

An encounter with mercy in prison

A prison resident in the Jefferson City diocese came face-to-face with the depths of God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

—CNS photo

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The CATHOLIC MISSOURIAN

December 18, 2020 • Vol. 64 No. 13

Newspaper of the Diocese of Jefferson City

Jupiter, Saturn to put on 'Christmas Star' show Dec. 21



U.S. Jesuit Brother Guy Consolmagno, director of the Vatican Observatory is pictured at the observatory in Rome in this Dec. 12, 2007, file photo. Brother Consolmagno, along with astronomers and sky gazers across the world, will be keeping watch at sunset Dec. 21, 2020, in any time zone for a rare astronomical phenomenon as two of the brightest naked-eye planets, Saturn and Jupiter, create an event known as "Planetary Conjunction."

— CNS photo/Annette Schreyer

Priests who have battled COVID-19 share insights into sickness, isolation and ministry

By Jay Nies

Father Joseph Corel had taken to writing to parish and school families being affected by COVID-19.

Especially to young people, he emphasized that "this is not God punishing you! But if we give it to His Son Jesus on the cross and align our suffering with His, He can do great things with it."

Upon coming down with a nasty case of COVID-19 himself, Fr. Corel had to stop and ask if he really believes what he wrote.

"Believe it!" he told himself. "Because it is your opportunity to grow and participate in this redemptive suffering!"

Fr. Corel, one of the pastors *in solidum* of St. Vincent de Paul Parish of Pettis County, is one of several priests of this diocese who have had to take time off from ministering in order

to be ministered to in this time of pandemic.

"I gave it up to God the best I could and asked Him to do something special with this gift," he said.

Services rendered

Father Donald Antweiler was very conscious of the protocols for fending off the virus, such as washing and sanitizing hands, wearing a facemask and maintaining proper social distances.

"Yet when my associate pastor tested positive for the virus, I took the test the next day and discovered that I, too, had it," said Fr. Antweiler, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Jefferson City.

Pending planetary passage will be the closest since 1623

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

Cleveland

A once-every-two-decade conjunction involving the solar system's two gas giants will give earthbound observers a look at a so-called "Christmas Star" on the longest night of the year.

Come sunset Dec. 21 in any time zone around the world, Jupiter and Saturn seemingly will merge into a single bright point of light low in the western sky.

The Great Conjunction of 2020 will yield an expected spectacular astronomical sight involving the two planets unseen in nearly eight centuries.

The two planets have been approaching conjunction — a point when planets or other bodies as seen from earth are near each other in the night sky — all year. That the conjunction is occurring near Christmas Day has given rise to talk about the Star of Bethlehem that the Gospel of Matthew describes in his telling of the birth of Jesus.

But the description of the star "is a very minor part of the infancy narrative," Jesuit Brother Guy Consolmagno, director of the Vatican Observatory, told Catholic News Service (CNS). "It's so unimportant that Luke doesn't talk about it and yet it has captured our imagination."

It's what the star represents — the birth of Jesus — that is the real story, Brother Consolmagno said.

Theories abound about the Star of Bethlehem, he explained, citing the millions of hits about the topic on the internet and the 400 book titles referencing it that are available at online stores.

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

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12/18/20

Sedalia SHS NHS to host Christmas Eve curbside pick-up

The Sacred Heart School (SHS) National Honor Society (NHS) will continue its tradition of feeding the elderly, unemployed and homeless of Pettis County on Christmas Eve.

To adhere to COVID guidelines SHS will be hosting a curbside-only meal pickup from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 24, at Sacred Heart School,

416 W. Third St. in Sedalia,

If you or a family you know is in need of the meal, please call the school office at 660-827-3800. Provide your name and the number of meals you are requesting.

Volunteer help will be limited to NHS members and their parents.

Monetary contributions may be sent to: Sacred Heart NHS, 416 W. Third St., Sedalia, MO 65301.

Chancery closings

The diocesan Chancery offices will be closed Dec. 24-25, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 and Jan. 18. This is a revision from previously announced schedules.

Festival of Lights at national shrine in Laurie through Jan. 10

The National Shrine of Mary, Mother of the Church in Laurie is offering its 39th annual Festival of Lights drive-through Christmas display.

All are invited to view the hundreds of thousands of colored lights adorning the 30-acre outdoor shrine, located on the grounds of St. Patrick Parish.

Visitors may enjoy the Christmas spirit from their cars from 5 to 10



p.m. each evening through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Jan. 10, 2021.

Assembled by parish staff and volunteers, the shrine's Festival of Lights has been a Lake-area tradition for nearly four decades, with the number of lights increasing each year.

Its purpose is to direct people toward the source of their longing and the true cause of their Christmas joy.

The National Shrine of Mary, Mother of the Church is located on the grounds of St. Patrick Church, 176 Marian Drive, off Highway 5 in Laurie.

Visit thenationalshrineofmarymotherofthechurch.com or "The National Shrine of Mary, Mother of the Church" on Facebook.

Administrative Assistant Needed



The Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking a bilingual (Spanish/English) administrative assistant to support the Executive Director of Faith Formation and Hispanic Ministry as well as clerical support for our Vocations Department.

This individual will be expected to take minutes of meetings, compose letters, and will organize events in coordination with our Events Coordinator. It is essential that the candidate have the ability to translate both oral and written communications. Other duties include serving as back-up receptionist for the Catholic Center.

An energetic, welcoming disposition with a solid understanding of Hispanic culture and Catholic values is required. Final candidates will be asked to take a Word and Excel skills assessment.

Please send resume to HRDir@diojeffcity.org.

Director of Religious Education & Youth/Young Adult Ministry



The Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking a Director of Religious Education and Youth/Young Adult Ministry to administer the curriculum approval process within the diocese for parish-based religious education. The Director will provide direct support for, and development of, parish-based young adult leaders and youth ministers in the outreach, evangelization, faith formation and pastoral care of their youth. The Director will serve as a liaison between Newman Center campus ministers and the Chancery, as well as oversee the coordination of diocesan-supported youth ministry events at the diocesan, regional and national levels.

The Director of Religious Education and Youth/Young Adult Ministry will be expected to exercise diligence and oversight for the budget assigned to this ministry.

We are specifically seeking a bilingual candidate (English/Spanish) who has the capability of ministering across cultures with well-developed social media skills. A master's degree in catechetics, religious education, theology, or youth ministry is required.

Qualified candidates should email resume to:

HRDir@diojeffcity.org

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"A diocesan paper serves as a bond of unity by publishing diocesan happenings and promulgating official regulations and decrees. It also plays a teaching role by reporting notable events of a religious and secular nature, and interpreting them in the light of Christian principles."
— Bishop Joseph M. Marling C.P.P.S., July 7, 1957

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Next print edition Jan. 8

This is the last print edition of *The Catholic Missourian* for 2020. The next issue of the paper will be dated Jan. 8, 2021. Additional print editions for 2021 will be dated: Jan. 22; Feb. 5 and 19; March 5 and 19; April 2, 16 and 30; May 14 and 28; June 11 and 25; July 9 and 23; Aug. 6 and 20; Sept. 3 and 17; Oct. 1, 15 and 29; Nov. 12 and 26; and Dec. 10 and 17.

Pray for deceased priests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jan. 8 — **Fr. Leo T. Buhman**, Immaculate Conception, Macon (2011)

Jan. 9 — **Fr. Thomas F. Greaney**, Immaculate Conception, Jefferson City (1967); **Fr. Jeremiah F. Kennedy**, Immaculate Conception, Jefferson City (1967); **Bishop Michael F. McAuliffe** (2006)

Administrative Assistant Needed



The Chancery Office of the Diocese of Jefferson City is seeking an Administrative Assistant position in their Jefferson City office at 2207 West Main Street.

The **Moderator of the Curia and Vicar General** are seeking an accomplished Administrative Assistant to support their clerical needs. This individual must have excellent skills with Microsoft Office and the ability to prioritize and switch tasks as needed. This position is also responsible for training others, holds the key position for coordinating maintenance on office equipment and will serve as a back-up administrative assistant to the Bishop as necessary. Professionalism and confidentiality are essential.

Qualified candidates should email a resume to HRDir@diojeffcity.org.

Bishops: Getting COVID-19 vaccine is 'act of charity,' supports the common good

By Julie Asher
Catholic News Service

Washington, D.C.

The "gravity" of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and "the lack of availability of alternative vaccines," are "sufficiently serious" reasons to accept the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, the chairmen of the U.S. bishops' doctrine and pro-life committees said Dec. 14.

"Receiving the COVID-19 vaccine ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community," they said. "In this way, being vaccinated safely against COVID-19 should be considered an act of love of our neighbor and part of our moral responsibility for the common good."

The bishops addressed the moral concerns raised by the fact the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have some connection to cell lines that originated with tissue taken from abortions.

However, this connection to morally compromised cell lines is so remote and the public health situation is too grave to reject the vaccines, said Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

Late Dec. 11, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

(FDA) gave emergency-use approval to the Pfizer vaccine, with approval expected for Moderna the week of Dec. 14. UPS and FedEx began shipping the doses across the country Dec. 12, with the first shipments arriving Dec. 14.

Each state has a distribution plan for administering them. National guidelines call for health care workers and those in nursing homes and long-term care facilities to be first in line to get immunized.

On Dec. 8, *The Lancet* medical journal reported that four clinical trials of a third vaccine, being developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca "appears to have moderate efficacy in preventing symptomatic illness, and may significantly reduce hospitalization from the disease."

AstraZeneca is expected to apply to the FDA for emergency use of its vaccine in the coming weeks.

Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann said they found the AstraZeneca vaccine it to be "more morally compromised" and concluded this vaccine "should be avoided" if there are alternatives available.

"It may turn out, however, that one does not really have a choice of vaccine, at least, not without a lengthy delay in immunization that may have serious consequences for one's health and the health of others," the two prelates stated. "In such a case ... it would be permissible to accept the Astra-



A dose of the COVID-19 vaccination made by Pfizer and BioNTech is administered in this un-dated handout photo.

— CNS photo/BioNTech SE 2020 handout via Reuters

Zeneca vaccine."

Shortly after Pfizer and Moderna announced Nov. 11 and Nov. 16, respectively, that their vaccines were 95-percent effective against COVID-19, critics claimed the vaccines have been produced using cells from aborted fetuses, leading to confusion over "the moral permissibility" of using these vaccines.

Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann addressed this issue in a Nov. 23 memo to their fellow bishops and addressed it again in their 2,400-word statement Dec. 12. In the memo they noted some were "asserting that if a vaccine is connected in any way with tainted cell lines, then it is immoral to be vaccinated with them. This is an inaccurate portrayal of Catholic moral teaching."

In their new lengthy statement, the two committee chairmen emphasized that any such cell lines were derived from tissue samples taken from fetuses aborted in the 1960s and 1970s and have been grown in laboratories all over the world since then.

"It is important to note that the making of the rubella vaccine — or that of the new CO-

VID-19 vaccines — does not involve cells taken directly from the body of an aborted child," Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann said. "Cells taken from two abortions in the 1960s were replicated in a laboratory to produce two cell lines that can be reproduced again and again, indefinitely."

"To make the rubella vaccine, cells from these cell lines are stimulated to produce the chemicals necessary for the vaccine," they explained. "It is not as if the making of the vaccine required ever more cells

from ever more abortions."

The two committee chairmen said the Vatican, through the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Academy for Life, "has offered guidance on the question of whether it is morally acceptable to receive a vaccine that has been created with the use of morally compromised cell lines."

Both the congregation and the academy "emphasize the positive moral obligation to do good," they said, "and in so doing to distance oneself as much as possible from the immoral act of another party such as abortion in order to avoid cooperation with someone else's evil actions and to avoid giving scandal, which could happen if one's own actions were perceived by other people to ignore or to minimize the evil of the action."

"Our love of neighbor should lead us to avoid giving scandal, but we cannot omit fulfilling serious obligations such as the prevention of deadly infection and the spread of contagion among those who

See VACCINE, page 18



Bishop McKnight's Calendar

The following appointments are tentative, depending on the pandemic.

DECEMBER

Dec 19 Our Lady of Lourdes Confirmation ceremonies, 10 am and 11:30 am, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Columbia

Dec 20 Holy Hour with diocesan seminarians, 4 pm, Cathedral of St. Joseph, Jefferson City

Dec 24 Christmas Eve Mass, 7 pm, Cathedral of St. Joseph, Jefferson City

JANUARY

Jan 4-10 Region IX Bishops' Retreat



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Bishop McKnight's December prayer intention for our Local Church

For the sons and daughters of the Church: that we may be the light of God's love for the world by our sacrificial gifts for those in need, especially the children of our world.



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

Por los hijos e hijas de la Iglesia. Para que seamos la luz del amor de Dios para el mundo a través de nuestra caridad sacrificial por aquellos en necesidad, especialmente los niños del mundo.

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

Frankenstein students suggest birthday gifts for baby Jesus

The students of St. Mary School in Frankenstein answered the question:

"What do you think the baby Jesus would like for His birthday?"

First grade

Max: To be helpful by cleaning.

Grant: Listening to Mom.

Landon: To be more loving.

Westin: Being helpful to help my dad.

Everett: I will be prayerful.

James: To be more loving.

Second Grade

Callie: To try to be nice to my friend.

Gunner: To be helpful by helping my mom and dad.

Lizzy: To be joyful.

Third Grade

Timothy: I would give Jesus the gift of being nice to others. He would like this because He was nice to other people and He would like me to be nice to others.

Clayton: I would give Jesus the gift of being nice to others. He would appreciate this.

