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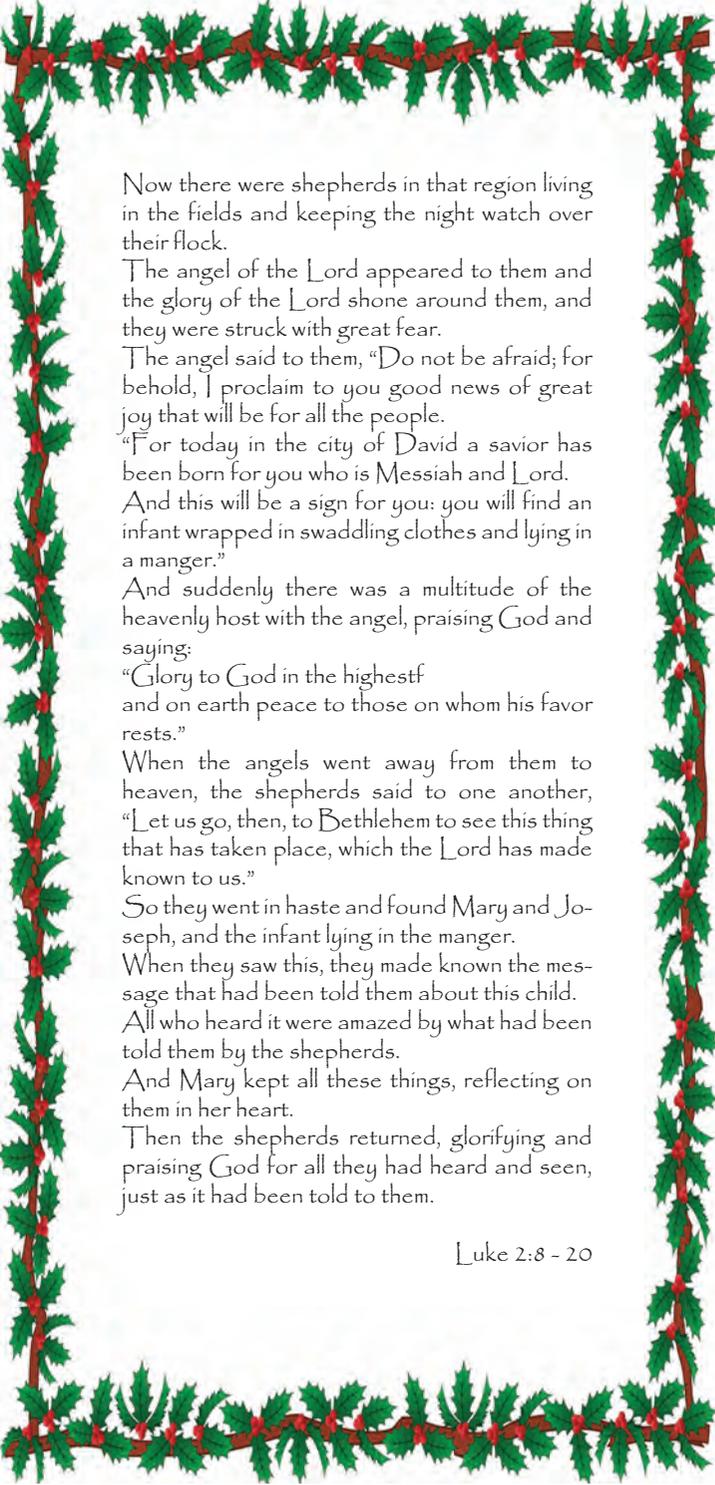
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“ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS’ BY GIOVANNI BENEDETTO CASIGLIONE



Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.

The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear.

The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

“For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.

And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

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

So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child.

All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds.

And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

Luke 2:8 - 20



RETREAT TALK: Middle school students at Lock Haven Catholic School enjoyed a presentation by Father Charles Ugo, pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Renovo, Saturday, November 6, during a retreat held at the school. Father Ugo spoke about growing up in Nigeria.

ANGEL TREE GIFTS: Angel Tree gifts all but swamp the Christmas tree in the Sister Frances Warde Room at Mount Aloysius College in Cresson. A tradition at the Cresson campus since 1986, the Angel Tree is located at the base of the Golden Staircase in the Mount's historic main building. Each angel - card has the name and Christmas wishes of a needy girl or boy from the community. Notes on each card describe a Christmas wish. An angel - card might read, "eight years old, autistic girl," and maybe the sizes of shoes or coats, or the type of toy they want, or maybe a special need like "working on hand-eye skills, addition and subtraction." And during the course of the Christmas Season Mount Aloysius faculty, staff and students pick these cards off of the Angel Tree, then go off to make a Christmas wish come true. The tradition operates on a system of numbers so the shopper/donors are anonymous and only the child's first name is known. And so as the days wind down toward semester's end, and with final examinations looming, wrapped gifts start to magically appear in the Office of the College's Campus Ministry Department.



CELEBRATING YEAR OF MERCY: Led in prayer by principal Jeffrey Maucieri and teacher Benedictine Brother Michael Miller (left) students at Saint Benedict School, Carrolltown, celebrated the opening of the Holy Year of Mercy on Tuesday, December 8.

Community

Accepting Grant Proposals

Hollidaysburg: Nazareth Family Foundation is accepting grant proposals for fiscal year 2016 - 2017

Grant requests must support the mission and criteria of the Foundation, which include: meeting a critical community need; strengthening the family; demonstrating collaboration; addressing the moral and religious renewal of family life; and demonstrating a holistic approach to serving families in need.

The Foundation, established by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth with funds from the sale of the former Mercy Hospital in Altoona, has been

awarding grants to programs and services in the Blair County area since 1997.

To request an application packet, call Sister Michele Collins at (814) 660 - 2559; e - mail MCollins.NFF@gmail.com, or write to Nazareth Family Foundation, 601 North Montgomery Street, Hollidaysburg PA 16648 - 1499.

Completed applications that meet the Foundation's criteria must be received no later than Thursday, February 18, 2016.

Higher Education

March For Life

Loretto: In order to promote the Pro - Life message Saint Francis University will

hold a March for Life on Friday, January 22, 2016 for those not attending the National March in Washington DC.

The Rosary will be recited prior to the March in the Immaculate Conception Chapel, located on the Loretto campus, begin-

ning at 10:30 a.m. The March will begin with a short prayer at 11:00 a.m. in front of the Chapel. The walk will then commence around the mall in the center of campus and will conclude at approximately 11:55 a.m. for those wishing to attend the noon Mass.

Some signs will be provided but marchers may also bring their own.

(Continued On Page 3.)

In The Alleghenies

Day Of Prayer For World Peace And Justice

On January 1 the Church acclaims Mary with her most ancient title, Mother of God. Raising her child in the tradition of the Hebrew faith, Mary teaches her Son about God the Father's love for his people. Over the generations God's mercy is proclaimed in the sacred texts. Israel celebrates the love, kindness, and compassion of God. Jesus learns of God's mercy through the loving guidance of his mother. Today the Diocese also prays for peace on this first day of the civil calendar. Through the intercession of the Mother of God, may justice and peace become a reality in our time.



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O God, who have revealed that peacemakers are to be called Your children, grant, we pray, that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice which alone ensures true and lasting peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Altoona Quadrant Board Announces Administration For New Regional School High Pre-Registration Prompts Relocation of Fifth Grade

The Board of the Altoona school quadrant has announced decisions involving the regionalization of schools in the Altoona, Hollidaysburg, and Newry areas.

Pre-registration for the new regional school, scheduled to open in the 2016-2017 academic year, has yielded higher than anticipated numbers. As a result, the Board has voted to house fifth grade students at the new middle school campus, which will be located at the site of the current Saint Rose of Lima School in Altoona. The original plan called for fifth grade to be located at the future Altoona and Hollidaysburg campuses – the current Altoona Central Catholic School and Hollidaysburg Catholic School buildings. Based on the pre-registration and the high interest from families outside of our Catholic school system, the Board believes that locating fifth grade at the middle school site will offer more room for growth for the overall school.

