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## News Briefs

### Pope OKs miracle, path to canonization

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.

The pope signed the decree for Blessed Teresa's cause Dec. 17, it was announced at the Vatican.

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 Pope Francis has approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, paving the way for her canonization in 2016.



**Blessed Teresa**  
(CNS file photo/Thomas Cheng, EPA)

### Refugees, displaced highest since WW II

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (CNS) — The number of refugees and internally displaced persons currently in need of protection is the largest since World War II, according to the Washington-based Jesuit Refugee Service/USA, which serves and advocates for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

In 2014, there were almost 60 million refugees and internally displaced people around the globe, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Waves of refugees have been fleeing war-torn Syria for new opportunities in the West. A new surge of Central Americans — mainly unaccompanied minors — were crossing the U.S.-Mexico border and entering the United States. Past mass migration events — including those prompted by unrest in Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, Colombia and the Balkans — indicate that the current crisis in the Mediterranean and Middle East may be a decade-long affair with an average time a refugee remains displaced at around 15 years, possibly longer, according to Mitzi Schroeder, director for policy for Jesuit Refugee Service/USA.

The agency is commemorating its 35th anniversary, looking back on the Indochinese boat and land crisis that led to its founding by Jesuit Father Pedro Arrupe, then superior general of the Society of Jesus.

*“I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all people” (Lk 2:10).*

The Savior of the universe has been born to us as a little baby boy, both God and man. This Christmas season communicates to us that God loves us more than we can imagine. He saw fit to come to us as one of us and thus to share in our humanity. God has delivered on his promise to redeem humanity. May God's blessings shower upon you and your family this holy time.

— Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton — Christmas 2015

(Column/Page 7)



**Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton blesses St. Lawrence Central School, Ironton. (Photo by DeFrancis) — Additional Photos/Page 2 —**

## Pope Francis addresses death penalty, debt, migrants

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis called for abolishing the death penalty worldwide, lifting the burden of debt on poor nations, global aid policies that respect life and revamped laws that welcome and integrate migrants.

He urged individuals, communities and nations to not let indifference, information overload or pessimism discourage them from concrete efforts “to improve the world around us, beginning with our families, neighbors and places of employment.”

Building peace, he said, is not accomplished by words alone, but through the grace of God, a conversion of heart, an attitude of compassion and the courage to act against despair.

The pope's multifaceted plea came in his message for World Peace Day, Jan. 1. The message, which was delivered

to world leaders by Vatican ambassadors, was released at the Vatican Dec. 15.

The message, titled “Overcome Indifference and Win Peace,” contained a three-fold appeal to the world's leaders.

He asked that countries: “refrain from drawing other peoples into conflicts of wars,” which not only destroy a nation's infrastructure and cultural heritage, but also their “moral and spiritual integrity”; forgive or make less burdensome international debt of poorer nations; and “adopt policies of cooperation which, instead of bowing before the dictatorship of certain ideologies, will respect the values of the local populations” and not harm the “fundamental and inalienable right to life of the unborn.”

Also part of building peace in the world, he said, is addressing the urgent problem of improving the living conditions

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# Ironton school that educates elementary students bought, dedicated



Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton and Father David L. Huffman distribute Year of Mercy calendars, created by the diocesan Office of Christian Formation and Schools, after Mass Dec. 13 at St. Lawrence O'Toole Church. Father Huffman is pastor of St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish, Ironton, as well as nearby St. Joseph Parish. He, too, serves as administrator of St. Mary Mission, Pine Grove, and is pastoral administrator of St. Lawrence Central School and St. Joseph Central High School, Ironton.



St. Lawrence Central School supporters, top, walk from St. Lawrence O'Toole Church to the school that was blessed by Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton Dec. 13. Some members of the St. Joseph Central High School, Ironton, choir, directed by Maria Whaley, perform, above, during the dedication of the 14-room school that has been purchased by the Ironton Catholic community from Ironton city schools. (Photos by DeFrancis)



Altar servers – Joey Bush, Bryson Canter, Tre Neal, Isaac Walker and Isaac Whaley – stand outside St. Lawrence Central School, Ironton, along with Knights, laymen and laywomen, during the Dec. 13 dedication of the South Sixth Street facility that educates 3-year-olds through sixth-graders.

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## Bishop gives book to Mass attendees in diocese

STEUBENVILLE — Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton placed an order for more than 15,000 books in November.

The move came after the decision to gift the book “Rediscover Jesus” to parishioners and visitors at Christmas Masses in parishes in the Diocese of Steubenville.

As detailed by Mark Moore, director of ministry, the Dynamic Catholic Institute, Erlanger, Kentucky, for eight years the firm has been making it possible for the distribution of books at Christmas Masses as a way to re-engage disengaged Catholics.

More than 10 million books have been distributed, Moore wrote.

Each year more than 5,000 parishes participate. And a growing number of dioceses are distributing books each Christmas through every parish.

At a cost of \$15,048, “Rediscover Jesus” by Matthew Kelly was sent to parishes in the Diocese of Steubenville, Bishop Monforton said.

Copyrighted in 2015, “Rediscover Jesus” is divided into 40 chapters, many just a couple of pages in length.

The author writes that he does not know “Jesus anywhere near as well as I would like to know him. The best time to rediscover Jesus is right now.”

Kelly suggests two ways to experience his book, one, by reading it from cover to cover; the other, by using it as a guide to a 40-day spiritual journey, reading a chapter a day. Beginning Ash Wednesday 2016, Dynamic Catholic’s “Best Lent Ever” program will be based on “Rediscover Jesus,” the bestselling author’s latest book. Each day of Lent, Dynamic Catholic will email participants a short 60-second email introducing one of the 40 chapters of the book.

Chapter titles include “New Beginnings,” “Getting to Know Jesus,” “An Invitation,” “The Jesus Question,” “The God Claim,” “There is More,” “The Third Question,” “Jesus Was a Radical,” “The Greatest Teacher Ever” and “Forty Words.”

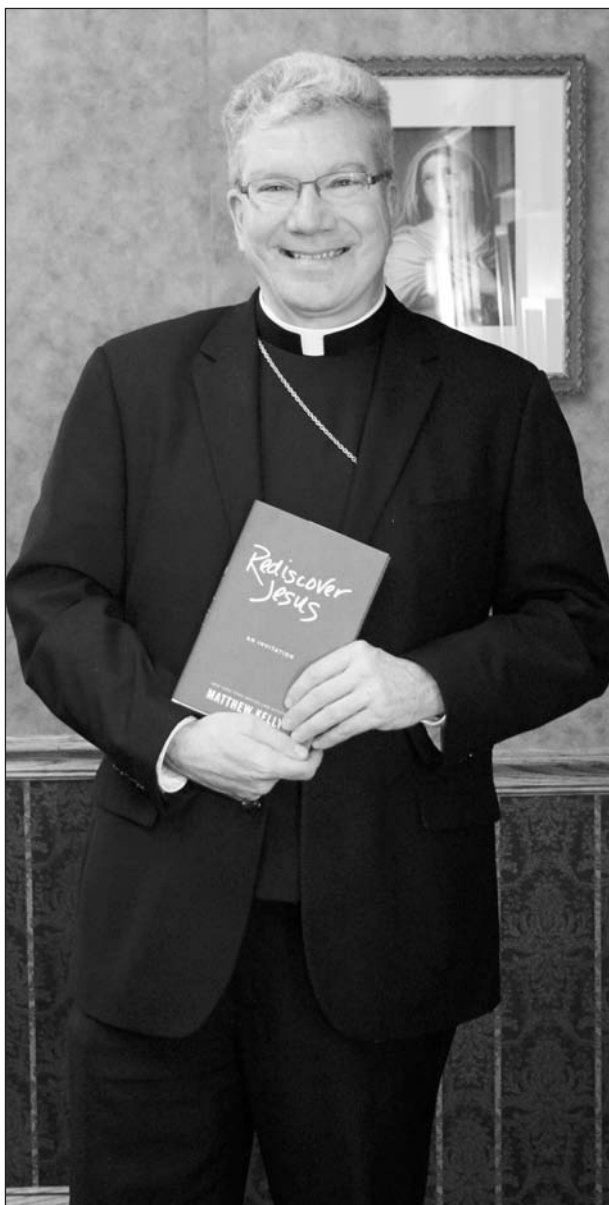
Also included are “The Heart of the Gospel,” “The Soul of the Gospel,” “Who is the Greatest?,” “Purity of Heart,” “Making Sense of Suffering,” “Do Not Judge,” “Radical Relationships,” “Jesus on Lifestyle,” “Miracles Abound,” “Radical Love,” “The Main Event,” “Beyond Tweaking,” “Upside Down,” “The Gap,” “Delve into the Gospel,” “The Prayer Process,” “Deny Yourself,” “Spontaneous Prayer,” “Dancing for Joy” and “Blind Spots.”