Fourth Grade

Jacie: I would give baby Jesus hope and love for His birthday. This would be an awesome gift because He did a lot of things for us.

Kenzie: I would give baby Jesus good behavior, hope, love and my attention for His birthday.

Fifth grade

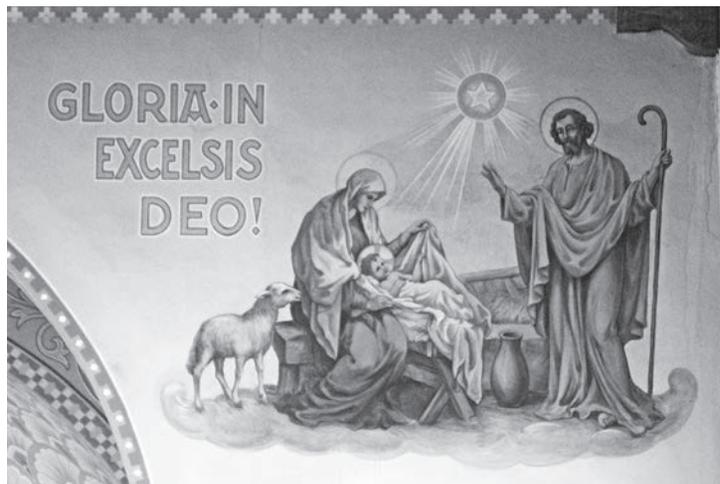
Jaylynn: My gift to Jesus is to be a better version of myself and to grow my relationship with God. I wanted to give God and Jesus a great present. I'm going to do this by being nicer to my brother and paying more attention in church. I chose to build my relationship because God wants us all to do that. He wanted a relationship so badly, He gave us His only son, Jesus.

Will: My gift to Jesus is spending time with Him. I spend time with him when I sing songs to Him. I go to church and participate in Mass to build my relationship with Jesus. I also pray to stay close to Him. Those are my gifts to Jesus.

Caleb: My gift to Jesus is my heart. I can give my heart by praying more. He can be a part of my heart. He can put nice thoughts in my heart. When the devil gets in my heart, Jesus will get him out.

Sixth grade

Melanie: I think Jesus would like to have a good relationship with me as a gift. I try to give this to Him by praying to Him every night and watching the Masses. God's not asking much from me when He asks for a good relationship with us. There are many things to distract us from God, and I need to make sure I leave time to talk to God. God created all of us and I try to spend some time every day to thank Him. To get a better relationship with God, there are many other things I could do besides thanking Him. I could follow the Ten Commandments, talk to Him, and study the Scriptures. Although gold, frankin-



Christmas mural in Our Lady Help of Christians Church in Frankenstein

cense and myrrh are good presents, what God really wants is a good relationship with us.

Seventh grade

Eli: My gift to Jesus will be my love and generosity to all people and to God. I'll be kind to all. I will help anyone who needs help. Most of all, I will make a relationship with God. That is my gift. I can help my friends with their homework and their school jobs if needed. I can help if someone gets hurt. I can make a relationship with God by praying and listening to Him. I can help out around the community.

Jenna: My gift to Jesus is my love. Love is one way to make a strong relationship. Praying and going to church are other ways to build a relationship with Jesus. Love is a good gift for Jesus. We give Him love because He gave us eternal life in heaven. He gave us love first. He loves us so much that He gave us the gift to go to heaven. So love is my gift to Jesus.

Kendra: I want to give Jesus love on Earth by helping others in need. I could help my neighbor in need by helping them out with yard work. I could help others by giving them food, clothes and toys. I want to give Jesus the gift of helping others. Helping others in need is how I give love on Earth to Jesus.

Chris: My gift to Jesus is giving to the poor; I will gather up all my clothes that are too small and donate them to a charity. I will also gather up

some food to give to the charity, too. I will also donate some money to the charity. This is my gift to Jesus, to give to the poor. I will give it to Saint Camillus Foundation. Giving to the poor is my gift to Jesus.

Braden: This year, I have two things that are my gifts for Jesus. The first one is trying to pray more to Him. The second one is trying to stop and spend more time with Him and think about Him more. Also to try to become closer to Him and try to stay focused on Him more. These are some of the gifts that I am trying to give Jesus.

Annabelle: My gift to Jesus is to build a relationship with Him. I want to go to heaven someday. I can build a better relationship with Jesus by going to church often. I can read the Bible more. The last way to get closer to God is by praying more often. This is how I can get a closer relationship with God. By going to church more and reading the Bible more often, also praying more than I used to.

Zach: God gives us many things like eternal life, the world, faith, hope, love and charity. He wants us to give something back to Him. We can pray to Him to repay Him for everything He has given us. Praying can make Him really happy but it's also even better if you go to Mass and Confession. Since God gives so many great things, the least we can do is some good things for Him like praying and going to Mass.

Eighth grade

Tyler: There is one thing God really wants to have with us, and that thing is a relationship. God has two goals. One goal is us to get to Heaven, and the other is to have a relationship with us. The relationship with God is the most important thing. With a relationship, we are closer to God in a spiritual way. We also want to have a relationship with God and get to Heaven. So if we have the relationship with God, we will have a better chance of going to Heaven, because we will be on good terms with God. God really wants to have a relationship with us while we're still alive on Earth.

Tessa: My gift to Jesus would be trying to make peace in the world so everyone would respect and care for each other. Not enough people stop and thank Jesus for sacrificing His life for us so we could live and have eternal life. I would also like to give Him love on earth because I feel like some people despise other people. Different races don't trust each other as much. I would tell Him thank you for giving up Your life for all of us. I want to give Jesus peace and love on Earth.

Evan: I think all God wants is for us on Earth to get along. There are a lot of lost people in the world. Some are not bad people; they should just try to follow God and try to get to Heaven. I think this is the best thing we on Earth can do for Jesus. My gift to Him is to follow Him and try to get to Heaven.

Ethan: I think my gift to God is buying gifts for the needy. There is a family that is poor, so our family is going to buy gifts for them. There are a lot of families that are too poor and can't get any gifts. We can get them a hoodie, socks, pants or a warm coat. Jesus wants us to care for each other and the needy. This is my gift to Jesus.

Many thanks to Principal Janice Markway and the faculty of St. Mary School for gathering the students' answers.

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Priest from Uganda talks about Christmas traditions from home

By Jay Nies

Christmas in the Central Region of Uganda is a massive celebration that commands anticipation throughout the year.

“It has the same theological understanding and liturgical preparations as per the universal Catholic Church,” stated Father Leonard Mukiibi, administrator of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in St. Thomas and St. Cecilia Parish in Meta.

Fr. Mukiibi grew up in Central Uganda and is a priest of the Archdiocese of Kampala. About 40 percent of the nation’s population is Catholic.

Preparations for Christmas, known as “Sekukkulu,” coincide with the start of Advent.

“People begin doing the shopping of items for Christmas, especially clothes and decorations,” he said.

Women and children especially enjoy buying new clothes to wear on Christmas.

Husbands and fathers, who are the primary breadwinners in many Ugandan households, are often less enthusiastic.

Christmas break from school begins around the last week of Advent.

The children traditionally head out to the woods in search of an appropriate cedar tree to bring home and decorate for Christmas, although artificial trees are becoming more popular than in the past.

Decorating then begins in earnest, along with the har-



Women in the Central Region of Uganda in eastern Africa traditionally dress in colorful Christmas finery for worship services on Christmas Day.

vesting of meat for the massive Christmas meals.

“Animals are butchered in very large numbers,” Fr. Mukiibi noted, “because this is a chance for many average families to eat enough cow and goat meat, pork and chicken, which they rarely dine on during the year.”

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Sr. Susan Renner, St. Nicholas Academy director, silver jubilee

By Jay Nies

Sister Susan Renner was walking down the middle of the street in a snowstorm one night.

There were no cars. Nothing but quiet.

"The snow looked like diamonds everywhere," she recalled.

She was blessed to be part of a large, devout Catholic family that weathered life's storms with prayer, humor and camaraderie.

All of her teachers had been School Sisters of Notre Dame. She had spent time with a few and become acquainted with their humanness.

"I was drawn to them because of who they were and how much they cared," she said. "Part of me wanted to be like them."

Then came that moment of snow-fall silence.

"I just had this sense of God's presence," she said. "It was probably the first time I felt that presence in a way that was so real."

From then on, the call would be more intense.

"It's hard to pinpoint, but it's what God does," she said. "God plants something deep within you, the calling He has for you, and He slowly reveals it to you."

Sr. Susan professed first vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND) 50 years ago.

She ministered in and near St. Louis before moving to Jefferson City in 2018 to become founding director of the St. Nicholas Academy.

"The idea of creating a program, creating a place for kids who don't have many options in their life to get a good, quality education — that's what drew me to say 'yes' to this new adventure," she said.

"It felt right, in the sense that I could do this, like this



Sister Susan Renner SSND

is what I'm meant to be doing now," she stated.

Matty the teacher

God gave Sr. Susan a compassionate heart, especially when it comes to people with disabilities and people who don't have a lot of money.

She doesn't see herself as being courageous by nature, "but by God's grace, I've been able to do things that I never thought I'd be able to do," she said.

"Initially, it takes courage to say yes," she stated, "and it has been through God's grace that I did say yes, and through His grace that I have wound up loving it."

She grew up in Belleville, Illinois, the first of seven children in her family.

The fourth, Matthew, had Down syndrome.

"He was born when I was 8," Sr. Susan recalled. "I remember how difficult it was for my parents."

"They loved him immediately — we all did," she said. "But there wasn't much help back then for parents of children with Down syndrome. They worried about what kind of future he'd face."

Their faith helped them embrace the difficulties.

Sr. Susan and "Matty" quickly became buddies.

"He was very, very special to me," she said.

He had difficulty speaking clearly but found other, creative ways to communicate — playing charades and giving high-fives whenever the message hit its mark.

"He ended up teaching our family so much," said Sr. Susan, "and I think a big part of it was how to be more compassionate."

He also taught them how to live, radiating joy and showing kindness even to people who were ruthlessly unkind to him.

"He was one of the most joy-filled, funny, loving people I will ever meet," she said. "He taught his big sister a lot."

One night a week, their dad would give their mom the night off, pin the curtains together and organize "hide and seek" games in the dark.

"We had so much fun!" Sr. Susan recalled.

Years later, her father developed a debilitating mental illness.

"He suffered with that for like 20 years," she recalled. "It made such a huge impact on my life, because I loved him so much."

She "prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed" for him to be healed before eventually turning away from God altogether.

It turned out that losing God hurt even more.

"I really had to give up a lot of my immature faith," she recalled. "I finally got to an image of God Who is loving, and that there are times when prayers are being answered but not the way I want them to be answered."

"I finally came to know that God stands with us in the midst of everything," she said. "He was standing with my dad in his pain and anguish. And He was standing with each member of our family who was suffering with him."

One call away

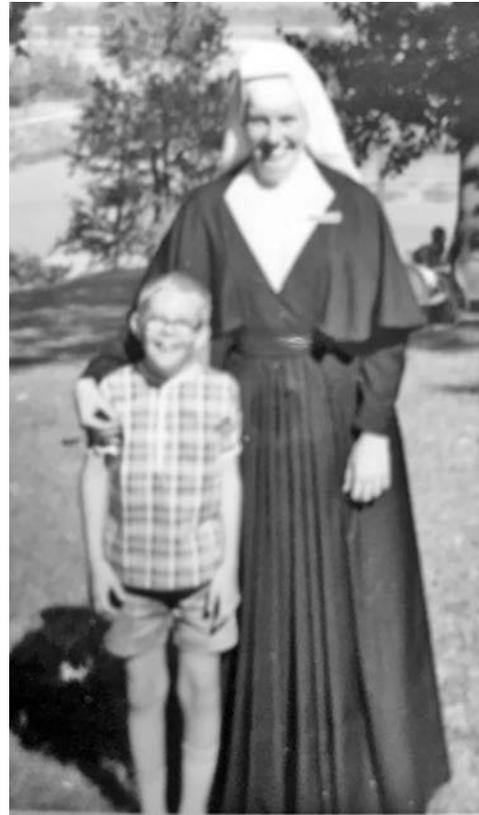
As youngsters, Sr. Susan and several grade-school classmates

would help clean their parish church on Saturdays.

Two sisters worked with them.

"That's how we really got to know them as individuals," she recalled. "We had great talks. The sisters were a lot of fun outside of the school situation."

The idea of having a hus-



Sister Susan Renner SSND greets her brother, Matthew, while she was in formation at the School Sisters of Notre Dame Motherhouse in St. Louis.

band and children and raising a family still appealed to her.

But during her senior year, she realized that she wouldn't have any peace unless she gave religious life a try.

She became an SSND postulant at the motherhouse overlooking the Mississippi River, south of St. Louis.

Homesickness set in right away.

She got one home visit that year and tried to hide her tears when it was time to go back.

Her dad told her, "Know that the door swings both ways. It will only take one phone call and I'll be there in an hour."

But she knew that the call from God would not go away.

"In the end, my peace came from saying, 'Okay, God, I'm going to quit fighting this,'" she said.

"And I've never regretted it."

"The best community"

During her postulancy, Sr.

Susan spent time helping at St. Mary's Special School.

She bonded with the children, some of whom reminded her of her brother.

She remembers praying, "God, get me to St. Mary's someday! I really want to teach there!"

It wound up becoming her first assignment.

"I was ecstatic!" she recalled.

It was the beginning of what she referred to as "my happiest, most fulfilling and most challenging years in ministry."

"We sisters love being with and working together with the children," she said. "They bring out the best in each of us."

She served as a teacher by day and a "dorm parent" by night.