The Board is also pleased to announce the administration for the new regional school. Elaine Spencer, the current principal of Hollidaysburg Catholic School, will serve as principal. Sherry Buck, Cathy Damiano, and Tabatha Griffin will serve as vice - principals. Buck is the current principal of Altoona Central Catholic School, Damiano is the current principal of Saint Rose of Lima School, and Griffin is the current principal of Saint John the Evangelist School in Altoona. The principal will be based at the middle school campus, with oversight of all three campuses; the vice - principals will each be assigned to a particular campus and be responsible for the day-to-day operations of their respective campus.

The Board wishes to inform families that the Naming/School Spirit committee, comprised of parents from the current schools, will be sending an electronic survey to all school parents in the next few days seeking feedback on a name for the new regional school. After receiving the feedback, the committee will select a name and send it to Bishop Mark L. Bartchak for his approval. The committee is also considering uniforms, school colors, and mascots. Other parent committees, including Fundraising, Development, and Athletics, have also been meeting to prepare for the transition to the new regional school.



DONATION TO FEED NEEDY: President Craig Campbell (right) of the American Polish Citizens Club of Nanty Glo presented a check to the Saint Vincent DePaul Food for Families program in Johnstown. The donation was for \$1,000.00 to be used to help feed the needy in Cambria County. Accepting the donation is Saint Vincent DePaul Society Executive Director Sonny Consiglio.

(Continued From Page 2.)

For more information contact Paul Girardi in the Campus Ministry department at Saint Francis University, at (814) 472 - 3328.

The March is sponsored by the Saint Francis University Campus Ministry Department and the Knights of Columbus Council #8222.

Schools

First - Ever Retreat

Lock Haven: On Friday, November 6 - Saturday, November 7, Lock Haven Catholic School (LHCS) held its first overnight retreat for the middle school students in their new gymnasium. Twenty - eight students attended the retreat. They were asked to sacrifice and fast from food and electronics in order to help them to take their eyes off of the things of the world and put the focus back on God.

The purpose of the retreat was to help raise funds for the Haven of Hope schools in Zambia, Africa (<http://www.havenofhopezambia.org/>). Teachers and students at LHCS thought it was important to help another school that is trying to build a

school building since LHCS has been recently blessed with an expansion to their own building.

The retreat included time for students to pray and spend time with scripture, reflecting on their thoughts and experiences in a journal. Many team building activities were incorporated and added to the fun of the retreat. Two of the favorite activities of the night were "Human, Hungry, Hungry Hippos" and "Successful Village". The latter allowed students to roam through a very dark school with flashlights playing a version of flashlight tag.

(Continued On Page 15.)



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Point Of View

Did you hear the news? Could it be true? Yes, every bit of it! What's the scoop? Mary, yes, Mary had a melt down on the way to Bethlehem! Yes, the often sweet and mild manner young girl, threw a complete, downright, arms fledging fit the morning of her trip. She was tired, did not sleep well the night before, cranky because she had other plans in mind and irritated because the last thing she wanted to do was to get all dressed in the famous white and blue garb. Yes, Mary was not very happy. When her father told her to "get moving" for she was going to be late, she ignored him. When her mother handed her the new outfit to be worn that day, she complained. She murmured the dress was too tight, the veil was itchy and the sandals not her style. Mary did not want to hear of the dissertation on the suitable dress attire for the trip, all she wanted to do was to go back to bed. Yes, Mary had a meltdown on the way to Bethlehem. It wasn't pretty and definitely not characteristic of her but Mary did not have a choice. Mary needed to go to Bethlehem, for she was carrying the baby and without her and the child, the Nativity would be incomplete.

So, what convinced Mary to go? Well, it wasn't her mother and father. It wasn't the dark and handsome young man who would accompany her. It was a hot cup of tea in a Dora the Explorer sippy cup, a Santa Sugar cookie for Breakfast and a promise of a Happy Meal at McDonalds that convinced her to



Family Matters

By Amy Kanich
Mary Had A Meltdown!

get dressed and begin the journey to Bethlehem. Not necessarily a good choice of food for the journey but none the less a bribe that worked.

No, our Blessed Virgin, the mother of our precious Lord, did not have a meltdown on her journey to Bethlehem but my three- year old daughter, dressed in her Mary costume to go to a Diocesan Christmas program surely did. Although, the morning was quite frustrating, not to mention exhausting, it is in these very moments, I sometimes find my greatest inspirations of the heart and in this very moment, I asked myself, maybe just Maybe, Mary did have a meltdown on her way to Bethlehem! And if she did, I am comforted. Mary, although conceived without sin, was still very human and because of this I am sure she experienced a host of different emotions on her journey to becoming the mother of our Lord. She probably experienced fear of the unknown, sadness in regards leaving her family, anxiety about giving birth and perhaps even weariness for the long journey ahead. All of these emotions I am sure could lead to a meltdown, at least one small, tiny, little Holy Meltdown. Sometimes, I think we idealize Christmas

to the point of having an unrealistic view of what really Mary endured on her journey to bring Christ into the World. Mary's road to Bethlehem was not easy; in fact, I would guess it is very hard. Did she question the way? Did she reminisce about her life before that very day the Angel appeared? Did she have second thoughts about marrying Joseph? Was she scared to death to give birth?

I don't know the answers but I do know one thing for sure: Mary kept going, she never turned back, placing on foot in front of the other, completing the very journey God Himself set forth in her life. So did Mary have a meltdown? This I am not entirely sure of either but I do know Mary chose courage over fear, surrender over control, belief over doubt and she chose her God over herself. Yes, Mary, the Mother of our God made a difficult trip to Bethlehem and it is because of her willingness to journey with God through the hard parts, even perhaps to include a meltdown, she was able to meet her God face to face that very first Christmas morning.

"Breath of Heaven, Hold me Together, Be forever near me!" Merry Christmas!



Another Perspective

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein
Merciful As The Father Is Merciful

"Merciful as the Father is merciful," is the motto for this Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

Those words are not simply an agenda for the observance of a special year; they are, in fact, the words that should be the agenda for every Christian, every day of every year of their life.

During this Christmas season, there stands out one person who embodied that principal, "Merciful as the Father is merciful," in a particularly heroic way: Saint Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the foster - father of the Lord Jesus. Saint Joseph, described in Saint Matthew's gospel as a "righteous man," was also a most merciful man. His role in the story of the birth of Jesus is a powerful and beautiful illustration of what mercy is all about.

I have spoken in two previous columns about the meaning of the word "mercy." The Hebrew word, "hesed," means to stand in solidarity with someone else; the Latin word "misericordia," means "to give a heart to the wretched." Both of these meanings find their fulfillment in the merciful Saint Joseph.

I have always loved Saint Matthew's story of the birth of Jesus, and the light it shines on Saint Joseph as a man of mercy. Matthew 1:18 - 25 is a story that illustrates the power of mercy; it is the story of a man who trusted God's mercy, and who was generous in showing that mercy to someone else. It is the story of a man who was merciful as the Father is merciful.

Joseph, the righteous man was a man whose dreams and hopes for a future with Mary seemed to be shattered when he learned of her pregnancy. He was an honorable man and he knew that the child was not his. He must have been brokenhearted, devastated by a sense of betrayal. Anger would have been a most likely, and an understandable reaction to this most unexpected news. But the greatness of Saint Joseph, the capacity to be merciful as the Father is merciful, is shown in his decision to divorce Mary quietly, instead of exposing her to the full brunt of the law - - a law which would have seen her stoned to death as an adulteress.

Joseph instead chose mercy. He chose to stand in solidarity with Mary. His wretched, broken heart reached out to Mary's heart. He must have realized that Mary, greatly privileged as she was to be chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, had to have been brokenhearted too at the way that her life had been turned upside down. Surely Mary had already had a difficult time explaining her pregnancy to her parents. She lived in a small town where tongues had undoubtedly been wagging about her and her condition. Surely she was fearful of what Joseph's reaction would be. She would have known that her life was at stake. Joseph's merciful response to her plight would have confirmed her in the knowledge that her child was indeed the Son of God. She would have known then that her child was truly "Emmanuel" - - "God with us." Joseph's mercy to Mary was the final piece of a puzzle being put together by God's hand.

And Joseph's mercy to Mary had its own reward. The angelic messenger who came to him revealed God's plan of salvation to Joseph. Because he was merciful as the Father is merciful, Joseph experienced that mercy, himself. Mercy begets mercy. All was well.