The book concludes with “Man’s Ways and God’s Ways,” “The Real Problem,” “Comfortably Comfortable,” “Two Wrestling Questions,” “Complete Joy,” “The Biggest Lie,” “The Holy Moment,” “What If?,” “People of Possibility” and “An Hour of Power.”

Each chapter is followed by a point to ponder, a verse to live, a question to consider and a short prayer.

Kelly was born in Sydney, Australia. As well as the author of more than 20 books that have sold more than 15 million copies and been published in more than 25 languages, he is an international speaker and business consultant

Bishop Monforton saw the purchase and distribution of



**As he stands in his office in the chancery in downtown Steubenville, Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton displays the book “Rediscover Jesus” by Matthew Kelly. (Photo by DeFrancis)**

the books as a tool of new evangelization. Moore agreed. “This is an inspiring and practical way to evangelize your diocese,” he wrote.

On the cover to “Rediscover Jesus,” Kelly wrote that there are some questions “We all ask ourselves in different ways: “Who am I? Who is God? What am I here for? What matters most? What matters least? What are my unique talents and abilities? What will my contribution be?”

“We discover the answers to these questions most completely by encountering Jesus. He longs to help us discover deeply personal answers to our deeply personal questions.”

## Bishop Monforton’s Schedule

### January

- 2 Christmas dinner with seminarians, Steubenville, 5 p.m.
- 4 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 8:30 a.m.
- 5 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.  
Dinner with priests, Steubenville, 5 p.m.
- 6 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.  
Dinner with priests, the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, 5 p.m.
- 8 Baron Club Dinner, Franciscan University of Steubenville, 6:30 p.m.
- 9 Mass, formation weekend for diaconate candidates, Sts. Peter and Paul Oratory, Lore City, 11 a.m.
- 11 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 8:30 a.m.
- 12 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.  
Catholic Conference of Ohio conference call, 2 p.m.
- 14 Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Steubenville, 7 a.m.

## Three priests elected to Presbyteral Council

STEUBENVILLE — Priests representing Presentation Deanery, the retired and religious priests have been elected to three-year terms on Presbyteral Council – comprised of a number of priests who aid Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton in the governance of the Steubenville Diocese.

Father Thomas A. Chillog, diocesan episcopal vicar for pastoral planning and personnel, announced the results of the year-end elections.

Father John F. Mucha, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua and St. Joseph parishes, Bridgeport, will represent Presentation Deanery priests.

Father Thomas A. Magary, a Diocese of Steubenville priest retired from active parish ministry, will represent retired priests.

Third Order Regular Franciscan Father James Morman will represent religious priests.

Father Chillog chairs Presbyteral Council, also served by Father Thomas A. Nelson, parochial vicar to Msgr. John Michael Campbell, rector of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, Visitation Deanery representative; Father Bradley W. Greer, master of ceremonies to Bishop Monforton and parochial vicar to Father Thomas R. Nau, rector of Holy Name Cathedral, Steubenville, and pastor of Triumph of the Cross Parish, Steubenville, Mother of Hope Deanery; Father Mark A. Moore, pastor of Christ the King University Parish, Athens, and St. Paul Parish, Athens, Nativity of Mary Deanery.

The bishop also names representatives to council. Father David L. Gaydosik, Monroe County Catholic community pastor, serves. Msgr. Kurt H. Kemo, vicar general, also attends.

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St. James, McConnelsville, parishioners' Advent project was "Holidays for Habitat." The parishioners at the 257 Bell Ave. church decorate two trees, locally made out of grapevines, with donated lights, ribbons, greens, handmade ornaments and gift certificates to local businesses. The trees were auctioned during the annual Habitat for Humanity Christmas auction and brought \$210 each. The proceeds were donated to the local Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit ecumenical Christian housing organization. Habitat volunteers build simple, decent, affordable housing in partnership with people in need. (Photo provided)



Fifteen families with 31 children among them were the beneficiaries of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Joseph, Toronto, parishioners. From left, Bob Deku, Mary Lou Deku, Judy Sabol and Janet Olesky, representing the Toronto parishioners, deliver the Christmas gifts to the Diocese of Steubenville Office of Family and Social Concerns (Catholic Charities). Coordinated by the parishes' Catholic Woman's Club, the parishioners annually, during Advent, select gift tags that list the Christmas wishes, purchase the gifts, wrap them and return them for distribution. Father Thomas A. Vennitti is pastor of the Toronto parishes. (Photo by DeFrancis)

## Annual diocesan Men's Day of Renewal Feb. 27 in St. Stephen Church

GALLIPOLIS — A diocesan Men's Day of Renewal will be held Feb. 27 at St. Stephen Church, Caldwell.

This is the seventh consecutive year that the Diocese of Steubenville has sponsored a day of renewal for men, announced Paul R. Sebastian, a St. Louis, Gallipolis, parishioner and publicist for the annual event.

St. Joseph is patron of the conference, themed "Rise Up Oh Men of God."

Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton will celebrate Mass during the day of renewal, scheduled from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. in the church, off of Interstate 77, Exit 25. The rosary will be prayed beginning at 8:30 a.m., and a penance service will be celebrated, also, during the day of renewal.

Matthew Leonard, executive director

of the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, Steubenville, will be the featured speaker.

Leonard converted to Catholicism in 1998 and earned a master's in theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville. He is an author of two books, "Louder Than Words – the Art of Living as a Catholic" and "Prayer Works – Getting a Grip on Catholic Spirituality," and speaker who has served as a missionary in Latin America, been a college vice president and theology instructor and led a real estate development firm. A native of Texas, Leonard is married and the father of five.

Leonard will speak on the art of being a true Catholic, give the men an appreciation of the faith and help them to become effective witnesses, Sebastian wrote. In

addition, Leonard will show that prayer is power and will help the men learn how to pray more effectively, Sebastian said.

To register for the men's day, contact Roger Huck via the U.S. Postal Service at P.O. Box 54, Beverly, OH 45715. Registration forms are available in parishes, or mail Huck your name, mailing address, telephone number, email address and parish. His email is huck4816@roadrunner.com.

The registration fee for the day of renewal

is \$25. Checks should be made payable to the Diocese of Steubenville.

Additional information on the event is available from Don Coen, chairman of the diocesan men's day steering committee. He can be reached via telephone at (740) 264-0155 or (740) 632-1565 or through email, donandmarg-coen@yahoo.com.

Anyone interested in placing an ad in the men's day program or donating to underwrite the conference should contact Huck.

Updates on the men's day and articles on men's spirituality are available at <http://diosteubmen.blogspot.com>, Sebastian pointed out.