She and another sister had 18 boys in their care for nine months each year. They fed them, helped them get ready for school, took care of them when they were sick, bathed them and helped them get ready for bed.

"It was very much like having your own kids," she said. "And I always thought that was a real gift God gave me."

The sisters at St. Mary's enjoyed great camaraderie.

"We worked hard, we prayed hard and we played hard!" she said.

Communal prayer and fellowship would commence at about 10 p.m., after all the children were in bed.

"We loved being together," she recalled. "We enjoyed being in community so much."

While there, she completed a master's degree in special education from Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee.

She then became the principal of St. Mary's, also serving for seven years as a houseparent at Mount Carmel Group Home for students between 16 and 21 who had special needs.

Previous principals mentored her, and she began dispensing her own hard-fought wisdom.

See SR. SUSAN, page 23

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The Sacrament: Confession with Fr. Pardee led prison resident to contrition, conversion

By Shon Pernice

I had coasted in the Missouri prison system for seven years.

The only admission of my crime was at sentencing, as part of the plea agreement.

Otherwise, the crime was not my fault. I blamed my victim, justified my wrongful actions and minimized a horrible transgression.

I was numb inside: a hollow being. I did not care about anyone or anything else but my reputation.

Denial was so much easier to hide my shame and regret. I was in a dark place, and lost in a world with no hope.

I had grown up in a Catholic family and attended parochial schools until I reached the eighth grade.

I had begun to distance myself from the Church while attending public schools.

Inside prison, I attended Catholic services because that is what I knew and am more comfortable with.

Our Sunday services are normally led by a deacon from an outside parish. We may get lucky a few times a year and have a priest lead the services.

The diocese stepped in and sponsored a Catholic banquet for us on Dec. 12, 2017.

This was a pivotal moment in my life, my spirituality, and my rehabilitation.

The banquet was held in the prison's visitation room. Tables were set up, outside guests arrived, and the sweet aroma of outside food filled the air.

Most of the outside guests were volunteers from St. Pius X Parish, which assists in our Sunday services.

Two priests arrived. Just observing these men of the cloth on this side of the fence brought both fear and comfort.

This is a medium-security

prison, and the men get complacent in gestures and speech. However, for some mysterious reason, nobody wants to slip up in front of priest. We are on our best behavior.

After our meal was blessed and ample conversation was shared during the meal, the two priests set up areas on opposite sides of the room to offer Confession.

I had not been to Confession in at least 25 years and did not look in the direction to where the sacraments were being offered.

If I did venture over there, what sins should I confess to? Certainly not the one that I am in prison for. What would the priest think of me?

I was physically trembling at the thought of sitting before the man that represented God and confessing the mortal sin that was caused by my hand.

It felt like the preemptive Judgment Day.

A staff member sitting next to me said, "Shon, Fr. Pardee has an empty seat over there. You should go."

Now, a staff member that I respect had just set me out. I had a choice: prison mentality and continue eating, or face my sinister past that I have denied for the past seven years?

I took a deep breath, one of those massive inhalations that fill the lungs and give you added courage.

I took each step with careful precision. It was like stepping into the ocean for the first time and unsure of what is going to greet you.

I sat cautiously in the plastic orange chair before the padre.

He smiled as I struggled for the words that I once knew many years ago:

"Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been over 20

years since my last confession."

Expecting a reaction of surprise or condemnation — nothing.

I considered spouting out some common sins just to go through the motions of confession: foul language, lies, adultery, pornography, theft and impure thoughts.

Too easy, I can do this.

On the other hand, do I want to tell of the big one?

I decide to jump right into the deep water of the pool of my sins.

I'm not sure if this was due to fear, being impatient and just wanting to get it over with — or was this a divine push?

As I told my sin, this was the first time of a genuine confession of guilt, the first time without justification, minimizing or blaming — that I killed my wife.

I watched Fr. Pardee's face, his eyes and his hands with the eyes of an eagle. I expected a look of disappointment, a grimace or some uneasiness at sitting three feet in front of a murderer with no barrier between us.

I only saw love on his face.

I felt an unconditional love emitting from him. Up to that point in my life, I had never felt love like that: *agape* love.

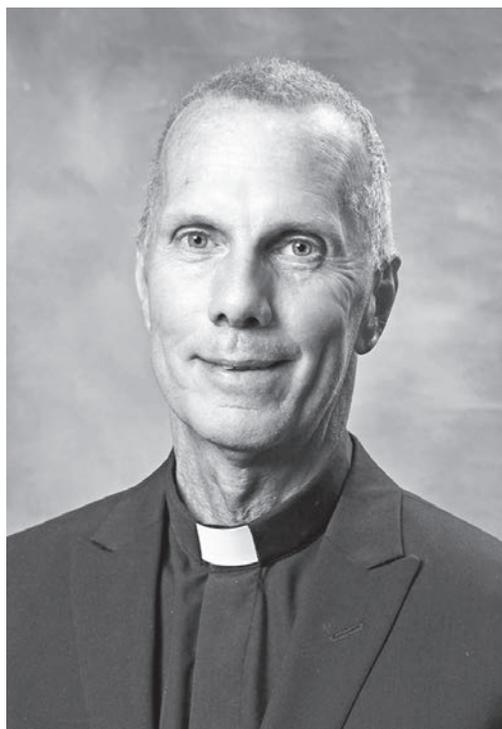
Fr. Pardee said a prayer and declared me, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, absolved of my sin.

I wept.

In a prison visitation room, surrounded by inmates that I will see in general population the next day, the emotional levy that withheld so much guilt and pain was now broken.

I felt a rebirth, as the dark spot on my soul was now gone.

My path in the prison system



Father Charles Pardee (1954-2019) served as a parish pastor and prison chaplain in the Jefferson City diocese.

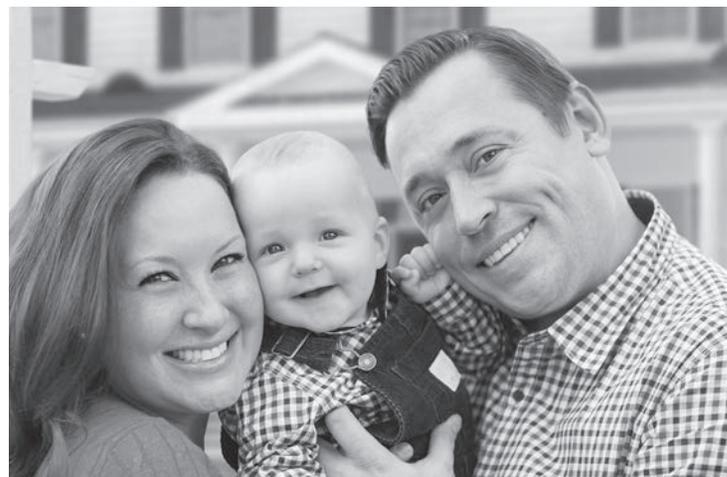
changed at that very moment and the priest that brought spiritual relief into my life I will never forget.

Father Charlie Pardee passed away in 2019 from cancer. His death was announced at our Catholic banquet in December of that year.

I write this story to inspire other clergy of the importance of the sacraments in the prison setting.

But also as a living tribute to Fr. Pardee and the impact that he had on my life. Amen.

Mr. Pernice is a resident of the Moberly Correctional Center and a member of the Catholic community there.



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QUESTION CORNER

Christ's descent into hell / Distracted in prayer

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service



no sins — He was God. (Glen Allen, Virginia)

Q. I get *The Catholic Virginian* and have enjoyed reading your column over the years. But I do have a question that has always bothered me, even though I have made more than 30 retreats at a Jesuit retreat center and have taught CCD (religious education). In the Apostles' Creed, why does it say that Jesus descended into hell and rose on the third day? How could Jesus go to hell? He had

A. During the celebration of the Mass, the Apostles' Creed may be used as an option in place of the more traditional Nicene Creed, and that prayer does say that Jesus, following His death, "descended into hell."

When I received your email, it occurred to me that I had answered a similar question once before; but when I checked my files, I discovered that that particular column had run in the year 2013. And since I've been asked the same thing a number of times since then, it seems the question is still on people's minds and might deserve another response.

The answer has to do with the ambiguity, in early Christian times, of the Hebrew word "*sheol*." That word could refer to the eternal abode of the devil and the damned, but it could also denote the place where the righteous awaited redemption. Until Jesus had completed His death and resurrection, the just could not yet know the joys of being in God's presence.

So the first act of Christ after His death on Calvary was to go and rescue the just who had already died and bring them with Him into the glory of the Father. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before Him" (No. 633).

Q. Because of what has been going on in the world lately (the pandemic, difficulty finding work, etc.), I am having trouble concentrating when I pray. Any suggestions for avoiding such distractions? (Portland, Oregon)

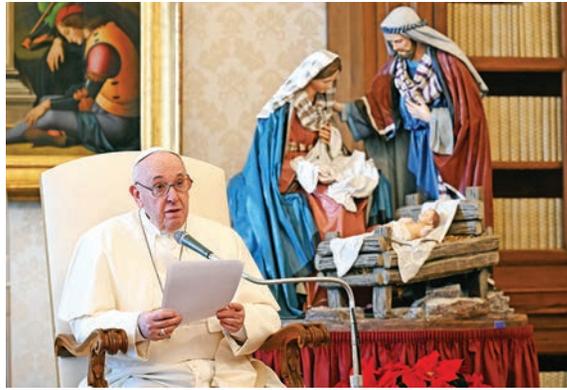
A. First of all, don't be discouraged — or surprised. Distraction is a normal companion to prayer. The holiest people we've known, some of the best-known saints, have spoken of their struggles to focus while praying.

St. Therese of Lisieux (the "Little Flower") had a "trick" that she would use. She explained, "I also have many (distractions), but as soon as I am aware of them, I pray for those people the thought of whom is diverting my attention, and in this way they reap benefit from my distractions."

It is important, I think, for us to set aside certain times exclusively for prayer. Sometimes I do pray when I am doing other things — driving a car, even working out on a stationary bike. But those can't be the only times that I pray — I need, too, to pray when I am doing nothing else.

And I can't rush in from a busy day, plop down in a chair or on my knees and expect to focus immediately on the Lord; instead, I need some moments to settle and catch my breath before I start to pray.

The saints seemed to do this a bit more easily. St. Francis of Assisi, when he was about to enter a church to pray, would say: "Worldly and frivolous thoughts, stay here at the door until I return." So when you meet with distractions while praying — as inevitably you will — don't panic. Simply pause, refocus and then continue your conversation with the Lord.



Papal Audience December 16, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In our continuing catechesis on Christian prayer, we now turn to the prayer of intercession. Following the example and teaching of Jesus, whenever we pray in silence and solitude, so as better to listen to the Lord, we do not hide from the needs of others, but open our hearts to their sorrows and

fears. The *Catechism* teaches that our intercessory prayer, in communion with all the saints, participates in Christ's own prayer (cf. No. 2635). While the whole Church has the mission of interceding for all — especially for those who suffer, those who do not know how to pray or have lost their way in life — this duty falls particularly to those in positions of responsibility, such as parents, teachers or priests. Although often hidden from the world, our intercessions are never hidden from God, who always hears those who cry to Him. Like Christ the Good Shepherd interceding with His heavenly Father for all His children, may our own prayer always be attentive to those most in need, and so contribute to the great network of intercession that sustains the life of the world.

I cordially greet the English-speaking faithful. On our Advent journey, may the light of Christ illumine our paths and dispel all darkness and fear from our hearts. Upon you and your families I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!



"I have set My bow in the clouds"

A rainbow could be seen over Our Lady of Lourdes Interparish School in Columbia as students arrived the morning of Dec. 11.

— Photo by Principal
Elaine Hassemer

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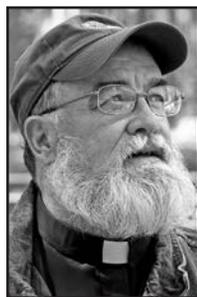
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Christmas prayer: 'Do you want to hold Him?'

By Father Richard Malloy, SJ
Catholic News Service



What's the best Christmas prayer you have ever experienced?

A mystical midnight Mass? Quiet adoration before the manger scene, lit by the glow of the tree in your living room? Watching "It's a Wonderful Life" for the 1,000th time? Taking your small children to see Santa and enjoying their delight on Christmas morning?

Donating to the needy rather than splurge on unneeded gifts? Hearing "Do You Hear What I Hear"? the wonderful call for peace written in the wake of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis? Just holding a loved one?

Mine was an hour one Christmas day a few years ago.

For many years, my Christmas routine consisted of preaching and presiding at a 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass at the university; later, a smaller home Mass for friends; usually a morning Mass at a parish; and then I'd attend the 11:30 a.m. Mass with the Jesuits in our infirmary at St. Joe's University. Wonderful prayer times all.

Then, it was off to visit four homes of families who are so good to me. The

last home was with my elderly mother to a huge family's feast who always welcomed the two of us to their raucous and loving celebration.

Late Christmas night, tired and stuffed, I would make the examen prayer of St. Ignatius, just stunned by how lucky I am to have so many people with which to celebrate the mystery of the birth of Christ, God incarnate among us.

A couple of years ago, my mother had died, and one family I usually visited was out of town. All of a sudden, it was 1 p.m. Christmas Day, and I had nowhere I had to be until later in the afternoon.

I went into the house chapel and settled down. Slowly, I read Luke 2:1-20, lingering on the words. Caesar Augustus. David. Mary and Joseph. The time came. She gave birth to her firstborn son. Shepherds. Great fear. "Do not be afraid!" trumpets the angel. Good news. Great joy. A savior has been born for you. An infant. Wrapped in swaddling clothes. Glory!