Soon we will experience a third New Year's Day - - January 1, 2016, the first day of the new civil year. We have already experienced two New Year's Days: Sunday, November 29 was the First Sunday of Advent, the start of a new Church year. Tuesday, December 8 was the first day of the Holy Year of Mercy. If we haven't yet made any resolutions for the New Year, this third New Year's Day gives us an opportunity to make a very important resolution: to look to the example of Saint Joseph in being merciful as the Father is merciful.

May Saint Joseph's example give us the courage to make good on that resolution!

Jubilee Year Of Mercy Means Pope's Schedule Will Be Busier Than Usual Throughout 2016

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- When Pope Francis established the Year of Mercy, a full slate of Jubilee events were slotted into his already packed calendar for 2016.

A typical "business as usual" year for a pope is already full with meetings, liturgies and foreign trips.

But then add the extraordinary Jubilee Year, which will run until Nov. 20, and the pope will now preside over at least one major public ceremony or event each month. He will carry out a personal "work of mercy" in Rome one Friday a month and lead an extra general audience one Saturday a month in addition to his weekly Wednesday gatherings.

And being the "impromptu" pope who likes to do things that aren't marked in press office bulletins, 2016 looks like it will keep this 79-year-old pontiff busier than usual.

The only load that has been lightened, at least one that has been announced ahead of time by the Vatican, is there will be no pastoral visits to Italian parishes for the year.

"Due to the intensified commitments for the Jubilee, it is the intention of the Holy Father to postpone pastoral visits in Italy," the Vatican press office said early December.

But that does not mean he's putting away his passport, since he still plans pastoral journeys across the globe.

A six-day, six-city trip to Mexico in February has been finalized with almost daily flights out of Mexico City to the "peripheries" to meet with indigenous communities, young people, prisoners and the poor. This will be his fourth visit to Latin America and his 12th trip abroad in his three years as pope.

Pope Francis will take a short flight to Poland for World Youth Day in Krakow in July.



CNS Photo/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE GREET'S BOY: Pope Francis greets a boy during a visit to a Caritas center for the homeless near the Termini rail station in Rome Dec. 18. The Pope opened a Door of Mercy at the center.

So far the unofficial, tentative schedule has the pope attending the last four days of events during the week-long gathering, including a Way of the Cross, a prayer vigil, and the closing Mass where, traditionally, he will announce the next World Youth Day host country.

The Vatican never makes an official announcement of future papal trips until a few months closer to the departure date but, looking at past practice, he took five trips abroad each year, trying to hit more marginalized nations and countries with a Catholic minority -- especially places where Christians had suffered persecution.

For 2016, one possible stop might be Armenia. He celebrated a special Mass at the Vatican in April 2015 to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1915-18 genocide of up to 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman-Turkish empire.

The pope told journalists in November he had already promised the Armenian Catholic and Orthodox patriarchs he would visit their country.

"I don't know if this can be done, but the promise has been made," he said.

When asked about other trips planned, especially for Latin America, he said, "You know, traveling at my age isn't good for you. You can do it, but it takes its toll."

However, he will invite the world come to Rome for a dozen major "jubilees" planned for the Year of Mercy, dedicated to: catechists; deacons; priests; religious; the Roman Curia and those administering offices connected with the Vatican; children; the ill; prisoners; and those in need of consolation, to name a few.

He will start the new year with opening the last of the four Holy Doors in Rome -- the Basilica of St. Mary Major -- on the feast of Mary, Mother of God.

He will send out more than 800 missionaries of mercy on Ash Wednesday to go to different parts of the world to be "preachers and confessors of mercy."

That event will coincide with the relics of St. Padre Pio,

a Capuchin priest who bore the stigmata of Jesus, being shown in Rome for the first time. The pope requested the saint's corpse be exposed for veneration in St. Peter's Basilica, according to jubilee organizers, to be a sign for the missionaries of how God welcomes those who seek forgiveness.

Pope Francis is expected to canonize Blessed Teresa of Kolkata in early September as the church celebrates the Jubilee for workers and volunteers of mercy.

Beyond the Jubilee, the pope will preside over major traditional liturgical events throughout the year, meet with ambassadors, papal nuncios, Vatican officials and groups from all over the world.

He will also visit Rome's synagogue Jan. 17 and meet with the city's Jewish community, making it the third time a pope has visited the city's place of worship.

He gave more than 200 speeches in 2015, and it's quite likely a similar stream of encounters will continue with

scripted or off-the-cuff talks to kids, teachers, religious men and women, Catholic associations and experts attending Vatican-sponsored conferences. It is in these addresses that the pope often outlines what needs to be done in the world -- as a disciple of Christ or a man or woman of good will.

Observers expect him to issue his second apostolic exhortation in 2016, following the conclusion of two gatherings of the Synod of Bishops on the family in 2014 and 2015.

As far as major meetings, he will probably convene the world's cardinals in February as he did the last two years. Such consistories offer the pope a chance hold working meetings on some of his most urgent priorities and tap into the College of Cardinals as an advisory body as well as vote on upcoming saints' causes.

The pope's smaller consultative body, the Council of Cardinals or the C9, will come together in February, too, beginning their cycle of five scheduled gatherings for the year dealing with internal issues of reforming the Vatican's structures and processes.

Their next working sessions, which will last for three days instead of two starting in April, will be dedicated to drawing up details for a new Vatican congregation merging offices dealing with justice, peace, migration and charity. The pope is also expected to release further details about the already announced establishment of a new office for laity, family and life.

As far as time off? Pope Francis does staycations. Almost all audiences and meetings will be suspended for a few weeks in the summer. But he'll be busy nonetheless, as he uses the short lull to play catch-up on paperwork, upcoming documents and personally responding to letters, especially from friends and acquaintances -- a habit he had as archbishop of Buenos Aires, and tries to stay true to as pope.

Pope Approves Miracle Attributed To Mother Teresa

Causes Of Convert - Nun And U.S. Missionary Brother Also Advanced

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

-- Pope Francis has approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, thus paving the way for her canonization.

Pope Francis signed the decree for Blessed Teresa's cause and advanced three other sainthood causes Dec. 17, the Vatican announced.

Although the date for the canonization ceremony will be officially announced during the next consistory of cardinals in February, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Vatican office organizing the Holy Year

of Mercy events, had said it would be Sept. 4. That date celebrates the Jubilee of workers and volunteers of mercy and comes the day before the 19th anniversary of her death, Sept. 5, 1997.

The postulator for her sainthood cause, Father Brian Kolodiejchuk of the Missionaries of Charity, said the second miracle that was approved involved the healing of a now 42-year-old mechanical engineer in Santos, Brazil.

Doctors diagnosed the man with a viral brain infection that resulted in multiple brain abscesses, the priest said in a statement published Dec. 18 by AsiaNews, the Rome-based missionary news agency. Treatments given were ineffective and the man went into a coma, the postulator wrote.



MOTHER TERESA OF KOLKATA

The then-newly married man's wife had spent months praying to Blessed Teresa and her prayers were joined by those of her relatives and friends when her dying husband was taken to the operating room Dec. 9, 2008.

When the surgeon entered the operating room, he reported that he found the patient awake, free of pain and asking, "What am I doing here?" Doctors reported the man showed no more symptoms and a Vatican medical commission voted unanimously in September 2015 that the healing was inexplicable.

St. John Paul II had made an exception to the usual canonization process in Mother Teresa's case by allowing her sainthood cause to be opened without waiting the usual five years after a candidate's death. He beatified her in 2003.

The order she started -- the Missionaries of Charity -- continues its outreach to the "poorest of the poor."

Among the other decrees approved Dec. 17, the pope recognized the heroic virtues of Comboni Father Giuseppe Ambrosoli, an Italian surgeon, priest and missionary who dedicated his life to caring for people in Uganda, where he also founded a hospital and midwifery school before his death in 1987. His father ran the highly successful Ambrosoli honey company.