(Photo provided)

Matthew Leonard



The youth group at St. Casimir Parish, Adena, and St. Adalbert Parish, Dillonvale, provided gifts for children at Christmas. The youth, directed by Denise Howell, selected tags from a giving tree for boys and girls, shopped for the children and returned the wrapped gifts for distribution, Howell said. Youth who participated included Dain Bednar, Morgan Donley, Maria Dickerson, Lucas Dickerson, Madalyn Becker, Shelby Gorlock, Shane Gorlock, Matthew Barsch, Logan Barsch, Anna Cermak, Lexie Swiger and Catherine Konkoleski. (Photo provided)

### DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Wheeling, West Virginia, seeks a full-time organist and choir director: four Masses a weekend and weekday evening adult choir rehearsal, Holy Days, special liturgical parish celebrations (i.e., first Communion, confirmation); teach weekday music classes with the students of parish grade school; presumed familiarity with traditional and contemporary sacred music and an understanding of GIRM with good interpersonal skills for directing cantors and leading choirs.

Salary will be dependent upon education and experience. Funerals and weddings are extra stipends.

Email Msgr. Paul Hudock at [phudock@dwc.org](mailto:phudock@dwc.org) with questions and to submit cover letter and resume. Msgr. Hudock can be reached by telephone at (304) 242-0406.

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# Sisters of St. Francis – who have served diocese since the '30s – now 100

SYLVANIA, Ohio and STEUBENVILLE — The Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio – who continue to serve in the Diocese of Steubenville – entered their 100th year of mission and ministry, Dec. 8.

Responding to a request in 1916 from Toledo Bishop Joseph Schrembs, 23 Franciscan Sisters from Rochester, Minnesota, moved to northwest Ohio to teach Polish immigrants in the Diocese of Toledo. Under the direction of Sister Mary Adelaide Sandusky, soon to be known as Mother Adelaide, the St. Francis Sisters were first stationed at St. Hedwig School in Toledo.

In 1917, the sisters purchased 89 acres of land in Sylvania and formally established the motherhouse of what is now known as the Sisters of St. Francis, Congregation of Our Lady of Lourdes, of Sylvania, Ohio.

In 1918, the St. Francis Sisters responded to another request from Toledo's bishop, this time in health care. Five Sylvania Franciscans went to Gypsum, Ohio, near Sandusky on the shores of Lake Erie to care for victims of the flu pandemic that was sweeping the country.

In 1921, the sisters were asked to manage a hospital in Ashland, Kentucky, beginning their official entry into their health care ministry.

In the spring of 1931, four Franciscans responded to a request to assume management of the 30-bed Gill Memorial Hospital in downtown Steubenville. In 1942, under their direction a \$250,000 wing was completed at the hospital.

In 1960, the congregation constructed St. John Hospital, that later became known as St. John Medical Center, in the city's west end, and now is named Trinity Health System, with east and west campuses. In November 2014, the Sisters of St. Francis transferred sponsorship of their health care ministry to Catholic Health Initiatives, a nonprofit, faith-based health system located near Denver with almost 100 hospitals in 18 states.

Also, in the Diocese of Steubenville, when St. Pius the Tenth Parish constructed a school on Lovers Lanes in Steubenville, the sisters taught there, and also at Aquinas Central School in Steubenville. Too, the sisters were part of the faculty at Catholic Central High School, Steubenville.

A spokesman for the sisters pointed out that throughout the years, the Sylvania Franciscans have adapted their ministries in response to God's call and the values of St. Francis and St. Clare to serve the ever-changing needs of the human family.

In the Diocese of Steubenville, the sisters served, too, in parishes, including ones in Athens, Bellaire, Buchtel, Nelsonville, Shadyside and Tiltonsville, in what is now Southeastern Ohio Regional Medical Center, Cambridge, and at a hospital in Athens, at Vianney Center, Bloomingdale, and directed a religious education center in Bridgeport.

Committed to reverence and respect, the Sisters of St. Francis are active in issues of peace and justice and care for the environment. A story in the 1984 edition of The Steubenville Register reported that the women religious publicly expressed a commitment in response to the 1983 peace pastoral of the U.S. bishops. The Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania's delegates and leadership, meeting in chapter at the Sylvania motherhouse in June 1984 made a recommitment to be peacemakers who promote, support and work for quality of life for all persons.

Since 1917, the sisters have taught in 125 schools in 13 states and ministered in 20 hospitals in seven states. Today, the Sylvania Franciscans have 151 sisters and minister in 16 dioceses in eight states, as well as the island of Haiti.



**Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio, began their ministry in the Diocese of Steubenville in health care at Gill Memorial Hospital, which was located in Steubenville's downtown. (Photo provided)**

In the Diocese of Steubenville, Sisters of St. Francis Paula Blevins and Nancy Ferguson are on staff at Trinity Health System. Sister Paula is supervisor in the microbiology lab and Sister Nancy is the director of mission integration. The two reside in Steubenville.

In addition, there are 70 associates who have made a commitment to share in the proclamation of Franciscan values. The Sisters of St. Francis respond to God's call to live the Gospel in joyful servanthood among all people through lives and ministries that reverence human dignity, embrace the poor and marginalized, and respect the gift of all creation.

Placing their individual gifts and talents in service to the needs of God's people, the Sylvania Franciscans today are engaged in such diverse ministries as education, health care, social services, religious education, media, law, art, parish and retreat ministries and spiritual direction. Sponsored ministries include: Lourdes University, a ministry in higher education, and Sylvania Franciscan Ministries, a health and human services ministry, which is made up of Bethany House, a long-term shelter for victims of domestic violence; Sophia Center, providing counseling services for children, adolescents and adults; Rosary Care Center, a skilled nursing facility; Our Lady of Grace, an assisted living facility; and Convent Park apartments for senior citizens.

In addition, All Good Things, the Sylvania Franciscan Art and Gift Shop, where the sisters share their gifts and talents is located on the motherhouse grounds near Queen of Peace Chapel.

On Dec. 8 – the anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio

– the sisters launched the centennial with Mass in Queen of Peace Chapel. Activities anticipated during the centennial include a Mass Feb. 11, the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, who the congregation is named after, in Queen of Peace Chapel; a picnic/ice cream social for community leaders and partners in ministry, July 16, the anniversary of Mother Adelaide's first vows, at the motherhouse; and Mass Aug. 11, feast day of St. Clare, in Queen of Peace Chapel. Also planned are Masses, Oct. 4, feast day of St. Francis, and Dec. 8, to close the sisters' centennial, in Queen of Peace Chapel. Social functions are expected to follow the Oct. 4 and Dec. 8 Masses.

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## St. John Paul II Freedom and Truth

By Diocese of Steubenville  
Bishop Emeritus Gilbert I. Sheldon

Shortly before his crucifixion and death, Jesus said to the crowds in Jerusalem: "The truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). There is an intimate connection, then, between truth and freedom. The freedom that Jesus accorded us in his redemptive death was a freedom both *from* something and *for* something. It was freedom from sin and the yoke of sin, which is slavery to the devil. It is the freedom of truth, which tells us the meaning of life – who and what we are and the purpose of life. Without such truth, we might wander through life aimlessly, not knowing where we are supposed to be going and how to get there. Truth and freedom are therefore correlated.

Jesus put freedom from sin ahead of freedom from sickness, as he often indicated when he first forgave the sins of those who came to him for healing (see, Mk 2:5). He sometimes said to the recipient of a miracle: "Go and sin no more" (Jn 5:14), or words to that effect. Jesus likened habitual sin as slavery to Satan, and called Satan "the father of lies," and therefore the enemy of truth (Jn 8:42-44). His biggest lie was in the Garden of Eden when he told our first parents that disobeying God would make themselves like God (Gn 3:4-5).

His miracles also conveyed truth, as when he said to those who challenged him when he cast out a devil: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 2:28). In other words, "Draw the obvious conclusion: if God is working among you through me, you had better take heed and listen to what I have to say." On the other hand, those who listen and follow his words are liberated, as was quoted above: "If you continue in my word, you are my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:31-32). That freedom includes not only freedom from sin

and Satan, but also the clear understanding of what life is all about, as intended by the Creator, himself. This is what St. Paul spoke of when he wrote to the Romans: "Creation itself was made subject to futility, not of its own accord, but by him who once subjected it (i.e., the devil) yet, not without hope, because the world itself will be freed from its slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:20-21).

