested in the faith, wanting to live it out and to figure out how to do that—it inspires me as a pastor and wakes me up a little bit," said Father Byrd. "If they're seeing priests and religious that are happy, that love what they're doing, that witness alone is going to be enough to inspire young people.

"That witness is really important. If we want to bolster vocations, that's how we have to do it." †

(For more information about vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, visit www.HearGodsCall.com.) †



Franciscan Sister Janette Pruit, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, speaks on Nov. 22 in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis during the National Catholic Youth Conference to Celina Feldhake, left, and Amanda Merkes, both of Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

By **Natalie Hoefler**

Katie Prejean McGrady acknowledged a truth about the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) and similar events.



Katie Prejean McGrady

"All of us hit these walls when we leave these big events," said the national Catholic speaker and youth minister. "We don't know how exactly to take what we've heard, take what we've felt and articulate it in a way that is engaging, that is dynamic and

that actually moves somebody to want to know and love Jesus."

NCYC planners recognized this phenomenon, too. Addressing a packed hall in the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Nov. 23 during NCYC, Prejean McGrady recalled an NCYC committee meeting she attended some time ago.

"The thought was, what if we went deeper with the young people who were ready to go deeper?" she said.

"A lot of NCYC is introductory. But NCYC is such an on-ramp for so many people who want to go deeper in faith."

Prejean McGrady said the committee asked themselves, "What does it look like when you take a couple thousand of you, throw you in a room and actually equip you to go and be vibrant, visible witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?"

And so NCYC's new "Deep Dive" series of sessions was created.

Below are practical tips offered by leading Catholic presenters about how young people—and anyone—can live their faith more intentionally through prayer, Scripture and asking "How can I help?"

'Prayer, love and TACOS'

Franciscans of the Renewal Father Agustino Torres mentioned the "out of sight, out of mind" tendency after NCYC.

Afterward, he said, "You're like, 'Woo, yeah!'"

"Then two weeks later things get back to normal. Sometimes you go home changed, but things at home haven't changed. ... You go back home to the same mess.

"My solution is prayer, love—and TACOS," he said, laughter filling the room as a slide appeared spelling out the acronym: "Telling Another Christ Overcomes Sadness."

Prayer is a must to keeping personal faith alive, said Father Agustino.

"We must pray, because if we're going to dive deeper, we can't give what we don't have," he said.

And Mass is the highest form of prayer and worship, he told the youths—but only for those who fully participate.

"If you go to Mass without putting anything into it, how can you expect to get anything out of it?" Father Agustino challenged. "I don't care if what the priest says in the homily is boring—Jesus is coming down in the Eucharist! He is being made present. Every single Mass is a miracle."

His next practical tip was on love, which he defined as when "we don't think first of ourselves but begin to think more of the person right in front of us."

And that includes God.

"How many of you, the first thing you do when you wake up is check your [phone]?" Father Agustino asked. "Don't think first of who contacted me—think first of contacting God. Just make the sign of the cross and say, 'Lord, help me to love like you today.' Then you can check your phone."

For his last piece of practical advice, the Latino priest admitted his "love for tacos" was so great, he found a way to incorporate them as a practical tip for living the faith by turning the word into an acronym: Tell Another Christ Overcomes Sadness.

"The best way for you to live what you receive" at NCYC, he advised, "is for you to go up to other people, especially if they're down, and share a word of encouragement—'Can I pray with you? Here's a Bible verse that's helped me.'"

"You never know how you sharing this message that Christ overcomes sadness can change a life."

Reading Scripture 'is a non-negotiable'

Author and national speaker Mark Hart didn't mess around in his Deep Dive session on practical tips to live the faith.



Mark Hart

"If you actually want to live—not just to be, but to live—as a Catholic, you are going to have to get to know this book—this is a non-negotiable," he said, holding up

the Bible.

His first suggestion was to read the upcoming Sunday readings in advance.

"The Catholic Church actually believes—this is so ridiculous—that in the 167 hours that you're not in Sunday Mass, that you would set aside some time to read the readings for Mass," Hart said in mock indignation.

Acknowledging people's busy lives, he suggested reading each of the Sunday readings—including the Psalm response—on separate days of the week rather than all in one sitting. He also noted the availability of several free phone apps that offer the Sunday readings and reflections.