The pope also recognized the heroic virtues of De La Salle Brother Leonardo Lanza of Spain (1894-1976)



MOTHER ELIZABETH HESSELBLAD

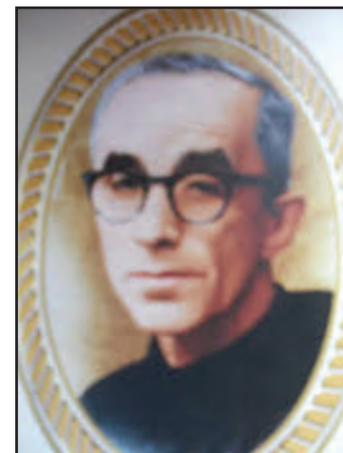
and Heinrich Hahn, a German surgeon.

Born in 1800, the lay Catholic doctor was the father of 10 children and dedicated much of his activity to providing medical care to the poor. He was also involved in public service, even serving in the German parliament. He founded the St. Francis Xavier Mission Society in Germany and the "Giuseppino" Institute for those suffering from incurable illnesses. He died in 1882.

Pope Francis has also advanced the sainthood causes of a Lutheran convert who established a branch of the Bridgettine order in her country and a U.S. missionary who died while ministering to the wounded in Vietnam.

During a Dec. 14 meeting with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, the pope signed a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad, who refounded the Order of the Most Holy Savior of St. Bridget, better known as the Bridgettines.

Born in Sweden in 1870 and baptized into the Reform Church, she immigrated to the United States in 1886 to earn money for her family back home. After working as a nurse, she converted to Catholicism in 1902. Moving to Rome, she dedicated her life and her religious order to prayer and work for the attainment of Christian unity.



BROTHER WILLIAM GAGNON

St. John Paul II beatified her in Rome in 2000.

The pope also signed decrees recognizing the miracles needed for the beatifications of:

-- Father Ladislao Bukowski, a Ukrainian priest who died in Kazakhstan in 1974.

-- Sister Maria Celeste Crostarosa, an Italian nun who founded the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer in the 18th century.

-- Sister Mary of Jesus Santocanale, an Italian nun born in 1852, who founded the Congregation of the Capuchin Sisters of the Immaculate of Lourdes.

-- Itala Mela, an Italian laywoman and Benedictine Oblate who died in 1957.

The pope also recognized the heroic virtues of four women and eight men, including New Hampshire native Brother William Gagnon -- a member of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God. Brother Gagnon tended to the sick and wounded during the Vietnam War, before falling ill and dying in Ho Chi Minh City in 1972.

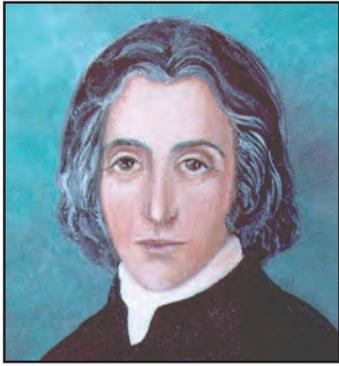
The pope also recognized the heroic virtues of Teresio Olivelli, an Italian layman who spoke out against fascism and Nazism before being arrested and imprisoned. Olivelli died trying to protect a fellow prisoner in a German concentration camp in 1945.

Contributing to this story were Carol Glatz and Junno Archo Esteves.



CNS Photo/L'Osservatore Romano

SAINTS MEET: Pope Saint John Paul II greets Mother Teresa of Kolkata at the Vatican in an undated file photo. Pope Francis has approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Teresa, paving the way for her canonization in 2016.



A Prince In The Service Of The Great King

The Servant Of God
Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin
1770 - 1840

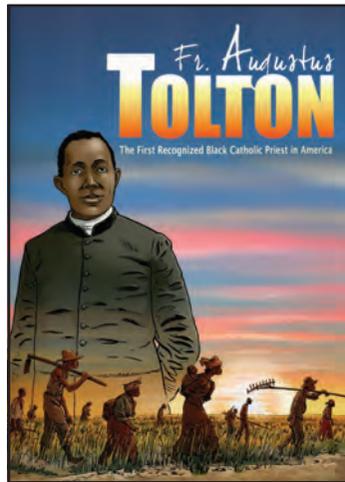
Life Of First Black U.S. Priest Reads Like A Novel

By Joyce Duriga
Catholic News Service

CHICAGO (CNS) -- The life of Father Augustus Tolton already reads like a novel, but now it is illustrated in full color in a new graphic book produced in partnership with Liturgy Training Publications in Chi-

cago and Editions du Signe in France.

Father Tolton's story -- that of the first identified black priest in the United States -- comes to life in the 48-page, 12-by-9-inch novel aimed at helping young people and adults learn about the extraordinary life of Father Tolton, according to Claude-Bernard Costecalde, director



CNS Photo

COVER: This is the cover of **Father Augustus Tolton: The First Recognized Black Catholic Priest In America**. Born into slavery, he fled with his mother and siblings through the woods of northern Missouri and across the Mississippi while being pursued by soldiers.

of publications for Editions du Signe.

The publishers worked closely with the Father Augustus Tolton Guild, the official organization promoting his cause, to ensure the story's accuracy.

Father Tolton's life story is already a compelling read. Born into slavery, he fled with his mom and siblings through the woods of northern Missouri and across the Mississippi while being pursued by soldiers. He was only 9 years old. The small family made their home in Quincy, Illinois, a sanctuary for runaway slaves. The boy's father died earlier in St. Louis after escaping slavery to serve in the Union Army.

Growing up in Quincy and serving at Mass, young Augustus felt a call to the priesthood but because of rampant racism no seminary in the United States will accept him. He headed to Rome, convinced he would become a missionary priest serving in Africa. However, after ordination he was sent back to his hometown to be a missionary to the community there, again facing rampant racism.

He was such a good preacher that many white Catholics filled the pews for his Masses along with black Catholics. This upset the white priests in the town so Father Tolton headed north to Chicago, at the request of Archbishop Patrick Feehan, to minister to the black Catholic community there.

Father Tolton worked tirelessly for his congregation in Chicago, to the point of exhaustion, and on July 9, 1897, he died of heat stroke while returning from a priests' retreat. He was 43.

"He encountered mistreatment and hate with faith, hope and love. (Father) Tolton persevered even when there seemed to be no logical reason to do so; he gifted his priesthood to everyone without distinction, both white and black, and was resented for it," writes Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry, postulator of Father Tolton's cause, in the novel's preface.

"Through it all, he exuded an inner peace rooted in his love for Jesus, his innocence and his profound respect for the church."

Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George introduced Father Tolton's cause for canonization in 2011 and the priest was declared a servant of God. The archdiocesan investigation into his life and virtues was formally closed in September. All of the evidence gathered by those working on his cause were sent to Rome to be analyzed, bound into an official position paper and evaluated by theologians.

The next phase of his cause would be for him to be declared venerable if the Vatican determines he led a life of heroic virtue.

The website www.toltoncanonization.org has details about Father Tolton's life, his sainthood cause and the graphic book. To order the book directly, visit www.ltp.org. It costs \$13 each with \$5 going to cause for canonization.

Prayer For Father Gallitzin's Intercession

O God, light of the faithful and shepherd of souls, who sent Servant of God Demetrius Gallitzin to serve God's people in the Allegheny Mountains, feeding your sheep by his words and forming them by his example, pour out your Spirit to sow seeds of truth in people's hearts and to awaken in them obedience to the faith.

May the Gospel continue to be preached and the Sacraments bring power and grace to the faithful. By the example of this man of faith, Demetrius Gallitzin, may your people advance in the path of salvation and love.

Confident of your faithfulness to us, we humbly ask you, our God, to grant us the favor of (name your intention).

May Christ's saving work continue to the end of the ages, and may we feel a more urgent call to work for the salvation of every creature. We pray this, as did your priest Demetrius Gallitzin, through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

+ + +

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Word of Life



The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis

Pope Will Visit Shrine Of Our Lady Of Guadalupe

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — On the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pope Francis announced that he would travel to the Marian shrine in Mexico City and pray to Mary so that Christian communities “may become oases and rivers of mercy.”

“To ask her this, in a strong way, I will travel to venerate her at her shrine on Feb. 13. There, I will ask this for all of America, of whom she is especially a mother,” the pope said.

The pope made the announcement during a Dec. 12 Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe, who appeared to St. Juan Diego in 1531.

In his homily, the pope said that God’s merciful love is his “most surprising attribute” and is not only manifested through Mary but also directed toward the church and every person. God, he said “loves us with a free love, without limits, expecting nothing in return.”