Sin can also be considered as an *alienation*: alienation between man and God and alienation within man himself. "My inner self agrees with the law of God, but I see in my body's members another law at war with the law of my mind ... (Rom 7:22-23). Christ has made possible the end of that alienation, the freedom to do as we should, i.e., as God

intended us to do. This is quite distinct from other kinds of constraint, e.g., physical, (e.g., unjust imprisonment), economic (e.g., "liberation theology"), psychological (e.g., fear of flying, of cancer, etc.). Jesus said: "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (Jn 8:36).

We saw that the effects of redemption can be considered as both positive and negative in its effects. Negatively, it frees us from sin; positively, it introduces us into a new life, the life of grace, which is a participation of the life of Jesus himself. Pope John Paul points out various aspects of this new life as revealed throughout sacred Scripture: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). He was referring here to his "sheep," who are all human beings. A "full life" means one that is all that God intended for it to be from the beginning, but that was lost in original and personal sin. To the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus described this new life in terms of "living water" that would spring within oneself. Water to the people of Our Lord's time, who depended on agriculture and animal husbandry for their existence, was a precious commodity – even more so than oil is in our own day (see, Jn 4: 4-26).

In the Old Testament we read statements that anticipate

and foretell this new life.

"I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from you and give you a heart of flesh instead" (Ez 36:26-27). The heart was to his hearers a symbol of life itself. St. Paul speaks often of this new life: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old creation has passed away, behold the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). "What you have done is put aside your old self with its past deeds and put on the new man, one who grows in knowledge as he is formed anew in the image of its Creator" (Col 3: 9-10). "... (Y)ou must put aside your former way of life and the old self which deteriorates through illusion and desire and acquire a fresh spiritual way of thinking. You must put on that new man created in God's image, whose justice and holiness are born of truth" (Eph 4:22-24).

The pope comments: "Redemption is therefore the new creation in Christ. It is a gift of God – grace – and at the same time it implies a call directed to man. Man must cooperate with the work of spiritual liberation accomplished in him by God by means of Christ. ... The redemption accomplished by Christ ... has a personal dimension which is directed to each individual. At the same time, it has an interhuman and social, a communitarian and universal dimension." John Paul refers us to the Letter to the Ephesians, which is often described as a treatise by St. Paul on the church. "That, then, is the definitive dimension of the new creation and of the newness of life in Christ: liberation from division, the breaking down of barriers which separated Israel from the others. In Christ, all people are the chosen people, because in Christ man is chosen. Everyone without exception or difference is reconciled with God and, as a consequence, called to share in the eternal promise of salvation and of life. ..."



Bishop Sheldon

**'The freedom that Jesus accorded us in his redemptive death was a freedom both *from* something and *for* something.'**

## The Meaning of Christmas – Connecting the Dots Between the Crib and the Cross

By Father Ron Rolheiser

The Gospel stories about the birth of Jesus are not a simple retelling of the events that took place then, at the stable in Bethlehem. In his commentaries on the birth of Jesus, the renowned Scripture scholar Raymond Brown highlights that these narratives were written long after Jesus had already been crucified and had risen from the dead and that they are colored by what his death and resurrection mean. At one level, they are as much stories about Jesus' passion and death as they are about his birth. When the Gospel writers looked back at the birth of Jesus through the prism of the resurrection, they saw in his birth already the pattern for both his active ministry and his death and resurrection: God comes into the world and some believe and accept him and others hate and reject him. For some, his person gives meaning, for others it causes confusion and anger. There is an adult message about Christ in Christmas, and the meaning of Christmas



Father Rolheiser

is to be understood as much by looking at the cross as by looking at the crib. Hardly the stuff of our Christmas lights, carols, cribs and Santa.

And, yet, these too have their place. Karl Rahner, not naive to what Raymond Brown asserts, argues that, even so, Christmas is still about happiness, and the simple joy of children captures the meaning of Christmas more accurately than any adult cynicism. At Christmas, Rahner contends God gives us a special permission to be happy: "Do not be afraid to be happy, for ever since I (God) wept, joy is the standard of living that is really more suitable than the anxiety and grief of those who think they have no hope. ... I no longer go away from the world, even if you do not see me now. ... I am there. It is Christmas. Light the candles. They have more right to exist than all the darkness. It is Christmas. Christmas that last forever." At Christmas, the crib trumps the cross, even as the cross does not fully disappear.

How do the cross and the crib fit together? Does Calvary cast a permanent shadow on Bethlehem? Should Christ-

mas disturb us more than console us? Is our simple joy at Christmas somehow missing the real point?

No. Joy is the meaning of Christmas. Our carols have it right. At Christmas, God gives us a special permission

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email: register@diosteub.org

Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, publisher  
Pat DeFrancis, editor  
pdefrancis@diosteub.org  
Janice M. Ward, circulation/advertising  
jward@diosteub.org

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## 'How Do You and I Accept His Gift?'

By Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton

*"I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people" (Lk 2:10).*

Indeed we celebrate this season of Our Lord Jesus' Nativity with great joy. God saw fit that the human race is worthy of salvation, and he sent his only Son to secure our redemption. As the Old Testament prophets foretold, God will never leave us, even if we "push back" at him. God is always faithful.

This Christmas season cannot be limited to the remembrance of a historic event from two millennia ago. Christmas is the promise fulfilled by God, a promise made to the Chosen People, a people dearest to his heart. The infant Jesus instructs us that God cares. The infant Jesus teaches us that we are precious in God's eyes and that no one is a mistake. The infant Jesus shows us that each one of us has been created to be good, if only we give ourselves and others the opportunity. The infant Jesus is proof that there always is hope!

Over 2,000 years ago, a little baby boy took his first breath among a people for whom he was to offer up his life. The infant Jesus poses the question to each one of us how we may share the Good News of Jesus Christ in an often ambivalent and directionless world. Christmas is a time of great joy, but, also, is a personal challenge. Jesus Christ offers us eternal life. How do you and I accept his gift? How do we share this gift?

Christmas provides us with the fortitude of Mary and Joseph as they complete the Holy Family with the child Jesus. The Holy Family reminds us that it is in each family where faith is nurtured and courage is fortified, virtues essential for our common vocation as Christian missionaries. As both Mary and Joseph said "yes" to Jesus, we, too, permit the infant Jesus to enter into our own lives.

The Nativity of the Prince of Peace instructs that in Jesus humanity is made whole again. We are fellow stewards of God's precious gifts, namely, you and me. The birth of Jesus is proclaimed with great joy by an angel for all to hear. May this Christmas season be one of profound joy and consolation for you and your family. In this Year of Mercy may our words and works communicate that in the Holy Name of Jesus there always is hope.



Bishop Monforton

## The Spiritual Master Pope Francis Wants You to Read

By Bishop Robert Barron

This year marks the 750th anniversary of the birth of the great Catholic poet Dante Alighieri. Michelangelo revered Dante, as did Longfellow, Dorothy Sayers and T.S. Eliot. In fact, it was Eliot who commented, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the world between them. There is no third." One of Bob Dylan's finest songs, "Tangled Up in Blue," contains a reference to Dante: "She opened up a book of poems, handed it to me/ It was written by an Italian poet from the 13th century/ And every one of those words rang true and glowed like burning coal/ Pouring off of every page like it was written in my soul."

I first read Dante's masterpiece, "The Divine Comedy," in the summer of 1990, when I was studying German in Freiburg in Breisgau. The experience changed my life. Almost every book I've written contains some reference to the poet, and I've used him extensively in my preaching for 25 years. Just this past summer, while filming with my Word on Fire team in Ravenna, I had the opportunity to visit Dante's tomb, which I found incomparably moving.

There is so much to admire in "The Divine Comedy": its architectonic structure, its lyrical language, its unforgettable metaphors, its cadences and rhythms (impossible to convey in translations), its psychological perceptiveness, its deep humanity, etc. But I would like to focus on its extraordinary spiritual power. How wonderful that arguably the most significant poem in the Western tradition is all about sin and redemption and is



Bishop Barron

suffused through and through with a distinctively Catholic sensibility.