Entering into the classic Ignatian method of contemplation, I imagined myself in the Gospel scene. My imagination was filled with the quiet rustling of the manger. An ox and donkey snort, their breath visible in the frigid air. A few mice dart around in the straw. The musty smell of earthen floor. A small charcoal fire reminds me of the same in

John 18 and 21.

I gaze on Mary holding Jesus. She looks tired, really exhausted. She's far from home, no gal pals to help her. Joseph too looks weary. He seems a bit awed and almost fearful. How is he going to care for these two? Does he already sense the terror of Herod?

As I just sit there, being present to the moment, suddenly, Mary turns to me and asks, "Do you want to hold Him?"

She gently places the sleeping baby Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes, in my arms.

As I hold the Savior of the world, all tiny and baby bald, smaller than a loaf of bread, I don't do anything. Nor say anything. Silence is often the best conduit of God.

There isn't any tremendous grace given, nor any startling insight into the mystery and majesty of divinity. What pervades my consciousness is a sense of

peace.

A deeper realization of the vulnerability of God dawns on me. A welling up of gratitude for the gift of faith, and hope for our world, moves in me. Love for Jesus, and a sense of connection to Mary and Joseph as they accept their mission, surges within me. The reality of Emmanuel, God with us, takes hold in my heart.

Carl Sandburg once said, "A baby is God's opinion that life should go on." This baby is God's pledge and promise that life will go on forever. Hold on to him.

Christmas in the chapel, holding the baby Jesus — best Christmas prayer ever.

Jesuit Father Richard Malloy is director of mission and ministry at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Baltimore. He is author of "Being on Fire: The Top Ten Essentials of Catholic Faith."

Celebrating true holiday spirit

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service



I usually look unfavorably at anyone who lays guilt trips on me that are a form of covert force that goes against the grain of my freedom.

Presently I am experiencing one such holiday guilt trip.

Advertisements are urging me to fulfill every creature comfort imaginable. For example, brochures arrive in the mail and the internet lists exotic foods to send as gifts with discounts abounding to entice us.

How easy it is to get into the holiday shopping spirit. Would that I could wrap myself up in the festivities and fully enjoy them, but I cannot.

What stops me are reports of thousands of people dying daily from the pandemic, of immigrants drowning as they seek freedom, of the displacement of millions during the winter season, of wars continuing to destroy lives and property. The list of abject misery is endless.

How easy it is to forget these hu-

man beings. How easy it is to forget we are ever so fortunate, and too, to think we are not culpable for other's misery and to dismiss this feeling. Are we responsible for something we did not cause?

Following the letter of the law, no, we are not to blame. Yes, we have a right to enjoy festivities. No, we are not guilty of breaking the law.

But if we have not gone beyond the law to its spirit then maybe we deserve a troublesome guilt trip.

If, for example, we feel the problems of developing nations are not ours — that we have enough of our own problems — then what does Christian charity mean?

If we do not educate our children to be aware of starvation, then what is real education about?

If we have not shared our financial blessings, then what values are motivating us?

Oh, how sticky questions raise guilt feelings.

If we take to heart our guilt trips, then I think the very freedom guilt trips threaten will be enhanced.

Is not a gift and a meal denied for the love and compassion of another at the very heart of freedom?

REFLECTION

Ransom notes

Mark Saucier

Our prayer began with the wafting of a flute playing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

Listening to the plaintive, brooding notes, I could feel the sorrowful longing of the Israelites in Egypt, the homesick banished to Babylon, and the poor oppressed under the Roman boot.

It was all "who mourn in lonely exile here."

But the hymn was more than the cries of the suffering. The refrain assured that the listener can rejoice, for Emmanuel shall surely come.

With its tonal range, the flute trilled a light, silvery sound that not only echoed but urged the jubilant words.

The flute is the oldest musical instrument. First fashioned from bird legs, its sounds filled Ice Age caves 40,000 years ago.

We don't know what tunes our forebears played, but their art must have reflected hardships and insecurity.

There is little doubt, though, that their flutes also invited the skin-clad clan to dance around the fire.

The flute is now a diverse family from piccolo to tin whistle, but its accompaniment of the scope of human emotions has not changed. Any flute is capable of the saddest dirges, but it can turn on its heel to start a reel or drop to its knees with the Ode to Joy.

That's why the flute and the hymn are the perfect match. The antiphonal message of the song about the ever-present struggles of life is countered with the "Yes, but ..." promise of God's abiding presence.

The mournful, and then the airy notes of the flute testify to both of these truths.

In our theological narrative, the longing and the joy meet in Christmas. We buy that, but find it more difficult to see how Christmas actually changes anything, especially me.

For Karl Barth, to celebrate Christmas, one must, like Simeon at the Presentation, "see salvation." It is not just enough to believe in Christmas, prepare for it or stumble toward it in an especially dark Advent.

Christmas, real Christmas, is the upbeat note — seeing that Emmanuel is really "God with us," here and now, in every crack and crevasse.

It is, as Barth says, seeing what until now we have only sought. It means taking and using what we have longed for.

So what is your deepest longing, your desperate need? For what do you mourn in exile?

Name it with courage and hope. Then in awe and humility, come close to the manger.

What do you see? Can you hear the music change?

19-year-old's example of finding joy in heartbreak will endure

By Jay Nies

A line from a Christmas carol is one of Mary Kramer's favorites, regardless of the season.

She couldn't escape it now if she wanted to: "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices."

That phrase from "O Holy Night" relays with vibrant intensity the effect her daughter Emily had on everyone she met.

"She taught us all that even under the most difficult circumstances, there is joy to be had," said Ms. Kramer, a member of Sacred Heart Parish in Rich Fountain.

"She taught us how to love — to love more, to love unconditionally, to love deeper," said Emily's brother, Phillip Kramer.

Born with a rare genetic condition that affected her immune system, Emily "Emmy" Kramer weathered a constant, relentless wave of medical emergencies from the moment of her birth 19-and-a-half years ago.

Not one of her 7,128 days in this life were free of pain, illness or discomfort.

She spent about 1,400 days — four to 12 weeks of every year of her life — as an inpatient at St. Louis Children's Hospital, was airlifted 17 times, and was transferred by ambulance close to 50 times.

"But she very consciously chose to push with all her might through the difficult things and live life so joyfully," said Ms. Kramer.

"Emmy stood faithfully to be an example of sacrifice, empathy, compassion, strength and most of all joy," she said.

"Baby Emily"

The young lady once known to readers of *The Catholic Missourian* and other local media as "Baby Emily" ended her earthly journey in the pediatric intensive care unit at St. Louis Children's Hospital, on Nov. 29, from complications of infection and disease.

She passed away cradled in her mother's arms and surrounded by her brother, sisters, brother-in-law and father.

"She's finally free and her burdens are lifted, and she's not suffering anymore," said

Ms. Kramer.

Emmy was the youngest of five children born to Mary Kramer and Dale Kramer.

The family steadfastly rallied around Emmy while her mother became her caregiver, medical manager and constant companion.

"I realized that caring for Emmy and helping her through her difficult journey was my calling, and it was my absolute pleasure and privilege to care for her," she said.

Even though Emmy spent most of her first months of life hooked up to a ventilator while trying to recover from a massive open heart surgery, her infectious smile, wicked wit and boundless charisma helped her bond with people.

"Anyone who came into contact with her immediately became inspired," said Ms. Kramer.

"Emmy was our life coach," stated Jackie Steuber, a physical therapist at Capital Region Healthplex in Jefferson City, who began working with Emmy when she was a toddler.



Emily Kramer (2001-2020) and her mother, Mary Kramer.

"She was our hero. And she was our good friend."

Father Anthony Viviano, who is now pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Westphalia and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Folk, got to know Emmy and her mother during a hospital chaplaincy internship in St. Louis when he was a seminarian.

"When I met them 12 years ago, her mom told me that they had already gone through many helicopter life flights and dozens of ambulance transfers from Osage County to St. Louis Children's Hospital," he recalled.

"Yet, Emmy was filled with joy," he said. "She was a young lady of faith, a young lady of hope, and someone who inspired all those who came into her path."

From a young age, Emmy was aware that her situation was different from most people's.

"But you know what? Every day, she made a choice to be like 'let's get through the hard stuff, and then on with the good parts of this day whatever tiny part that may be,'" said Ms. Kramer.

Carried away

At first, Emmy's mother frantically pursued treatments and remedies that would hopefully lift Emmy to normal health.

The family realized over time that this was God's and Emmy's journey, and it would be different from what was expected. There was no "fix," and they all had to make peace with the situation.

They turned to friends, fellow parishioners and a growing network of neighbors near and far for prayer and support.

They did whatever they could to mitigate the trauma Emmy experienced from constant close encounters with death.

"All along, we thought we were carrying and caring for Emmy," Mrs. Kramer recalled. "Then, somewhere in the middle, I can't really pinpoint when, we kind of realized that she was the one carrying our family along and teaching us."

"She gave us all purpose in life and made us all better people," stated Emmy's sister, Mackenzie Brune.

Emmy led them to forge unbreakable bonds with doctors, nurses and other members of her medical team.

They were enchanted with her sassy resilience and ability to live in the moment and find joy in little things.

Most of all, they were amazed and deeply moved by her indomitable will to survive.

"She loved to celebrate life even when her body was lim-



Emily Kramer (2001-2020)

iting her to do so," noted her pastor, Father William Debo of Sacred Heart Parish in Rich Fountain and Holy Family Parish in Freeburg.

"Her laughter could open the door to most hardened hearts," said Ms. Steuber, her longtime physical therapist. "She quickly became a 'celebrity' to those who met her or encountered her story."

"Ultimate survivor"

At age 10, Emmy was also given the support of the Palliative Care Team who helped her family understand that life is meant to be lived, not merely endured.

"You just gotta learn to find your joy each day, and you find it in the small stuff," said Ms. Kramer.

By age 11, Emmy under-

stood that how she handled her suffering would be an example to others.

"One day, out of the blue she said, 'Mommy, I know God made my body this way so I can help other people...'" Ms. Kramer recalled.

"And then she just collapsed in tears, and I didn't know what to do," she said. "So, I just took my baby into my arms and held her through it."

Emmy went to school some of the time but could not be around too many of her peers at once and could only manage the energy to go for an hour or two a couple times a week at best.

But still she continued to fight for those opportunities because it brought such happiness to her.

Family members and friends began organizing an annual 5K walk and run to help cover medical expenses and build up *esprit de corps*.

"It was a big draw of support for Emmy," said Ms. Kramer. "Some of these people she'd only get to see once a year but she so looked forward to it and it leant such support to her personally."

Ms. Kramer also created the Emmy Kramer "Ultimate Survivor" page on Facebook to share news about her and to let Emmy's journey inspire others.

Emmy focused on attending her graduation ceremony at

See EMILY, page 11

Pope to celebrate early Mass Dec. 24 because of COVID-19 curfew

Catholic News Service

Vatican City

Pope Francis will celebrate the Vatican's traditional Christmas "Mass during the Night" Dec. 24, but will begin the liturgy at 7:30 p.m. local time so that the few people invited to attend can get home in time to observe Italy's 10 p.m. curfew.

The curfew is one of many measures the Italian government has employed in an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

In addition to the early start time, the Vatican's COVID-19 measures are still in force: only a small congregation will be allowed inside the basilica; people's temperatures are checked as they arrive; masks are required for the congregation and servers; the seating is socially distanced.

Pope Francis moved it to 9:30 p.m. in 2013, his first Christmas as pope. The pope's Christmas blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) will be given, as usual, at noon Christmas Day from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica.

EMMY

From page 10

Fatima High School in Westphalia last spring, and the biggest event of being in her sister's wedding at Sacred Heart this fall.

Emily loved Christmas and would count down the days to it. She installed a countdown on her phone and constantly reminded everyone of how many days there were until Christmas, even when she was in the hospital.

Last year, she asked for some of the proceeds from the 5K event in order to buy presents for a child through a Christmas program for people in need and she spent time carefully choosing gifts.

"It was a great thing," said Ms. Kramer. "She had a big, compassionate, empathetic heart. She got to feel that joy that comes

with helping others."

"Not done yet"

Emmy's Funeral Mass drew friends from near and far to Sacred Heart Church in Rich Fountain.

They included doctors, nurses and other health professionals from as far away as St. Louis — some who had known Emmy since her birth, others for only her last days.

Fr. Debo, in his homily, noted that through friendship and fidelity, Emmy had led many people closer to Christ.

"Because of her great spirit, she has helped make it possible for everyone here today to go beyond these doors of this church and say 'yes' to God because of our faith," he said.

"Let Emmy be that light,

that shining example for all of us as we follow Christ, as we place our trust and hope in Him," the priest said.

Afterward, three of Emmy's main doctors told Ms. Kramer, "Your work here is not done yet. There are things you can do to uphold Emmy's legacy."

"She was absolutely faithful to her calling, to reaching out to people and lifting up the downtrodden," Ms. Kramer noted.

"I think her story can help so many different kinds of people in so many different sorts of way — especially the ones who are struggling to find energy to live their faith or their calling," she said.

"She made us all better human beings," Ms. Kramer continued, "helped us unleash strength within that we did not

know we possessed, taught us to find joy in situations where no one would imagine joy could exist — and most of all taught us to walk our life jour-

ney with grace and unwavering faith."