The pope said that no sin could cancel out God’s mercy but only shine forth his love with greater strength. “No matter how great or serious the sins of the world may be, the Spirit, who renews the face of the earth, makes possible the miracle of a more human life, full of joy and hope,” he said.

Recalling Mary’s words to St. Juan Diego, the pope said the presence of the Lord and his mother is the source of peace and joy even in the midst of suffering.

Mary, he continued, became the “mother of mercy” after having received in her womb “the very source of that mercy: Jesus Christ.” Entrusting the sufferings and joys of “the whole American continent” to her, Pope Francis prayed that Mary may “sow merciful love in the hearts of people and families” during the jubilee year.

“I beseech her to guide the footsteps of the American people, a pilgrim people who look for the mother of mercy, and I only ask her one thing: to show us her son Jesus,” the pope said.



CNS Photo/Paul Haring



ONE MORE TIME: A 2008 photo shows the figure of Baby Jesus in the manger displayed in the chapel of Saint Bernadine Monastery, Hollidaysburg.

The family across the street from me runs a day care. So it’s not unusual to spot toddlers who still have some trouble toddling.

Oh, how they want to walk on their own but fall flat on their diapers in the attempt to take that first step or to take off wobbling. But there are no tears, for the most part, and from the looks on their faces, they have no inkling of what it’s like to quit, and they never make a decision to give up, no matter what obstacles they encounter. They just stand back up and take another step.

I’ve been thinking about that as we contemplate a new year. When the end of one year approaches, and the next one rolls around, there’s the annual talk of resolutions -- to quit this or start that. We each have our regular pledges and promises that we make to others or to ourselves, and we each start with gusto and all-too-soon run out of gas.

Certainly it’s best to make some changes cold turkey and



Your Family

By Bill Dodds

Another Year Of Resolutions

with professional help (stopping drug or alcohol abuse, for example), but other resolutions can be a matter of tapering off on a bad habit and building up a good one. You can choose to spend less time on Facebook, for example, and decide to spend more time praying.

Years ago when I had to have some physical therapy for a bum knee, I learned about the “10 percent rule.” It says that you should never increase an activity by more than 10 percent a week. That small addition is the safest and surest way to keep heading toward a goal without getting discouraged and giving up, and without injuring yourself by doing too much too soon.

Let’s say that in 2016, you want to set aside time every day for reading the Bible and private prayer. Begin with one minute, 60 seconds per day for the first week. Then, using the 10 percent rule, bump it up to 66 seconds the next week and so on. Over time, you’ll be reading Scripture and praying an hour a day.

The numbers don’t lie. Whether they refer to time or distance, if you begin an exercise program, walking only one-tenth of a mile a day, three days a week, or praying, if you make the effort to increase beneficial activities, ultimately they can eclipse the bad ones and this will help you on a healthy and prosperous 2016.



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
The Sanctuary Light

Q. Some years ago, I was driving my car in an unfamiliar area and felt a desire to stop in a church and pray. I came across a huge barn of a building with no sign on the outside, and I wondered whether it might be “one of ours” (i.e., a Catholic church).

I entered and saw a red candle lighted, to the right of the altar, and I knew that I was “home.” In more recent years, though, some of the Catholic churches I visit have no red light, and the Blessed Sacrament is locked away in a chapel. Perhaps this is just a quirk of my home diocese, but I can’t help wondering: Why are we hiding God? (Orange, California)

A. The “sanctuary lamp,” to which you refer, is actually required in a Catholic church whenever the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (the GIRM, the church’s liturgical “rule book”) says in No. 316 that “near the tabernacle a special lamp, fueled by oil or wax,

should shine permanently to indicate the presence of Christ and honor it.”

Note that it need not be red, though certainly that is the traditional color. As for your concern with the Eucharist’s being “locked away in a chapel,” you should know that the GIRM does provide an option (in No. 315) so that the Blessed Sacrament may be reserved “either in the sanctuary, apart from the altar of celebration” or “even in some chapel suitable for the private adoration and prayer of the faithful.” That chapel, though, must be “organically connected to the church and readily noticeable by the Christian faithful.”

I am assuming that you have not seen the Eucharist literally “locked away,” since that would preclude the chance for adoration. In our parish, we have a separate eucharistic chapel. It can accommodate six to eight people, who may kneel or sit in quiet meditation before the Blessed Sacrament.

Just outside this chapel, vis-

ible as one enters the main body of the church, is a (red) sanctuary lamp that is kept lighted throughout the day and night. Far from “hiding God,” I believe this small but prayerful place honors the presence of Jesus in a special way and beckons people to visit.

Q. I am appalled that the church has apparently bought into the climate change mania. This, despite significant scientific evidence to the contrary -- and especially in spite of its obvious political motivation. Am I a bad Catholic for opposing this church position? (Troy, New York)

A. Clearly, the Catholic Church views climate change as a dangerous reality in need of a global solution. In his May 2015 encyclical on the environment (“Laudato Si”) Pope Francis said the following: “A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system.”

He continued: “Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes that produce or aggravate it.”

He also added: “There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy.”

The church’s moral position is based on a strong consensus within the international scientific community: Since 2001, some 34 national science academies worldwide have made formal declarations confirming human-induced climate change and urging nations to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

So, directly to your question: I suppose that you can be a good Catholic and still disagree with the church on climate change. I just wonder whether you are being a good scientist.



For The Journey

By Effie Caldarola
Welcoming The Stranger
Into Our Hearts

The day I arrived to help friends clean and furnish the tiny apartment into which our refugee family would be moving, I got lost.

I had the address, my GPS had led me to the right block, but I’m one of those directionally challenged folks. I approached a large apartment building with directions in hand, probably looking as clueless as I felt.

Our group had agreed with a resettlement agency to sponsor a family, this one from Bhutan, and we had been collecting furniture and household items for months.

All around me, children shouted and kicked soccer balls over the graveled parking lot and down the weed-covered lawn and over well-worn pathways. Women with head coverings scurried by, gripping the hands of brown-skinned boys.

Finally, I stopped a woman who had the makeup and hairstyle of someone who seemed Westernized. She smiled politely and listened intently to my question. “No English,” she responded, her accent as broad as her smile.

Welcome to the part of town where many refugees to our city are resettled. As it turned out, I was right across the street from our family’s apartment.

I know that we are suffering from fatigue on the refugee issue. Our national attention span is very short and our conversation moves on to the debate du jour.

But this issue speaks to the heart of what it means to be American, and to those of us who are Christian, it is intrinsic. It needs to be a continuing part of our discussion and prayer.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me. It doesn’t get more explicit than that. But it does go deeper. Not only are we mandated to welcome the stranger, we are specifically told it is in them that we encounter Christ.

When 30 U.S. governors, after the Paris attacks, almost immediately asked that our acceptance of Syrian refugees be paused, I felt that in politics, where knee-jerk reactions are endemic, this one stood out for pandering to our fears.

It’s an unfortunate human reaction to scapegoat someone. We’re good at it in the United States. We’re the people who refused a boatload of Jews during World War II when our anti-Semitism and fear of foreigners trumped our humanitarianism.

We’re the people who rounded up good Japanese - American citizens and put them in camps during that same war. We’re the folks who made it nearly impossible to escape the development of African-American ghettos because of our housing policies, federal and local. The mass of human misery escaping Syria has become the latest scapegoat for our fears. At least it’s briefly diverted some politicians from scapegoating others.

But should we worry about our national security? Of course. It horrifies me when I hear about the TSA’s failed tests, with guns routinely passing through our airports. I think we should immediately review the visa waiver policy. I think all airport employees should pass through screening every day (why don’t they already?).

But to target refugees is appalling. No one who gets into this country is screened more strenuously and at such length than refugees. I know from experience. We waited months for our Bhutanese family to make it through the international, national and state pipeline of investigation.

How can we cry over the body of a Syrian boy’s ocean-ruined body one day, and on nearly the next day allow our fears to reject the suffering stranger even when they present less chance of hurting us than our own airport policies? Even France is continuing to welcome refugees.

What is wrong with us?