The epic poem opens in the year 1300, when its protagonist was 35, midlife by a biblical reckoning: "The measure of our life is 70 years ..." (Ps 90:10). As psychologists and spiritual teachers over the centuries have testified, midlife is often a time of crisis and breakthrough. The justly celebrated opening lines of the "Comedy" signal this truth: "Midway on the journey of our life, I woke to find myself alone in a dark wood, having wandered from the straight path." Though he was a massively accomplished man, renowned in both the artistic and political arenas, Dante was, by his mid-30s, spiritually lost. That he realized this – that he woke up to it, to use his metaphor – was a signal virtue and the impetus for his journey, much as "hitting bottom" and "turning one's life over to a higher power" are essential for those who undertake a 12-step process.

He meets the ghost of the Roman poet Virgil, who functions as his psychopomp, mystagogue and spiritual director. One of the most important truths in the spiritual order is that one should never commence the journey alone: things get complicated fairly quickly, and a skilled guide is essential. Virgil tells the troubled Dante that there is a way forward, but that it involves a journey through hell. In our "I'm OK and you're OK" culture, this is a very difficult message to take in, but every authentic spiritual master acknowledges its indispensability. We have to confront our sin and dysfunction with complete honesty; otherwise we will get stuck. The 12-step program speaks of doing "a searching moral inventory" as a non-negotiable prerequi-

site to dealing with an addiction. So Virgil leads Dante on a thorough-going tour of the underworld.

As the pilgrim takes in the sufferings of the damned, he is sometimes so overwhelmed that he faints dead away, but Virgil brings him back around, for the point is to see what sin does to the soul. In watching the pains endured by the denizens of hell, Dante is seeing his own sin and appreciating, perhaps for the first time, precisely what it has done to him.

At the very bottom of hell, Virgil and Dante confront Satan. Unlike any other depiction of the devil in the great tradition, Dante presents Satan, not as ensconced in flames, but as buried in ice. The more one muses on it, the more this seems an apt image of the coldness, immobility and isolation that follow from rejecting God's love. Moreover, Dante imagines the devil as possessing three faces – a twisted imitation of the Trinity. Deep down, every sinner, in making himself the center of the universe, is aping God. From all six eyes, Satan weeps, signaling that, in the final analysis, sin is sad. Unlike Milton's Satan or even Al Pacino's version of the prince of darkness in the film "The Devil's Advocate," Dante's devil has nothing glamorous or romantic about him. He is just stuck, pathetic and sad.

Having gone all the way down, Dante is now ready to rise. Moving through the center of the earth, he comes out the other side (interestingly, the 13th century poet somehow intuited the roundness of the earth) and commences a journey up the Mount of Purgatory. On each level of that "seven-storey mountain" (the title, by the way, of Thomas Merton's autobiography), one of the deadly sins – pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and lust – is punished, usually through some version of enantiodromia, or moving in the direction opposite of one's sin. So the prideful,

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## Pope Francis addresses

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of prisoners, especially those still awaiting trial. Since rehabilitation should be the aim of penal sanctions, effective alternatives to incarceration should be considered as well as the abolition of the death penalty.

The pope asked government authorities to consider “the possibility of an amnesty” or pardon.

The pope called on national governments to review their current laws on immigration and find ways they could “reflect a readi-

ness to welcome migrants and to facilitate their integration” as well as respect the rights and responsibilities of all parties concerned.

All nations’ leaders should also take concrete measures in alleviating the problem of a lack of housing, land and employment, the pope wrote, as well as stop discrimination against women in the workplace, which included unfair wages and precarious or dangerous working conditions.

He said he hoped those who are ill could be guaranteed access to medical treatment, necessary medications and home care.

The pope’s message focused on the dangers of cynicism and indifference against God, neighbor and creation. “Disregard and the denial of God,” he said, “have produced untold cruelty and violence.”

And the exploitation of natural resources and mistreatment of animals have an effect “on the way we treat other people.”

“With the present Jubilee of Mercy, I want to invite the church to pray and work so that every Christian will have a humble and compassionate heart” and that all people will learn “to forgive and to give,” he said in his message.

God is never indifferent to the world, he said. He not only sees, hears and knows,

he “comes down and delivers” real healing and eternal teachings. The credibility of the church and its members rests on their willingness to live and act with the same tireless mercy God has for the world, the pope said. “We, too, then are called to make compassion, love, mercy and solidarity a true way of life, a rule of conduct in our relationships with one another,” he said.

Since these attitudes of compassion and solidarity are often handed down from person to person, the pope emphasized the importance of families and teachers in showing what love, respect, dialogue, generosity, charity and faith mean.

He also reminded the media and communicators of their responsibility to “serve the truth and not particular interests.” They don’t just inform people, he said, but also form and influence their audience. “Communicators should also be mindful that the way in which information is obtained and made public should always be legally and morally admissible,” he said.

In his message, the pope praised those journalists and religious who raise awareness about troubling and “difficult situations,” and defend the human rights of minorities, indigenous peoples, women, children and the most vulnerable.



Pope Francis passes a figurine of the baby Jesus as he arrives to celebrate Christmas Eve Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Dec. 24. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

## Seasonal checkup: Pope prescribes spiritual virtues to fight curial ills

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Instead of a typical gathering to exchange just thanks and best wishes, Pope Francis uses this year-end moment with cardinals and top officials to offer “fraternal correction,” spiritual direction and his clear expectation of their role as servants, not masters, of the church.

After diagnosing last year what was

ailing the Vatican, this year he prescribed a strong dose of medicine — a long list of “antibiotics” or virtues — to fight the disease of bad leadership.

The pope showed his own sense of humor this year when presenting his new verbose list of virtues, like “innocuity” and a rare Italian term for “plethora.”

“My vice is neologisms,” he admitted.

Diseases need “prevention, vigilance, care, and sadly, in some cases, painful and prolonged interventions,” he said in this year’s talk Dec. 21.

The spiritual problems he highlighted last year are still lingering, he said, and were “evident in the course of the past year, causing no small pain” to the whole body of the church and “harming many souls, with scandal, too,” he said in his 30-minute talk.

Treatment is necessary and the regimen entails getting back to basics, he said, for which he offered a “catalogue of needed virtues.”

This constant examination of what Christ demands of his disciples always will be necessary, he said. “The reform will move forward with determination, clarity and firm resolve,” since the church is always to be reformed, he said.

The papal catalogue was actually an acrostic, a list in which the first letter of each word spells out another word. In this case the word was “misericordia,” Italian for mercy. In an aside explaining his poetic format, he told his learned audience that Jesuit Father Matteo Ricci used to do acrostics when he evangelized in China.

Mercy, the pope explained, isn’t some “fleeting sentiment.” It’s the core teaching of the Gospel, the living “heart of Jesus” and, therefore, the light that needs to guide one’s life, reforms and decisions.

“May it be the basis of all our efforts. May it teach us when to move forward and when to step back. May it also enable us to understand the littleness of all that we do in God’s greater plan of salvation and majestic and mysterious working,” the pope said.

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to be happy, though that must be carefully understood. There is no innate contradiction between joy and suffering, between being happy and undergoing all the pain that life hands us. Joy is not to be identified with pleasure and with the absence of suffering in our lives. Genuine joy is a constant that remains with us throughout all of our experiences in life, including our pain and suffering. Jesus promised us “a joy that no one can take away from you.” Clearly that means something that doesn’t disappear because we get sick, have a loved one die, are betrayed by a spouse, lose our job, are rejected by a friend, are subject to physical pain or are enduring emotional distress. None of us will escape pain and suffering. Joy must be able to coexist with these. Indeed it is meant to grow deeper through the experiences of pain and suffering. We are meant to be women and men of joy, even as we live in pain. That’s a coloring taken from their understanding of Jesus’ death and resurrection, which the Gospel writers insert into their narratives about his birth.