Hart's second practical tip for reading Scripture is *not* to read the Bible in order from cover to cover.

"Start with the Gospel of Mark," he suggested. "It's the shortest, easiest, most action-packed Gospel. And it has stories you're accustomed to hearing."

He also recommended reading a few verses at a time rather than the entire book or even a chapter, and to use the "four R" *lectio divina* ("holy reading") approach to reading Scripture: *read* the passage, *reflect* on a word or phrase that got your attention, *respond* to God in prayer about the word or phrase, and *rest* in God, listening for his response.

If the Gospel of Mark, at 16 chapters, is too intimidating, said Hart, "go to the book of James." With only five chapters

it's one of the shortest books in the Bible, "and it's basically how to put up with really annoying people," he added.

He recommended downloading free Bible apps that use either the Revised Standard Version (RSV) or New American Bible (NAB), both approved Catholic versions of the Bible.

Hart noted that many people complain saying, "God's not speaking to me."

"How do you know for sure?" he questioned. "Are you putting yourself in a position where God can actually speak to you? Even if you only have five minutes, you can still go to Proverbs or Sirach or Psalms and read just one or two lines.

"When you give God the gift of your time, he is going to bless you."

'Uniquely suited to help the Church'

In the final Deep Dive session, Prejean McGrady identified the young people present as belonging to "Generation Z," those born in 1996 and after.

"I've studied your generation a lot by reading a lot about you and by spending a lot of time with you," said Prejean McGrady. "There are three things about Gen Z ... that I think make you uniquely suited to help the Church."

The first trait is that "you believe you can change the world," she said. Prejean McGrady backed up her statement citing a poll of 3,000 Gen Z members in which 64 percent answered yes, they did believe they could make a difference in the world.

Second, said Prejean McGrady, is that this generation "longs for presence. ... You crave quality time." So when it comes to helping others, she said, "you are uniquely suited to give that quality time to people, to look up from the phone, to stare into the face of another."

Finally, she said, "You like to tell your story," a trait essential to evangelization. "When you've met Jesus Christ, you can't help but give testimony to how he's changed your life—and if your life wasn't changed, then it wasn't Jesus that you met."

These traits enable the young Church to imitate Christ, "to walk into the chaos and the mess and the noise and say, 'How can I help?' There are four practical ways you can do that," Prejean McGrady said.

First is to study the faith. "Buy books. Read the catechism. Put Scripture in your life," she suggested. "You need to know what we believe and why we believe it, ... especially in the relativistic culture we live in where everybody has a question and wants to



At a Deep Dive session on Nov. 22, Franciscan Friars of the Renewal Father Agustino Torres uses a TACOS acronym to remind NCYC youths to "tell another Christ overcomes sadness." (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

disprove you."

The second step is to pray. Prejean McGrady likened this essential act to "charging your phone. ... You have to take personal quality time with the one who is just enraptured by you and just wants to see your face."

Next she told the youths to "get out of your comfort zone." This generation may like to tell their story, but talking to others about Christ and faith can be uncomfortable at first, Prejean McGrady noted.

"It takes a little while to get there, but there does come a time when talking with people about Jesus does become comfortable. You have to ask God to take those uncomfortable moments and make them comfortable for you."

And evangelizing doesn't have to mean talking, she added.

"Wear a cross. Put a Catholic sticker on your water bottle or a Catholic background on the back of your phone," she suggested. "Maybe grab a few friends and pray the rosary in the lunch room. Is it countercultural? ... Yeah. But get over yourself. Jesus died on a cross—you can say a rosary in front of other people."

Prejean McGrady's last practical tip was to "be generous."

"Generosity is the way we're called to see the people in front of us, to ask in every moment, 'How can I love them like Jesus loves them?' and 'How does that bring me closer to Jesus?'"

Prejean McGrady closed with words of encouragement to those who chose to take the Deep Dive sessions.

"You are the generation that will revive and renew our Church," she said. "You will do it through your witness, through your joy, through your stories, through your study and through your generous spirit." †

'Cooking priest' shares special recipe for teenagers to get to heaven

By **John Shaughnessy**

Known as "the cooking priest," Voluntas Dei Father Leo Patalinghug



Fr. Leo Patalinghug

has a reputation for creating meals that have been described as heavenly.