Memorials or condolences can be mailed to the Kramer Family, P.O. Box 234, West-

"Bambinelli Sunday"



Father James Finder, a volunteer in hospital ministry in Jefferson City, blesses images of the baby Jesus from parishioners' Nativity scenes during the Vigil Mass for the Third Sunday of Advent in St. Andrew Church in Tipton. This "Bambinelli Sunday" tradition was started by Pope St. John Paul II. "Bambinelli" is Italian for "little baby boy." Thousands of people come bring the Baby Jesus figurines from their crèches and Nativity scenes to St. Peter's Square in Vatican City for the Pope to bless during his Sunday Angelus address. — Photo by Becky Holloway

Fr. Dolan: Jesus's Infancy Narratives are more than meets the eye

By Jay Nies

The road to the cross ran clearly through Bethlehem, according to Father Patrick Dolan.

Imagery in the Infancy Narratives — perhaps more accurately, the Origin Narratives — of Jesus in the Gospel books of Matthew and Luke foreshadow His passion, death and resurrection, the priest stated.

"As such, they really serve as introductions to the Gospel, the Good News, with particular goals in mind by each evangelist," said Fr. Dolan, volunteer sacrament minister for St. Mary Parish in Milan and the Mission of St. Mary in Unionville and priest in service to Hispanic Ministry.

The priest gave two informal talks on the Infancy Narratives after Wednesday morning Masses this Advent in Immaculate Conception Church in Brookfield.

"I was trying to help people understand how to see the Infancy Narratives in Luke and Matthew as introductions to the Gospel," he said.

"Both are trying to make sure that the important religious concepts, themes and covenants of the Old Testament find a new and greater fulfillment in the New Testament, in the coming of Christ," he said.

These introductions highlight themes that will be explored in greater detail throughout the narratives of Jesus's adult ministry, passion, death and resurrection.

Fr. Dolan pointed to the many names and descriptions given to Jesus in both infancy narratives:

•In Luke — "Son of the Most High"; "Son of God"; "Messiah and Lord"; "Salvation"; "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and Glory for Your People Israel"; "filled with wisdom"; and "God's favor was upon Him"

•In Matthew — "Son of David"; "Son of

Abraham"; "Messiah"; One Who "will save people from their sins"; "God is With Us"; "New-born King of the Jews"; "Ruler"; "Shepherd"; and "Nazarene"

The priest spoke of the symbolism of the infant Jesus being placed in a manger. Some Scripture scholars believe this harkens back to Isaiah 1:3 — "An ox knows its owner, and an ass, its master's manger; but Israel does not know, my people has not understood."

That verse points to the difference between knowing the source of something and knowing the ultimate source of that source.

It is another foreshadowing of the Passion and death Jesus would suffer at the hands of people who misunderstood the higher purpose of sacred and secular law, Fr. Dolan stated.

The priest emphasized how Jesus's Passion casts a shadow onto the narratives of His infancy and childhood.

For instance, the Infancy Narratives bring the infant and child Jesus into the company of some of the same types of secular and religious leaders who would help define His adult ministry.

The priest likened the three days Jesus's parents spent looking for Him before finding Him in the Temple to the three days Jesus would spend in the tomb before His resurrection.

Likewise, the three Wise Men departing by a different route after paying homage to Jesus foreshadows how the Apostles would head out in all directions after Jesus's Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them.

"We cannot read these narratives and not come away with a clear understanding that Jesus came to bring the Good News of salvation to His own people and to the Gentiles alike," said Fr. Dolan.

"The Incarnation is far-reaching and inclusive," he said. "It is truly meant for all of us."

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Annual Live Nativity in Bonnots Mill



Members and friends of St. Louis of France Parish in Bonnots Mill reenact the circumstances leading up to Jesus's birth in Bethlehem, during the Bonnots Mill Community Betterment Association's seventh annual Live Nativity on Dec. 13. Visitors encountered each scene by driving through the hilly streets of town. Carol Haslag and Myra Rackers stood in for the angels. The Three Wise Men were Mike Rackers, Jerry Haslag and Jacob Buhr. Ed DeOrnellis, Cindy DeOrnellis and Margie Stuecken kept watch of their flocks by night, with sheep provided by Mr. and Mrs. DeOrnellis. Dillon and Andrea Boss stood in for Joseph and Mary, with angel Emma Stuecken and shepherd Doug Starke.

— Photos by Jay Nies



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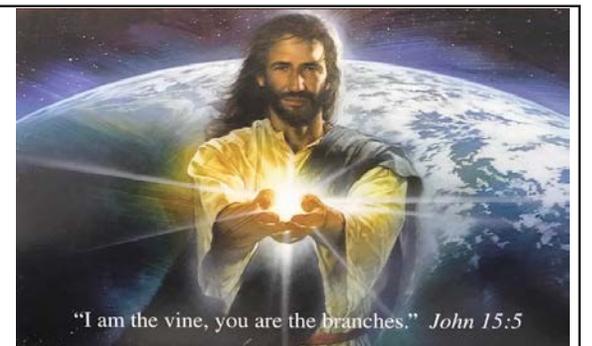
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Haste to bring Him laud!

Nealie Lingo, the art teacher at St. Pius X School in Moberly, stands outside the St. Pius X rectory next to the Nativity scene she recently repaired and repainted. "She did a wonderful job," said Father Philip Niekamp, pastor.

St. Clement Knights serve Thanksgiving meals to over 200 families

St. Clement Parish in St. Clement contributed a record \$3,540 to Knights of Columbus St. Clement Council 1928's 2020 No Hunger Holiday.

The parish joined local churches, organizations and businesses to assist the Knights in providing a complete Thanksgiving meal to more than 200 families in need in the Bowling Green area.

The Knights are grateful to the volunteers who helped on the day of the event, including the St. Clement Ladies Sodality, who also provided coffee and donuts for the volunteers.

Sunday Rosary group at J.C. hospitals

A Jefferson City group is organizing a Sunday evening Rosary prayer group outside the city's hospitals.

The purpose is to pray for COVID-19 patients and frontline healthcare workers.

The Rosary will begin at 7 p.m. on the parking lot of SSM St. Mary's Hospital Jefferson City, 2505 Mission Drive; and at 7:30 p.m. on

the parking lot of Capital Region Medical Center, 1125 Madison St.

Participants can pray inside or outside their cars on the hospital parking lot.

"It doesn't matter if we're in the same parking lot just that we're at the hospital," organizers stated. "For those outside of Jefferson City you can pray where you are."

PLANETS

From page 1

"To me, asking 'What was the star?' is a lot of fun, but not particularly significant either astronomically or theologically. Nothing's really at stake if it turns to be this explanation or that explanation," Brother Consolmagno said.

Ideas about the Star of Bethlehem range from the natural — a great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter near the time of Jesus' birth or a comet — to the supernatural as a sign from God.

Or it could have been a metaphor used by St. Matthew "to show how important Jesus' birth was to humanity," said Father James Kurzynski, pastor of St. Olaf Parish in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and an amateur as-

tronomer.

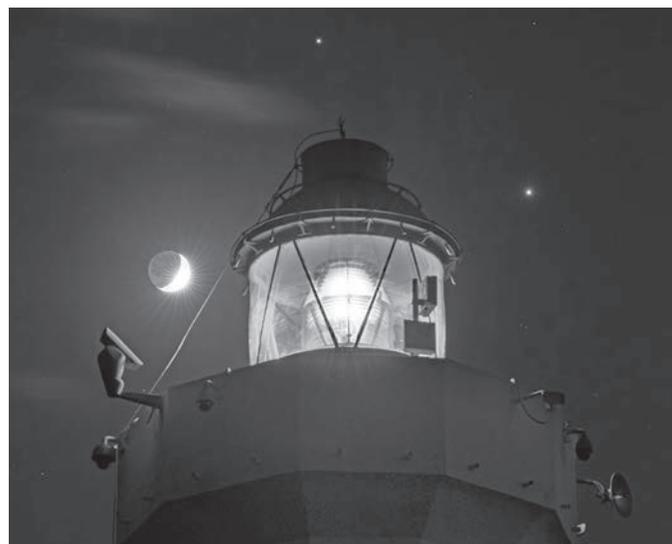
"We need to remember that the Star of Bethlehem could have had different meanings for the people that Matthew was writing to," Fr. Kurzynski explained. "Was it a supernatural event? Was it an event to signal somehow, some way that there was something that was happening in the world that was signaling the birth of a king that was not just a human being, but that there was something different about this king?"

He suggested that Matthew may have even meant that Jesus' birth was the "great light" bringing people out of the darkness in which they walked, as told in the Book of Isaiah.

Fr. Kurzynski said the conjunction can be as inspirational as what the Catholic Church calls a sacramental such as a saint's relic, a blessed medal, or rosary.

"Whether this conjunction is a Star of Bethlehem candidate or not," the priest told CNS, "that night (Dec. 21) can be a sacramental that people look up to and ask 'What was it like when Christ was born?' To me this is an opportunity for people to get out that night and meditate on what it may have been like when Christ was born. What does the birth of Christ mean to me?"

Whatever the Star of Bethlehem, Fr. Kurzynski and Brother Consolmagno said the upcoming astronomical event can allow people time to step outside to observe the beauty of creation and to realize that God is greater than any planetary dance, especially as the world continues to battle the



Saturn is seen shining above the Cape Murro di Porco Lighthouse in Syracuse, Sicily, and Jupiter is seen shining to the right, in this photo taken in November 2020. The two largest planets in the solar system will pass so close together in Earth's sky that the moon will easily be able to cover them both simultaneously Dec. 21.
— CNS photo/Kevin Saragozza, courtesy NASA

coronavirus pandemic, confront political divisiveness and experience social ills.

The conjunction will see bright white Jupiter and fainter yellowish Saturn separated by 0.1 degree, about one-fifth the diameter of a full moon. Binoculars will reveal the slim separation, but to the unaided eye, the planets will appear to converge.

In reality, Saturn will be twice as far from Earth as Jupiter will be. The close alignment occurs as Jupiter laps Saturn

as they orbit the sun.

The hulking orbs appear in conjunction about every 19.8 years, but not every close alignment is as near as this one. The last occurred May 28, 2000, but was nearly impossible to see because the two planets were in the sun's glare in the early morning sky.

The last time Saturn and Jupiter appeared this close was July 16, 1623, but again it was highly un-

likely that it was seen because it occurred near the sun at sunset.

The last easily visible super conjunction with such an apparent minimal separation was March 4, 1226.

Brother Consolmagno encouraged people to take the time to look at the night sky any time.

Better yet, he said, "spend some time away from people, but also away from your house. Spend some time with nature and remember that God is there."

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COVID-19

From page 1

He immediately sequestered himself to his upstairs quarters in the I.C. rectory — stairs and closed doors away from parish office staff working on the main floor.

With Father Benedict Chagula, associate pastor, also ill with the virus, Fr. Antweiler scrambled to get the twice-daily weekday Masses and the parish's five weekend Masses covered.

"With the help of our good deacons, we covered our weekday Masses and services," he said. "And with the help of the diocese and our good bishop himself, the people of I.C. were served."

Fr. Antweiler spent a surprising amount of time on the intercom with parish staff members.

They left correspondence, checks to be signed and business of all sorts that needed attending to on the landing of the stairs leading to his room.

Sometimes, there was also home-cooked food from parishioners.

"In return, I left stuff to be typed, emailed, mailed and so forth," he said.

Never alone

His symptoms bloomed into coughing, achiness and fatigue.

"I slept an unheard of nine to 10 hours a night," he said.

Having stocked up on canned goods and frozen dinners, he found the extra time "a bit liberating."

"Now I had time to read: history, Scripture, a bit of science fiction," he said. "I caught some shows and documentaries on TV."

He could also take his time praying the Liturgy of the Hours and the Rosary, studying Scripture and other spiritual reading.

He offered his daily Masses privately, which he had only done a few times out of necessity since his priestly ordination in 1973.

He found it "different and difficult."

"I know and take comfort in the fact that the angels and saints filled the room and that the spiritual sinews of the Body of Christ connected me," he stated. "But how much I missed the physical presence of God's people praying with me!"

It helped him relate bet-

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

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

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

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

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

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

He who taught us to "love one another, as I have loved you" took our sufferings upon Himself and bore our sorrows

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

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

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

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

ter with those who, due to increased susceptibility to COVID-19, can only participate in Mass via livestream.

"In-seat Church gathering of us as a faith family is incredibly important — to be the Body of Christ, receiving Christ present in Word and Sacrament, to be fed with the Bread of Life," he stated.

Fr. Antweiler is grateful for and inspired by the faith of all the people who "faithfully hang in there and experience the Lord where they are, apart yet connected."

"They remain in my prayers," he stated.

Divine intervention

Fr. Chagula, associate pastor of Immaculate Conception parish in Jefferson City, knew something was terribly wrong after four days of feeling sick, with joint pain and aches, loss of appetite, headache, fatigue and dizziness.

He went for a COVID test, which came back positive.

Being relatively new to the parish and far from his home in Tanzania, he felt worried and lonely during his isolation.

"It was a hard time for me, and I surrendered myself to God Whom I believed was my rescue," he said.

His symptoms persisted for 13 days.

"I felt weary and very weak, not even able to walk around," he said. "It was the time to offer my personal prayers, asking

God to intervene in this difficult situation."

People who sent emails and text messages touched his heart, gave him support and helped him relax.

He gives thanks to God for restoring him to good health.

He now ministers with a heightened awareness of the risks he is called upon to take as a purveyor of God's sacraments.

"Moreover, I have become more aware of the presence of the virus and more sensitive to the COVID-19 protocols like wearing masks, social distancing and thoroughly washing of hands," he said.

Giving it to God

Fr. Corel fell into the symptoms of COVID while traveling with his mother for her birthday.

Eventually unable to talk without coughing, he retreated into a desert of silence.