But, of course, that is not what children see when they get caught up in the excitement of Christmas and when they look at the Christ-child in the crib. Their joy is still innocent, healthily protected by their naivete, still awaiting disillusion, but real nonetheless. The naive joy of a child is real

and the temptation to rewrite and recolor it in light of the disillusionment of later years is wrong. What was real was real. The fond memories we have of anticipating and celebrating Christmas as children are not invalidated when Santa has been deconstructed. Christmas invites us still, as John Shea poetically puts it, “to plunge headlong into the pudding.” And despite all the disillusionment within our adult lives, Christmas still offers us, depressed adults, that wonderful invitation.

Even when we no longer believe in Santa, and all the cribs, lights, carols, cards, colorful wrapping-paper and gifts of Christmas no longer bring the same thrill, the same invitation still remains: Christmas invites us to be happy, and that demands of us an elemental asceticism, a fasting from adult cynicism, a discipline of joy that can hold the cross and the crib together so as to be able to live in a joy that no one, and no tragedy, can take from us. This will allow us, at Christmas, like children, to plunge headlong into the pudding.

Christmas gives, both children and adults, permission to be happy.

**Father Rolheiser, a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate, is president of the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, a lecturer, author, retreat master and widely circulated newspaper columnist. His website is [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com).**

## The Spiritual Master

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who elevated themselves in their earthly lives, are forced to carry huge boulders that press them to the ground; and the envious, who spent their lives looking resentfully at others, have their eyelids sewn shut; and the slothful, who could muster no spiritual energy in this world, are made to run, etc. Dante thereby takes in the two essential steps in the process of conversion: seeing and acting.

Having then been purified, Dante is ready to fly. At the top of the Mount of Purgatory, now accompanied by the blissful Beatrice, he commences a flight through the various levels of heaven. What he sees are, in essence, different modalities and dimensions of love, for heaven is nothing but love. One of the most memorable examples of this is that the Franciscan St. Bonaventure introduces St. Dominic, the founder of the Dominican Order, and the Dominican

St. Thomas Aquinas introduces St. Francis, the founder of the Franciscans. Rivalries and jealousies are absent in heaven; all that remains is courtesy. Finally, at the very end of his pilgrimage, the poet is permitted to look into the face of God, which he appreciates as “the love that moves the Sun and the other stars.”

The itinerary through hell, purgatory and heaven is not a bit of medieval fantasy; instead, it is a vivid description of the process by which we find salvation. Hence, it is as relevant now (probably more so) than it was in the 13th century. Pope Francis has said that, especially in this Year of Mercy, we should *read and reread this magnificent spiritual teacher*. I think he’s right.

**Bishop Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.**



## Pope's visit to border expected to highlight church's outreach to poor

CHICAGO (CNS) — With the poverty on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, Pope Francis' visit to the region in February will be an important opportunity for the Catholic Church "to emphasize the mercy of God that is at the core of the Christian faith."

That's how Catholic Extension views the trip, which will take place during the church's newly launched Holy Year of Mercy.

"In building up the faith among the poor," said Father Jack Wall, president of Chicago-based Catholic Extension, "we are answering the Gospel call to serve 'the least of our brothers and sisters' and the Gospel mandate of the 'preferential option for the poor,' which is a cornerstone of Catholic social teaching.

"During his visit to the border, Pope Francis will undoubtedly show us the way," he said in a statement.

On Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Vatican announced details about the pope's Feb. 12-17 visit to Mexico. He will visit some of the country's most marginalized communities.

Pope Francis will stop in six cities, including two in the state of Chiapas and — across from El Paso, Texas — Ciudad Juarez.

Following the Vatican's announcement, Catholic Extension issued a news release saying it will work with the Diocese of El Paso to plan papal visit events on the U.S. side of the border. The Chicago-based papal society has a long history of providing support to El Paso and the other Catholic dioceses at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The pope is scheduled to be in Ciudad Juarez Feb. 17 and his visit will culminate with a 4 p.m. Mass (local time) at Benito Juarez Stadium right next to the border. According to the Diocese of El Paso, the Mass will include a cross-border component.

"We hope that in a special way Pope Francis' visit to this region will give voice to these often voiceless people here on the border, especially children and families who are the most vulnerable," said El Paso Bishop Mark J. Seitz.

"And we hope that his presence will facilitate a much-needed national dialogue that will help unite our own country around a compassionate response to the poor in our midst," he added.

He also remarked on the fact the Vatican chose the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe to officially announce the pope's visit.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is the patroness of the Americas. Devotion to her began in Mexico, but today unites Catholics across the Americas.

The Feb. 17 papal Mass at the border is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from both the U.S. and Mexico.

Parishes in El Paso Diocese and in the neighboring Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico, will receive tickets for their parishioners to attend the Mass in Juarez. In addition, the Texas diocese is working out details with local officials for its plans to have a simultaneous celebration of the Mass at the El Paso border fence.

Bishop Seitz added that the diocese was "very grateful to Catholic Extension for being an integral partner in this milestone event" and that its "long-standing support

helps us bring hope and faith to the marginalized."

Since its founding in 1905, Catholic Extension has been supporting the work and ministries of U.S. mission dioceses, like the El Paso Diocese. They are defined as "mission" because these dioceses have limited resources for funding both basic and essential pastoral works and ministries, and cover a vast territory with a Catholic population served by a small number of priests, religious sisters and other pastoral workers.

Catholics make up 80 percent of the total population of the 26,700-square-mile El Paso Diocese; it is the third highest Catholic percentage in the country, after the dioceses of Brownsville and Laredo, which are also in Texas.

According to Joe Boland, vice president of mission at Catholic Extension, U.S. mission dioceses "are places where the Catholic Church's missionary spirit is alive and where the church is growing."

As an example, he pointed to the border Diocese of Brownsville, where the Catholic population has tripled in size since 1980, to more than 1.2 million people.

Catholic Extension has had a special focus on dioceses in Texas throughout its history. It said that adjusted for inflation, it has provided a total of more than \$122 million to help U.S. dioceses along the U.S.-Mexico border with the building and repair of churches, the education and formation of priests and other leaders, and various ministries.

El Paso's diocesan director of religious formation, Veronica Rayas, received fund-

ing from Catholic Extension to help her afford her education; Extension also supports her many faith formation programs in the diocese, including leadership formation, training and support to pastors, parish catechetical leaders and catechists.

Boland called Rayas a "true 'missionary disciple,' as Pope Francis is calling all Catholics to be."

"Innovative, hard-working, joyous, and faith-filled, she is a shining example of the kind of great leaders we have seen emerging in mission dioceses," he added.

Catholic Extension also supports two positions in Rayas' office — a coordinator of religious formation for rural west Texas and a specialist in confirmation. In addition, it provides a scholarship for graduate theology education and helps to fund the salary of two young adult leaders from the diocese.

In 2014, three members of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary ministering in the Brownsville Diocese were named the winners of Catholic Extension's annual Lumen Christi (Light of Christ) Award.

Sisters Carolyn Kosub, Emily Jocoson and Fatima Santiago arrived in the South Texas "colonia" of Penitas, located in the Diocese of Brownsville, in 2003 after a tornado ravaged the poverty-ridden community, and since then have worked with residents to help meet some of their most basic needs.

They created Proyecto Desarrollo Humano (Project for Human Development), an outreach center dedicated to evangelization, health, social services and education.



The Hispanic community of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption, Marietta, hosts a celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12. Dancers begin the celebration and sharing traditional Spanish food concludes it. Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton accepts flowers that represent a request from Mary in the 1500s to the bishop of Mexico that a church be built in her name. At right, June Logue, a St. Ambrose, Little Hocking, parishioner gives Sister of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd Francisca Aguillon, coordinator of Hispanic ministry for the diocese, a check for \$1,887.15 for her ministry. The money was raised and/or donated by St. Ambrose parishioners. Father Robert A. Gallagher is St. Ambrose Parish pastor. Msgr. John Michael Campbell is rector of the basilica. (Photos by DeFrancis)

# Immigration opposition: My country, 'tis of me, but no room for thee

By Mark Pattison

WASHINGTON (CNS) — “No Irish need apply.”