During the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 22, he provided a different kind of recipe—"Five Steps to Become a Teenage Saint"—to help youths get to heaven.

Yet before he offered those steps

during one of the many workshop sessions at the conference, Father Leo stressed two points.

The first point he shared was, "Being a saint is our calling in life."

His second point began with a question for the youths: "Do you want to get to heaven? Then you'd better be a saint."

He then stressed that everyone can become a saint if they follow these five steps:

Reach out to God. "The first step in becoming a saint is realizing that you are not a saint and you need help. How are you going to be a saint if you're not trying to reach out to God? Try!"

"Maybe you can try by reaching out to a sinner or someone who is poor. Or

how about this—reach out and call up your priest and say, 'You know what, I'm struggling. Help me.' Reach out."

Call out for God: "You got to say, 'God save me.'" God is going to give you the greatest gift you can ever imagine—the gift of himself. At Christmas, God comes out of heaven and into this ugly, messy world" for everyone.

Be sanctified: "Let God come into your life and cut sin away. You do not have that power, but God does.

"We have a sacrament to help us to become saints. You want to find saints? Look for them in the confessional. For it is there that they tell the truth, and the truth sets them free."

Be bound to God: "God can interpret

the groans of our hearts. God understands us. God can give life to us all."

Be a bridge to God for others: Become "a bridge, not a barrier" for other people in their relationships with God.

Summing up, Father Leo said, "That's what you can do. It's that easy, but also that difficult. Let's be honest. It's not as easy as saying, 'God save me,' and it comes so quickly.

"It requires us to be willing to practice our faith *and* to be faithful in practicing our faith. It requires us to be consistent, and to make sure you surround yourself with all of the right people. It's a total stretching." †



Monk creates images to help youths encounter Christ

By Sean Gallagher

Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis might be described as a cathedral of football since tens of thousands of Indianapolis Colts fans faithfully fill it for the National Football League team's home games.

But the organizers of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) sought to make the massive stadium as much like an actual cathedral as they could for the 20,000 Catholic youths from across the country who attended the biennial event on Nov. 21-23.

Instead of cheering touchdowns, they wanted the youths to enter deeply into prayer and give praise and worship to God.

To that end, the organizers commissioned nationally-known liturgical artist Benedictine Brother Martin Erspamer, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, to create five stained glass-like images of the story from the Gospel of St. Luke of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:23-35).

Brother Martin spoke with *The Criterion* about his work in the days leading up to NCYC. In a way, he compared his art to the youths who journeyed from their homes across the country to attend the conference.

"I hope they move them to pray and enter into the mystery of the Lord revealing himself," Brother Martin said. "These things tend to have for me a life of their own."

"They're like my children, in sense, in that I work on them and I agonize over them. And, at a certain point, you have to cut them loose. Then, after they're loose, they're on their own."

The images, originally 28 inches tall and 10 inches wide, were created with

transparent ink on paper. In the stadium, they were projected onto panels hung far above the stage that were 28 feet tall and 10 feet wide. They were also on panels 8 feet tall and 3 feet wide that were brought adjacent to the stage itself during different sessions of the conference.

The images of the disciples on the road to Emmaus were chosen in particular because the participants were led during the conference in prayerfully meditating on that Gospel passage.

Paul Sifuentes, archdiocesan director of youth ministry and an NCYC organizer, is convinced that beauty is an attractive way to invite young people to enter into the faith and explore it within their hearts more deeply.

"I think they need to know that faith and beauty are companions on the journey," Sifuentes said. "They don't just intersect for a moment. Our faith should produce beauty."

He reflected that sacred art is an effective means to help youths not so much learn about Christ, but to meet him.

"So often in our Church recently, we have often concentrated on how we can best tell someone about Christ," Sifuentes said. "And we absolutely need to tell people about Christ and be able to tell a story."

"But we also need to know of the ways that we can say, 'This is the person who encountered me in incredible ways. Let me help you encounter him as well.'"