"But being silent didn't necessarily end the coughing fits," he noted.

The constant hacking also affected his ability to sleep.

"When I knew I wasn't going to get better, I went to the Emergency Room on a Friday and remained in the hospital until the following Wednesday," he said.

Once home from the hospital, he still couldn't celebrate any Masses the following weekend.

"One wants to come back from vacation refreshed, energized and ready to get back to the parish to minister — not

unable to talk, coughing, tired and unable to minister," he said.

He also felt overwhelmed at the amount of day-to-day activities, decisions and plans that had to be put on hold.

"But I give it to God as His ministry, His Church, His people, and we'll get to it when we can," he said in the spirit of Pope St. John XXIII's famous bedtime prayer.

Fr. Corel also rested in the reassurance that there are many talented people in his parish to help keep things moving in the right direction.

He recognized God's presence in the people who shared their concern through phone calls, text messages, Facebook posts, gifts of food and other items brought to the rectory, and genuine willingness to help the priests and staff of the parish.

"God surrounded us with a loving, supportive team and with an army of parishioners and friends who really showed they cared by their words, prayers and actions," he said.

United in prayer

Fr. Chagula said anyone dealing with COVID and its symptoms should follow the advice of medical professionals while also using ginger, garlic, onions and lemon and steaming themselves over hot water.

These are things that brought him relief during his illness.

He also encourages all the faithful to continue frequently

praying Bishop W. Shawn McKnight's Prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for Protection from the Coronavirus."

Fr. Chagula urges everyone to follow the proper protocols for slowing the virus's spread, both in their personal dealings and as they gather for worship.

Fr. Corel emphasized that anyone afflicted with the virus should call on their fellow parishioners for help.

He noted that being physically isolated shouldn't mean being totally isolated.

"If you're able to talk, call on people," he suggested. "If you can't talk, text-message or write letters. Don't stay isolated in mind by cutting yourself off from others."

Finally, he also urged people weathering COVID's obnoxious symptoms to turn them into a prayer.

"Don't let the sufferings go to waste!" he advised. "Offer them to Jesus on the cross and give Him your intentions of what you are offering them for."

Full of promise

In due time, Fr. Antweiler safely returned to his post, in the midst of the challenges the pandemic continues to affect the parish and the school.

Although this year's Thanksgiving gathering with his family had to be virtual, "I'm glad we were able to do that," he said.

He misses spending time in prayer and fellowship with his fellow members of his priest support group, which has been gathering regularly for decades.

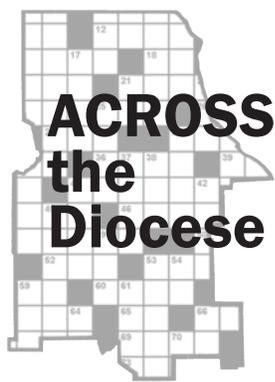
He also longs for the return of the monthly get-togethers of his brothers and sisters-in-law.

"These gatherings are COVID casualties, at least for now," he stated. "But I am grateful for the health to serve God's people."

He gives thanks for the prayers and support of his parishioners, present and past, and his friends.

"I am grateful for Advent and Christmas and the promise of the life and joy of Jesus Christ," he said, "maybe especially in a Christmas season different from any in our memory."

"COVID, like all things of this world, will pass," he proclaimed. "Christ endures and brings life and joy! Can I get an Amen?"



By Father Don Antweiler
ACROSS

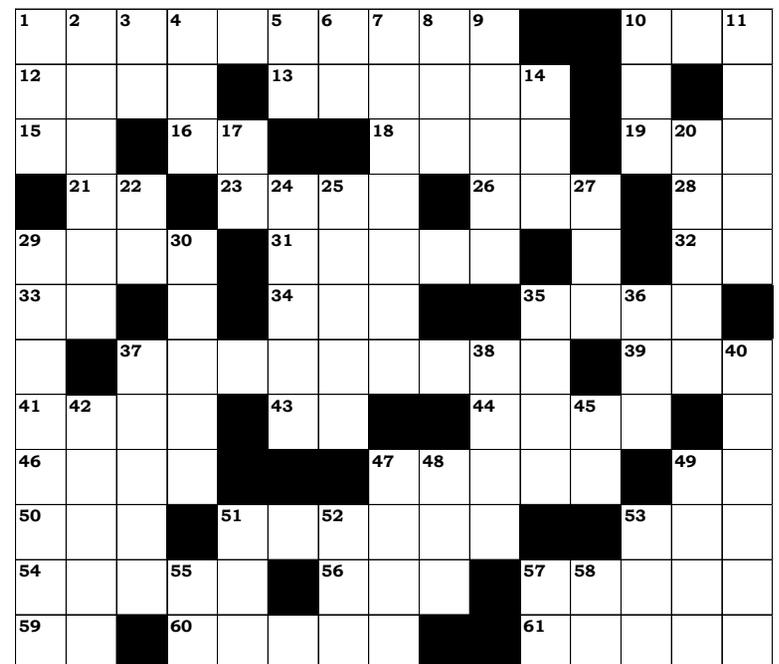
1. The first ____ Christmas trees appeared in Germany in the 19th century, due to major deforestation. They were made of green-dyed goose feathers.
10. Thomas Lincoln was Abraham Lincoln's youngest son who spent childhood years in the Civil War Whitehouse. Nicknamed "____" because he was "as wiggly as a tadpole," he was one of three of the four Lincoln sons who did not make it to adulthood.
12. First king of Israel (1 Samuel 11:15).
13. Tinsel was invented in 1610 in Germany and once was made of real ____.
15. Miguel's yes.
16. "They think themselves to be shining lights, and ____, they plunge down to earth and their foolish heart is darkened over," — St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 5.
18. *King ____*; a tragedy by Wm. Shakespeare; though first staged in 1606, for centuries the play was thought too bleak to perform.
19. It is said that Japanese traditionally ____ Christmas dinner at KFC. A 1947 "Kentucky for Christmas" campaign became strongly connected with the holiday season. Reportedly, though relatively few Japanese are Christians, they enjoy the festivities associated with Christmas.
21. Possible acronym for Nigeria, from where come several priests serving in our diocese.
23. Shoemaker's sign: I will heel you and save your ____.
26. Q – U.
28. Tarheel State (abbr.).
29. "Peter said to him, 'Yes, Lord, You know that I love

You.' Jesus said to him, '____ my sheep,'" (John 21:16).

31. Am. author Washington Irving (who founded the St. Nicholas Soc., in NYC in 1812) speaks of St. Nicholas as riding over the tips of trees in a ____ (later to become a sleigh) bearing gifts to children.
32. The AL's Designated Hitter (____) position.
33. I sometimes disagree with the opinions in the op-____ section of the newspaper.
34. Letters on an airport's schedule board perhaps.
35. Description of Santa's reindeer.
37. Mistletoe is an ancient symbol of _____. Just an FYI.
39. Letters on the side of an Am. ship.
41. ____ Window is a 1954 Alfred Hitchcock mystery thriller starring Jimmy Stewart and Grace Kelly.
43. "I don't give up ____ what I start. I'm a stubborn cuss," —Harry Truman.
44. "Jingle Bells," originally titled "One Horse ____ Sleigh," was written in 1857 by James Lord Pierpont to be played in a concert for...not Christmas as one might expect but Thanksgiving! It was meant to coincide with annual Thanksgiving sleigh-ride races in that part of England at that time.
46. Three sisters had no dowries and would be forced into servitude. St. Nicholas saved them by dropping bags of gold down the chimney into their stockings hung by the ____ to dry. Thus the tradition of Christmas stockings hung over the fireplace on Dec. 6, the feast of St. Nicholas.
47. John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis.
49. This State has produced more Presidents (8) than any other (abbr.).
50. The Jamestown settlers in Virginia created the first batch of "eggnog." The word nog comes from grog (i.e., any drink made with ____). The familiar rich milky egg base came later.
51. There are 150 of them in the 23rd Book of the Bible.
53. In Germany, Poland and

Ukraine a spider's ____ on a Christmas tree was seen as lucky. A legend says a spider wove a blanket for Baby Jesus.

54. "Faith is an ____ in the heart which will never be reached by the caravan of thinking," — Khalil Gibran.
 56. Although turkey is the choice meat for a Thanksgiving meal, ____ is the more popular choice for a Christmas table.
 57. Part of a flower.
 59. This State is a major center of beer brewing (abbr.).
 60. A Christmas poem titled "A ____ from St. Nicholas" was first published in 1823 & attributed to Clement C. Moore, a professor at an Episcopal seminary in NY. Later it became known as "Twas the Night Before Christmas" after its opening line.
 61. Jingle Bells was the first song to be broadcast from _____. Dec. 24, 1965, aboard Gemini 6, two astronauts reported a UFO entering earth's atmosphere. This tense report was interrupted by the sound of Jingle Bells, courtesy of Wally Schirra on the harmonica and Tom Stafford with the sleigh bells. The astronauts had smuggled the instruments aboard for the Christmas Eve occasion.
- DOWN**
1. A donkey (or ____) and an ox typically appear in nativity scenes. Besides appropriate to go with a manger, the animals can also refer back to Isaiah 1:3.
 2. It ____ for 40 days & nights on Noah's ark.
 3. *Et cum spiri ____ tuo.*
 4. "Now a man was ____, Lazarus from Bethany..." (John 11:1).
 5. "For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who ____ Messiah and Lord," (Luke 2:11).
 6. 101 for Cicero.
 7. For 22, years Christmas was ____ in Massachusetts. The Puritans in Boston had outlawed Christmas considering it a



- once-pagan day.
8. ____ *Maria, gratia plena...*
9. "...let our people ____ to devote themselves to good works..." (Titus 3:14).
10. Ball holder in golf.
11. Stories of St. Nicholas came to Am., not from England but from ____ settlers in the 17th century. Their St. Nicholas — "Sinter Klaas" — evolved into "Santa Claus" in America and England in the 1870s.
14. Abbr. for railroads.
17. Bone.
20. Griffith and Williams.
22. Since 1946 the town of Santa Claus in this State has been home to the family-owned Santa Claus Land (now Holiday World & Splash Park) with top ranked roller coasters & one of the world's largest water parks. The town features the 1880 Santa Claus Church, Santa Claus Museum, Santa Claus Post Office, Santa Claus Christmas Store, Santa's Toys, Santa's Stables, and Santa's Candy Castle (abbr.).
24. I ____ my mom & dad more than I could ever repay (2 wds.).
25. The official language of the Roman Catholic Church since the 4th century.
27. Prefix for ad or angle.
29. "He will wipe away every ____ their eyes..." (Revelations 21:4).
30. John ____ Tractor Company has a leaping buck on its logo.
34. Cartoonist Thomas Nast in 1881 in *Harper's Weekly* contributed greatly to the image of Santa Claus by drawing him with a red coat, fur trim, a stocking-____ night cap, and a large black belt and buckle.
36. St. Scholastica or St. Teresa of Avila, for example.
37. 98% of Am. Christmas trees are grown on Christmas tree ____ in seven States: CA, OR, WA, MI, WI, PA and NC.
38. One of the many different mascots for Kellogg's Sugar Corn Pops over the years was a cowboy-prairie dog named Sugar Pops Pete who sang the jingle: Sugar Pops are ____!
40. Nativity scene structure.
42. All the full time vowels.
45. Prefix for teem or cape.
47. A plot of ground.
48. Letters for osteopathic manual medicine (i.e., an osteopath's non-evasive treatment of the nerve, muscle and bone system).
49. Letters for Veterans Employment Advisory Council; was launched by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to foster hiring of veterans and military spouses. The Council consists of 30 of Am.'s largest employers.
51. Letters on the side of a tire.
52. A type of tuna.
53. The Works Progress Ad. (____) was a New Deal agency employing millions during the Depression.
55. What nurses often hook you up to in the hospital.
57. Short for Sacred Scripture.
58. Abbr. for epistle, perhaps, which are what St. Paul's letters to the Churches used to more commonly be called.

ANSWERS on page 19

Follow-up scan shows Fr. Coleman to still be cancer-free

Father Michael Coleman remains cancer-free.

A recent PET scan found there to be no recurrence of cancer in the pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Centralia and part-time chaplain of Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School in Columbia.

He has been steadily recovering following the surgical removal of a cancerous tumor in his chest this summer and an aggressive regimen of follow-up radiation and chemotherapy.

Walking around his rectory while praying the Rosary each day, he continues to

build-up strength in his legs. He has yet to overcome the frequent feeling of nau-

sea. Fr. Coleman said he feels very blessed. He remains

grateful for all the love and prayers from present and past parishioners and students.

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VACCINE

From page 3

are vulnerable just to avoid the appearance of scandal," the two prelates said.

At the same time, the bishops also cautioned Catholics against complacency about the moral issue of abortion and ethical issues surrounding the development of some vaccines.

"While having ourselves and our families immunized against COVID-19 with the new vaccines is morally permissible and can be an act of self-love and of charity toward others, we must not allow the gravely immoral nature of abortion to be obscured," Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann said.

"It is true that one can receive benefits from an evil action in the past without intending that action or approving of it. The association with the evil action that comes with receiving benefits from that evil action, however, can have a corrupting influence on one's perception of the evil action, making it more difficult to recognize it as evil,"

they explained.

"One might become desensitized to the gravely evil nature of that action. One might become complacent about that action and ignore the obligation to do what one can to oppose the evil action," they said, adding that others might see "one's acceptance of benefits from an evil action" and feel the action isn't really evil, feel less urgency "to oppose that evil" or even miss opportunities to do what they can "to oppose it."

"We should be on guard so that the new COVID-19 vaccines do not desensitize us or weaken our determination to oppose the evil of abortion itself and the subsequent use of fetal cells in research," Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann said.

The full text of Bishop Rhoades and Archbishop Naumann's statement can be found by searching "moral considerations" at:

usccb.org

'Walk with Ease' Six-week program in J.C.

Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri (CCCN-MO) is taking registrations for "Walk With Ease," a six-week virtual program (Jan. 10-Feb. 4) designed for arthritis sufferers, but all are welcome!

Register by Jan. 4 by searching "walk with ease" at extension.missouri.edu or call Liz Harrison at 573-445-9792.

Things To Do

Fundraisers & Social Events

Dec. 19

Kirkville, Curbside soup sale, 11 am-4 pm, outside Mary Immaculate School, pre-order by emailing jldahlman@cablone.net

Jan. 12

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

Jan. 16

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

Meetings & Conferences

Dec. 8-Jan. 26

Jefferson City, Free nutrition counseling, co-sponsored by Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, Tuesdays 5-6 pm, the LINC, to register, visit www.jcparksregistration.com and search "nutrition"

Jan. 13

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

Retreats & Spiritual Renewal

Jan. 3

VIRTUAL, "Farewell to Christmas," Epiphany concert with Kathleen & Christian Basi, 3-4 pm, for more info email KathleenBasi@gmail.com

Jan. 8-10

Moberly, Engaged Encounter Weekend, St. Pius X Church, for info or to register, visit diojeffcity.org/marriage-preparation/ or call (573) 635-9127

Health & Wellness

Jan. 4

Rich Fountain, Blood drive, 2-6 pm, Sacred Heart School

UGANDA

From page 5

The *Sekukkulu* celebration commences with the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve.

Churches are well decorated using all kinds of decor and are illuminated with Christmas lights.

"The rural areas where there is no electricity do their best to make the event colorful in their own special way," the priest stated.

The sounds of Christmas carols, church bells and drums can be heard all across the country.

"Like Thanksgiving in the United States, almost every one of the family mates come back home to celebrate Christmas with family," said Fr. Mukibi. "Usually, there's a big crowd at homes for Christmas, sometimes relatives join other families."

The bulk of the cooking takes place after the Vigil Mass.

"I remember my mother used to do most of the cooking preparation on Christmas Eve, and she would then get up at 4 a.m. on Christmas morning to start the cooking," he said.

When the children awoke at 6 or 7 a.m., she would mash the plantain called "*matooke*" and then move on to grilling the chicken or meat for the feast.

"*Matooke*, a special kind of banana, is the staple food of Ugandans living in the Central Region," said Fr. Mukibi.

They are harvested green, peeled and fried or boiled or steamed in banana leaves.

"When they are steamed, they turn yellow and are usually mashed," he said. "*Matooke* is best served when mashed."

The churches are crowded to capacity the morning of *Sekukkulu*.

"Even people who never go to church crowd on this day into church," Fr. Mukibi noted.

They're often wearing Christmas finery, purchased especially for the celebration.

"Most people still practice the tradition of buying Christmas clothes and shoes, especially women and children, to show off their new traditional dresses in rich fabric and colors with matching turbans," he said.

Families sit down to an incredible meal after returning home from Mass on Christmas Day.

"Most Ugandans can't often afford a feast like this, so it is like no other," the priest noted.

Afterward, most people enjoy attending one of the many Christmas events, usually music, dance or drama, in their neighborhoods or local theaters.

Sometimes, local churches organize activities such as Nativity reenactments or the singing of Christmas carols.

"Some people may attend soccer/football matches between different town communities," said Fr. Mukibi.

Some elderly people adjourn to a local salon to cap off the day with a toast.

He said the spirit of the day is the same for people here and in Uganda.

"May the love and peace of baby Jesus be with you at this Christmas," he said.

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www.cocemo.org

"And when you are praying, do not behave like the hypocrites ... but ... enter your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you." Matthew 6:5-6.

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For info, email cocemowrkshp@gmail.com, or call or text 573-645-0406 and provide contact information.



COCEMO

Contemplative Outreach of Central Missouri

Anniversaries

Camdenton, St. Anthony

Jerry & Joyce Robbins, 58 years
Bob & Judy Raeth, 50 years
John & Vicki DeHahn, 30 years
Brian & Beth Miller, 22 years

Columbia,

St. Thomas More Newman Center

Dr. Joseph & Yvonne Gulino, 50 years

Dixon, St. Theresa

Jim & Shirley & Wodohodsky, 59 years

Jefferson City, St. Peter

Ed & Mary Rackers, 68 years

Russellville, St. Michael

Glenn & Jackie Steenbergen, 46 years
Larry & Judy Thompson, 46 year
Robert & Maricel Tripp, 14 years

St. Martins, St. Martin

Ken & Kaye Meller, 50 years

Wardsville, St. Stanislaus

Patrick & Judy Scott, 50 years

Westphalia, St. Joseph

Fred & Dina Krieg, 25 years

Baptisms

Hermann, St. George — **Lottie Jane Kolbe**, daughter of Joshua & Haily Kolbe

Jefferson City, Cathedral of St. Joseph — **Paxton Allen Distler**, son of Tyler & Chelsey Distler

Jefferson City, St. Peter — **Brooklyn, Hannah** and **Madison Schatzer**

Moberly, St. Pius X — **Kyrie Juan Cardenas** and **Keylaina Dior Marie Gamble**, children of Nicholas Gamble & Mariana Cardenas

Palmyra, St. Joseph — **Luther Ronin Baker**, son of Douglas & Sarah Baker; **Juniper Laurie Winningham**, daughter of Brandon Winningham & Natasha Baker

Rich Fountain, Sacred Heart — **Audrey Frances Fick**, daughter of Arthur & Jessica Fick

Salisbury, St. Joseph — **Karter Brooks Linneman**, son of Tyler & Heidi Linneman

Eucharistic procession for peace and healing

By Jay Nies

About 230 people joined Father Anthony Viviano in a Eucharistic and Rosary procession through Westphalia after Sunday Mass on Dec. 6.

Fr. Viviano, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Westphalia and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Folk, carried the Most Blessed Sacrament as the people sang

Deaths

Argyle, St. Aloysius — **Dorothy R. Massman**

Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes — **Helen Baker, Nancy Coleman, Carol McCarthy, Ron VanBooven**

Freeburg, Holy Family — **Jeffrey L. Nelson**

Indian Creek, St. Stephen — **Tom Quinn**

Jefferson City, Cathedral of St. Joseph — **Jennifer E. Kemp-Oestreich**

Jefferson City, Immaculate Conception — **Martha F. Campbell**

Jefferson City, St. Peter — **James C. Coy, John M. Curry, Diane Southerlin**

Laurie, St. Patrick — **Lucille Libbert**

Marceline, St. Bonaventure — **Jo-Ann Harrison**

St. Martins, St. Martin — **Stephyn D. Mathis, Thomas W. Quinn**

Rich Fountain, Sacred Heart — **Theodore J. Hasenbeck**

Sedalia, St. Vincent de Paul — **Janice Gray**

Tipton, St. Andrew — **Clifford L. Moon**

Birthdays

St. Thomas, St. Thomas the Apostle — **Herbert Kroll**, his 93rd on Dec. 15

Elections

Brookfield, Immaculate Conception — **Barb Hayes, Donna Hulett, Roger Hulett**, parish pastoral council

hymns and prayed and meditated on the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.

From church, they processed down Main Street to Bridge Avenue, to Linn Street, to South Maries Avenue, and to Main Street and back to the church.

The purpose was to give public witness to the supernatural power of God and His ability to intervene both in times of crisis and tranquility.

“We ask for grace for our country with our most powerful weapons, the Blessed Sacrament and the Rosary — all for the greater glory of God, through the intercession of our Immaculate Mother,” Fr. Viviano stated.

Altar servers carrying candles, incense and a crucifix escorted the priest and the Blessed Sacrament.

Teenaged parishioners followed, carrying a platform bearing an image of Mary as the visionaries at Fatima de-

Fr. Viviano and the people stopped at a makeshift altar in a parishioner's driveway.

“Lord Jesus Christ, You gave us the Eucharist as the memorial of Your suffering and death,” the priest prayed. “May our worship of this sacrament of Your Body and Blood help us to experience the salvation You won for us and the peace of the Kingdom, where You live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.”

Fr. Viviano said it was urgent to gather for public prayer on this day, regardless of the weather.

“Things are in a bad way right now,” he said. “There's a lot of confusion, a lot of division, a lot of anger going on in our country, and we can't take care of it all ourselves. We have to turn it over to God and His grace.”

“We do so through the Rosary,



scribed her, and adorned with roses and evergreen boughs.

Young girls scattered rose petals donated by Busch's Florist and River City Florist, both in Jefferson City.

Members of the Knights of Columbus Monsignor Ralph Kutz Fourth Degree Assembly 2811 carried the flags of the United States and of the Holy See.

Teenage parishioners led the Rosary prayers, announcing each mystery and praying the beginning of each prayer and the people completing the prayers antiphonally.

Their voices echoed off buildings that had been standing for many decades. Compared to the prayers themselves, the structures were brand new.

The weather cooperated, with sunlight and a breeze sweeping away the morning dew.

through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, through our worship of the Holy Eucharist,” he said.

He said the United States was founded on Judeo-Christian values.

“We've slowly, gradually fallen away from our roots,” he stated. “There has been a concerted effort over many decades to eradicate God from the country and our society, and it has taken root.

And I think that's one of the big reasons we're in the trouble that we're in.

“We need to give it back to God,” he said. “We need to stay tuned, stay alert and not just turn to Him when we're in trouble.”

Fr. Viviano urged everyone to pray the Rosary every day, consistently.

“And hopefully, God will have mercy on us and bring us out of all of this,” he said.

Names for the People Page

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

Crossword puzzle answers

E	C	V	d	S	19	J	L	S	I	A	09	O	M	65
T	V	d	95	S	45	M	V	H	95	S	I	S	V	05
R	E	A	55	S	M	T	V	S	15	M	U	R	05	
V	A	64	S	E	d	O	d	47	E	R	E	I	E	94
J	N	d	O	N	O	S	R	V	E	R	A	N	J	14
S	S	04	A	L	I	T	I	L	E	R	E	V	47	
A	N	95	I	L	V	J	E	E	D	E	E	55		
H	D	23	R	N	O	G	V	W	D	N	E	J	67	
C	N	82	J	R	S	E	T	O	S	22	I	N	12	
L	V	02	R	V	E	11	O	11	I	S	51	51	51	
U	E	R	A	T	I	S	13	T	I	V	S	21	21	
D	V	01	T	I	C	I	E	I	I	L	R	V	11	

More photos from this event have been posted in *The Catholic Missourian's* online edition, cathmo.com. Select "Photo Galleries" from the "Multimedia" tab on the menu bar.

Jesus said, "Why don't you give them something to eat?"



Representatives of Sacred Heart School in Sedalia prepare to deliver the largest food donation in the history of the school's Thanksgiving Food Drive. Chris Martin, SHS Class of 1993, is the driver. Pictured with him are his two sons, Dylan and Lucas, and Lucas' fellow SHS senior classmates, John Ulbrich, Dallin Chappell and Jeffrey Hollabaugh. "Cases, not cans" was the challenge, and students in grades K-12 responded. SHS student leaders, faculty, and parents delivered 7,272 pounds of food to Open Door Ministries in November. That's 72 percent more than what was raised in 2019! All food stays local to support neighbors in need.
— Photo from Sacred Heart School



Members of the St. Stanislaus School student council in Wardsville help load more than 500 boxes of cereal the school collected for the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri in November.
— Photo from the St. Stanislaus School Facebook page

Students of St. Martin School in St. Martins help sort through more than 1,500 items collected during the school's October food drive for Samaritan Center in Jefferson City.

— Photo from the St. Martin Catholic Church & School Facebook page



A sweet story to tell



Father Anthony Viviano, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Westphalia and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Folk, reads *The Legend of the Candy Cane* to first-graders at St. Joseph School. He read to the first-, second- and third-graders and gave them candy canes in anticipation of the feast-day of St. Nicholas.

— Photo by Principal Pat Kirk

O Tannenbaum!



The eighth-graders at St. Pius X School in Moberly decorated the Christmas tree in the school lobby.

— Photo from the St. Pius X School Facebook page

Mary receives good news from an angel

By Joe Sarnicola
Catholic News Services

While Mary was engaged to Joseph, the angel Gabriel appeared to her. "Hail, favored one!" he said. "The Lord is with you."

Mary was not sure whether the angel was bringing good news or bad. Sensing this, the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall name Him Jesus."

Mary told the angel that she did not think this possible because she had not yet married Joseph.

Gabriel told her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born



will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for

God." Then Mary, no longer afraid, said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

When she had the oppor-

tunity, Mary went to the town of Judah to visit Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, the child in her womb stirred, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

She said to Mary, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then she returned home.

When Elizabeth's son was born, neighbors and friends

thought he would be named Zechariah, after his father, but Elizabeth said, "No. He will be called John."

Zechariah, who had been unable to speak for a time, agreed.

He wrote on a tablet, "John is his name," and when he had done so, his voice returned and he immediately praised God.

The people who saw and heard what had happened asked one another, "What, then, will this child be?" They knew the hand of the Lord was upon him.

Read more about it... Luke 1

1. What did the angel call Mary?
2. How did Elizabeth's baby react to Mary's voice?

Bible Accent

When the angels gave the message that Jesus had been born, they did not go to the palaces or synagogues to tell the political and religious leaders of the day. Instead, they appeared to shepherds who were tending to their sheep. Sheep are an important symbol in the Bible, and shepherds are often thought of as loving caretakers of their flocks.