The Holy Innocents First Century Feast - December 28



The Holy Innocents are the boys of Bethlehem put to death by King Herod the Great after the Magi from the East visited the baby Jesus, then left for home without stopping in Jerusalem to give Herod news about “the newborn king of the Jews.” This slaughter is related in the second chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, but is not mentioned by other sources, including the Jewish historian Josephus. Estimates of the number killed range from 10 or 12, based on the likely population of Bethlehem at the time of Christ’s birth, to 64,000, a fantastic figure cited in the Syrian liturgy. This feast has been celebrated in the West since the fifth century; the Holy Innocents are the patrons of foundlings.

Time For Forgiveness Has Begun Pope Says, As Holy Doors Open Worldwide

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- With the opening the Holy Door at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, Pope Francis declared that the time for tenderness, joy and forgiveness had begun.

As holy doors around the world were opened at city cathedrals, major churches and sanctuaries Dec. 13, the pope said this simple gesture of opening God's house to the world serves as "an invitation to joy. The time of great pardon begins. It is the Jubilee of Mercy."

Dressed in rose vestments on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, marking the joyful expectation of Christmas, the pope began the ceremony outside the basilica in front of the bronze holy door. The door depicts a bas relief of the crucified Christ looking down on Mary tenderly holding the baby Jesus, whose small foot shone like bright gold from the countless kisses and touches of visiting pilgrims.

"This is the door of the Lord. Open for me the gates of justice. I will enter your house, Lord, because of your great mercy," the pope read solemnly before climbing two marble steps

and pushing open the large door. He crossed the threshold decorated with a garland of flowers and greenery and bowed his head in silent prayer inside the darkened interior of the basilica.

The church and the people of God are called to be joyful, the pope said in his brief homily.

With Christmas approaching, "we cannot allow ourselves to become tired, no form of sadness is allowed even if we have reason for it with the many worries and multiple forms of violence that wound our humanity," he said.

Amid the bullying, injustice and violence wrought, "above all, by men of power, God makes it known that he himself will rule his people, that he will never leave them at the mercy of the arrogance of their leaders and that he will free them of all anguish," the pope said.

People today are called to listen to the words of the prophet Zephaniah in the day's first reading, as he told God's people not to be afraid or discouraged "because of doubt, impatience or suffering."

God always protects his people, he is always near, the pope said, and that is why "we must always be joyful and with our kindness offer everyone witness of the closeness and care God has for everyone."

The Holy Year of Mercy is meant to be a time for people to rediscover God's real presence in the world and his tenderness, he said.

"God does not love rigidity. He is father. He is gentle. He does everything with fatherly tenderness."

(Continued On Page 11.)



HOLY DOOR: Pope Francis walks after opening the Holy Door of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome Sunday, December 13. Holy doors around the world were opened at city cathedrals, major churches and sanctuaries December 13 as part of the Jubilee of Mercy. The Holy Year began when Pope Francis opened the Holy Door at Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Tuesday, December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

CNS Photo/Paul Haring

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SAINT JOHN LATERAN: Pope Francis opens the Holy Door at Rome's Basilica of Saint John Lateran, Sunday, December 13. Holy Doors were opened at cathedrals, shrines and other major sanctuaries worldwide, that day.

(Continued From Page 10.)

As Christians are called to cross the threshold of "the door of mercy," they are asked to welcome and experience God's love, which "re-creates, transforms and reforms life."

From there, people of faith must then go out and be "instruments of mercy, aware that we will be judged by this," the pope said. Being a Christian calls for a lifelong journey and a "more radical commitment" to be merciful like God the father, he added.

Christians are asked to be joyful as they open their arms to others and give witness to "a love that goes beyond justice, a love that knows no limits. This is the love we are responsible for

As Holy Doors around the world were opened at city cathedrals, major churches and sanctuaries Sunday, December 13, the Pope said this simple gesture of opening God's house to the world serves as "an invitation to joy. The time of great pardon begins. It is the Jubilee of Mercy."

despite our contradictions," and weaknesses, he said.

Later in the day, the pope appeared at the window of the apostolic palace to recite the noonday Angelus with visitors in St. Peter's Square.

He focused on the day's Gospel reading according to St. Luke, in which people in the crowd, including tax collectors and soldiers, asked St. John the Baptist "What should we do?" in order to convert and become acceptable for the coming of the Lord.

St. John does not leave them waiting for an answer, the pope said, and replies with concrete instructions: to live justly, in moderation and in solidarity toward those most in need. "They are the essential values of a life that is fully human and authentically Christian," the pope said.

The saint said to share food and clothing, do not falsely accuse others, do not practice extortion and do not collect more than the tax prescribes, which means, the pope said, "no bribes. It's clear."

By addressing people who held various forms of power, the prophet showed that God excludes no one from being asked to follow a path of conversion in order to be saved, not even the tax collectors, who were considered among the worst of all sinners.

God "is anxious to be merciful toward everyone and welcome everyone in the tender embrace of reconciliation and forgiveness."

Advent is a time of conver-

sion and joy, he said. But today, in a world that is "assailed by so many problems, the future weighed down by the unknown and fears," he said, people really need courage and faith to be joyful.

In fact, life lived with Christ brings the gift of solid and unshakable joy because it is rooted in knowing "the Lord is near" always.

The same morning, U.S. Cardinal James M. Harvey, archpriest of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, opened that basilica's holy door.

Pope Francis was scheduled to open the fourth and last holy door in Rome at the Basilica of St. Mary Major Jan. 1, the feast of Mary, Mother of God.



CNS Photo/Doug Mills, Pool

POPE FRANCIS WAVES TO THE CROWDS GATHERED AT THE U.S. CAPITOL, FROM THE SPEAKER'S BALCONY, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24.

Pope's Visit: The Impact Of Six Days In September

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Pope Francis' U.S. visit -- Sept. 22-27 -- was so full, "each day was like a week," said the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Any one of his public events would have made the trip worthwhile, said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, but he noted that what will stand out the most from the visit were the pope's "personal opportunities to be with people that are not the influential, but the forgotten."

The archbishop, in a Nov. 18 interview during the bishops' fall meeting in Baltimore, said the pope brought Catholics together with a "sense of fervor and enthusiasm" that will continue to benefit both the U.S. church and the pope, who was

"encouraged by his interaction with us."

Pope Francis talked about how much he enjoyed the U.S. visit right away: during his Sept. 27 return flight to Rome after six jam-packed days in Washington, New York and Philadelphia on the heels of his four-day visit to Cuba. He told reporters he "was surprised by the warmth of the people" in the U.S. and how they were "so loving."

There was certainly plenty of love on display for the pope in crowds that lined streets in Washington, New York and Philadelphia just to catch a glimpse of him. And he returned the love right back, waving from the popemobile or the black Fiat and personally greeting bishops, schoolchildren, prisoners, the homeless and abuse victims or in celebrating liturgies and addressing massive crowds or congressional leaders and U.N. officials.

It was his first visit to the

United States and he introduced himself as a brother, a son of immigrants and a neighbor not far from our southern border. He reminded the country's leaders of the nation's founding principles and he urged them to protect families and the earth from an uncertain future.

During the whirlwind visit all attention was on the pontiff who had guarded with extremely tight security. His trip was covered by 8,000 credentialed reporters and also described in detail by tens of thousands through social media. According to the USCCB Communications Department, there were 5.1 billion impressions about the pope's visit on Twitter with the hashtags #PopeinUS and #Pa-paEnUSA.

Other numbers which stand out from the visit include the crowd sizes at major events:

-- 1 million people attended the closing Mass in Philadelphia, Sept. 27.

-- 80,000 tickets distributed to see the pope in New York's Central Park, Sept. 25.

-- 50,000 were on U.S. Capitol grounds to see the pope, Sept. 24.

-- 25,000 people attended the canonization Mass for St. Junipero Serra at the Basilica of National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington Sept. 23.

The theme of the visit was "Love is Our Mission" and in each U.S. stop the pope stressed the importance of reinvigorating one's faith, serving others and living up to the founding ideals of the United States.

Pope Francis was welcomed to the White House and became the first pope to address a joint meeting of Congress. He joined leaders of other religions in honoring the dead and comforting their surviving family members at ground zero in New York. He addressed the United Nations. And, in Philadelphia, using a

lectern once used by Abraham Lincoln, he called for respect for religious freedom and ethnic and cultural differences.