That was a typical sign more than a century ago in cities along the Eastern Seaboard when job openings were announced in store windows.

Of course, it wasn't the Irish alone who bore the stigma of anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States. Name the ethnic group, and suspicions, fears and slanders have been posed against them when Americans who were more settled in this country thought these immigrant groups posed a threat to the American way of life — or, more likely, the status quo that benefited the earlier arrivals.

Germans, Italians, Poles, Catholics, Jews — who, it should be noted, have been shunned by numerous nations over the course of centuries — and Mexicans, now lambasted as “illegal.” Name the group, and they have likely been the subject of hatred, fear and harassment at some point in the development of the nation.

So it seems that Muslims in general, and Syrians in particular, are in pretty good company.

Like all the groups before them, they are the victims of nativism, which is a shorthand term for preserving the status of an established population over any claims on such status made by an immigrant group. Nativism is a misnomer when applied to the United States, as the most established population in the country — Native Americans — were themselves subject to centuries of land grabs and slaughter; “the only good Indian is a dead Indian,” went one popular phrase of the time.

“Anti-immigration” is the more current term to describe the politics of keeping

others out of the country so those already in the country can enjoy the benefits of residency. It has long been held by immigration opponents that immigrant labor depresses wages for everyone else. The kicker is that very few Americans would work the kind of jobs immigrants perform for the wages they're paid — assuming they're paid even that little.

Nativism in the United States existed even before the country took shape. Long before “E Pluribus Unum” (“out of many, one”) became the national motto that still graces the nation's coins, groups fleeing religious persecution in England and elsewhere in Europe settled in the colonies, but frequently kept to themselves in their newly settled lands: Pilgrims in Massachusetts, Quakers in Pennsylvania, Catholics in Maryland (named for Mary, the mother of God), Anglicans in Virginia (named for Queen Elizabeth I, the “virgin queen”). Benjamin Franklin, long lauded as one of the architects of American democracy, criticized the German presence in Pennsylvania.

“The great irony, of course, is that our country was founded by people fleeing persecution and intolerance and hostility,” said John Carr, director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University. “There's a terrible human temptation that when we go through that, we become the people we were trying to escape.”

The Alien and Sedition Acts, passed in 1798, became the first federal moves to limit immigration. Three of the laws were revoked after Thomas Jefferson became president in 1801, but one of the laws was invoked to warehouse Japanese, German and Italian “aliens,” or noncitizens, during World War II. More than 100,000 Japanese-Americans also were caught up

in the war hysteria, and sent to camps along with their alien counterparts.

In the antebellum era, anti-Irish Catholic bigotry appeared in fits and starts, including the occasional burning of a convent or church — not unlike today's arson of mosques. The movement came to a boil with the creation of the anti-immigrant American Party, active in the late 1840s and 1850s. Dubbed the Know-Nothings, party members in 1854 destroyed a stone donated by Pope Pius IX for the Washington Monument. That act stopped work on the obelisk for 25 years, as it caused donations to dry up and Congress to halt support for the project. While they never won a principal national office, the Know-Nothings briefly bested the Whigs as the main opposition to the Democratic Party until it was supplanted in the late 1850s by the Republican Party.

The Chinese Exclusion Act, which was meant to last only 10 years when it became law in 1882, was renewed in 1892, made permanent in 1902, survived Supreme Court challenges to its interpretation, and never went away until 1943, after China had become a U.S. ally in World War II.

Mexican and Latin American immigration has been a neuralgic topic since the 1980s, when civil wars and authoritarian governments in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras, coupled with lack of economic opportunity in the region, drove millions into the United States. Despite a slowdown — some now believe there is a net reduction in recent months of immigrants as they head back to their home countries — there are still an estimated 12 million Latin American immigrants without documents living in the United States.

“One of the best ways to defend American values is to practice them,” Carr said, including respect for religious liberty. “Our

values are not tested in the easy times, but in the hard times.”

Judy Coode of Pax Christi International had been at Pax Christi's international headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, as police essentially shut down the city on occasion while conducting raids for suspected terrorists and their helpers connected to the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris. It was “intense,” said Coode, whose 20 years working for the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns prior to Pax Christi saw her frequently visit Latin America and the Middle East.

Yet, as much of an imposition Belgians felt by having their lives disrupted, Coode told Catholic News Service, “it's nothing compared to living in a country where this kind of thing is a daily occurrence.” It is those kinds of events that make people consider leaving their homeland for a safer, less violent place, even if it means never seeing their country again.

Missing from this conversation are African-Americans.

While they were immigrants, the ancestors of today's American blacks did not come of their own volition, noted the Rev. Cheryl J. Sanders, a professor of Christian ethics at Howard University Divinity School and senior pastor of the Third Street Church of God, both in Washington.

“We weren't chosen for our looks or our education or our skills” by an immigration officer, Rev. Sanders said.

And, while greater equality has come to African-Americans over the course of her life, there is still a long way to go, she added.

“When we folded everybody into the melting pot, they didn't put us in there,” Rev. Sanders said, adding that one cannot talk about “a melting pot of whiteness ... without dealing with the ugly reality of that.”

## ‘People’s pastoral’ shares struggles, hopes, dreams of Appalachians

By Dennis Sadowski

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Everyone has a story.

A new pastoral letter emerging from the hollows, farms, mountain communities and urban enclaves of Appalachia is giving everyday people a chance to teach anew their stories in their journey to overcome the social injustice that they find deeply entrenched in the region.

Titled “The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories that Shape Us,” the document comes from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia and reflects the dreams, desires and disappointments of Appalachians at a time when the region's plight is often overlooked.

Organizers describe the document as a “people's pastoral” that gives voice to those who are rarely heard above deeply partisan political debates.

Michael Iafrate, chair of the committee's board and the document's primary author, said the letter showcases the teaching authority — what he called the “magisterium” — of the people.

Iafrate and the others involved in preparing the document over the last three years explained that they moved forward with the project out of a sense of urgency because

people felt that the issues they face daily were not being actively or forcefully addressed by the Catholic Church.

“Somebody came up with the term ‘people's pastoral’ as a symbolic phrase for what we wanted the new pastoral to be. With or without the bishops' signatures, we pressed on with the pastoral,” Iafrate told Catholic News Service.

“It's that the authority is coming from elsewhere, that all the people of God need to listen to the voices of people, whether laypeople or clergy or bishops. That's another kind of authority that we all need to attend to,” he said.

“Also, if the bishops were not really in a place to generate reflection on social justice or to speak out that this would be a way of inviting them to those conversations.”

The issuance of a new document addressing the needs and concerns of a region whose stunning landscapes and rich biodiversity belie the immense social and economic ills confronting so many Appalachians continues a once-every-20-year pattern that began in 1975.

The bishops of Appalachia promulgated “This Land Is Home to Me: A Pastoral Letter on the Poverty and Powerlessness in Appalachia” 40 years ago. That was followed by “At Home in the Web of Life: A

Pastoral Message on Sustainable Communities in Appalachia” in 1995. Both pastoral letters challenged local communities and wider society to address poverty, unemployment, environmental exploitation by coal mining and logging firms, substance abuse, the lack of access to health care and the low quality of education that keeps people mired in uncertainty.

“By calling it the people's pastoral, it had to come from the people because they were the only ones who could illustrate what would be included,” said Sister Jackie Hanrahan, a member of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame and a consultant on the project.

“It was very important to the people at the Catholic Committee of Appalachia that they wanted every voice possible to be heard, those most at the margins, those who are voiceless and really have no voice,” explained Sister Beth Davies, a member of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame who served as a consultant to the drafting committee.

“We're talking to each other. We're listening. The dialogue piece,” said Sister Jackie, director of the Appalachian Faith and Ecology Center in Norton, Virginia.

Sister Beth and Sister Jackie told CNS the pastoral reflects the call of Pope Francis

for members of the Catholic Church to be in touch with people who experience everyday struggles, pains, joys and celebrations.

“The three pastoral letters are so in sync with Pope Francis, when he talks about wisdom coming from listening, listening with the heart. That's what we're trying to do here,” said Sister Beth, director of the Addiction Education Center in Pennington Gap, Virginia.

“With this one, people are becoming more engaged because they are really saying, ‘You really want to hear what I'm saying. My story is important,’” she added.

The new document continues the almost poetic narrative style established in the first two pastorals. It urges people to recall the teachings of Jesus and how they apply to today's social challenges. It cites the words of Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI and St. John Paul II and their call to respond to the needs of forgotten people as well as the importance of protecting the earth.

Sections also call upon individual bishops, priests and others working in the church to follow the lead of Pope Francis by enthusiastically taking up the charge of justice for the poor and marginalized.

The pastoral is published online and hard copies are due out Jan. 1.

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**Barnesville** — “It’s family movie day,” Jan. 3 at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, and everyone is invited to view “The Nativity Story,” said Father David J. Cornett, pastor. The movie will be shown at 1 p.m. in the church undercroft. Popcorn, pizza and drinks will be served, free of charge. “This is a wonderful retelling of the Christmas story,” Father Cornett said. The film is rated PG, because of some minor violence.

**Cambridge** — A soup luncheon, consisting of homemade soups, breads, desserts and beverages, will be held from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Jan. 8, at St. Benedict Athletic and Events Center, corner of North Seventh Street and Steubenville Avenue. Takeout orders will also be available. To order lunch for pickup, telephone (740) 995-0605. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Samaritan Center for Transitional Housing.

**Carrollton** — Our Lady of Mercy Parish Ladies of Mercy will collect items for Caritas House, a women’s shelter, through Jan. 4. Items needed consist of toilet paper, soaps, lotions, sweatpants, canned goods, feminine products and diapers. Donations can be taken to Our Lady of Mercy Church, 616 Roswell Road. For additional information, telephone the church office at (330) 627-4664.

**Chesapeake** — Beginning Jan. 14, Father Charles E. Moran, pastor of St. Ann Church, will present an eight-week course on the “Year of Mercy.” Classes will be held from 7-9 p.m., Thursdays, in the church fellowship hall. For additional information or questions, telephone Father Moran, (740) 867-4434 or Sue Pfaffenberger, (740) 867-4184.

**Marietta** — The 24th annual St. Mary School Foundation benefit drawing will be held Feb. 6, in St. Mary School Msgr. Edward Kakascik Parish Center. The \$125 ticket entitles two people admission to the event, and also provides an opportunity to win a portion of \$6,000 in cash prizes. As stated in the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption bulletin, the St. Mary School Foundation was established in 1992, to ensure the future financial stability of St. Mary School and maintains the viability of this educational institution through long-term financial development and planning. For additional information or to purchase a ticket, telephone St. Mary School office, (740) 374-8181 or the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption office, (740) 373-3643.

**Steubenville** — An entrance placement test for eighth-grade students not attending Bishop John King Mussio Central Junior High School will be given at 8 a.m., Jan. 20, at Catholic Central High School, 320 West View Ave. For additional information, telephone (740) 264-5538.

Bishop John King Mussio Central Junior High School students will present “The Lion King JR.” March 17, March 18 and March 19, at Catholic Central High School, in Berkman Theater, Lanman Hall, 320 West View Ave.

**Around and About**

**Bloomington** — Registration for the Apostolate for Family Consecration’s summer “Holy Family Fests” will be open at 10 a.m., Jan. 11, at the website <https://afc.org>.

**Cambridge** — A free throw competition, for boys and girls ages 9 through 14, will be sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 1641 at 1:30 p.m., Jan. 10, at St. Benedict Athletic and Events Center, corner of North Seventh Street and Steubenville Avenue. For entry forms or additional information, telephone Al Mueser at (740) 439-4273. There is no charge to participate; preregistration is not required.

**Woodfield** — Knights of Columbus St. Joseph of Monroe County Council 5009 will sponsor a free throw contest at 10 a.m., Jan. 16, at the Monroe Central High School gymnasium, 469 Lewisville Road. For additional information, telephone Anthony Schumacher at (740) 827-3626.



St. Mary School students – under the leadership of Student Council – agreed, “It is better to give than to receive,” and purchased Christmas gifts for two Marietta children, said Principal Susan T. Rauch. Some Student Council members at the Marietta parochial school – Carson Urban, Shelby Anderson, Marie Rauch, Abby Anderson, Zuly Marquez, Tyler Kytta and Braedon Ayers – hold some of the gifts that the children will receive. Julia Brown and Molly Frye are St. Mary School Student Council advisers. (Photo by Tammi Bradley)



Students at Bishop John King Mussio Central Elementary School, Steubenville, held a baby shower for AIM Women’s Center, Steubenville, and Katelynn Daugherty, Anthony Serafini, Norah Younce and Andrew Rohde display some of the gifts. (Photo by Paula Dulaney)



The 3-year-old preschool students at Bishop John King Mussio Central Elementary School, Steubenville, filled stockings with everyday needs, such as toothpaste and toothbrushes, for donation to the Diocese of Steubenville Office of Family and Social Concerns (Catholic Charities), said Rachel DiGregory, teacher, left, and Marla Phillips, teacher’s aide. The students filling the stockings include Kate Mitch, Aiden Daughtry, Brendan Bolster, Braden Wanchik, Caelan Grimm, Mason Saggio, Sofia Kissinger, Natalie Collins, Hope Schmitz, Sarah Stone, Tiffany Chen, Evelyn Bowers and Haley French, along with Brandon Gump, Hanna Heffner, Morgan Moffett, Jackson Cia, Lucy Colaros, Sasha Harold, Lily Zeinmister, Hollas Chaney, Donnie Pierro and Sylar Andlinger. (Photo provided)

**Obituaries**

**Stefanie Arnott**, 69, Syracuse, Ohio, Sacred Heart, Pomeroy, Dec. 9.

**Thomas A. Carroll**, 85, Martins Ferry, St. Joseph, Bridgeport, Dec. 19.

**Frank Circosta**, 95, 106 W. 40th St., Shadyside, St. Mary, Dec. 19.

**Charles “Chick” Clark**, 103, Lansing, St. Joseph, Bridgeport, Dec. 25.

**Kenneth D. Ferguson**, 84, St. Gabriel, Minerva, Dec. 20.

**Wanda Gosciski**, 90, Steubenville, St. Peter, Dec. 19.

**Mary M. Herrick**, 84, Toronto, St. Joseph, Dec. 19.

**Karen P. Howard**, 71, Athens, Christ the King University Parish, Dec. 13.

**Mary Ann Fornal Nagy**, 85, Barton, St. Joseph, Bridgeport, Dec. 21.

**Thomas J. Potenzini Jr.**, 59, Wintersville, St. Agnes, Mingo Junction, Dec. 21.

**Anne J. Vrabel**, 87, Athens, Christ the King University Parish, Dec. 13.

**Dorothy E. Peters Wendt**, 95, Beverly, St. Bernard, Dec. 11.



The James White Construction Co., Weirton, West Virginia, has been awarded the bid for street work in front of Holy Name Cathedral, Fifth Street, Steubenville, that will allow a pedestrian-friendly space to be created in front of the renovated, restored and renewed cathedral, said Diocese of Steubenville Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton. P. Mark Viola, president, Source Architechnology Systems Inc., architects, planners, developers, Pittsburgh, reviews plans with Louis A. Almonte, vice president, and David Holt, project manager, James White Construction Co., while James G. Piazza, executive assistant to the bishop, left, and D. Scott Yarman, project manager on the cathedral renovation, restoration and renewal, second from left, look on during a 2015 year-end meeting in the diocesan chancery second floor conference room. (Photo by DeFrancis)

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