The form of prayer used in the conference in connection to the images was *lectio divina* ("holy reading"), an ancient spiritual practice fostered for more than 1,000 years in monastic communities like Saint Meinrad Archabbey, in which people slowly read scriptural texts and approach them prayerfully from different perspectives.



Franciscan Friar of the Renewal Father Agostino Torres and a group of youths lead National Catholic Youth Conference participants in a period of *lectio divina* ("holy reading") prayer on Nov. 22 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. An image depicting part of the story from the Gospel of St. Luke about the disciples on the road to Emmaus created by Benedictine Brother Martin Erspamer sits adjacent to the main stage during the prayer session. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

The contemporary images created by Brother Martin are in many ways modeled after the modes of artistic expression used in medieval stained-glass windows.

Brother Martin said that Saint Meinrad is a place where ancient traditions of faith, including art, *lectio divina* and Gregorian chant, are alive and form the faith of the monks and many who visit the monastic community.

"Certainly all of those traditions are alive here," Brother Martin said. "I consider what I do and what we do as being connected to the ancient traditions of the Church. In a sense

there's one foot that is stabilized by the past but then the other foot is moving into the future."

Sifuentes said that bringing together Scripture, a form of prayer used for more than 1,000 years and art rooted in the age-old traditions of the Church shows that these traditions are alive today and can speak to contemporary Catholic youths.

"The reason that they are alive is that they produce encounters with the living God," he said. "Art, beauty, *lectio divina*—I think these are ways where we get out of the way and let them encounter God himself." †

Saint Meinrad's youth liturgy program shares ancient traditions at NCYC

By Sean Gallagher

Two years ago at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey helped lead the youths that filled Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis in praying Night Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours in the ancient practice of Gregorian chant.

This year, youths themselves chanted at various points in the conference's general sessions in a small schola led by Benedictine Brother John Mark Falkenhain of Saint Meinrad.

Many were former participants of One Bread One Cup, Saint Meinrad's summer youth liturgical leadership program.

Chant was used at different times during the conference to help its participants enter into an ancient form of prayer called *lectio divina* ("holy reading") that involves slowly reading a scriptural text and approaching it in prayer from different perspectives.

Tammy Becht, director of youth and young adult formation at Saint Meinrad, was excited that the gifts of One Bread One Cup, which involves about 350-400 youths per year, was shared with 20,000

youths at NCYC.

In an interview with *The Criterion* before the conference, she expressed her hope that NCYC participants would be as open to the Church's ancient liturgical and spiritual traditions as those who come to Saint Meinrad for One Bread One Cup.

"We've found that young people are just completely enamored with them and respond really well to the monastic community," she said.

Lilly Secrest is a two-time One Bread One Cup participant. She is a member of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood and a senior at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

At NCYC's opening session, Lilly, two other youths and a deacon chanted the story from the Gospel of St. Luke of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). The youths that filled Lucas Oil Stadium in that and subsequent sessions were led to meditate on the passage through *lectio divina*.

In the days leading up to the conference, Lilly spoke about how chant and liturgy have become important for her through One Bread One Cup.

"When I first heard about chant, I thought it was going to be so boring," she said. "And that wasn't the case at all. I can't wait to show so many people that this is cool and can help you in your prayer life."

"After One Bread One Cup when I'm at Mass, I am so mesmerized and pay so much attention to what is going on because I see the beauty of the sacrament that's happening. I didn't recognize and appreciate it before."

Becht said that Lilly is not alone. Many One Bread One Cup participants have been drawn closer to the Church simply through its worship.



Benedictine Brother John Mark Falkenhain, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, leads youths in chanting the "Salve Regina" ("Hail Holy Queen") on Nov. 22 in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis during the National Catholic Youth Conference. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

"The liturgy is right there under our noses," she said. "That's the vehicle we should use and concentrate on to bring young people back to Christ and to keep them in the Church. We have everything we need. We just have to do it well."

Brother John Mark was impressed by how well the youths in the schola picked up on the chant for the conference. They came together from across the country at Saint Meinrad for a practice in the summer and earlier this fall. Even though they had only sung together twice, they sang the chant well at the conference.

"They're trying to show the kids that this is part of our tradition and belongs in all our worship," Brother John Mark said. "It's alive."

Josh Russell, a 16-year-old member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany and a junior at Our Lady of

Providence High School in Clarksville, was a member of the schola.

Chanting in front of 20,000 Catholic youths from across the country was impressive for the former One Bread One Cup participant.

"It was fantastic," Josh said after a general session on Nov. 22. "I've never gotten that kind of opportunity before. It really opened my eyes to how big the Church really is. It's really worth it to stay in the Church and to work to keep these people close to the Church."

For him, chant doesn't seem like an old form of music but instead shows "how long-running the sacraments have been and how well Christ has lived through the Church. I think it's evidence enough that Christ has been in the Church because things like chant can survive for so many years." †



Lilly Secrest, a member of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, chants part of the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus from the Gospel of St. Luke on Nov. 21 at Lucas Oil Stadium during the National Catholic Youth Conference. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Special needs services send message, 'all are welcome'

By Natalie Hoefler

Under the streets of Indianapolis, a youth on crutches rides a golf cart through a tunnel from the Indiana Convention Center to Lucas Oil Stadium for the closing Mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).



Erin Jeffries

At that same Mass, a deaf youth laughs at a humorous comment made during the homily, thanks to a volunteer interpreting the words using American Sign Language (ASL). Later, several teens and adults with allergy issues receive Communion in

special low-gluten hosts.

These scenes portray just a few of the ways in which the riches of NCYC are made available to all, including those with special needs.

"If you say all are welcome, people with special needs assume, 'Oh, that means me, too.' But that's not always the case," says local NCYC special needs coordinator Erin Jeffries, who serves as the archdiocesan coordinator of ministry to those with special needs.

That's why, when signing up for NCYC, attendees can identify special needs they'll require assistance with during the three-day event.

"It could be issues with hearing, vision, mobility, sensory issues, a need for low-gluten hosts—the needs vary from

conference to conference," says Jeffries.

For instance, 150 participants expressed a need for ASL interpreters at the 2015 conference. This year there were none.

But just in case, two ASL interpreters were present to sign in front of a section of Lucas Oil Stadium reserved for the hearing impaired during the conference's four general sessions and closing Mass celebrated there.

Despite no registrants indicating a need, a young woman sat in the section at the opening session on Nov. 21.

"She was hard of hearing, but for some reason didn't see the section for special needs when she registered," Jeffries explained. One of the ASL interpreters volunteered to sign for the teen at the breakout sessions she wanted to attend the next day.

"We didn't have any requests, but it's a good thing we're here—that's why we're here," Jeffries said.

She noted that for this conference, "A big part of what I'm doing is accessibility issues. I connect people with local resources to rent wheelchairs and such, and there are some on site, too. We do what we can to help them get around."

Jeffries arranged another just-in-case service, a quiet room for those with sensory issues.

"We put out paper, decks of playing cards, bean bags, a binder with steps on how to calm down—anything that might help someone who need time away from the noise," she explained.

And for the first time this year, NCYC included ADA (American Disabilities Act) Needs informational kiosks. *The Criterion* stopped by one of the ADA booths on the second day of NCYC for a status checkup.



Joyce Ellinger uses American Sign Language to interpret for the hearing impaired during the National Catholic Youth Conference closing Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 23. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

"We've rented out all our wheelchairs and scooters," said Jeffries. "And last night the elevator [was damaged], so we were busy redirecting people this morning."

While she serves as a local liaison, the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry which organizes the event offers special needs services as well, such as assisted listening devices, large-print and Braille program guides and gluten-free hosts.

The special needs services at NCYC are all about welcome, says Jeffries.

"Sometimes you need that explicit invitation, to say, 'All are welcome, and here, we have these things available to meet your needs.'" †



A person with special dietary needs receives a low-gluten host during the National Catholic Youth Conference closing Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 23. Several stations offered the special hosts.



At left, youths, chaperones and youth ministers from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis fill St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis for a Mass to open the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 21. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson was the principal celebrant. At right, the archbishop then led a eucharistic procession from St. John to the Indiana Convention Center. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)



Archdiocesan youths put their best foot forward at NCYC with saintly socks

By John Shaughnessy

Teens from Wisconsin proudly proclaimed their "cheese-head" status with a triangle of cheddar on their heads.

Youths from Maryland donned crab hats while their counterparts from Los Angeles roamed the conference halls wearing halos. And teens from Florida were decked out in hats displaying sharks and dolphins.

It was all part of the distinctive, fun and crazy headgear that's always on display during the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis—a three-day celebration of faith that brought

together 20,000 youths from across the country on Nov. 21-23.

This year, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis wanted to take local pride to another level—creating a head-to-toe look for the 1,456 youths from central and southern Indiana who participated in the conference.

The most unusual part of the ensemble was a pair of socks that pay tribute to St. Theodora Guérin, the first saint in the history of Indiana. The front part of the sock shows an image of the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods while the back features the coat of arms of the archdiocese, and the sole shares her motto, "Trust in Providence."

"It's a good opportunity to do some catechesis on who St. Theodora is—and help them identify with our archdiocese as the local Church," said Mary Kate Shanahan, assistant director of youth ministry for the archdiocese.

"We want to let people know she's part of our archdiocese, part of our story. St. Theodora's story also fits well with the theme of NCYC—'Blessed, Broken, Given.' She's blessed—she's a saint. She certainly struggled a lot. And she has given a whole lot to our state and our community through the Sisters of Providence and their outreach."

The archdiocese's swag package also included a "trucker" hat in colors of blue and white, with the image of a cow's head in the middle of "NCYC" and "2019" on the front of the cap. Then there was a grey sweatshirt with the deaneries of the



Grace Swinefurth, left, Alyssa Struewing and Joan Njoroge show off part of the ensemble that youths from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis were given to sport during the National Catholic Youth Conference. (Photos by John Shaughnessy)

archdiocese outlined on the back. The final part of the package was a collection of stickers with the cow logo that—like the hat—are designed for trading with youths from other states.

"During the conference, they use the trade items as a way for them to engage and meet other people from all over," Shanahan said. "It's fun."

The swag brought rave reviews from youths in the archdiocese's contingent.

"I'm so excited about the socks," said Alyssa Struewing, 16, a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis.

"They're personalized to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. It's just so cool that they're just for us."

Joan Njoroge liked everything in the package.

"They're beautiful and appealing," said Joan, 18, a member of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis. "And I like the label of NCYC. It shows you are part of our religion. It also shows togetherness because we all have them." †



Socks that pay tribute to St. Theodora Guérin, the first saint in the history of Indiana, were among the gifts that young people from central and southern Indiana were given to wear during the National Catholic Youth Conference.



Does NCYC have a lasting impact? Yes—I saw it

By Natalie Hoefler

I admit it. I have wondered about the lasting impact the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) has on teens.



Natalie Hoefler

I do recognize the value of the conference. The experience offers youths and adults alike exposure to thought-provoking workshops and inspiring speakers.

It's eye-opening and encouraging for those at the age when

fitting in is of paramount importance to see 20,000 of their peers unabashedly excited about their faith. And absolutely no one can deny the merit of placing these young people in the real presence of our Lord in eucharistic adoration, Mass and confession.

I acknowledge all of this, truly I do.

But what I've questioned is what happens after NCYC. Do the young people put into action—let alone simply remember—the lessons they learned there? Do they step out into the world changed, ready to live their faith more intentionally?

I have no doubt many-a-youth minister and parent reading these words are already mentally forming letters to the editor to disprove my doubts.

There is no need. My doubts were dispelled as I walked back to my car after the closing Mass on Nov. 23.

It was about 10:30 p.m., cold and dark. Streams of teens sang and chatted their way up West Street in downtown Indianapolis toward comfy rooms in the ritzy hotels that surround the Indiana Convention Center.

I noticed two teens off to the side of the sidewalk. One wore a foam corn cob hat, the other a chasuble and bishop's miter that looked like they were purchased at a Walmart after-Halloween costume sale.

The two were bending over near a trash can. I stepped over to make sure they were OK.

That's when I noticed a man sitting on the cold concrete, huddled against the



After the closing Mass for the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 23 in Indianapolis, young people on the way to their hotel stopped to offer water and snacks to a homeless man. They then prayed over him, led by the young man on the far left. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

trash can. The youths were unzipping their backpacks and handing him snacks.

More teens noticed, and they too stopped to shower the man with bags of chips, bottles of water and packages of cookies and crackers.

Then another group stopped and gathered around. I'm not sure if it was a teen or a chaperone, but a young-looking man wearing a yellow foam crown stepped up and asked, "Sir, is it all right if we pray with you?"

The man said yes and bowed his head. Some youths did the same, others held out their hands in blessing, and the young man with the crown prayed aloud for the homeless man's protection, his safety, his ability to find shelter, and his knowledge of God's love for him.

The foam-crowned man then knelt down and shook the other man's hand, gave him a pat on the arm and continued up the sidewalk along West Street. The youths offered the seated man a chorus of "good-nights" and "God-bless-you's" then followed the man wearing the crown.

After the pray-ers moved on, I noticed that many other groups of goofy-hat-wearing NCYC attendees continued to stream by, singing and chatting, oblivious to the man by the trash can.

OK, so maybe not all who participate in NCYC walk away changed. But some do, and I was utterly humbled by the unhesitating generosity and charity I witnessed by the youths and young adults who ministered to the man by the trash can.

"All are children of God," they were

told at NCYC.

"You're called to step out of your comfort zone."

"Go and be the hands and feet of Christ."

"Tell another Christ overcomes sadness."

Late on a cold night in Indianapolis, these young people put each of these NCYC lessons into action.

Does NCYC make a lasting impact on those who attend?

On some it does. And that lived impact makes Christ more present in them, and thus more present to others.

Like the homeless man.

And me.

(Natalie Hoefler is a reporter for The Criterion.) †

Teenagers embrace volunteer opportunities during NCYC

By Mike Krokos

Like many other teenagers, A.J. Terry made sure the time she spent in the thematic park during the National



Fr. Thomas Clegg

Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis was also about helping others.

A.J., a high school freshman who lives in the Diocese of Springfield, Mass., spent several minutes helping put together meals for Pack

Away Hunger, an Indianapolis-based organization that provides nutritious dehydrated meals to local food pantries

throughout Indiana. They also work with international populations.

The meal consists of rice and soy, dehydrated vegetables and a powerful vitamin nutrient pack that goes into it, said Allison Avin, Pack Away Hunger's director of communications. The meals are sealed and have a long shelf life.

"It's so great to see everybody serving. It's a really hands-on way for them to impact someone's life," noted Avin, adding that the teenagers were to pack close to 44,000 meals over the three days of the conference.

A.J. was happy to do her part.

"I really like to help people. I'm really blessed to not have to worry about things like that," she said. "The ability to help people who do have to worry about things like that is really nice."

Avin was impressed by the teens' commitment to helping others.

"They all are just really eager to serve," she said, "and it's so nice to see young people getting engaged with service to others and having a heart for God and being able to really put that into action."

Olivia Reyna also took time to assist the least fortunate.

"Right now, I'm making a shirt for children in Haiti," said the 10th grader from the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, inside the thematic park, which was located in a large exhibition hall in the Indiana Convention Center in



Teenagers from the Diocese of Springfield, Mass., put together meals on Nov. 23 during the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis for Pack Away Hunger, an Indianapolis-based organization that provides nutritious dehydrated meals to local food pantries throughout Indiana. They also work with international populations. (Photos by Mike Krokos)

Indianapolis.

The outreach, known as Hands Across Haiti, is a ministry of St. John Paul II Parish in Sellersburg. It provides decorated T-shirts, school supplies, tote bags and backpacks to its sister parish in Haiti.

Father Thomas Clegg, pastor of St. John Paul II Parish, said his parish started the outreach six years ago, and they were happy to see NCYC participants step up and help with their initiative.

"It's so neat to see people grab hold

of an idea and say, 'This is something I can do,'" said Father Clegg. "Not everybody may be able to travel to Haiti, not everybody may be able to travel to Mexico or Latin America, but anybody can come in and decorate a shirt that we're going to send down there."

"The neat part for us is that when we go down to visit [Haiti], we see them wearing these shirts and carrying these backpacks in our schools." †



Olivia Reyna, a 10th grader from the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa, decorates a T-shirt on Nov. 23 for a child in Haiti during the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 23 in Indianapolis.