He ended his visit by urging Catholics to continue their enthusiasm in the faith, welcoming newcomers and caring for creation.

"Do not let your enthusiasm for Jesus, his church, our families, and the broader family of society run dry," Pope Francis said at the Philadelphia International Airport before flying back to Rome.

The pope always stressed that the purpose of his visit was to attend the World Meeting of Families, which took place in Philadelphia on the closing days of his U.S. visit. While there, he emphasized, in prepared text and unscripted remarks, the importance and grace-filled moments of family life.

(Continued On Page 13.)



CNS Photo/Alex Brandon, Pool

PAPAL PARADE: After his official reception at the White House, Wednesday, September 23, Pope Francis rode in the popemobile in a parade down Constitution Avenue in Washington DC, greeting the public as he made his way through the city.

(Continued From Page 12.)

The crowds, gathered at every turn of the pope's visit and willing to wait for hours to get through security lines, reflected the pontiff's rock-star appeal but they also indicated something else, said Jonathan Lewis, director of young adult ministry and

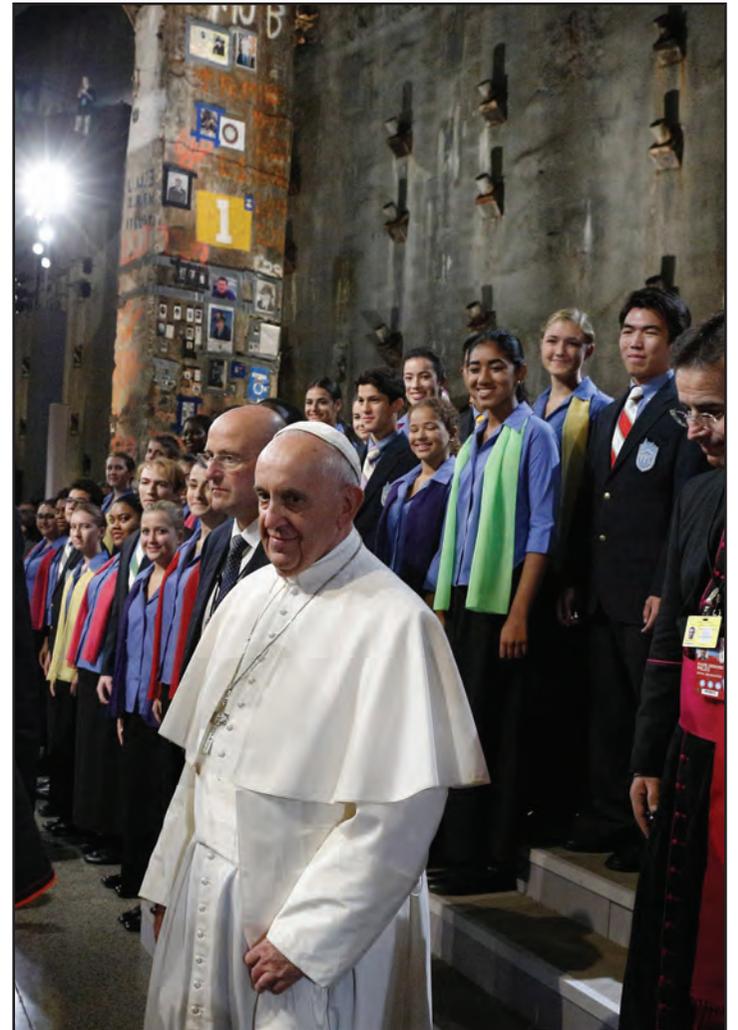
evangelization for the Archdiocese of Washington.

Lewis, who volunteered along the parade route near the White House Sept. 23, said the pope's appeal is also because "he points us to Christ."

"This is a kickoff moment," Lewis told Catholic News Service as the crowds around him

vied for optimum viewing spots. "It's easy to cheer for Francis; it takes more courage to walk with Francis."

And after people put away their yellow and white Vatican flags or their pope buttons and T-shirts, they had the chance to put this zeal for the pope and what he stands for into action.



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

GROUND ZERO: The Last Column is seen as Pope Francis leaves after a prayer service at the Ground Zero 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York Sept. 25. The column was the final steel beam removed from Ground Zero.

According to a poll released Dec. 15 by the St. Leo University Polling Institute in St. Leo, Florida, 61 percent of Americans were motivated to donate the same amount or more to charities this year and 14.9 percent attributed this to the pope's visit.

The survey of more than 1,000 people online from Nov. 29-Dec. 3, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, showed that Catholics intended to increase their giving this year by 24.3 percent to environmental groups, places of worship, charities, refugee causes, pro-life organizations and human rights groups this year.

"People feel compelled to do something," said Nancy Wood, St. Leo University, assistant professor of Human Services, "whether that is donating money or donating time and volunteering."

She also said the pope's message resonated with non-Catholics because it "translates into helping others."

Since the pope's visit, pastors in the Washington Archdiocese have said they have seen more outreach to the most vulnerable, said Susan Timoney, secretary of pastoral ministry and social concerns for the Archdiocese of Washington.

In a Dec. 15 email to Catholic News Service, she said priests in the archdiocese also have noted that they have heard many people say during the sacrament of reconciliation that they were inspired by the pope's visit to "come back to church or begin to work on some of their spiritual concerns."

Returning to the sacraments and helping the poor reflects what Timoney said is the most significant impact of the pope's visit: "people's desire to continue the conversation Pope Francis started."

Now Showing

Filmmakers Fail To Rise To Challenge Of Mother Teresa's 'Letters'

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- As the elaborate procedures that precede the Catholic Church's decision to declare someone a saint amply demonstrate, genuine holiness can be difficult to pin down or identify in real life.

When it comes to capturing sanctity on screen, the elusiveness of a person's interior union with God becomes even more apparent, even when that bond is testified to by extraordinary outward achievements.

There's also a significant aesthetic challenge to consider: As every reader of poet John Milton's Bible-based epic "Paradise Lost" soon realizes, evil is -- on the face of things, at least -- far more interesting than goodness.

The launching of wars, the trampling down of enemies, the liquidation of vast numbers of innocents; all these deeds have the built-in quality of spectacle. Hours of solitary prayer, the patient acquisition and perfection of the virtues; although admirable in themselves, these activities, by contrast, are likely to strike even a well-disposed observer as yawn-inducing.

So the filmmakers behind "The Letters" (Freestyle), a biography of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata (1910-1997), have set themselves a daunting task. All the more so, since the posthumous publication of their subject's correspondence -- the documents from which the movie takes its title -- startlingly revealed to the world that she suffered for decades from a potentially paralyzing sense of God's complete absence.

The woman born Anjeze



CNS Photo/MPRM Communications

THE LETTERS: Juliet Stevenson stars in a scene from the movie "The Letters." The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

Gonxhe Bojaxhiu in Skopje, Macedonia (in what was then the Ottoman Empire), thus found herself in a paradoxical position. As the world's most saintly celebrity, she was a figure committed to -- and acclaimed for -- spiritually inspired works of mercy, many of which made no sense whatever from a purely worldly perspective. Yet within her own soul, her faith had become almost entirely a matter of abstract theory.

How she carried on in the face of such desolation might provide a rich subject for the most psychologically perceptive of novelists. Expressing her dilemma in a compelling way for moviegoers, however, proves too much for writer-director William Riead -- and for his film's star, Juliet Stevenson.

Riead frames his story via a retrospective conversation between Fathers Celeste van Exem (Max von Sydow), the famed nun's spiritual director, and Benjamin Praagh (Rutger Hauer), the church official charged with investigating her life with a view to her possible canonization.

But Riead uses this narrative device awkwardly, with the result that the facts surrounding Mother Teresa's courageous ministry -- as well as her tenacious spiritual struggle -- are

alternately spoon-fed to the audience through dialogue and dramatized in a way that fails to spark interest.

Riead focuses primarily on Teresa's momentous decision to leave the Sisters of Loreto, the cloistered teaching order in which she began religious life, and dedicate herself instead to the work of serving the most afflicted of her adopted city's slum dwellers.

He successfully conveys the obedience with which she submitted her personal convictions about her altered vocation to the judgment of the church -- her patience being further tried by the persistent but ultimately futile opposition of her former

superior, played by Mahabanoo Mody-Kotwal. Yet Riead otherwise fails to delve below the surface.