David, the youngest boy in his family, tended his father's sheep and was called by God to become king of Israel. Jesus called Himself "the Good Shepherd," and He referred to

sheep or shepherds in several of His parables. The first verse of the 23rd Psalm says, "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack." Jesus is our shepherd and He cares for us.

Trivia

What is the name of the important prayer honoring Mary that uses beads and a crucifix?

Answer: The Rosary.

Saint Spotlight

Theodore (d. 841) and Theophanes (d. 845) were brothers who lived on the shores of the Dead Sea, ancient home of the Moabites. Both of them felt a strong calling to the faith, and they became monks at the monastery of St. Sabas while they were still young men. Their kindness and knowledge earned them a reputation as outstanding monks. When Emperor Leo the Armenian outlawed religious images, Theodore pleaded with him not to ruin the possessions of the church. Leo banished Theodore and his brother to a cold, remote island in the Black Sea where there was little food. The brothers returned home after the death of Leo, but Emperor Theophilus banished them again. Theodore died during this second exile. After Theophilus died around the same time, the war against holy images ended. Theodore and his brother were honored for their faithfulness in spite of torment. We remember them both on Dec. 27.



Puzzle

Fill in the blanks with the correct words or names from the list. Not every word will be used.

census, star, Bethlehem, Elizabeth, angels, John the Baptist, manger, Mary, Nazareth

1. The three Wise Men followed this by night _____
2. They told shepherds about Jesus _____
3. A crib for Jesus _____
4. A counting of people _____
5. Mother of Jesus _____
6. Birthplace of Jesus _____
7. Famous relative of Jesus _____



Answers: 1. star, 2. angels, 3. manger, 4. census, 5. Mary, 6. Bethlehem, 7. John the Baptist.

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Books for Christmas — 2020

By George Weigel

How bad a year has it been? Let me not count the ways.

Good books can hearten us in 2021 and beyond, though.

Herewith, then, some suggestions for Christmastide book-giving:

•*American Awakening: Identity Politics and Other Afflictions of Our Time*, by Joshua Mitchell (Encounter Books): A highly original analysis of what ails America and an intriguing proposal for a biblically informed Great Awakening that can redeem us from the scapegoating now destroying the Republic's cultural fabric.

•*What It Means To Be Human: The Case for the Body in Public Bioethics*, by O. Carter Snead (Harvard University Press): A dissection of the false

ideas of the human person that warp public policy today and the outline of a truly humanistic alternative. Professor Snead's book should inspire everyone who believes there is more to freedom than doing things "my way" — and it might persuade some who haven't understood that yet. Brilliant and entirely accessible.

•*Conciliar Octet: A Concise Commentary on the Eight Key Texts of the Second Vatican Council*, by Father Aidan Nichols, O.P. (Ignatius Press): Exceptionally timely, given the torrent of nonsensical, conspiracy-mongering commentary now impeding Catholic efforts to live Vatican II's teachings through the New Evangelization. Fr. Nichols's book should be required

reading in every seminary and every parish's Christian Initiation program.

•*Eight Popes and the Crisis of Modernity*, by Russell Shaw (Ignatius Press): The online and social media "debates" about the Catholic future are too often rebarbative because the combatants are woefully ignorant of the recent Catholic past that helps account for the Catholic present. I tried to do something about this in my 2019 book, *The Irony of Modern Catholic History*; Russell Shaw covers similar historical territory much more succinctly in this useful primer on "How Catholics Got Where We Are Today."

•*Hope to Die: The Christian Meaning of Death and the Resurrection of the Body*, by Scott Hahn with Emily Stimpson Chapman (Emmaus Road Publishing): It's a sad fact of pastoral life that the Church's pastors have largely ceased to talk about death: what death is for the Christian; what the "resurrection of the body" means for the future and for now; why the burial of the dead is, from a Christian point of view, preferable to cremation. Biblical scholar Hahn and co-author Chapman discuss these crucial topics with sensitivity to the traditions of Christian orthodoxy and the confusions of the present. Lots of apt Lenten homiletic material here; good spiritual reading, too.

•*A Most English Princess*, by Clare McHugh (William Morrow): An impressive first novel

Movie Ratings



Adults and Adolescents

Come Away (PG)
The Croods: A New Age (PG)



Adults

All My Life (PG-13)
Half Brothers (PG-13)
The Last Vermeer (R)
Mank (R)
Martin Eden (not rated)



Morally Offensive

Divine Love (not rated)
Freaky (R)
The Life Ahead (PG-13)
Unhinged (R)

Ratings are supplied by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Film and Broadcasting Office. Visit www.usccb.org for current reviews.

about "Vicky," daughter of Queen Victoria, and her marriage to the ill-starred "Fritz" Hohenzollern (the future German Emperor Frederick III), whose premature death was one of the factors leading to that civilizational catastrophe known as World War I.

•*Pluralism and American Public Education: No One Way to School*, by Ashley Rogers Berner (Palgrave Macmillan): The next few years are going to be tough for the advocates of school choice. They should take comfort, and intellectual firepower, from this carefully reasoned argument that the virtual monopoly of state funds by government-run elementary and secondary schools is ill-serving future citizens, their families, and the American Republic. Without shirking difficult issues, Hopkins professor Berner makes a powerful plea for achieving serious educational reform by making a wider range of educational options more avail-

able to parents, especially poor parents.

•*100 Ways John Paul II Changed the World*, by Patrick Novacosky (Our Sunday Visitor): A concise introduction to the extraordinary achievement of St. John Paul II and an invitation to dig deeper into his life and teaching; especially helpful for young adults who have no memory of the great Polish pontiff.

•*Gallimaufry: A Collection of Essays, Review, Bits*, by Joseph Epstein (Axios): A cornucopia of insight and wit from one of America's most engaging authors (and the best lunch companion imaginable).

•*The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, by Evelyn Waugh (Back Bay Books): Why not mark the end of a hallucinatory year with a hilarious tale about a victim of hallucinations?

•And then there is *The Next Pope: The Office of Peter and a Church in Mission* (Ignatius Press), which is also about every Catholic's responsibility for the New Evangelization. I wrote it as a hopeful pointer into the Catholic future, and I've been pleased by those who've told me that's what they found in it: hope for the future, amidst great challenges.

Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. His column is distributed by the Denver Catholic.

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Diocese of
Jefferson City

SR. SUSAN

From page 6

She discovered that there would always be children who are harder to love at the beginning.

"One thing I came to learn was if I find this child difficult, I am being called to spend more time with him or her until I find something absolutely lovable," she said.

That's a lesson she's worked to apply to all aspects of her life.

Good neighbors

Sr. Susan later took up a new area of ministry, as assistant director of The Family Center in East St. Louis, Illinois, working with mothers and their children who lived in a nearby housing project.

"I was passionate about that!" she said. "I felt like we were making a difference."

She found herself immersed in a new culture and helping the mothers form a community.

"These were women who had lived in poverty all their lives," she said. "The Family Center was a safe place where they could come and experience each other's support."

"We who were staff could help them find resources, and they could help each other," she said.

In those 10 years, she and the staff helped the women finish their GEDs, get jobs, learn to budget and save money, improve their parenting skills and tutor their children.

"We helped them grow into a support network for each other," she said. "They got to be friends, and life got to be easier for them."

She helped start a program called East Side Heart & Home, on the model of Habitat for Humanity.

"We started buying up vacant properties around the family center," she said. "Any mother who was faithful to the program could work into becoming the recipient of one of those homes and eventually become a homeowner."

The two blocks around the center gradually grew into a vibrant neighborhood.

It must be St. Nick!

Sr. Susan was working in St. Louis when Sister Kathleen

Wegman, who was the Jefferson City diocese's chancellor, invited her to spend Thanksgiving weekend with the SSND community Jefferson City.

Sr. Kathleen showed her a newspaper article. It told of how Elizabeth Huber was working with local educators to develop a boarding school that would offer the opportunity of an excellent Catholic education to families who could use the help.

It would be known as St. Nicholas Academy, in honor of the patron saint of children.

"The idea of creating a program, creating a place that gives options to kids who don't otherwise have many — that drew me to say yes," she said.

St. Nicholas Academy is a three-way partnership among the child's family, the St. Nicholas staff and St. Peter Interparish School in Jefferson City.

"St. Nicholas offers boarding during the week in order for the kids to get a quality education and reach their full potential," she said. "And St. Peter's is really a great school for that."

House parents Funtez and Unique Robinson provide a loving and safe and nurturing boarding and learning experience at St. Nicholas.

The local community has been overwhelmingly generous, fully renovating and furnishing the building, which St. Nicholas Academy is renting for \$1 a year from Capital Region Medical Center.

Sr. Susan looks forward to filling all of the beds.

"Everything happens in God's time," she stated. "And that is the best time."

Standing invitation

Each day, Sr. Susan reflects on "How am I being called today?"

"And I keep saying, 'God, I'm not really sure what You're doing. But I know you'll get me to where You want me.'"

She is abundantly grateful to be a School Sister of Notre Dame.

"I love what I do, I love that I'm a sister, I love my vocation, and I'm just happy!" she said.

"I'm grateful for the gift of community — the community of my sisters, the community

Daily Readings

Sunday, Dec 20

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
2 Sm. 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Ps. 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29
Rom. 16:25-27
Lk. 1:26-38

Monday, Dec 21

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

Tuesday, Dec 22

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

Wednesday, Dec 23

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

Thursday, Dec 24

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

Friday, Dec 25

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (Christmas) *Holyday of Obligation*

Vigil:

Is. 62:1-5
Ps. 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Mt. 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Night:

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

Dawn:

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

Day:

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

Saturday, Dec 26

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

Sunday, Dec 27

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH
Sir. 3:2-6, 12-14
Ps. 128:1-2, 3, 4-5
Col. 3:12-21 or 3:12-17
Lk. 2:22-40

Monday, Dec 28

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

Tuesday, Dec 29

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

Wednesday, Dec 30

1 Jn. 2:12-17
Ps. 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10
Lk. 2:36-40

Thursday, Dec 31

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

Friday, Jan 1

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD
Holyday of Obligation

Nm. 6:22-27
Ps. 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8
Gal 4:4-7
Lk. 2:16-21

Saturday, Jan 2

Ss. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, bishops and doctors of the Church
1 Jn. 2:22-28
Ps. 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4
Jn. 1:19-28

The Holy Father's prayer intentions for January:

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

Sunday, Jan 3

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
Is. 60:1-6
Ps. 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13
Eph. 3:2-3a, 5-6
Mt. 2:1-12

Monday, Jan 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious (USA)
1 Jn. 3:22-4:6
Ps. 2:7bc-8, 10-12a
Mt. 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday, Jan 5

St. John Neumann, bishop (USA)
1 Jn. 4:7-10
Ps. 72:1-2, 3-4, 7-8
Mk. 6:34-44

Wednesday, Jan 6

St. André Bessette, religious (USA)
1 Jn. 4:11-18
Ps. 72:1-2, 10, 12-13
Mk. 6:45-52

Thursday, Jan 7

St. Raymond of Penyafort, priest
1 Jn. 4:19-5:4
Ps. 72:1-2, 14, 15bc, 17
Lk. 4:14-22a

Friday, Jan 8

1 Jn. 5:5-13
Ps. 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20
Lk. 5:12-16

Saturday, Jan 9

1 Jn. 5:14-21
Ps. 149:1-2, 3-4, 5-6a, 9b
Jn. 3:22-30

The Holy Father's prayer intentions for December:

We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

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of my family, and the community of people who have been key players in the various ministries I've been involved in," she said.

She believes the Holy Spirit is still filling young people with a longing for community, service and spirituality.

"It's not exactly clear to me what it's going to look like in the future, but I know they are being called," she said.

She encourages anyone who's searching for their calling to "keep praying and being aware of where God is acting in their life."

"Take time to sit with it and not deal with it as a problem to be solved but as an invitation emerging within you," she said.

"And look at life as a journey, with God always part of it," she said. "You don't always know where you're going to end up!"



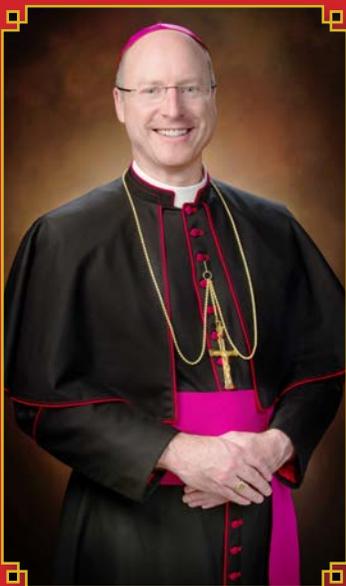
THE 2020-2021 SEMINARIANS OF THE DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY

Thank you for your prayerful support this year

Your meaningful gifts of time, talents and treasure have supported our seminarians this year spiritually and provided for many of their needs. The Vocations Office is grateful for your continued support during the second collection for Seminarians at your parish's Christmas Masses.

WITH HEARTFELT GRATITUDE,

Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight, Bishop of Jefferson City
Father Paul Clark, Director of Vocations



Deacon Derek Hooper
Cathedral of St. Joseph, Jefferson City

Erick Chinchilla
St. Mary, Milan

Christopher Hoffmann
St. Vincent de Paul, Sedalia

Jacob Hartman
St. Andrew, Holts Summit

Phillip Novotny
St. Thomas More Newman Center, Columbia

Shane Kliethermes
Immaculate Conception, Jefferson City

Gage Neisen
Queen of Peace, Ewing



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Vocations
CALLED TO SAINTHOOD

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