Given its inspiring subject matter, and the absence of any really problematic content, this appreciative but poorly handled profile makes suitable fare for all but the youngest viewers.

The film contains some tense scenes of conflict and potentially disturbing medical situations. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

Coming Up On 'Proclaim!'

Upcoming guests on "Keeping The Faith," Bishop Mark L. Bartchak's segment of "Proclaim!" will include:

January 3 - - Amy Hill, Communications Director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, reviews 2015 and looks ahead to the goals of 2016.

January 10 - - As the Church celebrates a Jubilee Year of Mercy, Carmelite of the Word Sisters Margie Monahan and Martha Burbulla discuss the works of mercy through the Diocese's Fulton County Mission.

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Proclaim!
10:30 a.m.

A half - hour of local Church news and features

In The Alleghenies

(Continued From Page 3.)

Special guests were brought in to talk to the students on Saturday morning. Father Charles Ugo, pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Renovo, stopped by to share his experience of growing up in Nigeria, Africa. Bethany Hartman, Director of Haven of Hope Zambia, shared stories from her trips to Zambia and about the students that will be helped from the funds collected. Students also presented Mrs. Hartman with gallon sized bags full of Christmas presents that Mrs. Hartman will take with her when she and the Haven of Hope team travel to Zambia next month.

The retreat ended with family members and friends bringing food for a potluck in order to celebrate the completion of the retreat and the end to the fast. The retreat was organized by LHCS faculty members Sarah Hanson, Loretta Jones, and Michele Alexander.

Through the school's "Change for Change" program and sponsorships middle school students obtained for their retreat, LHCS will be donating over \$1,100 to Haven of Hope.

Prayer

Retreat

New Baltimore: Father Richard B. Tomkosky, pastor of Saint John the Baptist Parish and Retreat Center will be conducting an overnight weekend retreat at the parish retreat center from Friday, February 5, 2016 until Sunday, February 7 on the topic of "What the Saints can teach us as we prepare for Lent and in daily life throughout the year."

It will begin on Friday evening and conclude on Sunday afternoon. Meals and Private Room Lodging are included. Reservation required by Friday January 29, 2016. Space is limited. Please call (814) 733-2210 for cost and more information.



CNS Photo/Kara Palladino

REMEMBRANCE: Mary McCarthy Hines and her husband, Charles, touch the grave of their stillborn daughter, Virginia, in late October. "A m.o.m.s. peace" helped order and install a grave marker for Virginia and honor her life through a remembrance program.

Group Memorializes Children Lost Through Miscarriage, Stillbirth

By Katie Scott
Catholic News Service

ARLINGTON, Va. (CNS) -- When Kara Palladino lost a child through miscarriage about a year ago, she knew she wanted to bury the baby in a way that honored her Catholic faith.

But after calling a long list of funeral homes and cemeteries, she couldn't find any with a plan in place to bury and memorialize an infant lost before birth. In many cases, the cost was prohibitive, with one cemetery charging \$5,000 for a burial.

The experience motivated Palladino, a parishioner of Holy Trinity Church in Gainesville, to make the process easier for other grieving parents. "I didn't want people to have to suffer needlessly, to have to hear 'no', 'no', 'no' when they are in such a state," she said. So the mother of seven -- including one deceased child -- went to work creating "a m.o.m.s. peace: a ministry for mothers of miscarried and stillborn souls."

The ministry walks families through the burial process and offers programs to commemo-

rate the young lives. It aligns with Catholic teaching, but individuals of all faiths are welcome, said Palladino. Serving families in central and Northern Virginia, the ministry charges a small fee to cover costs, which are offset by donations.

Through partnerships with local cemeteries, a m.o.m.s. peace helps secure an affordable location to bury a child and helps obtain graveside markers and a casket. The ministry also serves parents who do not have the baby's remains. Whether a woman loses a baby late-term or miscarries just weeks into the pregnancy, "we are here to embrace her," Palladino told the **Arlington Catholic Herald**, newspaper of the Diocese of Arlington.

Mary McCarthy Hines, who gave birth to her stillborn daughter in September, reached out to a m.o.m.s. peace for help ordering and overseeing the installation of a grave marker. "When grieving, any amount of help you can get to handle those logistical details takes such a load off the effort," said Hines, a member of St. Raymond of Penafort Church in Springfield.

Drawing upon the Holy

Trinity community, the ministry also provides child care and meal support.

"When you have a baby or there is a death, people bring you meals, cards and other great things," said Palladino. But when both happen on the same day, people are unsure how to proceed, she said.

Along with practical support, a m.o.m.s. peace "is about remembrance," said Palladino, and providing babies the "respect and love and dignity they deserve."

The ministry offers an "Acknowledgement of Life" certificate and a virtual and physical "Book of Life." Parents can include the names of their deceased child online, where they will be remembered and prayed

for, or in the "Book of Life" at Holy Trinity Church. When the book is full, it is sent to a monastery or convent where families are prayed for continually.

"Even before I turned to them for help securing a marker, I filled out the form to have my daughter remembered," said Hines, who is a media relations specialist at The Catholic University of America in Washington. "I was especially touched that my daughter would not only be remembered in the short term, but that she would be prayed for perpetually."

Palladino said she's not aware of anything like a m.o.m.s. peace elsewhere in the country, but she hopes other programs will spring up to meet a great, but often hidden, need.

Cathedral Charismatic Prayer Group "Winter 2016 Schedule"



All are welcome!
Please Clip and Save.

Mon, January 11th, Praise & Worship, **7PM**, Cathedral.
Mary Beth Schmidhamer—to give teaching.

Mon, January 25th, Charismatic Mass, **7PM**, Cathedral.
Fr. Bob Hiltz, TOR—celebrant.

Mon, February 8th, Praise & Worship, **7PM**, Cathedral.
Fr. Christopher Panagoplos, TOR—to give teaching.

Tues, February 23rd, **6:30 PM**, Cathedral.
Eucharistic Adoration—area confirmation students.
Prayer Group Music Ministry leading music. All are welcome.

Mon, March 7th, Praise & Worship, **7PM**, Cathedral.
Fr. Dave Rizzo—to give teaching.

Sat, March 12th, **9AM**, **St. Monica, Chest Springs**.
Eucharistic Festival of Praise—confirmation students.
Prayer Group Music Ministry leading. All are welcome.

Mon, March 21st, Praise & Worship, **7PM**, Cathedral.
Guided meditation on "The Cross."

Mon, April 4th, Praise & Worship, **7PM**, Cathedral.
Janine Anna—to give witness talk.

Mon, April 11th, Praise & Worship, **7PM**, Cathedral.
Night of Intercessory Prayer for the FIRE RALLY.

Sat, April 16th, **FIRE RALLY**, **8AM-3PM**, Cathedral.
Annual diocesan-wide retreat—speakers include:
Fr. Jonathan St. Andre, TOR; Sr. Linda LaMagna, CCW;
Msgr. Robert Mazur; and Bob Sutton.

Creche Is A Reminder That God Saves People With Love, Not Force

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Seeing baby Jesus in the Nativity scene reminds people that Christ uses humility and love to save the world, not impressive force or a magic wand, Pope Francis said.

"God does not love powerful people's imposing revolutions in history, and he doesn't use a magic wand for changing the situation," he said Dec. 18, meeting the people who donated the centerpieces of the Vatican Christmas decorations in St. Peter's Square.

"Instead, he makes himself small, he becomes a baby, in order to draw us in with love, in order to touch our hearts with his humble goodness, in order to shake up those who race to accumulate the false treasure of this world," he said.

The birth of baby Jesus in Bethlehem shows that God didn't "simply appear on earth" just to come and go, but that "he came to share in our life and embrace our desires."

He came "because he wanted to and still wants to live here, together with us and for us," the pope said. "Because of his great mercy, he came down to us in order to stay permanently with us."

He asked the children always to remember that the Nativity scene also shows that God "does not impose with force."

"In order to save us, he didn't change history performing a grandiose miracle. Instead, he came with great simplicity, humility, meekness."



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

A Nativity Scene And A Christmas Tree Decorate The Apostolic Palace At The Vatican

PERIODICAL RATE MAIL

The Catholic Register

Official Publication of the
Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown