



## Pope Benedict XVI, a teacher and promoter of the faith, dies nearly 10 years after historic resignation

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Retired Pope Benedict XVI, who had an impressive record as a teacher and promoter of the Catholic faith, will also go down in history books as the first pope in almost 600 years to resign.

He died on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95, nearly 10 years after leaving the papacy to retire to what he said would be a life of prayer and study.

Pope Francis was scheduled to celebrate his predecessor's funeral on Jan. 5 in St. Peter's Square. Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said the funeral rites would be simple in keeping with the wishes of the late pope.

As the retired pope neared death, he was given the anointing of the sick on Dec. 28 in his residence, Bruni said.

His body was placed in St. Peter's Basilica on Jan. 2 so that people could pay their respects and offer their prayers.

Immediately after the pope died at 9:34 a.m., Bruni said, his personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, phoned Pope Francis, who went

immediately to the late pope's bedside to pray and to offer condolences to those who had cared for him in the last years of his life.

Archbishop Ganswein told Vatican News on Jan. 1 that Pope Benedict's last words were, "Lord, I love you."

It was about 3 a.m. the day he died, the archbishop said. "In a faint voice, but in a clearly discernable way, he said in Italian, 'Lord, I love you!' I was not there at the time, but the nurse told me shortly afterward. These were his last comprehensible words, because afterward he was no longer able to express himself."

A close collaborator of St. John Paul II and the theological expert behind many of his major teachings and gestures, Pope Benedict came to the papacy after 24 years of heading the doctrinal congregation's work of safeguarding Catholic teaching on faith and morals, correcting the work of some Catholic theologians, and ensuring the theological solidity of the documents issued by other

Vatican offices.

As pope, he continued writing as a theologian, but also made historically important gestures to Catholics who had difficulty accepting all of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, particularly about the liturgy. In 2007, he widened permission to use the "extraordinary" or pre-Vatican II form of the Mass and, a short time later, extended a hand to the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X. Besides lifting the excommunications of four of the society's bishops who were ordained illicitly in 1988, he launched a long and intense dialogue with the group. In the end, though, the talks broke down.

See **BENEDICT**, page 12

Above: Pope Benedict XVI smiles as he bids the crowd farewell after celebrating Mass at Nationals Park in Washington on April 17, 2008. Pope Benedict died on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican.

(CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)





Pope Benedict XVI greets then-Bishop Charles C. Thompson of Evansville, Ind., during a Feb. 9, 2012, meeting with U.S. bishops on their “ad limina” visits to the Vatican. Bishops from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin were making their “ad limina” visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses. (CNS photo /L'Osservatore Romano)

## Reflecting on the life and ministry of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

By Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

At age 95, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI passed from earthly life into eternal life on Dec. 31, 2022. It is an occasion to reflect on the long life and ministry of a truly holy and brilliant servant of God. Some have even referred to him as the most intellectual of all the popes.

Pope Benedict XVI appointed me as Bishop of Evansville in 2011, where I served for six years before being named by Pope Francis as Archbishop of Indianapolis in 2017. I met Pope Benedict XVI on two occasions, the first time was shortly after I was ordained a bishop and the second time was during my first *ad limina* visit. He always struck me as very reserved and rather shy in demeanor. His decision to retire as pope in 2013, the first in centuries, was an incredible act of courage and humility.

I have often thought of Pope Benedict XVI as an excellent catechist, and Pope Francis as an excellent evangelist. Pope Francis often quoted Pope Benedict XVI, as well as Pope Paul VI. Despite media attempts to create some type of narrative of them as polar opposites, I believe that their affection and admiration for one another was quite genuine. In fact, they displayed a very complementary relationship.

My favorite quote from Pope Benedict XVI is from his December 2005 encyclical “*Deus Caritas Est*” (“God Is Love”): “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (#1). Authentic

discipleship for Pope Benedict XVI, as for Pope Francis, begins with a personal encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. Each time we celebrate Mass, we encounter the events of his passion, death and resurrection.

Prior to being elected pope in 2005, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger served as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under Pope John Paul II. It is said that he twice tried to resign from the position to return to pastoral or academic ministry in a less notable way. Both times, Pope John Paul II reportedly asked him to continue as prefect. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was a dedicated, loyal son of the Church. No doubt, he accepted his election as pope in a rather reluctant but loyal manner.

I suspect that Pope Francis will miss Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI more than the world, and most in the Church, will ever know. Pope Benedict XVI’s decision to retire made it possible for Pope Francis to be elected. Had he not retired and continued until his death, it is hard to imagine that an 86-year-old Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio would be elected in 2023. It is our Catholic belief that the Holy Spirit inspires papal elections. The same Holy Spirit that guided the election of previous popes, like St. Paul VI and St. John Paul II, guided the elections of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

Pope Benedict XVI served the Church well in all aspects of his ministry—whether as priest, bishop, cardinal, pope or emeritus pope. He was a good and faithful servant, a loyal son of the Church. May he rest in eternal peace, gazing on the face of God. †



## Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

January 8–19, 2023

**January 8 – 9:30 a.m.**  
Mass at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, Indianapolis

**January 10 – 10:30 a.m.**  
Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

**January 11 – 7 a.m.**  
Visit to Roncalli High School, Indianapolis

**January 11 – 3 p.m.**  
Virtual Continental Assembly meeting for synod

**January 12 – 8:15 a.m.**  
Virtual Judicatories meeting

**January 12 – 10 a.m.**  
Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

**January 12 – 3 p.m.**  
Indianapolis Eucharistic Revival Planning Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

**January 17 – 10:30 a.m.**  
Visit to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, St. Mary-of-the-Woods

**January 18 – 10 a.m.**  
Department Heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

**January 18 – 2:10 p.m.**  
Visit with eighth-grade religion class at St. Pius X School, Indianapolis

**January 19 – 7 p.m.**  
Christian Unity Prayer Service at Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral, Indianapolis

## Reflexiones sobre la vida y el ministerio de Benedicto XVI

Por Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson

A los 95 años, el papa emérito Benedicto XVI pasó de la vida terrenal a la vida eterna en el último día de 2022. Así pues, esta es una ocasión para reflexionar sobre la larga vida y el ministerio de un siervo de Dios verdaderamente santo y brillante. Algunos incluso se han referido a él como el más intelectual de todos los papas.

El papa Benedicto XVI me nombró obispo de Evansville en 2011, donde serví durante seis años antes de que el papa Francisco me nombrara arzobispo de Indianápolis en 2017. Estuve con el papa Benedicto XVI en dos ocasiones: la primera poco después de mi ordenación episcopal y la segunda durante mi primera visita *ad limina*. Siempre me pareció muy reservado y bastante tímido. Su decisión de retirarse del papado en 2013—la primera vez que esto ocurría desde hacía siglos—fue un increíble acto de valentía y humildad.

A menudo he pensado en el papa Benedicto XVI como un excelente catequista, y el papa Francisco como un excelente evangelista. El papa Francisco lo cita frecuentemente, así como también al papa Pablo VI. A pesar de los intentos de los medios de comunicación de presentarlos como polos opuestos, creo que el afecto y la admiración que se tenían eran auténticos. De hecho, mostraban una relación muy complementaria.

Mi cita favorita del papa Benedicto XVI es de su encíclica de diciembre de 2005 “*Deus Caritas Est*” (“*Dios Es Amor*”): “No se comienza a ser cristiano por una decisión ética o una gran idea, sino por el encuentro con un acontecimiento, con una Persona, que da un nuevo horizonte a la vida y, con ello, una orientación decisiva” (#1). Tanto

para el papa Benedicto XVI como para el papa Francisco, el discipulado auténtico comienza con un encuentro personal con la persona de Jesucristo. Cada vez que celebramos la misa, nos encontramos con los acontecimientos de su pasión, muerte y resurrección.

Antes de ser elegido papa en 2005, el cardenal Joseph Ratzinger fue prefecto de la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe durante el papado de Juan Pablo II. Se dice que en dos ocasiones intentó renunciar a su cargo para volver al ministerio pastoral o académico de forma menos notoria. En ambas ocasiones, el papa Juan Pablo II le pidió que continuara como prefecto. El cardenal Joseph Ratzinger fue un hijo fiel y entregado a la Iglesia. Sin duda, aceptó su elección como papa de forma más bien reacia, pero leal.

Sospecho que el papa Francisco echará de menos al papa emérito Benedicto XVI más de lo que el mundo, y la mayoría de la Iglesia, nunca sabrán. La decisión del papa Benedicto XVI de retirarse hizo posible la elección del papa Francisco. Si no lo hubiera hecho, habría continuado hasta su muerte. En ese caso, resulta difícil imaginar que un cardenal Jorge Bergoglio de 86 años resultara electo papa en 2023. Nuestra creencia católica es que el Espíritu Santo inspira las elecciones papales. El mismo Espíritu Santo que guio la elección de papas anteriores, como san Pablo VI y san Juan Pablo II, guio las elecciones del papa Benedicto XVI y del papa Francisco.

El papa emérito Benedicto XVI sirvió bien a la Iglesia en todos los aspectos de su ministerio como sacerdote, obispo, cardenal y sumo pontífice. Era un servidor bueno y fiel, un hijo leal de la Iglesia. Que descanse en la paz eterna, contemplando el rostro de Dios. †



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# Archdiocesan priests shaped by writings and examples of Pope Benedict

By Sean Gallagher

For decades before he was elected bishop of Rome in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI had been one of the Church's leading theologians.

So, it's not surprising that three archdiocesan priests ordained during the past 15 years interviewed by *The Criterion* read his writings during their coursework in seminary.

But they later discovered that Pope Benedict would shape them by his example of faith and pastoral leadership in addition to his profound writings on the faith.

Now that he has died, Pope Benedict's legacy continues in the way these priests try with God's help to follow in his footsteps in their parish ministry.

## 'A loving pastor to the whole world'

Father John Hollowell was enrolled at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad when Pope Benedict was elected bishop of Rome.



Fr. John Hollowell

"I immediately went to the bookstore and bought every book by him that they had, which was about five," Father John recalled. "I read them and fell in love with his teaching and writing style."

"I went on to read about 50 more books by Cardinal Ratzinger, as well as everything that he wrote as pope. I have no doubt that he will be named a doctor of the Church."

Father John, pastor of Annunciation Parish in Brazil and St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, had many classes at Saint Meinrad in which the pope was required reading, noting that "they had a tremendous impact on my priestly formation."

"He wrote on every single topic that is covered and taught in the seminary, and so impacted every single aspect of my priestly formation," Father John said. "He wrote at least one book for every single class I had in the seminary."

Pope Benedict's 2008 visit to the U.S. came near the end of his formation in seminary.

"I read every speech he gave while here, and found



Pope Benedict XVI congratulates a newly ordained priest during an ordination Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on June 20, 2009. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

everything he said while here directly on point," Father John remembered. "I also remember how absolutely joyful President [George W.] Bush was to meet Pope Benedict."

"I think that visit in particular, for many Americans, dispelled the image of Pope Benedict as a cold theologian and showed him to be a loving pastor to the whole world."

For Father John, this is the way he will remember Pope Benedict.

"His lasting legacy for me is a deeply spiritual man who radiates joy," he said.

## Fostering a love of liturgy and learning

Father Michael Keucher was discerning a possible call to the priesthood when Pope Benedict was elected bishop of Rome.

At the time, he would watch broadcasts of the pope's Holy Week and Christmas liturgies.

See **PRIESTS**, page 8

# Pope Benedict XVI was 'like a second father' for St. Malachy parish pastor

By Sean Gallagher

As a college seminarian in the spring of 2005 at the time of the death of St. John Paul II, Father Sean Danda knew little about then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.



Fr. Sean Danda

But watching Cardinal Ratzinger celebrate the funeral of St. John Paul II left a "deep impression" on him, noted the pastor of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg in a recent interview with *The Criterion*.

"I could tell that he loved John Paul," said

Father Danda. "He loved the God John Paul loved, and he loved and believed in the Church John Paul had shepherded up to that point."

"I thought to myself: 'This is the kind of priest I want to be.'"

Cardinal Ratzinger was soon elected to succeed St. John Paul II as bishop of Rome and took the name Benedict XVI. Father Danda arrived in Rome two months later for the last four years of his priestly formation.

The day after he arrived, he attended a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican celebrated by Pope Benedict. Although Father Danda didn't yet know Italian, the language in which the Mass was celebrated, the new pontiff continued to affect him.

"I recognized the noble humility with which he carefully celebrated the Mass," said Father Danda. "And when he spoke his homily, it was with confidence and authority. He embodied both the Lamb of God and the Lion of Judah. Although I didn't understand his words, I understood [something greater]. Pope Benedict's actions were always as clear as his words—he made himself available to God and God's word."

As Father Danda studied Pope Benedict's writings in seminary, his attraction to him grew.

Although he saw the pontiff as an intellectual, he also recognized that "his words came not only from a gifted mind, but also from deep reflection and pondering all things in his heart like the way St. Luke described Mary 'pondering all these things in her heart'" (Lk 2:19).

"He wrote about who God is," Father Danda said. "He was simple, direct and clear, and gave great images that played upon the imagination."

"He wrote and spoke like a father who sits down with his son to teach him the most important profound truths and mysteries of the universe. It is no wonder his first encyclical was 'Deus Caritas Est' ['God Is Love']. If we miss this image of God, we miss everything."

Because Father Danda was far from his family in Rome, Pope Benedict became "like a second father" to him. Instead of going to a Christmas Mass with his family back in Indiana, he went to a Christmas Eve Mass at St. Peter's Basilica celebrated by Pope Benedict.

"The images from his homily consoled me and revealed to me that my home is not anywhere on this Earth," Father Danda recalled. "I am a citizen of heaven because of who I am and who my Father is."

He recalled the words of Pope Benedict during a Christmas Eve Mass: "The Lord said to me: You are my son; this day I have begotten you.' With these words of the second psalm, the Church begins the Vigil Mass of Christmas. ... God is so great that he can become small. God is so powerful that he can make himself vulnerable and come to us as a defenseless child, so that we can love him."

Two years later, the first volume of Pope Benedict's three-volume set of

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## Editorial

# Benedict XVI was a good and faithful servant, loyal son of the Church

On Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2022, Pope Francis concluded his general audience with a request for prayers for his predecessor, the 95-year-old Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

Pope Francis said:

*I ask all of you for a special prayer for the pope emeritus Benedict, who, in silence, is sustaining the Church. Remember him—he is very ill—asking the Lord to console him and to sustain him in this testimony of love for the Church until the end.*

Three days later, on Dec. 31, at 9:34 a.m. in the Vatican City State, Pope Benedict returned to the Lord he loved and served during his long and holy life.

Born Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger in Bavaria on April 16, 1927, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI was elected pope on April 19, 2005, and served as bishop of Rome until his voluntary resignation on Feb. 28, 2013. Since that time, he lived in relative seclusion in a former monastery in the Vatican City State devoting his time to prayer.

Pope Francis' statement that his predecessor was sustaining the Church in silence contrasted with the former pope's many years of service as a teacher, bishop, cardinal and pope in which he "sustained the Church" by his profound reflection on, and clear teaching of, the most fundamental aspects of Catholic belief and practice. The author of hundreds of books and articles on theology, liturgy, sacred Scripture, spirituality, sacraments, the lives of the saints, and more, Joseph Ratzinger was a significant voice of wisdom in the Post-Vatican II Church. In his teaching and in his ministries, he worked zealously to promote the forward movement of the Council's teaching—"to endow Christianity once more with the power to shape history"—without ever breaking ties with all that preceded it in 2,000 years of Christian history.

As a man, Joseph Ratzinger was soft-spoken, cultured and kind. During his time as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he was sometimes characterized as a hard-liner, and it's true that he took his official responsibilities as a guardian of the faith quite seriously. But those who worked closely with him frequently spoke of his gentle and caring approach to his work. Pope St. John Paul II valued him so highly that he twice turned down Cardinal Ratzinger's requests to be allowed to return to his native Bavaria to write.

In his reflections on 25 years of episcopal ministry, *Surprised by Grace*, the late Indianapolis Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein offered the following observations:

*I am proud to call myself a disciple of Pope Benedict. ... By God's grace, he has been a blessing for our Church. He is unrivaled as an astute and balanced theologian. I have little patience with his critics, who often enough have never read his writings. Anyone who reads what Joseph Ratzinger has written—either before or after his election as pope—can see that he is never heavy-handed or*



A man holds a copy of the Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano* newspaper announcing the death of Pope Benedict XVI, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31, 2022. Pope Benedict died at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

*rigid, but always speaks the mind of the Church, as he understands it, with a firm but gentle voice.*

Although he never had the time to write a comprehensive treatise on any individual subject, we are blessed to have Joseph Ratzinger's many published books, articles and homilies—as well as Pope Benedict's papal encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, catecheses, homilies and other writings. Together these form a substantial compendium of insightful and faith-filled reflections on nearly every aspect of Catholicism.

Two of Joseph Ratzinger's writings, his *Introduction to Christianity*, written in 1968 when he was teaching theology, and his three-volume series, *Jesus of Nazareth*, published during his years as pope, illustrate the lifelong goal of his teaching and writing: to draw his readers into friendship with Jesus Christ.

As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in his encyclical, "*Deus Caritas Est*" ("God Is Love"): "*If friendship with God becomes for us something ever more important and decisive, then we will begin to love those whom God loves and who are in need of us. God wants us to be friends of his friends and we can be so, if we are interiorly close to them*" (#1).

During his 70-plus years as a priest, professor, theologian and bishop, this gentle and inspiring teacher touched the minds and hearts of millions of people. His humility and his loyalty to the Church he loved earned for him a special place of honor in our hearts and in the history of Catholicism.

As Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson said when he learned about the former pope's passing to eternal life, "Pope Benedict XVI served the Church well in all aspects of his ministry—whether as priest, bishop, cardinal, pope or emeritus pope. He was a good and faithful servant, a loyal son of the Church. May he rest in eternal peace, gazing on the face of God."

—Daniel Conway

Commentary/Greg Erlandson

## A needed salute to a noble work

On the hallway wall leading to my office at Catholic News Service (CNS) is arrayed a series of eight photographs of its previous directors.



Lorsung and Tony Spence.

Justin McGrath, the first director, guided the service from 1920 to 1931. Frank Hall, with the longest tenure, led the service from 1932 to 1963. The most recent photos include Richard Daw, Tom

people that made up the Church in this country for the past century: Our first Catholic presidential candidate in 1928.

See related story, page 14.

Our first Catholic president in 1960.

The Second Vatican Council and all the changes that followed. The civil rights movements. The wars. The papacies.

CNS was originally founded by editors before the bishops' conference assumed responsibility for it in 1920. It evolved through the decades, expanding its coverage of the Vatican into a full-fledged bureau in 1950, a fortuitous decision in advance of the dramatic events of Vatican II.

In the council's wake, the documentary service Origins was established. It became a necessary resource for understanding the changes emanating from Rome as well as the great debates of the U.S. bishops themselves as they hammered out the war and peace pastoral, the economics pastoral, and, later, their repeated efforts to address the sexual abuse crisis.

In all of its coverage, CNS amplified not only the voices of the popes, but also those of the bishops and lay leaders of the Church in America, giving them an international audience and an international influence.

Along with the reporting, the news service kept pace with technology, introducing the photo service, then digital services, video, and most recently podcasts as its clients' needs grew and changed.

What did not change was that the work of reporting, editing, photographing and filming has always been done by men and women who committed themselves to doing the best job possible to get the story and to get it right.

The list of editors and reporters who have worked for CNS is long and noteworthy. Less known but also deserving of note are the interns and reporters who were "graduates" of CNS, taking their skills to other organizations in the Catholic press, helping to spread a culture of professionalism and dedication to the craft of Catholic journalism.

Many of them, like myself, dedicated the better part of their professional lives to communicating the faith lived out in practice, documenting the Church's engagement with the great issues of the

day, and telling the stories of ordinary and extraordinary Catholics who were the face of that Church.

This is noble, necessary work. For most of us, it is at once a profession, a career, a vocation, a mission. It melds, whether we want it to or not, our professional life with our faith life. It is a spiritual double helix of the personal and the professional that becomes part of our DNA.

Journalists are by stereotype a pretty cynical group. They've seen the sausage being made. They shed a lot of their illusions. But to combine faith and career is personal and at times even fragile. To put 20 or 30 or 40 years into this effort is a vocation lived out in service to the people of God as certainly as that of any priest or bishop or deacon.

The news that CNS would be forced to shutter its Washington and New York offices at the end of 2022 was greeted with shock and dismay.

But the truth is, we've seen a disturbing number of Catholic news staff—diocesan and national—laid off in recent months and years. Some of the most historic or most acclaimed Catholic newspapers have been shut down. People are dismissed with little recognition of their service. "We've been kicked to the curb," is an oft-heard complaint.

That businesses, even Church businesses, run into financial pressures is nothing new. That management decides, rightly or wrongly, that another media strategy is necessary is nothing new, either.

I think it is fair to say that collectively the Church as an institution doesn't handle these kinds of transitions well. Perhaps that's because of a certain clericalism, or the notion that the Church knows best. Perhaps it is a bit of guilt, people representing an institution big on mercy and supporting workers are uneasy about tossing people out of jobs.

But for a moment let us, in the words of W.H. Auden, "Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone" and salute not just the staff of CNS, but all of those extraordinary editors, reporters, designers, ad managers and more who have lost their jobs these past few years.

Let us acknowledge that these are men and women, flesh and blood, who worked long hours and weekends, who made sacrifices, who went above and beyond when necessary, and who did their level best to report the news and serve their readers even as budgets were cut and staffing eroded.

Let us remember not just the 14 employees of CNS, but also those of *Catholic New York*, the *Catholic Sentinel*, the *Catholic Miscellany*, the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, and so many other newspapers who were dedicated to recording the first draft of our Catholic history.

To our colleagues, our peers, our clients, our friends, yours has been a noble work.

May the spirit of our profession continue in the work of the CNS Rome bureau, in the work at OSV News, and in the work of all the Catholic journalists who will continue to serve the Church they report on in the coming years.

(Greg Erlandson is the ninth director of Catholic News Service. This column was reprinted with permission from The Catholic Journalist.) †

## Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In

order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

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

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# Christ the Cornerstone

## The light of Christ shines in the world's darkness

This weekend, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. “Epiphany” is not a word we hear very often. It has a specific meaning, especially when it is used in a religious context. A sacred epiphany (from the ancient Greek ἐπιφάνεια) is an experience of a sudden and striking revelation that comes through a manifestation of God’s presence in our lives.

The Epiphany of the Lord that we celebrate each year at the end of the Christmas season is the manifestation of the light of Christ in the world’s darkness. It is the announcement of the Good News of our salvation in Christ to all nations and peoples throughout the entire world. This divine epiphany is symbolized, of course, by the visit of the Magi who traveled “from the east,” saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage” (Mt 2:2).

Jesus was a Jew. He was born of the line of King David, and from his earliest youth he absorbed the teachings of the law and the prophets of Israel. Jesus came to fulfill the Messianic promise and to manifest the love and

mercy of the God of Abraham to the Jewish people. And yet, there was nothing insular or parochial about Jesus or his ministry. He was open to all. He healed whoever came to him—often scandalizing those whose perspective was more limited (and rigid) than his.

The Magi we meet in this Sunday’s Gospel (Mt 2:1-12) were wise men—sometimes called “astrologers.” There is no evidence to suggest that they were kings or that there were only three of them. In fact, a popular legend suggests that a fourth Magus arrived without a gift and was deeply embarrassed to appear before the newborn king empty-handed. Mary, the compassionate mother, sensed her visitor’s discomfort and asked if he would mind holding the baby while she and Joseph received the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh from the other Magi. While he was holding the Christ Child, the fourth Magus had a personal epiphany. He realized that he had been given the most precious gift imaginable: Jesus Christ, the revelation in human flesh of God Almighty. What an honor to be able to touch him and hold him closely, next to his heart!

Of course, this is the great privilege that we are given every time we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the holy Eucharist. Christ gives himself to us. He loves us and becomes one with us in the most intimate way imaginable. Jesus is our epiphany, the manifestation of God’s presence in our lives. All we have to do is acknowledge him, and then follow his example in our love for others, which is what will ultimately change the world’s darkness so we can all live in his holy light.

In the second reading for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, St. Paul refers to his own experience of epiphany:

“You have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation. It was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel” (Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6).

Paul tells us that Christ revealed himself to him so that he, in turn,

would share the Good News with others. The great Apostle to the Gentiles acknowledges that he is a steward of God’s grace called to share his experience of divine revelation with the whole world.

The first reading for this great feast of the Lord’s Epiphany (Is 60:1-6) foretells the visit of the Magi. It also reflects the radiant light—and joy—that will be shared with all nations when the Promised One arrives:

“Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you. Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the Lord” (Is 60:5-6).

As we continue our synodal journey from darkness to light and from desolation to abundant joy, let’s remember that we too are called to be stewards of God’s grace and witnesses to the Lord’s epiphany, his presence among us here and now.

A blessed New Year to all! †



# Cristo, la piedra angular

## La luz de Cristo ilumina las tinieblas del mundo

El fin de semana celebramos la solemnidad de la Epifanía del Señor. La palabra “epifanía” no resulta muy común ya que tiene un significado específico, principalmente al utilizarla en un contexto religioso. Una sagrada epifanía (del griego antiguo ἐπιφάνεια) es una experiencia de revelación repentina e impactante que llega a través de una manifestación de la presencia de Dios en nuestras vidas.

La Epifanía del Señor que celebramos cada año al final del tiempo de Navidad es la manifestación de la luz de Cristo en las tinieblas del mundo. Es el anuncio de la Buena Nueva de nuestra salvación en Cristo a todas las naciones y pueblos del mundo entero. Esta epifanía divina está simbolizada, por supuesto, por la visita de los Tres Reyes Magos que viajaron “desde Oriente,” preguntando: “¿Dónde está el rey de los judíos, que ha nacido? Porque hemos visto su estrella en el oriente, y venimos a adorarlo” (Mt 2:2).

Jesús era judío. Nació del linaje del rey David, y desde su más tierna juventud absorbió las enseñanzas de la ley y los profetas de Israel. Jesús vino a cumplir la promesa mesiánica y a manifestar el amor y la misericordia del Dios de Abraham al pueblo

judío. Y, sin embargo, no había nada insular ni parroquial en Jesús ni en su ministerio, sino que estaba abierto a todos. Sanaba a quien se le acercaba, a menudo escandalizando a aquellos cuya perspectiva era más limitada (y rígida) que la suya.

Los Reyes Magos que encontramos en el Evangelio de este domingo (Mt 2:1-12) eran sabios, a veces llamados “astrólogos.” No hay pruebas de que fueran reyes ni de que solamente fueran tres. De hecho, una leyenda popular sugiere que llegó un cuarto rey mago, quien se sintió profundamente avergonzado al presentarse ante el rey recién nacido con las manos vacías. María, la madre compasiva, sintió la incomodidad de su visitante y le preguntó si le importaría sostener al bebé mientras ella y José recibían los regalos de oro, incienso y mirra de los otros reyes magos. Mientras sostenía al Niño Jesús, el cuarto rey mago vivió una epifanía: se dio cuenta de que había recibido el regalo más preciado que se pueda imaginar, el propio Jesucristo, la revelación en carne humana de Dios Todopoderoso. ¡Qué honor poder tocarlo y abrazarlo de cerca, junto a su corazón!

Por supuesto, este es el gran privilegio que se nos concede cada

vez que recibimos el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo en la Sagrada Eucaristía. Cristo se entrega a nosotros; nos ama y se hace uno con nosotros de la forma más íntima imaginable. Jesús es nuestra epifanía, la manifestación de la presencia de Dios en nuestras vidas. Lo único que debemos hacer es reconocerlo, y luego seguir su ejemplo en nuestro amor por los demás, que es lo que finalmente cambiará la oscuridad del mundo para que todos podamos vivir en su santa luz.

En la segunda lectura de la solemnidad de la Epifanía del Señor, san Pablo se refiere a su propia experiencia de epifanía:

“Sin duda ustedes se habrán enterado del plan que Dios, en su bondad, me asignó para el bien de ustedes; me refiero al misterio que me declaró por revelación. [...] Conozco el misterio de Cristo, misterio que en otras generaciones no se dio a conocer a la humanidad tal y como ahora se ha revelado a sus santos Apóstoles y profetas por el Espíritu. Ahora sabemos que, por medio del evangelio, los no judíos son coherederos y miembros del mismo cuerpo, y copartícipes de la promesa en Cristo Jesús” (Ef 3:2-3a, 5-6).

Pablo nos dice que Cristo se le reveló para que él, a su vez,

compartiera la Buena Nueva con los demás. El gran Apóstol de las gentes se reconoce corresponsable de la gracia de Dios, llamado a compartir con todo el mundo su experiencia de la revelación divina.

La primera lectura de esta gran fiesta de la Epifanía del Señor (Is 60:1-6) anuncia la visita de los Reyes Magos. También refleja la luz radiante —y la alegría— que se compartirá con todas las naciones cuando llegue el elegido:

“Cuando veas esto, te pondrás radiante; tu corazón se ensanchará y quedará maravillado al ver que a ti llega la abundancia del mar, y sobre ti se vuelcan las riquezas de las naciones. Una multitud de camellos te cubrirá; vendrán a ti dromedarios de Madián y de Efa, y todos los que hay en Sabá, cargados de oro e incienso, y se proclamarán alabanzas al Señor” (Is 60:5-6).

Mientras continuamos nuestro viaje sinodal de la oscuridad a la luz y de la desolación a la alegría abundante, recordemos que también nosotros estamos llamados a ser administradores de la gracia de Dios y testigos de la epifanía del Señor, de su presencia entre nosotros aquí y ahora.

¡Un bendecido Año Nuevo para todos! †



# Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/events](http://www.archindy.org/events).

## January 6

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, [www.womenscarecenter.org](http://www.womenscarecenter.org).

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 5:45 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, [msross1@hotmail.com](mailto:msross1@hotmail.com).

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Rd. W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**, 11:45 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

## January 7

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Rd. W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confessions 8:10-8:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

## January 7-8

Mary Queen of Peace Church, 1005 W. Main St., Danville.

**Bruté Weekend**, Sat. 5 p.m., Sun. 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Masses celebrated by Father Andrew Syberg, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary vice rector, talks on how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or [esanders@archindy.org](mailto:esanders@archindy.org).

## January 14

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteering Opportunity**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, assist retired Providence Sisters. Information, registration: [TeenVolunteer.SistersofProvidence.org](http://TeenVolunteer.SistersofProvidence.org), [jluna@spsmw.org](mailto:jluna@spsmw.org) or 361-500-9505.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Gabriel Project Angel Training**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., lunch provided, free. Information: 317-213-4778 or [moodyak1@aol.com](mailto:moodyak1@aol.com).

## January 14-15

St. Michael Church, 1400 Farmers Lane NE, Greenville. **Bruté Weekend**, Sat. 4 p.m., Sun. 10:30 a.m. Masses celebrated by Father Joseph Moriarty, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary rector, talks

on how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or [esanders@archindy.org](mailto:esanders@archindy.org).

## January 15

St. Bernard Church, 7600 Highway 337 NW, DePauw. **Bruté Weekend**, 8:30 a.m. Mass celebrated by Father Joseph Moriarty, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary rector, talk on how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or [esanders@archindy.org](mailto:esanders@archindy.org).

## January 16

**Sr. Thea Bowman Black Catholic Women Monthly Prayer Gathering**, via Zoom, third Monday of each month, sponsored by archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry, 7 p.m. Join meeting: [cutt.ly/SrTheaPrayer](http://cutt.ly/SrTheaPrayer), meeting ID: 810 3567 0684 or dial-in at 301-715-8592. Information: Pearllette Springer, [pspringer@archindy.org](mailto:pspringer@archindy.org) or 317-236-1474.

## January 18

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## January 19

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis.

**Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## January 20

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Scott Williams, co-founder of Sock Religious, presenting "Building a Catholic Business in a Secular World," rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on Jan. 17. Information, registration: [cutt.ly/CBE-Reg](http://cutt.ly/CBE-Reg).

## January 21-22

St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Rd., Indianapolis. **Bruté Weekend**, Sat. 4 p.m., Sun. 7:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. Masses celebrated by Father Daniel Bedel, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary spiritual director, talks on how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or [esanders@archindy.org](mailto:esanders@archindy.org).

## February 3

Women's Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, [www.womenscarecenter.org](http://www.womenscarecenter.org).

Our Lady of the Greenwood

Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 5:45 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, [msross1@hotmail.com](mailto:msross1@hotmail.com).

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Rd. W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**, 11:45 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

## February 4

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Rd. W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confessions 8:10-8:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

## February 4-5

St. Mary Church, 1331 E. Hunter Robbins Way, Greensburg. **Bruté Weekend**, Sat. 4:30 p.m., Sun. 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Masses celebrated by Father Joseph Moriarty, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary rector, talks on how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or [esanders@archindy.org](mailto:esanders@archindy.org).

## February 11-12

St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7575 Holliday Dr. E., Indianapolis. **Bruté Weekend**, Sat. 8:15 a.m. and 5 p.m., Sun. 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses celebrated by Father Daniel Bedel, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary spiritual director, talks on how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501 or [esanders@archindy.org](mailto:esanders@archindy.org). †

## February 15

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

## February 15

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

Events and retreats can be submitted to The Criterion by logging on to

[www.archindy.org/events/submission](http://www.archindy.org/events/submission)

or by mailing us at 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, ATTN: Ann Lewis. or by fax at 317-236-1593.

## Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/retreats](http://www.archindy.org/retreats).

### January 23, 30, February 6, 13

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **"Who Wrote the Bible?" Bible Study**, 10 a.m. or 6:30 p.m. each Monday through Feb. 13, Franciscan Father Ken Bartsch presenting, free. Information: [cutt.ly/SFCWinterBblstudy23](http://cutt.ly/SFCWinterBblstudy23) or 812-23-8817.

### January 26

**From Cave to the Mountaintop Part II: Benedict's Vision for a Spiritual Life—"Building the Kingdom of God" (via Zoom)**, 7-8:30 p.m., Benedictine Sister Antoinette Purcell presenting, fourth of four independent sessions, \$25. Registration: [www.benedictinn.org/programs](http://www.benedictinn.org/programs).

Information: [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org), 317-788-7581.

### February 5

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **The Letter: Movie and Discussion**, 2-4 p.m., film on *Laudato Si'*, discussion led by Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, \$5, proceeds benefit Our Lady of Grace's *Laudato Si'* Action Plan. Information, registration: [benedictinn.org/programs](http://benedictinn.org/programs), 317-788-7581, [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org).

### February 7

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Personal Day of Retreat**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40, includes private room

for the day and lunch; spiritual direction available for additional \$30, must be scheduled in advance.

Information, registration: [benedictinn.org/programs](http://benedictinn.org/programs), 317-788-7581, [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org).

### February 10-12

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Welcoming In-laws**, Valentine retreat for married couples, Benedictine Father Noël Mueller presenting, \$425 double. Registration: [saintmeinrad.org/retreats](http://saintmeinrad.org/retreats).

### February 15

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Prayers of Jesus: Lessons in Empowering Our Prayers**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Father Stephen Schaflein presenting, \$35.

Information, registration: [benedictinn.org/programs](http://benedictinn.org/programs), 317-788-7581, [benedictinn@benedictinn.org](mailto:benedictinn@benedictinn.org). †

### February 15

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$40 per day, includes room, continental breakfast, lunch and use of

common areas and grounds, overnight stays available for additional \$30, dinner additional \$10. Registration: [ftm.retreatportal.com/events](http://ftm.retreatportal.com/events), 317-545-7681 or [lcoons@archindy.org](mailto:lcoons@archindy.org).

### February 22

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.

## Wedding Anniversaries

**STEPHEN AND REBEKAH (DEPOSITAR) ARVIN**, members of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 16.

The couple was married in St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis on Dec. 16, 1972.

They have two children: Anthony ("AJ") and Keith Arvin.

The couple also has one grandchild. (*correction*)



**KEN AND LYNN (PHILLIPS) MEIER**, members of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 6.

The couple was married on Jan. 6, 1973, and had their marriage convalidated at Mary Immaculate Church in Farmers Branch, Texas, in July 1973.

They have five children: Shannon Arrendale, Lorinda Youngcourt, Brian, Mark and Rob Meier.

The couple also has nine grandchildren.



**ANTHONY AND CLAIRE (DOERGER) VINCENT**, members of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 30.

The couple was married in St. Lawrence Church in Cincinnati on Dec. 30, 1972.

They have five children: Denise Atkins, Anthony, Jr., James, Kevin and Robert Vincent.

The couple also has four grandchildren.



Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to [cutt.ly/anniversaries](http://cutt.ly/anniversaries) or call 317-236-1585.

## Wabash Valley Right to Life Benefit Dinner set for Jan. 24 in Terre Haute

Wabash Valley Right to Life will hold a benefit dinner at World Gospel Church, 900 Gardendale Road, in Terre Haute, at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 24.

Pro-life advocate and minister David Williams will serve as keynote speaker at the event. Williams is a voice for the preborn who ministers particularly to men, women and families broken by abortion. He is a men's chapter leader with SaveOne, an international ministry that helps men, women and families recover after abortion. He is also a member of Men and Abortion Network and partners with pregnancy centers and pro-life organizations throughout the U.S.

Williams is a monthly guest contributor on two Moody Radio affiliates. He has contributed chapters in two books: *Tears of A Fisherman: Recovery of Men Wounded by Abortion* and *Ein Neubeginn (New Beginning) - Real Stories of Healing After Abortion* (in German and English).

The event is free, but donations are requested. Checks made payable to WVRTL Education Fund can be mailed to PO Box 3261, Terre Haute, IN 47803.

For more information, go to [wvrtl.com](http://wvrtl.com) or e-mail [wabashvalleyrtl@gmail.com](mailto:wabashvalleyrtl@gmail.com). †



# Pope Francis pays tribute to the late Pope Benedict XVI

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Keeping his appointment to celebrate Vespers as 2022 was ending, Pope Francis also paid tribute to his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, who died early on Dec. 31, 2022.

“At this moment, our thoughts go spontaneously to our dearest Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who left us this morning,” Pope Francis told thousands of people joining him in St. Peter’s Basilica for the evening prayer service.

“With emotion we remember him as such a noble, such a gentle person,” the pope said. “And we feel so much gratitude in our hearts: gratitude to God for having given him to the Church and to the world; gratitude to him, for all the good he accomplished, particularly for his witness of faith and prayer, especially in these last years of his retired life.

“Only God knows the value and strength of his intercession and his sacrifices offered for the good of the Church,” Pope Francis said of the 95-year-old Pope Benedict, who had spent almost 10 years in retirement in a monastery in the Vatican Gardens.

The prayers of the faithful also included special mention of the deceased Pope Benedict, asking God to allow him to see Jesus face to face.

In the main section of his homily, Pope Francis focused on kindness and gentleness as both a religious and a civic virtue.

With the Christmas season still underway and the basilica’s Christmas decorations still in place, Pope Francis said that Jesus “did not come into the world swooping down from heaven; he was born of Mary.”

Jesus became human “with her consent; in freedom, in gratuitousness, in respect, in love,” the pope said.

Focusing specifically on the Diocese of Rome, his diocese, Pope Francis urged citizens to cultivate kindness in their relationships with each other.

“Kindness is an important factor in the culture of dialogue,” he said, “and dialogue is indispensable if we are to live in peace, as brothers and sisters, who do not always get along—that is normal—but who nevertheless talk to each other, listen to each other and try to understand and meet each other.”

Kindness is not just politeness, he said, it is a virtue that can “humanize our societies.”



Retired Pope Benedict XVI greets Pope Francis during an event for the elderly in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on Sept. 28, 2014. Pope Benedict planned to live a “hidden life” in retirement, but to the delight and surprise of pilgrims and cardinals, he appeared at events with Pope Francis several times. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

“Kindness is an antidote against some of the pathologies of our societies: against cruelty, which unfortunately can creep in like a poison in the heart and intoxicate relationships,” he added, and also “against distracted anxiety and frenzy that make us focus on ourselves and close us off to others.”

Too often, the pope said, people get caught up in their own lives and do not realize how aggressive they are and how they stop asking “please,” or saying “sorry” or “thank you.”

“Peace progresses with those three words,” he said.

“It would be good for us to think about using ‘please,’ ‘sorry’ and ‘thank you’ often.”

Pope Francis said his wish for the new year would be that everyone try harder to be kind.

“Experience teaches us that if it becomes a way of life, it can create healthy coexistence,” he said, and “it can humanize social relationships by dissolving aggression and indifference.”

After the service, Pope Francis joined thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square to admire, and stop to pray, in front of the Nativity scene. †

## Bishops call Catholics to unite in mourning the death of retired pope

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Across the U.S., Catholic bishops called on the faithful to unite in mourning for retired Pope Benedict XVI, who died on the eve of the new year.

“While we grieve that he is no longer with us here, I join Catholics everywhere in offering my profound gratitude to the Lord for the gift of Pope Benedict XVI and his ministry,” said Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). “Together we beg our Lord to grant him eternal rest.”

Benedict XVI (1927-2022) passed away on Dec. 31, 2022, at 95 years old, nearly a decade after resigning the papacy—an event not seen in 600 years. He led the Catholic Church as pope from 2005-2013, previously served under Pope St. John Paul II for more than 20 years as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and was one of the last living participants at the Second Vatican Council.

Archbishop Broglio, who also heads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, said Benedict’s passing “sounds contrasting notes of sorrow and gratitude in my heart.” The Dec. 31 statement noted the late retired pope was “a superb theologian” and “effective teacher of the faith” who left a wealth of learning for the whole Church.

“As a priest, university professor and theologian, archbishop and cardinal, his voice in deepening an authentic understanding led all of us to a more profound love of truth and the mystery of God,” he said.

The USCCB president also praised Pope Benedict XVI for his decision to retire from the papacy in 2013—a move that “shocked the world,” but “continued his teaching about courage, humility and love for the Church.”

Even in retirement, he said, Pope Benedict XVI “continued to teach us how to be a true disciple of Christ, while still contributing to his legacy.”

From coast-to-coast, tributes to Pope Benedict XVI from U.S. Catholic bishops kept pouring in, reflecting on his legacy, virtues, and his love of Christ.

“His long life included not only his ecclesial contributions, but his impassioned pleas for world peace, human understanding, and global solidarity,” Cardinal Wilton Gregory, archbishop of Washington, said in a statement praising Benedict’s distinguished and generous life in service to Catholicism and humanity.”

Cardinal Seán P. O’Malley, archbishop of Boston, whom Pope Benedict XVI made a cardinal in 2006, and president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors since its establishment in 2014, said in a statement that he always found the late pope to be “an engaged leader, thoughtful in his decisions and always committed to the mission of the Church.”

Cardinal O’Malley recalled Pope Benedict XVI’s “deep pastoral care for the survivors” when the cardinal accompanied survivors of clergy sexual abuse to a meeting with the pope in Washington during the pontiff’s 2008 pastoral visit to the United States. He said it was “perhaps the most moving experience for me.”

The pope “recognized the pain experienced by survivors and all persons impacted by the abuse crisis,” Cardinal O’Malley said. “He was then, and at all times remained, committed to the Church supporting their journey toward healing and doing all that was possible to ensure the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.”

Bishop J. Mark Spalding of Nashville, Tenn., noted Pope Benedict XVI was “well prepared to serve when elected to lead the Church as successor to St. John Paul II,” and that his “strength and compassion ... carried the world through periods of moral, political, and societal challenges on the firm footing of the depth and breadth of Catholic teaching.”

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of

Arlington, Va., called on his diocese to both “unite in prayer” for the retired pope as they mourn and also give thanks to God for Benedict’s “example and witness.”

“A devoted student of the word of God and steeped in the Church’s liturgical and theological tradition, he was able to engage the modern world with intellectual clarity and pastoral charity,” Bishop Burbidge said.

As a scholar and Churchman his whole life, Pope Benedict XVI “showed us what it means to fulfill the ancient command to love God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind,” said Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago.

“As the last pope who attended the Second Vatican Council, he has served as a bridge to the future, reminding us all that the reform and renewal of the Church is ongoing,” the cardinal said in a Dec. 31 statement.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston also noted Pope Benedict XVI’s “first-hand” knowledge of Vatican II’s teaching, and said his scholarly work will shape the Church for years to come. His statement said the former pope’s “keen intellect invigorated the New Evangelization by drawing hearts and minds into the mystery of our redemption in Christ, and inspiring countless men and women to spread the Gospel by the example of their lives.”

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco said Pope Benedict XVI’s passing “marks the loss of one of the world’s greatest theologians and pastors of souls of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

“Many generations to come will benefit from the breadth and depth of his understanding of our faith tradition and ability to communicate it clearly and effectively,” he said in a statement provided to OSV News by his communications office. “For those

of us who have had the great blessing of interacting with him on a personal level, we will always be inspired by his gentleness, kindness, wit and ability to listen with respect and compassion.”

Many U.S. bishops also reflected on how Pope Benedict XVI’s intellectual contributions and humility went hand-in-hand, rooted in a life of following Jesus Christ.

Bishop Donald J. Hying of Madison, Wis., said one found in Pope Benedict XVI “a remarkable convergence of the soul, intellect, heart and will of a man radically convicted of the truth of the Gospel and fully dedicated to serving the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church.

“He knew who he was before the Lord, without pretense or artifice,” Bishop Hying said in a statement. “This humility grounded him through the trials, difficulties and controversies of his varied and demanding life, poured out for Christ and the saving truth of our beautiful Catholic faith.”

Pope Benedict XVI also was a “man of true humility” who radiated “quiet, authentic joy in Christ,” said Ukrainian Catholic Archbishop Borys Gudziak of Philadelphia in a Facebook post written originally in Ukrainian. “In an age of flaunted raw ambition, he did not cling to power. He lived eucharistically. He witnessed a spiritual peace, a focus on the Lord, a profound goodness, forged by the capacity to say ‘I am sorry.’”

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of San Diego also reflected on Pope Benedict XVI’s death with “sadness and gratitude,” saying he served God “with sacrifice and courage, brilliance and wisdom, humility and kindness for his entire life.

“He was a theologian of immense depth, a caring pastor and a prayerful servant who unswervingly sought to follow the pathway to which God was calling him,” Cardinal McElroy said.

“In loving Jesus Christ he brought grace to the Church and ennobled our world.” †



# FATHER

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books *Jesus of Nazareth* was released. The books showed Father Danda “how captivated Benedict was with Jesus.”

“He did not just want us to know about Jesus but who Jesus is,” Father Danda said. “It was as if I was reading the desert fathers, St. Augustine or St. Ambrose. He saw things I never noticed before, and I was amazed how he could discover the timeless hidden questions of humanity.”

Seeing him celebrate Mass from afar soon turned into an up-close encounter for Father Danda when he was asked to be an altar server at a papal Mass on Jan. 1, 2008. He was specifically assigned to hold the missal from which Pope Benedict would pray the prayers of the liturgy.

“When I came up the first time, I held the book a little lower than I knew I was supposed to so that I could see his face,” Father Danda recalled. “And he looked me right in the eyes with a fatherly gaze for quite some time.

“But I started to shake because the missal was getting heavy from the awkward way I was holding it. When the master of ceremonies reached over to steady the book to make sure I didn’t drop it, I moved it back up to where I knew it should be.

“Later that October, I met Pope Benedict in person. He was meeting many different people that spoke different languages so we didn’t speak, but he pointed at me as if to say: ‘You were that seminarian who held the missal for me, weren’t you?’ Or, at least, I would like to think that was what he was thinking.”

As he moved toward his ordination in 2009 and returned to Rome for a year of graduate studies, Father Danda experienced new ways that Pope Benedict shaped his priestly life and ministry.

“Pope Benedict was an introvert who followed an extrovert—St. John Paul II,” Father Danda said. “Pope Benedict offered us freedom to be ourselves. He showed that priests ought to be themselves, not someone else, even if we have to step out of our comfort zone at times.

“This was very freeing for many young priests who saw and realized this through him.”



Pope Benedict XVI greets then deacon candidates Sean Danda, center, from St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, Nicholas Vaskov, left, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and Jesse Burish, right, of the Diocese of LaCrosse, Wis., in St. Peter's Square in Rome in 2008. The seminarians received priestly formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome. (Submitted photo/L'Osservatore Romano)

Father Danda also saw meaning in Pope Benedict’s death on Dec. 31, 2022, the memorial of St. Sylvester I, a pope of the fourth century.

“When Cardinal Ratzinger was elected pope, he chose the name Benedict, who was the saint that brought great stability in a turbulent time which led to future growth and expansion for the Church,” he said. “St. Sylvester prior to St. Benedict did the same. He

brought great stability in unstable times which set for growth and expansion in the Church.

“I believe that remains Pope Benedict XVI’s legacy to us as well—stability during unstable times which will lead to future growth and expansion in the Church,” Father Danda said. “He planted while others will harvest, but we will all rejoice in the joys of the harvest one day together in the kingdom of heaven.” †

# PRIESTS

continued from page 3

“His homilies were so powerful, but what captivated me most was the way he would celebrate Mass,” Father Keucher said. “Such humility, such dignity, such solemnity. The way he celebrated Mass made me want to be a priest.”



Fr. Michael Keucher

When he was a seminarian at Saint Meinrad, he recalled Benedictine Father Denis Robinson, the seminary’s president-rector, often reflecting

on “the latest insights from Pope Benedict.”

But it was the pontiff’s attention to liturgy that continued to attract Father Keucher, who serves as archdiocesan vocations director, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and sacramental minister of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County.

“Pope Benedict knew the importance of good liturgy,” he said. “I appreciated how well he knew and loved the liturgy and learned a lot from him about the liturgy.”

Father Keucher has also learned from Pope Benedict the value of continually studying of the faith.

“He fostered in me a desire to always be learning, and that the soul flies on the wings of heart and mind,” Father Keucher said. “He showed me that study is an essential part of life for any person of faith, but especially for us priests.”

He looks in particular to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which Pope Benedict as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger oversaw the writing of in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

“I think we take the catechism for granted, but the Holy Spirit used Pope Benedict to put it together,” Father Keucher said. “For us younger Catholics, we don’t remember a day when there wasn’t the catechism as we have it now. We owe a debt of gratitude to Pope Benedict for it.”

## ‘Continuity’

Father Anthony Hollowell’s time in priestly formation at the North American College in Rome straddled the end of Pope Benedict’s pontificate and the beginning of the papal ministry of Pope Francis.

Like other archdiocesan priests of his generation, Pope Benedict was often required reading for him in seminary.



Fr. Anthony Hollowell

“I was always attracted to his lucid thought, the academic underpinning to his writings, and his willingness to address some of the most critical issues in the Church,” said Father Hollowell, who is known as Father Tony, and who is a younger brother of Father John Hollowell.

After being ordained a priest in 2016, Father Tony returned to Rome for graduate studies and eventually earned a doctorate in moral theology. He now ministers as pastor of St. Mark Parish in Perry County and St. Paul Parish in Tell City.

Pope Benedict’s often “academic priesthood” has influenced him. “Although most priests are not called to active academic ministry, his example influences my priestly life by encouraging me, and all priests, to keep alive an academic foundation to my ministry,” Father Tony said.

Pope Benedict’s decision to step down as pope in 2013 left a deep impression on him. “His humility, self-awareness, and wisdom in stepping down as the active pope is an example for us all,” Father Tony said. “By this act, he has taught the Church about the need to remove ourselves from a position in the Church if we discern in our conscience that we can no longer serve well in this position.”

For Father Tony, the word “continuity” summarizes Pope Benedict’s legacy for the Church.

“His academic writings sought for continuity among a variety of Jewish,

Protestant and Catholic authors whom he harmonized into a masterful synthesis on many topics,” Father Tony said. “After the Second Vatican Council, he dedicated many years of his life to an interpretation of the council as continuous with, and not a rupture from, the previous councils of the Church.

“His papacy solidified the moral and doctrinal legacy of his

predecessor, St. John Paul II, and he actively wrote about the moral and doctrinal continuity between his papacy and that of his successor Pope Francis. Whenever he spoke, it was in continuity with both his contemporaries and predecessors. His ability to articulate that continuity and to illuminate its intrinsic authority is a wonderful legacy for the Church.” †

## Prayer for the repose of the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI



A prayer for the soul of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI:

Father, eternal shepherd,  
hear the prayers of your people for your servant Benedict,  
who governed your Church with love.

In your mercy, bring him with the flock once entrusted to his care  
to the reward you have promised your faithful servants.

May he who faithfully administered the mysteries  
of your forgiveness and love on earth,  
rejoice with you for ever in heaven.

In your wise and loving care,  
you made your servant teacher of all your Church.  
He did the work of Christ on earth.

May your Son welcome him into eternal glory.

May your servant whom you appointed high priest of your flock  
be counted now among the priests in the life of your kingdom.

Give your servant the reward of eternal happiness  
and let your mercy win for us the gift of your life and love.

We entrust your servant to your mercy with faith and confidence.  
In the human family he was an instrument of your peace and love.

May he rejoice in those gifts for ever with your saints.  
Amen



# THE LIFE OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

**OSV news**



**● APRIL 16, 1927** ... Joseph Ratzinger is born in Marktl am Inn, Germany.



**● 1962-1965** ← Father Ratzinger serves as an expert at the Second Vatican Council.

**● 1945** ... With World War II ending, the 18-year-old conscripted soldier deserts from the German army and is held briefly as a U.S. prisoner of war.



**● 1958-1977** ← He teaches theology at five German universities.

**● JUNE 29, 1951** ... He is ordained a priest along with his brother, Georg, and continues his theological studies.



**● MAY 28, 1977** ... He is ordained a bishop, becoming the archbishop of Munich and Freising, Germany.

**● JUNE 27, 1977** ... Pope Paul VI inducts him into the College of Cardinals.




**● APRIL 19, 2005** ... Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, 78, elected pope and takes the name Benedict XVI.

**● 1981-2005** ... He serves as prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.



**● DEC. 22, 2005** ... In a meeting with top aides at the Vatican, Pope Benedict insists the teaching of the Second Vatican Council must be read in continuity with the church's tradition.

**● SEPT. 12, 2006** ... In a speech about faith and reason at the University of Regensburg, Germany, Pope Benedict cites a historical criticism of violence in Islam, setting off consternation and protests.



**● APRIL 15-20, 2008** ... Pope Benedict visits Washington, New York and the United Nations, meets with victims of clerical sex abuse for first time.

**● JULY 7, 2007** ... Pope Benedict issues an apostolic letter, "Summorum Pontificum," permitting wider use of the 1962 Roman Missal.



**● APRIL 16, 2007** ... The first of what would be a three-volume work, "Jesus of Nazareth," by Pope Benedict goes on sale and is an immediate commercial success.

**● JANUARY 2009** ... With Pope Benedict's approval, the Vatican issues a letter lifting the excommunication of four traditionalist bishops belonging to the Society of St. Pius X to clear the way for reconciliation talks with the group.

**● NOV. 4, 2009** ... With the apostolic constitution "Anglicanorum coetibus," Pope Benedict establishes personal ordinariates for Anglicans entering into full communion with the Catholic Church.

**● JULY 15, 2010** ... With the approval of Pope Benedict, the Vatican releases streamlined procedures for handling accusations of clerical sexual abuse and removing from the priesthood those found guilty.

**● FEB. 28, 2013** ... Pope Benedict, 85, becomes the first pope in almost 600 years to resign; he cited declining strength because of age.

**● MAY 1, 2011** ... Pope Benedict beatifies Pope John Paul II.




**● 2013-2022** ... Lives a "monastic" life of prayer and study, receives visitors in a renovated monastery near the Vatican Gardens. With prompting from Pope Francis, he appears in public for a number of significant church events at the Vatican.

**● DEC. 31, 2022** ... Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI dies at 9:34 a.m. Rome time. His funeral is scheduled for Jan. 5, 2023.



## Pope Benedict's spiritual testament: 'Stand firm in the faith'

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Retired Pope Benedict XVI's final message to Catholics around the world was: "Stand firm in the faith! Do not let yourselves be confused!"

Less than 10 hours after informing the world that the 95-year-old pope had died on Dec. 31, 2022, the Vatican press office released his spiritual testament, a statement of faith and of thanksgiving.

Unlike St. John Paul II's spiritual testament, Pope Benedict's included no instructions for his funeral or burial and made no mention of what should happen to his belongings.

"To all those whom I have wronged in any way, I ask forgiveness from my heart," Pope Benedict wrote.

Written in German and dated Aug. 29, 2006—in the second year of his almost eight-year pontificate—Pope Benedict wrote with great affection of his parents, his sister and his brother, the beauty of Bavaria and his faith in God.

"If at this late hour of my life I look back over the decades I have been living, I first see how many reasons I have to give thanks," he wrote in the document when he was 79 years old.

"First of all, I thank God himself, the giver of every good gift, who gave me life and guided me through various moments of confusion; always picking me up whenever I began to slip and always giving me the light of his countenance again," he said. "In retrospect, I see and understand that even the dark and tiring stretches of this path were for my salvation and that it was in them that he guided me well."

Born in 1927, Joseph Ratzinger was raised in a Germany struggling to recover from the first World War; Adolf Hitler came to power when the future pope was only 7.

In his testament, he offered thanks to his parents, "who gave me life in a difficult time and who, at the cost of great sacrifices, with their love prepared a magnificent home that like a clear light still enlightens my days.

"My father's lucid faith taught us children to believe, and as a signpost it has always stood firm in the midst of all my academic achievements," he said. "My mother's profound devotion and great goodness are a legacy for which I cannot thank her enough."

Pope Benedict thanked God for the many friends, both men and women, he had had by his side, and for his teachers and students—many of whom he continued to meet with late in his life.

A pope known for his concern for the environment, he thanked God for the beauty of his Bavarian homeland, "in which I always saw the splendor of the Creator himself shining through."

"I pray that our land remains a land of faith," he wrote before pleading with his fellow Germans to let nothing draw them from the faith.

"And, finally," he wrote, "I thank God for all the beauty I experienced at every stage of my journey, especially in Rome and in Italy, which became my second homeland."

Addressing the whole Church, Pope Benedict urged Catholics to hold fast to their faith and to not let science or research shake the foundations of their belief.

"It often seems as if science—the natural sciences on the one hand and historical research, like the exegesis of Sacred Scripture, on the other—are able to offer irrefutable results at odds with the Catholic faith," he said.

But he assured those reading the document that throughout his life he had seen science offer "apparent certainties against the faith" only to see them vanish, "proving not to be science, but philosophical interpretations only apparently pertaining to science."

At the same time, he said, "it is in dialogue with the natural sciences that faith too has learned to better understand the limit of the scope of its claims, and thus its specificity."

In 60 years of theological study and observation, he said, he had seen "unshakable" theses collapse, including those offered by the "Marxist generation" of theologians.

"The reasonableness of faith has emerged and is emerging again," he wrote. "Jesus Christ is truly the way, the truth and the life—and the Church, with all its inadequacies, is truly his body."

In the end, Pope Benedict wrote, "I humbly ask: pray for me, so that the Lord, despite all my sins and inadequacies, may receive me into his eternal dwelling." †



Pope Benedict XVI carries a candle during the Easter Vigil Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on April 7, 2012. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)





Above, Pope Benedict XVI greets a cheering crowd as he arrives with young people for his visit to the cathedral in Cologne, Germany, during World Youth Day in this Aug. 18, 2005, file photo. The pope placed young people at the center of his concerns and reached out to them with networking media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. (CNS photo/Wolfgang Rattay, Reuters)



Left, Pope Benedict XVI plays a piano during his summer retreat in Les Combes, northern Italy, in July 2006. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



Pope Benedict XVI distributes Communion as he celebrates Christmas Eve Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 24, 2012. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Benedict XVI waves to the crowd after celebrating Mass in Yankee Stadium in New York on April 20, 2008. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiehede)



# “Lord, I love you!”

*(The final words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, 1927-2022)*



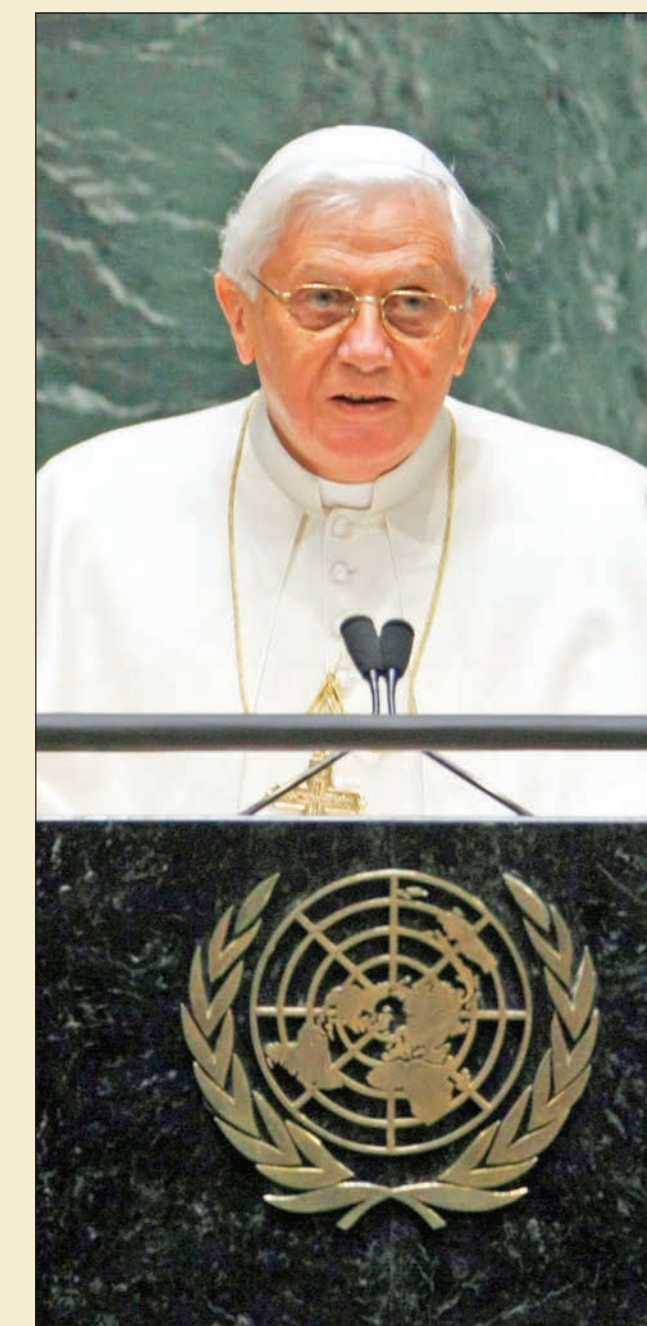
Pope Benedict XVI visits the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest prayer site, in the Old City of Jerusalem on May 12, 2009. The pope left a written prayer for peace in a crevice of the wall. (CNS photo/Menahem Kahana, Reuters)



Joseph Ratzinger, second row at right, is pictured with his sister, Maria, brother, Georg, and parents, Maria and Joseph in this July 8, 1951, file photo. Pope Benedict died on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican. (OSV News photo/Catholic Press Photo)



Pope Benedict XVI wears a kaffiyeh, a traditional Arab headscarf, presented to him in Amman, Jordan, during his 2009 visit to the Holy Land. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)



Pope Benedict XVI addresses the General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York on April 18, 2008. (CNS photo/Ray Stubblebine, Reuters)



# BENEDICT

continued from page 1

His papacy, which began when he was 78, was extremely busy for a man who already had a pacemaker and who had wanted to retire to study, write and pray when he turned 75. He used virtually every medium at his disposal—books and Twitter, sermons and encyclicals—to catechize the faithful on the foundational beliefs and practices of Christianity, ranging from the sermons of St. Augustine to the sign of the cross.

Pope Benedict was the first pope to meet with victims of clerical sexual abuse. He clarified Church laws to expedite cases and mandated that bishops' conferences put in place stringent norms against abuse.

Although he did not expect to travel much, he ended up making 24 trips to six continents and three times presided over World Youth Day mega-gatherings: in Germany in 2005, Australia in 2008, and Spain in 2011.

On a historic visit to the United States in 2008, the pope brought his own identity into clearer focus for Americans. He set forth a moral challenge on issues ranging from economic justice to abortion. He also took Church recognition of the priestly sex-abuse scandal to a new level, expressing his personal shame at what happened and personally praying with victims.

While still in his 30s, he served as an influential adviser during the Second Vatican Council, 1962-65, and as pope, he made it a priority to correct what he saw as overly expansive interpretations of Vatican II in favor of readings that stressed the council's continuity with the Church's historic traditions.

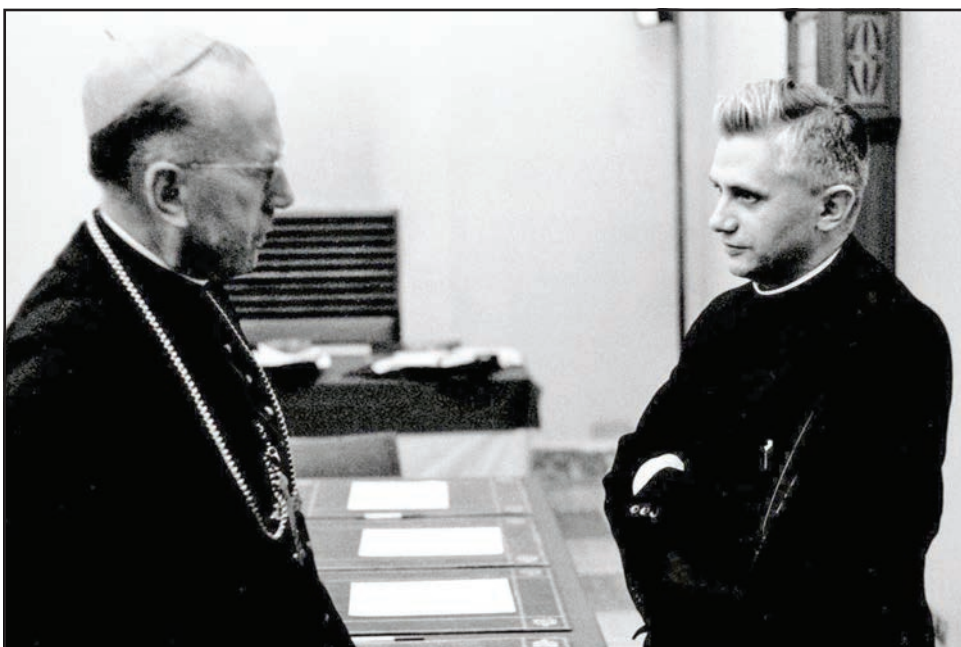
Under his oversight, the Vatican continued to highlight the Church's moral boundaries on issues such as end-of-life medical care, marriage and homosexual acts. But the pope's message to society at large focused less on single issues and more on the risk of losing the basic relationship between the human being and the Creator.

Surprising those who had expected a by-the-book pontificate from a man who had spent so many years as the Vatican's chief doctrinal official, Pope Benedict emphasized that Christianity was a religion of love and not a religion of rules.

The German-born pontiff did not try to match the popularity of St. John Paul, but the millions of people who came to see him in Rome and abroad came to



Pope Benedict XVI visit the former Auschwitz death camp in Oswiecim, Poland, on May 29, 2006. "To speak in this place of horror, in this place where unprecedented mass crimes were committed against God and man is almost impossible—and it is particularly difficult and troubling for a Christian, for a pope from Germany," he said at the time. (OSV News photo/Giancarlo Giuliani, Catholic Press Photo)



Father Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, talks with Cardinal Franz König of Vienna during the Second Vatican Council at the Vatican in 1962. Pope Benedict died on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 in his residence at the Vatican. (CNS photo/courtesy Diocese of Mainz archives, KNA)

appreciate his smile, his frequent ad-libs and his ability to speak from the heart.

Some of Pope Benedict's most memorable statements came when he applied simple Gospel values to social issues such as the protection of human life, the environment and economics. When the global financial crisis worsened in 2008, for example, the pope insisted that financial institutions must put people before profits. He also reminded people that money and worldly success are passing realities, saying: "Whoever builds his life on these things—on material things, on success, on appearances—is building on sand."

He consistently warned the West that unless its secularized society rediscovered religious values, it could not hope to engage in real dialogue with Muslims and members of other religious traditions.

In his encyclicals and in his trilogy of books *Jesus of Nazareth*, the pope honed that message, asking readers to discover the essential connections between sacrificial love, works of charity, a dedication to the truth and the Gospel of Christ.

The retired pope looked in-depth at his papacy and resignation, his relationships with St. John Paul and Pope Francis and a host of other issues in *Last Testament*, a book-length interview with journalist Peter Seewald published in 2016.

In the book, Pope Benedict insisted once again that he was not pressured by anyone or any event to resign and he did not feel he was running away from any problem. However, he acknowledged "practical governance was not my forte, and this certainly was a weakness."

Insisting "my hour had passed, and I had given all I could," Pope Benedict said he never regretted resigning, but he did regret hurting friends and faithful who were "really distressed and felt forsaken" by his stepping down.

Less than a month after resigning, he already looked frailer and walked with noticeably more difficulty than he did when he left office. The video images released by the Vatican on March 23, 2013, when his successor, Pope Francis, visited him at Castel Gandolfo underscored the "diminishing energy" Pope Benedict had said led to his resignation.

Pope Benedict moved to the papal summer villa at Castel Gandolfo on Feb. 28, 2013, the day his resignation took effect. He remained at the villa south of Rome for two months—a period that included the conclave that elected Pope Francis as his successor and the first month of the new pope's pontificate. The retired pope moved back to the Vatican on May 2, 2013, living in a monastery remodeled as a residence for him, his secretary and the consecrated women who cared for his household before and after his resignation.

On his only post-retirement trip outside of Italy, he flew to Germany in June 2020 for a five-day visit with his ailing 96-year-old brother.

Answering questions from reporters on a flight back from Brazil in July 2013, Pope Francis spoke with admiration of the retired pope's humility, intelligence and prayerfulness. The unusual situation of having a pope and a retired pope both living at the Vatican was working out very well, Pope Francis said. Having the retired pope nearby to consult with, or ask questions of, Pope Francis said, was "like having a grandfather at home—a very wise grandfather."

By the time Pope Benedict had been retired for a year, his daily routine was set. Archbishop Georg Ganswein, his personal secretary, said his days began with Mass, morning prayer and breakfast. Although mostly hidden from public view, he was not cloistered, but continued welcoming old friends and colleagues, engaging in dialogue or offering spiritual counsel. He spent hours reading and dealing with correspondence before a 4 p.m. stroll in the garden and recitation of the rosary.

In the early days of his retirement, to the delight and surprise of pilgrims and cardinals, Pope Benedict appeared at major events with Pope Francis, including the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on Dec. 8, 2015.

At a June 2016 celebration in the Apostolic Palace, where Pope Benedict once lived and worked, Pope Francis, top officials of the Roman Curia and a few friends gathered with him to mark the 65th anniversary of the retired pontiff's priestly ordination.

Pope Francis told Pope Benedict that with him in residence, the monastery in the Vatican Gardens "emanates tranquility, peace, strength, faithfulness, maturity, faith, dedication and loyalty, which does so much good for me and gives strength to me and to the whole Church."

Pope Benedict replied to Pope Francis, "More than



Newly elected Pope John Paul II greets Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Munich and Freising in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Oct. 22, 1978. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano/KNA)

the beauty found in the Vatican Gardens, your goodness is the place where I live; I feel protected."

He prayed that Pope Francis would continue to "lead us all on this path of divine mercy that shows the path of Jesus, to Jesus and to God."

Mercy was a prominent topic in an interview Pope Benedict gave in 2015. The Catholic focus on mercy really began with St. John Paul, the retired pope told Belgian Jesuit Father Jacques Servais in the written interview, which was not released until March 2016.

From his experience as a youth during World War II and his ministry under communism in Poland, St. John Paul II "affirmed that mercy is the only true and ultimately effective reaction against the power of evil. Only where there is mercy does cruelty end, only there do evil and violence stop," said Pope Benedict, who worked closely with the Polish pope for decades.

"Pope Francis," he said, "is in complete agreement with this line. His pastoral practice is expressed precisely in the fact that he speaks continuously of God's mercy."

Pope Benedict had said he planned to live a "hidden life" in retirement—and to a large extent he did. But when he did make contributions to public discussions, they became headline news. In April 2019, for instance, what he described as "notes" on the clerical sexual abuse crisis were published; and, in January 2020, an essay he wrote on priestly celibacy was published in a book by Cardinal Robert Sarah, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

In the text on abuse, which the retired pope said was motivated by the February 2019 Vatican summit on the crisis, Pope Benedict traced the abuse crisis to a loss of certainty about faith and morals, especially beginning in the late 1960s. To address the crisis, he wrote, "what is required first and foremost is the renewal of the faith in the reality of Jesus Christ given to us in the Blessed Sacrament."

The 2020 text on celibacy became the center of a media storm, not only because of its content, but also because Catholics were awaiting Pope Francis' official response to the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon and suggestions made there that in remote areas the Church could consider ordaining some married men to take the sacraments to Catholics who usually go months without.

Since marriage and priesthood both demand the total devotion and self-giving of a man to his vocation, "it does not seem possible to realize both vocations simultaneously," Pope Benedict wrote in his essay.

The retired pope's contribution to the discussion became even more controversial when Archbishop Ganswein informed media and the original publisher that while Pope Benedict contributed an essay to Cardinal Sarah's book, he did not want to be listed as co-author of the volume.

As inevitable as his election seemed after St. John Paul II died in 2005, Pope Benedict's path to the papacy was long and indirect.

Joseph Ratzinger was born on April 16, 1927, in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn, the third and youngest child of a police officer, Joseph, Sr., and his wife, Maria. Young Joseph joined his brother, Georg, at a minor seminary in 1939.

Like other young students in Germany at the time, he was automatically enrolled in the Hitler Youth program, but soon stopped going to meetings. During World War II, he

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



# Thousands pay last respects to Pope Benedict in St. Peter's Basilica

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A quiet hush covered the vast expanse of St. Peter's Square even though it was filled with thousands of people slowly winding their way around the colonnade into St. Peter's Basilica to pay their last respects to the late Pope Benedict XVI.

Outdoor souvenir sellers were well-stocked with rosaries on Jan. 2, but they seemed to have been caught off guard with a plethora of touristy trinkets and few to no images or mementos of the late pope.

A damp chill hung in the air at 9 in the morning when the doors of the basilica opened to the public on the first of three days to view the pope's body.

Special accommodations, however, were made for officials of the Roman Curia, Vatican staff and dignitaries who were allowed access from the back of the basilica and offered a place to sit or kneel on either side of the pope's body, which was laid out in red vestments on a damask-covered platform.

Before the doors opened to the general public, Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, the archpriest of the basilica and papal vicar for Vatican City State, accompanied Italian President Sergio Mattarella and his entourage and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and other government ministers to pay homage to the late pope.

The first in line outside the basilica was a group of religious sisters from the Philippines, who said they got there at 5:30 a.m.

People kept slowly arriving before sunrise, including a group from Duluth, Minn., and Superior, Wis., led by Father Richard Kunst of Duluth. The priest told Catholic News Service (CNS) that he was leading a tour of Rome the day Pope Benedict died.

Being able to see and pay homage to the late pope made the group a part of "a really incredible piece of history," he said.

Father Kunst said he was "a big fan" of Pope Benedict and "not sad at his passing" since the 95-year-old pope had lived a long life and "this is what he lived for—to be able to be with God."

Father Felipe de Jesús Sánchez, who is from Mexico and is studying in Rome,

told CNS that he saw Pope Benedict as "a simple man, humble, a model, who didn't have as much fame as John Paul II, but he was the mind behind him."

"For me, in my personal opinion, he was an authentic testimony of what it means to be Christian and a disciple of Jesus," he said.

Father Matthew Schmitz was with a group of 90 young people from ECYD, an international Catholic youth organization affiliated with Regnum Christi.

"We were praying while we were waiting. We prayed the rosary" and went inside the basilica in silence, he told CNS.

He said he was in Rome for his studies when Pope Benedict was elected in 2005, and "I met him once after an Easter Mass," which means "I'm still kind of processing" the fact that he found himself back in Rome when the pope died.

Ana Sofia de Luna, who is with ECYD and from Mexico, said, "It's very sad that Pope Benedict died, but being here and seeing his body was a great blessing, to be able to ask for grace and seeing his body there was very impactful."

Daniela Romero, a member of a group from Guatemala, said, "to be able to come here and see that we are representing and supporting the Church is a blessing."

Father Justin Kizewski happened to be traveling with a group of 45 seminarians and nine priests on



The body of Pope Benedict XVI lies in St. Peter's Basilica for public viewing at the Vatican on Jan. 2. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

pilgrimage from Madison, Wis.

He said, "I've been privileged to accompany him through his pontificate: I was here in the square when he was elected, I was here in the square when he resigned, and now here when he's lying in state."

"When we read his writings, or heard him preach, or saw him celebrate the Mass, we really saw a man that cares for his sheep and gives us an example of how to care for ours," he said.

Hannah O'Connor from Rhode Island credits Pope Benedict as being instrumental in her conversion during college, where "we read a lot of Ratzinger."

His writings and pontificate were "an important part of my journey," she said, and "I hope that people keep encountering his works and are brought to the one Church through beauty; that's what really drew me in."

Sugey Viramontes from Mexico told CNS that, "without a doubt, his example of simplicity, and above all how he spent

his last few years, always in prayer, is a great example for us young people."

Inside the basilica, staff and security kept visitors moving smoothly and quickly, letting people stop before the pope's remains long enough to make the sign of the cross and take a picture or two before being asked quietly to "Please, move along."

However, many took advantage of the large nooks and niches in the basilica to press up against a wall or barricade and linger just a little while longer.

Pope Benedict's mortal remains were to lie in repose in the basilica for three days until the late evening of Jan. 4; Pope Francis was scheduled to preside over the funeral Mass on Jan. 5.

Rome authorities estimated there would be 30,000 to 35,000 people a day visiting the basilica and an estimated 60,000 people attending the funeral in St. Peter's Square. But Vatican police said that 40,000 people had already entered the basilica to pray by 2 p.m. on Jan. 2. †

## CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

was conscripted into the army, and in the spring of 1945, he deserted his unit and returned home, spending a few months in an Allied prisoner-of-war camp. He returned to the seminary late in 1945 and was ordained six years later, along with his brother.

In a meeting with young people in 2006, the pope said witnessing the brutality of the Nazi regime helped persuade him to become a priest. But he also had to overcome some doubts, he said. For one thing, he asked himself whether he "could faithfully live celibacy" his entire life. He also recognized that his real leanings were toward theology and wondered whether he had the qualities of a good pastor and the ability "to be simple with the simple people."

After a short stint as a parish priest, the future pope began a teaching career and built a reputation as one of the Church's foremost theologians. At Vatican II, he made important contributions as a theological expert and embraced the council's early work. But he began to have misgivings about an emerging anti-Roman bias, the idea of a "Church from below" run on a parliamentary model, and the direction of theological research in the Church—criticism that would become even sharper in later years.

In a 2005 speech that served as a kind of manifesto for his young papacy, Pope Benedict rejected what he called a "hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture" in interpreting Vatican II as a radical break with the past. The pope called instead for reading the council through a "hermeneutic of reform" in continuity with Catholic tradition.

In 1977, St. Paul VI named him archbishop of Munich and Freising and, four years later, Pope John Paul called him to head the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, where he wielded great influence on issues such as liberation theology, dissent from Church teachings and pressure for women's ordination. Serving in this role for nearly a quarter century, then-Cardinal Ratzinger earned a reputation in some quarters as a sort of grand inquisitor, seeking to stamp out independent thinking, an image belied by his passion for debate with thinkers inside and outside the Church.

As the newly elected pope in 2005, he explained that he took the name Benedict to evoke the memory of Pope Benedict XV, a "courageous prophet of peace" during World War I, and said he wanted to place his ministry at the service of reconciliation and harmony among peoples.

Like his namesake and his predecessors, he was untiring in his appeals for an end to violence in world trouble spots and for dialogue as the only true and lasting solution to conflict. Another key to building a better world, he said repeatedly, is to respect the right of each person to seek and to worship God.

A direct appeal to China's communist government to respect the religious freedom of its people was a central part of Pope Benedict's 2007 Letter to Chinese Catholics. The letter also pleaded with the faithful on the mainland to work toward reconciliation between communities that had accepted some government control in order to minister openly and those that continued to practice their faith more clandestinely.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States and amid reports of rising religious-inspired violence in various parts of the world, Pope Benedict also repeatedly and clearly condemned all violence committed in the name of God.

One of the biggest tests of his papacy came after a



Pope Benedict XVI leads his last public Angelus from the window of his apartment overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Feb. 24, 2013. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

lecture at Germany's University of Regensburg, in 2006, when he quoted a Christian medieval emperor who said the prophet Muhammad had brought "things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

Protests in the Muslim world followed, and Pope Benedict apologized that his words had offended Muslims, distancing himself from the text he had quoted. Soon after, he accepted the invitation of an international group of Muslim scholars and leaders to launch a new dialogue initiative, "The Common Word," looking at teachings that Christians and Muslims share. †



# Archdiocese welcomes new leader of evangelization and discipleship

By Natalie Hoefler

The archdiocese has hired Anita Bardo as its new coordinator of evangelization and discipleship.

The member of St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and passion to the role.



Anita Bardo

She is currently her parish's director of faith formation, a role in which she has served for 12 years, and has led youth ministry for St. Rita and the Indianapolis East Deanery for 22 years.

"Through these two ministries, I find myself evangelizing to youths, families, parishioners and those that are not members of our parish community," says Bardo. "We are all called to spread the Good News to each other. You never know who may

convert or who may want to talk to you more about their own faith journey.

"But while we are all called to evangelize, we must first discern in prayer on what we want our Christian life to be, and then be able to share those experiences and visions with our neighbors."

For Bardo, leadership is more than directing and delegating—it's a way of life.

"Leadership for me is to be more Christ-like in my efforts to evangelize," she says. "We are called to guide

others in their faith, in their roles of being a disciple of Christ," including practicing Catholics, those who have stepped away from the faith and those of no faith, to bring them together "for one goal, and that is to inspire one another to live out the true meaning of being a disciple of Christ."

Bardo says her new role with the archdiocese is an answer to prayer—three months of prayer, in fact.

After working for 32 years in the mortgage industry and 22 years for the same employer, she was laid off on Aug. 3 last year.

"Wow, was that a surprise," Bardo admits, then adds, "But God knew what I needed"—she had been discerning for some time whether God might be calling her elsewhere.

In the midst of prayer and discernment, she reached out to a friend who mentioned that the archdiocese's coordinator of evangelization and discipleship position was open.

"I believe that opportunities don't just happen," says Bardo. "We create them with the help of God, beautiful people of faith, family and being able to say, 'Yes, Lord, use me.'"

She was hired for the position in December.

"It's where I am supposed to be and the plan God had already had in place," she says.

In her new role, Bardo will reach out to the archdiocese's 126 parishes to offer help and guidance with their evangelization and discipleship efforts.

She says her hope is to connect with these faith communities "and ask the question, 'Are we open for change in how we share with one another our own journeys of faith?' hoping this ... gives an opportunity for the faithful to step outside their comfort zones and allow God and the Holy Spirit to move them."

Bardo, a lifelong Catholic, is grateful her parents started her off "on a good foot," raising her to know "the importance of church, quiet time and praying."

She admits there might have been times when her quiet time and prayer might have been a challenge as she and her husband Marvin raised four daughters, now ranging in age from 18-33. And now they have four grandsons to enjoy, ranging in age from 5 to just 3 months old.

Bardo's favorite saint is the namesake of her parish, St. Rita, known as the "saint of the impossible."

But for now, she finds joy in the possible as she begins her new role.

"I enjoy waking up daily and smiling because I can work on goals set for myself and for our office," says Bardo. "To be able to work and pray together with those you work with, to attend daily Mass, adoration, pray the rosary with others—at work! Does it get any better than this?"

(To learn more about the Office of Evangelization's parish evangelization and discipleship efforts or the Totus Tuus summer Catholic youth summer camp, contact Anita Bardo at 317-236-1466 or [abardo@archindy.org](mailto:abardo@archindy.org), or go to [evangelizeindy.com](http://evangelizeindy.com).) †

## OSV News aims to speak 'truth in charity in a way that unites' faithful

(OSV News)—The hallmark of OSV News, a new Catholic news service that launched on Jan. 1, is to provide news and content "that speaks to truth in charity in a way that unites," said OSV Publisher Scott Richert.

See related commentary, page 4.

"An increasing number of

Catholics—and non-Catholics, for that matter—are searching for presentations of the truth in a non-polarizing way ... but

they don't know where to look," he said. "What they will be able to do now is to open up their local diocesan publication, go to a diocesan website, just as they've been able to come to *Our Sunday Visitor*, and find that kind of edifying material—material that doesn't shy away from the truth, that speaks the truth as the Church has always spoken the truth, but speaks it in a way that is accessible to Americans today."

Catholic media company OSV created OSV News last year to fill the anticipated void from the Dec. 30, 2022, closure of



Catholic News Service (CNS), a news agency founded in 1920 and owned by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

In May, CNS announced that the USCCB had decided to close CNS' domestic bureaus in New York and Washington, D.C., eliminating its national news and most of its international news coverage. The USCCB continues to operate CNS' Rome bureau, which reports on the pope and matters pertaining to the Holy See.

CNS provided news stories on issues and events about or affecting the Catholic Church to subscribers, with a focus on diocesan media. In 2022, it was serving the majority of U.S. dioceses, according to CNS Director and Editor-in-Chief Greg Erlandson. *Our Sunday Visitor* was among its subscribers.

When CNS announced its closure, Richert said he had a sense that OSV was well positioned to address the anticipated need. "Someone is going to have to fill that hole" created by CNS' closure, he recalled thinking in a Dec. 6 interview. "We're going to have to fill that hole for us. Why don't we fill that hole for everyone else, as well?"

OSV is the largest Catholic publisher in the United States, and one of the largest in the world. Based in Huntington, Ind., the company was founded in 1912 by Archbishop John Francis Noll as the Catholic newspaper *Our Sunday Visitor*. OSV has grown to include other periodicals, books and parish resources with a shared mission: "to champion the Catholic Church."

The addition of a news service to OSV's offerings fits with the company's mission and identity, he said.

When then-Father Noll launched *Our Sunday Visitor* newspaper, "there was a lot of misunderstanding of what the Church taught," Richert said. "You look at where we are 110 years later and the names have changed, the situations have changed, but the broader cultural similarities are there. We need the Catholic press ... as a whole, and that's not just newspapers and magazines and print publications, but we need, increasingly, digital publications,

websites, apps, social media. We need audio and video. We need all of this because that's what's necessary today to spread the Gospel."

OSV News clients can expect national and international news, feature stories and columns, like those CNS provided, Richert said. However, "we are going to try in many ways to go beyond what CNS has been able to do," such as offering more catechetical resources, he said.

The OSV News team includes veteran Catholic journalists from around the United States with an international editor in Poland. It is led by OSV News Editor-in-Chief Gretchen R. Crowe, who joined OSV in 2013 as its newspaper's editor. She has most recently served as OSV's editorial director for periodicals, overseeing the publication of *Our Sunday Visitor*, *The Priest* and *The Deacon* magazines, *OSV Kids* magazine, [RadiantMagazine.com](http://RadiantMagazine.com) and [SimplyCatholic.com](http://SimplyCatholic.com).

"OSV News is going to stand out by providing really excellent journalism and context that helps explain what the Church teaches and why," Crowe said. "OSV News will become that go-to resource for Catholics that want to understand what's happening in the world and how that affects them, in terms of their faith and how they should be living their faith out in the world today."

OSV News' domestic team includes Julie Asher, senior editor; Maria-Pia Chin, Spanish editor; Paulina Guzik, international editor; Megan Marley, digital editor; Bob Roller, photo editor; Elizabeth Scalia, culture editor; Peter Jesserer Smith, national news and features editor; and Maria Wiering, senior writer. Gina Christian and Kate Scanlon are national reporters, and John Mulderig is OSV News' media reviewer.

Like CNS, OSV News will partner with diocesan media to share news and feature stories from their publications with its clients.

Richert hopes OSV News will "excite the imagination of Catholic media professionals," he said, helping them "to turn Catholic media from something that that largely is talking to an established audience, to a vehicle that increasingly can become a vehicle for evangelization, reaching more people, bringing more people to Christ." †

## Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition

Feb. 17 issue of The Criterion

Couples who are planning to be married between Feb. 17 and July 14, 2023, in a marriage that is recognized as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage, or couples who were wed between July 1, 2022 and Jan. 31, 2023, in such a recognized marriage and did not have their engagement announcement in *The Criterion* are invited to submit the information for the upcoming Feb. 17 Spring Marriage Edition.

Announcements can be submitted by mail using the form below or electronically at [www.archindy.org/engagements](http://www.archindy.org/engagements).

### E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend sending a photo where the couple's faces are close to each other. Please send the photo as an attachment to the e-mail: [alewis@archindy.org](mailto:alewis@archindy.org). Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If it is not possible to e-mail a photo, a photo can be mailed with the bottom form. Please no photocopies or laser prints. To have the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

### Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 5 p.m. on Tuesday Jan. 31, 2023.

— Use this form to furnish information by mail —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, The Criterion, ATTN: Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. To submit information online go to: [www.archindy.org/engagements](http://www.archindy.org/engagements). Deadline with photos: Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2023 at 5 p.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last)		Daytime Phone	
Mailing Address	City	State	Zip Code
Name of Bride's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)			
Name of Bridegroom's Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Wedding Date	Church	City	State
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Enclosed	Signature of person furnishing information		Relationship
<input type="checkbox"/> Return photo			Daytime Phone
<input type="checkbox"/> No Picture			



# Pope's U.S. visit a whirlwind with timely, pointed messages

WASHINGTON (CNS)—When Pope Benedict XVI came to the United States for a visit to Washington and New York spanning six days in mid-April 2008, some news accounts called the pace of his schedule “grueling.”

Pope Benedict handled the pace with good grace while getting his message out to millions of Catholics both in the United States and throughout the world. He died at the Vatican on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95.

The trip had been timed to help celebrate the bicentennials of four archdioceses in the United States: New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Louisville, Ky. They were erected from the Baltimore Diocese, the nation's first diocese, which was elevated to an archdiocese in the same year, 1808.

But it was the abuse crisis, which burst onto front pages in 2002 and persists to this day, that was a central focus of Pope Benedict's trip; this was the first papal visit since the scandal started making headlines in the U.S.

At a Mass at the brand new Nationals Park in Washington, Pope Benedict said that “no words of mine could describe the pain and harm inflicted by such abuse. It is important that those who have suffered be given loving pastoral attention.”

The pope lauded the efforts to deal “honestly and fairly with this tragic situation and to ensure that children—whom our Lord loves so deeply and who are our greatest treasure—can grow up in a safe environment.

“I encourage each of you to do what you can to foster healing and reconciliation and to assist those who have been hurt. Also, I ask you to love your priests, and to affirm them in the excellent work that they do,” he said.

Later that day, he met privately with a group of abuse survivors at the apostolic nunciature; the meeting was a first for a pope.

Pope Benedict's Washington itinerary included an audience with the U.S. bishops and an appearance at The Catholic University of America, the nation's papally chartered university, to speak to educators. He also presided over a Vespers service at the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The pope met with President George W. Bush inside the White House, emerging to cheering throngs outside as the pope and the president exchanged greetings.

In his meeting with the bishops, Pope Benedict acknowledged the “evil” of the clerical sexual abuse crisis and encouraged them to continue their work to restore trust in the Church and its ministers.

Talking to educators at The Catholic University of America, he said today's challenges require sound

instruction in the faith, especially among the young. But they also call for “cultivating a mindset, an intellectual culture, which is genuinely Catholic” and can bring the Gospel to bear on the urgent issues American society faces.

Before heading to New York, Pope Benedict met with 200 representatives of Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism gathered at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, and on his way to an ecumenical prayer service in Manhattan, Pope Benedict stopped to greet Jewish leaders at the Park East Synagogue.

At the synagogue, Pope Benedict expressed his respect for the city's Jewish community and encouraged the building of “bridges of friendship” between religions. The encounter marked the first time a pope had visited a Jewish place of worship in the United States, and it came a day before the start of Passover.

At the ecumenical prayer service, Pope Benedict said the witness of Christians in the world is weakened not only by their divisions, but also by some communities turning their backs on Christian tradition.

“Too often those who are not Christians, as they observe the splintering of Christian communities, are understandably confused about the Gospel message itself,” he said.

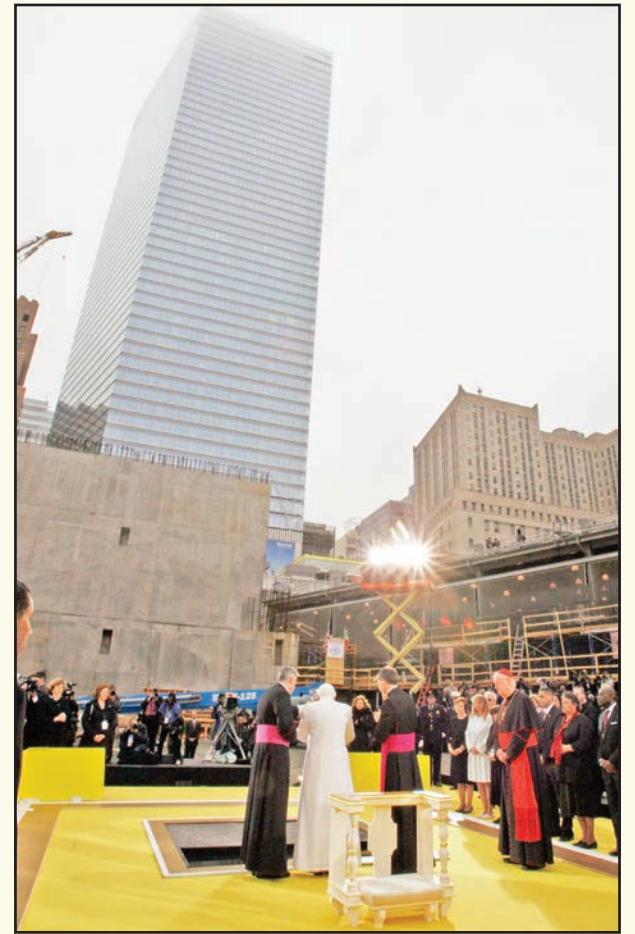
Celebrating Mass in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral with thousands of priests and religious, the pope urged the Catholic Church in the United States to move past divisions and scandal toward a “new sense of unity and purpose.” It is time, he said, to “put aside all anger and contention” inside the Church and embark on a fresh mission of evangelization in society.

Honoring the bicentennial of four U.S. archdioceses, Pope Benedict praised the “solid foundations” of the Catholic Church in America and said that “the future of the Church in America” must continue to build on that “impressive legacy.”

But in his homily for the final U.S. Mass, celebrated at Yankee Stadium, he also said the “impressive growth” of the Church in America has been “not without its challenges,” comparing those challenges to the “linguistic and cultural tensions” found in the early Church.

“In these 200 years, the face of the Catholic community in your country has changed greatly,” Pope Benedict said. “We think of the successive waves of immigrants whose traditions have so enriched the Church in America.”

He also lauded “the strong faith which built up the network of churches, educational, health care and social institutions which have long been the hallmark of the Church in this land,” as well as “those countless fathers and mothers who passed on the faith to their children,



A light fog hangs over New York as Pope Benedict XVI visits the site of the destroyed World Trade Center towers on April 20, 2008. He spoke with family members of some of the victims of the 2001 terrorist attacks and with those who were first responders to the disaster. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

the steady ministry of the many priests who devoted their lives to the care of souls, and the incalculable contribution made by so many men and women religious.”

In a speech to the U.N. General Assembly, Pope Benedict said neither government nor religion has a right to change or limit human rights, because those rights flow from the dignity of each person created in God's image. The pope insisted that human rights cannot be limited or rewritten on the basis of national interests or majority rule.

He also said the role of religions is not to dictate government policy, but to help their members strive to find the truth, including the truth about the dignity of all people, even if their religious views are different. †

## Pope Benedict's special focus on God's love surprised and inspired local Catholics

By John Shaughnessy

David Siler will always remember the moment when he was surprised and inspired by Pope Benedict XVI.

It came in 2005 when Pope Benedict shared his first encyclical with the world—“*Deus Caritas Est*” (“God Is Love”)—the papal letter that totally changed Siler's initial impression of the then-recently elected pope.



David Siler

“My great love for him started with that encyclical. I was the executive director for

Catholic Charities in the archdiocese at the time,” recalls Siler who served in that role from 2003-2016. “The encyclical perfectly captured the essence of God, which is love.

“I remember being at a Catholic Charities national conference, and we were all responding about how it was such a surprise, coming from this seemingly stoic German. You wouldn't have expected such a soft letter. I've reflected on it many times.”

While the news of Pope Emeritus Benedict's death on Dec. 31, 2022, at the age of 95 saddened Siler, it also brought back wonderful memories from the pope's visit to Washington in April of 2008—a time when Siler experienced two of the most amazing moments he's known as a Catholic.

A member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, Siler was part of

the crowd that stood on the South Lawn of the White House, welcoming Pope Benedict to the United States as part of a group from Catholic Charities USA.

A day later, Siler was just 20 rows from the pope, part of the crowd of 46,000 people who filled Nationals Park for the first public Mass of the pope's pilgrimage to the United States.

“It was an incredibly powerful experience. It was a highlight of my spiritual life,” Siler says. “Just being in the presence of so many people who wanted to spend time with the pope celebrating the Mass. I never expected to share a Mass with a pope. You just felt you were on holy ground.”

Ever since, Siler's career choices have been influenced by those experiences and that first encyclical by Pope Benedict. He currently serves as the executive director of the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas, an organization that connects parishes in the United States with needy parishes in Haiti and Latin America.

“My career choices have all been connected to service,” he says. “It seems like a great response to the encyclical. I get to invite people to share the love of God with many people in the world, especially Haiti and Latin America.”

### ‘I always thought that was a brave thing he did’

Annette “Mickey” Lentz had a similar reaction of being inspired and surprised by Pope Benedict when she was among a select group chosen to meet with him during his 2008 visit to Washington.

She was a part of a group of about 350 individuals that represented the most

influential people in Catholic education in the United States. At the time, Lentz was the executive director of Catholic Education and Faith Formation for the archdiocese.



Annette “Mickey” Lentz

As she prepared to meet him for the first time, Lentz had an image of Pope Benedict as being “stoic and less personal”—an image that changed quickly when he stood in front of her.

“The way he shook your hand and looked you in the eyes made a great impression. He had a warm, fuzzy tone that surprised me,” she says. “He talked with me about the importance of Catholic education and lifelong formation. He was genuine and authentic, and he was very grateful for my service.”

Lentz was also thankful for Pope Benedict's stunning, historic decision to resign as pope in 2013, citing his physical and mental limitations to lead the Church as he thought it should be led.

“He was the first in centuries to retire. I admired him for that,” says Lentz, the chancellor emeritus of the archdiocese who retired in September of 2021 after serving the archdiocese for 60 years. “Sometimes you know it's your time. I always thought that was a brave thing he did.”

### The pursuit of truth and a relationship with Christ

Benedictine Sister Anne Frederick never had the opportunity to meet Pope

Benedict, but she has felt a closeness to him through her extensive reading of his writings.

That connection began when she heard Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, during his tenure as archbishop of Indianapolis, refer to a 2010 address by Pope Benedict.



Sr. Anne Frederick, O.S.B.

“I remember [then] Archbishop Tobin commenting that it would go down in history as one of the greatest papal addresses, and I knew that I needed to track this down,” says Sister Anne, the formation director of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove and a teacher at St. Roch School in Indianapolis.

“Pope Benedict was gracious, wise and brilliant in his comments as he spoke of the legitimate role of religion in the public square—a religion purified by reason which could speak to the common good and the dignity of all individuals. He was applying Catholic social teachings to the role of government.”

She views Pope Benedict as “a master theologian who has left a treasure to the Church in his writings.”

Even more, she views his legacy as leading to the universal goal that connects all people of faith.

“As a theology student at Saint Meinrad, I found his writings accessible,” she says. “I appreciated so much his teachings on the Eucharist and the pursuit of truth, and his understanding of our faith as first and primarily a relationship with Jesus Christ.” †



For the Journey/Effie Calderola

## Take time to appreciate the larger picture that is God

Mom was recuperating, years ago, in front of the television set in her hospital room following surgery.



As she grew older, surgery was hard on Mom, physically and mentally. It took her down, and she was never quite able to climb back to pre-operation levels.

On this particular day, when the nurse came in, Mom looked away from the TV and told her that St. John Paul II had died. This was big news, and unexpected. It was also not true. The pope was very much alive, but Mom sounded lucid and concerned. Word traveled swiftly around the hospital floor, and someone even told a relative several states away that the pope was dead.

Later, we laughed about how fast Mom innocently and convincingly spread that rumor, and how gullible those who believed it felt. But even then, before smartphones were in every pocket, we had grown accustomed to hearing news from around the world within minutes. And Mom was sitting right in front of the television.

St. Francis Xavier died on Dec. 3, 1552, trying to reach the mainland of China

after three years of missionary work in the East. But news of the death of one of St. Ignatius of Loyola's closest friends did not reach Rome for more than a year. In our world today, this is unimaginable. The news cycles spin so fast that last month's news seems ancient.

Francis is one of the greatest Jesuit saints, and like many great saints, he had a storied past. It would be a boring world if the saints we love were born as the plaster images we make of them. Born into a noble family whose prospects had been diminished financially due to war, Francis was a self-indulgent student at the University of Paris when he met Ignatius, a fellow Basque who had grown from his own wild younger days.

Eventually, Ignatius would guide his friend through the Spiritual Exercises, and together with St. Peter Faber, the trio would work to found the Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits.

When the pope asked Ignatius to send missionaries to Asia, Francis went. He served in Goa in India and later in Japan before dying from sickness trying to reach mainland China. He was only 46.

Francis and Ignatius would never meet again on this Earth. But what amazes my modern, Internet- and smartphone-addicted sensibilities is that through those long years, Ignatius would have so little communication

regarding his friend and his friend's death. No checking in, no texting.

I'm barely out of Mass before I check my phone, and if I leave my phone at home when I run errands, I feel a bit adrift. What if someone needs me? Or I need them?

One of the great lessons of Ignatian spirituality is indifference. Indifference in the sense of freeing myself from attachments that take me away from God. Ignatius practiced being indifferent to everything except the will of God.

We are so attached to the morning news, to Twitter, to Facebook, to whatever makes us feel in touch at a moment's notice. Ignatius, on the other hand, practiced a willingness to accept whatever God willed for his friend and for the Jesuits' future and was indifferent to the fears and anxiety this could produce.

Perhaps intentionally turning away a bit from our technological dependence would help us appreciate the larger picture that is God in history and in our lives. Perhaps the indifference we could practice would include fasting occasionally from social media and devices and imagine a world where we can trust in God for a year or a lifetime.

(Effie Calderola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Faith at Home/

Laura Kelly Fanucci

## Jesus was a teenager, too

If I asked you to imagine Jesus' childhood, you'd likely picture him as a baby in the manger. But have you ever considered that Christ was once a teenager, too?



In this season, we can forget that the incarnation means Jesus became a teen, too. With hormones and growth spurts, with a changing body and a deepening

voice, with all the questions and appetite and energy that young people bring.

Teens often get a terrible rap, but the roller coaster of adolescence is essential to our growth—and young people bring enormous gifts to the human family. Their enthusiasm, prophetic voices and optimism are sources of deep hope and renewal.

Still, rare is the adult who would repeat middle or high school. So what does it matter for us—young or old—that Jesus was once 13, 15 or 18 years old?

Jesus' adolescence affirms the overlooked and underappreciated chapters in our own lives. The one story we have from Jesus' childhood beyond his birth narratives—the time he was lost and found in the Temple—speaks to our growing callings, our desire for independence and our need for strong role models in faith.

Jesus knew what it was to see the world as a child and then grow taller, stronger and older: to change physically, emotionally and spiritually. He experienced the transformations that teens live daily: the same struggles that adults can be quick to forget when we're frustrated or flummoxed by the young people in our lives.

What a gift that Jesus blessed our most trying, tumultuous years by living them himself.

There is good news in this truth for all of us, even those with adolescence far-off in the rearview mirror.

In Jesus' time, life expectancy was typically 30-35 years—a shockingly short life span by our modern standards. But this fact means he lived through what his time would have considered to be young adulthood and even mature adulthood.

While he did not get to grow to be an elderly man, he lived through huge swaths of the human experience.

As a son and cousin, Jesus understood the joys and conflicts of families. He journeyed through friendship with women and men from different walks of life. He labored for decades as a carpenter and then spent three years in public ministry as a teacher, preacher and healer, which means he understood work in many forms.

He knew physical, mental and spiritual suffering—all the ordinary and extraordinary emotions and experiences of human life.

Jesus' adolescence reminds us that most of the Messiah's life was not dramatic moments recorded for posterity, but everyday encounters much like our own: hidden or forgotten, but still meaningful.

Ultimately the details of age matter less than the deeper truth that God become one of us, among us, for us.

If you look closely in this season, you might just catch a glimpse of Christ in a child's eyes—or a teen's smile. Whether you meet a new baby in your family, sit near a cranky toddler at church or try to make small talk with a tween, remember that Jesus was once their age, too.

Jesus, who knew what it was to be young, taught us to welcome the least. May his wisdom soften our hearts to heed his words and hear his echo in every baby's cry, every child's shout and every teenager's voice.

(Laura Kelly Fanucci is a writer, speaker and author of several books. Her work can be found at [laurakellyfanucci.com](http://laurakellyfanucci.com).) †

Guest Column/Debra Tomaselli

## Be not afraid, and believe in the Savior of the world

It was a dark, starry night. "Omar" tapped his staff, guiding his sheep past the sharp, craggy edges of a rock. Moments later, he waved his cloak, steering them away from a cliff covered in darkness. This guy could do this job with his eyes closed. He knew the fields; he knew his sheep.



Next, he scanned the furthest corners of the countryside, spotting fellow workers tending their flock. All was calm. All was well.

Suddenly, the nighttime sky grew bright. Brighter than any full moon could deliver. Brilliantly bright. Too bright. Scary bright.

Omar trembled. He called to the other shepherds. One, staring aloft, was frozen in

place. Another, racing across the field, was panting with fear.

Before this, life seemed predictable.

But this ... this was so unexpected. This was startling. This was unnerving.

Suddenly, a voice spoke from the heavens. In the midst of gripping fear, the shepherds heard it.

"Don't be afraid" (Lk 2:10).

They looked at each other. They cocked their heads.

An announcement followed: "I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord, had been born tonight in Bethlehem. How will you recognize him? You'll find a baby wrapped in a blanket lying in a manger" (Lk 2: 10-12).

The shepherds, well-versed in Scripture, understood. They'd been waiting for a Messiah. They believed. They jumped into action.

"Come on," they said. "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about" (Lk 2:15).

They ran to the village and found their way to Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. The

shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherd's story expressed astonishment, but Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and often thought about them. (Lk 2:16-19)

Like the shepherds, our daily lives can lull us into a false sense of security. We think we're in control. We set earthly goals. We think we can handle anything. We think we've seen it all ... until, suddenly, something unexpected happens.

It may be a job loss, an irreversible illness, or a death ... and our security suddenly shatters.

Our world, as we knew it, changes. Abruptly. Unexpectedly. Unpredictably.

Like the shepherds in the field, we're terrified.

Maybe you've been there. Maybe you've wrestled with unwanted twists in life. Maybe you're afraid. Maybe you're stumbling with uncertainty.

Maybe we can learn from those frightened shepherds in the field.

Perhaps we need to look up.

Maybe we need to heed the heavenly whispers: Can you hear it? *Don't be afraid.*

Perhaps we can embrace the heavenly hosts surrounding us. Angels in disguise. Love in action.

Let's race to find the Lord and then to share our own astonishing stories of God's guidance and presence.

Because he's here with you.

What scares you?

*Don't be afraid*, he says. He's got this.

He's here ... in this age, in this day, in this hour ... in this momento.

He's here ... now, and forever.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

(Debra Tomaselli writes from Altamonte Springs, Fla. She can be reached at [dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com](mailto:dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com).) †

Guest Column/Richard Etienne

## Let the Spirit guide you in building up the body of Christ

If you are getting along in age as I am, here's a question: have you ever been blessed to have the wonderful experience of someone writing you—yes, by pen, on paper and delivered by regular mail—or texting you or telling you that you had a major effect on their life?



Most of us would be surprised to know that some small act of kindness from the past

had a major impact on someone.

We never know how a kind word, a short note, or a quick phone call will impact another person. If a person lives long enough, there will be moments when he or she will need a little encouragement to persevere in

their efforts to do what's right. It is at those times that we are especially touched by any positive message we receive.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is always at work in our lives when we are open to this action.

I am regularly prompted to send a quick text or picture when stirred by an idea, a specific object or a place that reminded me of someone whom I love or with whom I have had a friendship. This little act conveys that I am thinking about a person and how they've touched my life. On occasion, I am even moved to send a card or note when the moment seems appropriate.

I was recently surprised when my nephew asked my great niece to make a short video greeting for my birthday. It was a wonderful to hear her say that she thought I was very important to her "and

the whole family, actually!"

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read, "The Church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers" (Acts 9:31).

Likewise, we too are called to build up one another as members of the body of Christ whenever we are prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Is there someone in your life who could use a brief interaction that you could initiate today? Could you take a few moments to encourage this person? Why not do it today?

(Richard Etienne has a degree in theology from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and resides in Newburgh, Ind.) †



Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 8, 2023

- Isaiah 60:1-6
- Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
- Matthew 2:1-12

This weekend, the Church celebrates the ancient Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, commemorating and



reflecting upon the visit of Magi “from the East” to the crib side of the newborn Savior (Mt 2:1).

For the first reading, the Church presents a passage from the third and last section of Isaiah. After four

generations of exile in Babylon, survivors or descendants of survivors of the long past Babylonian conquest of the Holy Land finally were able to return to their homeland.

When Persia in turn overtook Babylonia, Persia’s King Cyrus allowed the exiles to leave Babylon and to return to the Holy Land. Their homecoming was bittersweet. The land to which they returned after so many years was desolate and unyielding.

The prophets insisted that, despite this desolation, times would change for the better because God would not forget the chosen people.

Thus, the prophet rejoices in God’s salvation. He will vindicate the people. God will come in justice and mercy. The prophecy predicts a great new day!

For the second reading, the Church offers us a selection from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians. It is a frank and direct statement that God intends salvation also for the Gentiles, not only for the chosen people.

St. Matthew’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. Among the four Gospels, only Matthew and Luke refer to the conception, birth and early life of Jesus. Mark and John are silent on these subjects.

Only Matthew has the story of the Magi. This story is one of the most profound and expressive revelations in the New Testament. To understand it requires recognizing the symbols and images contained in the passage.

First, the Gospel speaks of visitors “from the East” (Mt 2:1). “From the East” was a phrase referring to much more than a direction of the compass. It

meant a distant and unknown place. It was a term of mystery.

These visitors came from a place totally outside the Holy Land and Jewish culture and religion.

Who and what were they? Scholars cannot agree on a description for them. Some think that they were astrologers in a time when astrology fascinated everyone and was heavily associated with theology and philosophy. Others think they were nobles or kings. Another term is “magi,” but this term’s meaning is unclear.

Whatever the answer, they were gifted, learned, resourced and very sincere people from some place far away, strangers to Jews, driven by the wish to know God. Art and legend have seen them through the centuries as three in number.

Herod tried to frustrate their search, hoping to remove any threat to his corrupt control over the people, fearful that a “newborn king” might be a rival (Mt 2:2). Looking for clues, he discovered that according to the Scriptures, the Savior would be born in Bethlehem. This discovery put in jeopardy the infant Lord and the young boys of the town, traditionally known as the Holy Innocents.

Overall, the message is powerful. The Magi, only humans, yearn for God but cannot find him on their own. God assists them with a star in the sky and even through the evil Herod.

## Reflection

This wondrous feast teaches us a vital lesson. The Magi were humans—lost and not knowing where to go. We are often similarly lost. Additionally, we are sinners, choosing to distance ourselves from God. We are helpless in the last analysis.

The Magi remind us to consider what is truly important in life. Too often, people allow themselves to look for rewards in earthly terms. Inevitably, they are disappointed.

The Magi knew that something wonderful, beautiful and fulfilling was in life, in their lives, if they could find it. In Jesus, an infant but also the Son of God, they found it, guided by the star and warned of danger. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, January 9

The Baptism of the Lord  
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7  
or Acts 10:34-38  
Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 9-10  
Matthew 3:13-17

### Tuesday, January 10

Hebrews 2:5-12  
Psalm 8:2ab, 5-9  
Mark 1:21-28

### Wednesday, January 11

Hebrews 2:14-18  
Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9  
Mark 1:29-39

### Thursday, January 12

Hebrews 3:7-14  
Psalm 95:6-7c, 8-11  
Mark 1:40-45

### Friday, January 13

St. Hilary, bishop and doctor of the Church  
Hebrews 4:1-5, 11  
Psalm 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8  
Mark 2:1-12

### Saturday, January 14

Hebrews 4:12-16  
Psalm 19:8-10, 15  
Mark 2:13-17

### Sunday, January 15

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Isaiah 49:3, 5-6  
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10  
1 Corinthians 1:1-3  
John 1:29-34

## Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

### Christ empowered the Apostles and their successors to forgive sins in confession

Why must I confess to a priest, when I can just talk to God? (New Jersey)



Jesus told His Apostles: “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained” (Jn 20:23). Our bishops are the direct successors to the Apostles and, together with their

priests, they share the same mission and sacramental powers given to the original Twelve.

However, while Jesus gave priests and bishops the authority to forgive sins, he didn’t also give them the ability to read minds.

In order to offer sacramental absolution, it is necessary for priest-confessors to be made aware of a penitent’s sins. This typically happens through a spoken confession. Additionally, one requirement for absolution within the sacrament of reconciliation is true sorrow for our acts and a resolve to avoid sin in the future. Confessions spoken aloud give a penitent the opportunity to

express real contrition.

That being said, while we know for sure that sins are forgiven through the sacrament, God is of course free to extend his grace beyond even what he has promised. If circumstances prevent you from getting to the sacrament of reconciliation in person, you can always directly, prayerfully petition God for the forgiveness of your sins in the meantime.

As soon as circumstances allow you to go to confession, though, it is good to do so in order to

receive sacramental absolution from a priest.

I have not gone to confession in years, and I’m anxious about it. Will the priest be angry with me? (Ohio)

Most priests will be happy to welcome you back to the sacrament, and not angry at all. Your finally making it to confession is what is important. The priest asks how long it has been since your last confession only to gain some context, so he can better understand your situation and thus counsel you more effectively.

If you are nervous, there are practical ways you can find a confessional situation with which you are most comfortable. If you feel like you need to just dive in and talk, you can simply go to your parish at the normally scheduled time for confessions (typically found in the parish bulletin or website). But if there is a specific local priest whom you think would be an especially gentle confessor, it’s also perfectly fine to reach out to him directly and ask to make an appointment.

On the other hand, if you want your confession to be as anonymous as possible, you can go to a parish other than your own, even one in another town. If you have a shrine or pilgrimage site within driving distance, these places will often offer confessions as well, with priests you’re unlikely to run into in your day-to-day life.

You may find it useful to review the process of the sacrament of reconciliation, and its prayers, ahead of time. Do know, however, that if you get flustered in the confessional, you can ask the priest-confessor to remind you of what to do. Many confessionals even provide printed copies of an Act of Contrition.

Finally, as you prepare for your confession, it might be helpful to read and reflect on the parables in chapter 15 of St. Luke’s Gospel, all of which illustrate the joy God takes in those who repent and return to him. These include the parable of the lost sheep, the prodigal son and the woman who rejoices over finding a lost coin.

Jesus concludes the parable of the lost coin by saying: “In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Lk 15:10).

(Jenna Marie Cooper, J.C.L., is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News.) †

## My Journey to God

### Be The Light

By Cathy Lamperski Dearing

That Star in the East—  
The Angels heralded it  
Shepherds and the Wise Men  
Followed it  
We too seek and follow  
This light  
And like the Shepherds  
And the Wise Men  
Once we find it  
We are to become it  
We are to become  
Light

(Cathy Lamperski Dearing is a member of Saint Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: The visit of the Magi is portrayed in a stained-glass window at St. Michael’s Cathedral in Toronto. The feast of the Epiphany of the Lord is on Jan. 8. It commemorates the adoration of the newborn Christ by the Magi, or Wise Men. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)





# Rest in peace

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

**BEIER, Richard J.**, 84, St. Boniface, Fulda, Nov. 25. Father of Denise Gehlhausen, Carla Libbert, Joyce Merkley, Daniel and Stephen Beier. Brother of Eleanor Schaeffer and Lorine Voegerl. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of 32. Great-great-grandfather of one.

**BUERGER, Mary Jane**, 76, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Dec. 7. Mother of Katy Buerger, Mindy Dablow and Jaime Williams. Grandmother of three.

**CHAMBERLIN, Janice K.**, 83, Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood, Nov. 20. Mother of Renee Dougherty, Erin, Brian and Eric Chamberlin. Sister of David and Matthew McAllister. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of seven.

**FORNI, Angela T.**, 88, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 9. Mother of Beth Chalupa, Marie Glaspie, Jane, David and Tom Forni. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of six.

**GORGOL, Nancy C.**, 67, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Dec. 5. Wife of Robert Gorgol. Mother of Joseph and Robert Gorgol. Sister of Jeanne Rollins, David and Edward Ormerod. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

**HAGER, Barbara**, 91, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Nov. 19. Mother of Camilla Gehring, Michelle Hager-Harrison-Prado, Veronica Kagley, Bridget Mitchell, Damian and Tim Hager. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of two.

**HAMILTON, Elizabeth J.**, 96, St. Mary, Greensburg,

Dec. 7. Sister of Margaret Hash, and Sharon, John and Thomas Tumilty.

**HANDT, Teresa D.**, 62, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Oct. 21. Sister of Sandra Allman, Linda Sneed, and Barbara, Ken and Leon Handt. Aunt and great-aunt of several.

**HARRINGTON, Dennis P.**, 80, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Dec. 11. Father of Patricia Sinovic, Kathleen Zendejas, Colleen, Eileen, James, John and Kevin Harrington. Brother of Joan Rysavy, and James, Larry and Raymond Harrington. Grandfather of 21. Great-grandfather of one.

**HEMMER, Paul J.**, 76, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 4. Father of Paula Black, Teresa Carson, Brian, Eric and Gabriel Hemmer. Brother of Carolyn Koontz. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of two.

**LAWRENCE, LaVerne**, 91, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 5. Mother of Dr. Steve and Dr. Tom Lawrence. Step-sister of Irma Johnson. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of eight.

**QUINN, Christopher S.**, 49, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Dec. 7. Husband of Jennifer Quinn. Son of Quentin and Marilyn Quinn. Brother of Jeff Quinn.

**RENNIE, James**, 67, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 9. Husband of Beverly Rennie. Father of Brad and Mason Rennie. Brother of Kathryn Fisher, Rita Mahoney and Mary Sparrow.

**ROSS, Barry S.**, 69, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Dec. 8. Husband of Anne Ross. Father of Tommy Kennady and Michael Ross. Brother of David Ross. Grandfather of two.

**SAGE, Jr., Bill**, 78, Prince of Peace, Madison, Dec. 8. Husband of Linda Sage. Father of Alison Sutton. Son of Margaret Sage. Brother of Sherri Sage.

**SHANE, Irene G.**, 94, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 4. Mother of Annette Swanson, Daniel, Guy, Steven and Thomas Shane. Sister of Thomas Voegele. Grandmother of 17. Great-grandmother of 39. Great-great-grandmother of four.

**SIMMERMEYER, Raymond E.**, 78, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Dec. 6. Husband of Edith Simmermeyer. Father of Carla Dwenger, Rebecca Hornerberger and Anthony Simmermeyer. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of five.

**SNYDER, Richard B.**, 78, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Dec. 5. Husband of Teresa Snyder. Father of

Sandy Foley, Annette Kron and Kathy Striegel. Brother of Mary Fink. Grandfather of seven. Great-grandfather of three.

**STEWART, Samuel J.**, 68, St. Ambrose, Seymour, Dec. 5. Husband of Billie Stewart. Father of Kara Schneider, Ashleigh and Ben Stewart. Brother of Sharon Burger, Anne Marie Goss, Sally Mogle, Mary Jane Prewitt and Steve Stewart. Grandfather of five.

**STRONG, Amanda L.**, 87, Holy Angels, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Mother of Cheryl Shields, Jerilyn Strong and Pamela Strong-Tender.

Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of four.

**WALSMAN, Robert R.**, 101, St. Louis, Batesville, Dec. 10. Father of Robert and Thomas Walsman. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of seven.

**WILLIAMS, Jean M.**, 91, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Dec. 8. Mother of Angela Garraux, Elaine Heiden and Michael Williams. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of five.

**WISSEL, Paul H.**, 88, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Nov. 3. Husband of Lois Wissel. Father of Ruth Cooper, Carey Giffen and Ann Wissel. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of two. †

## Christmas in Ukraine



Local residents sing Christmas carols during an air raid alarm inside a metro station in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Dec. 25, 2022. (CNS photo/Valentyn Ogirenko, Reuters)

## Providence Sister Thomas Jeanne Doriot served the Church as a teacher and journalist

Providence Sister Thomas Jeanne Doriot, a member of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, died on Dec. 19, 2022, at Westridge Health Center in Terre Haute. She was 85.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Dec. 29 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Thomas Jeanne was born on Oct. 20, 1937, in Fort Wayne, Ind. She entered the Sisters of Providence on Feb. 2, 1960, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1967.

Sister Thomas Jeanne earned a bachelor's degree in journalism at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master's degree in English at Indiana University in Bloomington.

During her 63 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Thomas Jeanne ministered in Catholic schools for five years in California, Illinois and Indiana. She also worked as a journalist at secular newspapers in Indiana and Illinois and at a diocesan newspaper in California. Beginning in 1983, she began ministering in a variety of pastoral settings in California and Nevada until she retired to the motherhouse in 2019.

In the archdiocese, Sister Thomas Jeanne served at the former Chartrand High School in Indianapolis from 1966-69 and at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in St. Mary-of-the-Woods in public relations from 1972-75.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

### Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

For more information, please log on to [www.archindy.org/layministry](http://www.archindy.org/layministry)



### REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

- 1 Ethics Point**  
Confidential, Online Reporting  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810
- 2 Victim Assistance Coordinator**, Archdiocese of Indianapolis  
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410  
**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[victimassistance@archindy.org](mailto:victimassistance@archindy.org)

### 2023 HOLY ANGELS WEEKLY CALENDAR RAFFLE \$20 PER TICKET

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Winners will be posted on church website [holyangelsindy.org](http://holyangelsindy.org).

For questions please contact us at: 317-926-3324.

LICENSE #001284



# Voice of the Church will again illuminate debate at Statehouse

By Victoria Arthur

When state lawmakers return to downtown Indianapolis on Jan. 9 to begin the 2023 General Assembly, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) will stand ready



to speak for the most vulnerable and shed light on the key issues of the day.

The opening of this year's General Assembly will occur just months after an unprecedented special session of the state legislature that saw Indiana become the first state in the nation to enact a new law extending legal protection to unborn babies.

As it did during the summer session and as it has for more than five decades, the ICC will draw upon 2,000 years of Catholic social teaching to influence the debate on important issues and legislation.

"The ICC is the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in the state of Indiana," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC. "Simply put, we



Angela Espada

advocate either for or against proposed legislation in line with the long and rich history of Catholic social teaching. As always, promoting the common good and protecting the most vulnerable members of society form the basis for the Church's engagement in the public arena."

Protecting human life from conception to natural death remains the most pressing of the Church's priorities—and, therefore, the ICC's. A pivotal opportunity arose on June 24, 2022, when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling that had declared a constitutional

right to an abortion, returning regulation of the procedure to the states.

The high court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* served as the catalyst for the special session of the Indiana General Assembly from late July to early August that culminated in the passage of groundbreaking legislation significantly limiting abortion. Senate Enrolled Act 1 banned both surgical and chemical abortions with some exceptions.

They include pregnancies resulting from rape or incest (within 10 weeks of fertilization), and in cases of lethal fetal anomalies or to save the life of the mother (up to 20 weeks post-fertilization).

In addition, the measure terminated the licensure of all abortion centers and required abortions to be performed in hospitals or surgical centers owned by hospitals. Historically, nearly all abortions in Indiana have taken place in abortion centers, such as those operated by Planned Parenthood.

Senate Enrolled Act 1 went into effect Sept. 15 and was almost immediately challenged in court by Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union.

The Indiana Supreme Court has taken up the case against the legislation. Hearings in the case are scheduled to begin later this month.

During the 2023 legislative session, the ICC will continue to serve as a voice for the unborn while also advocating for other key issues across the pro-life spectrum.

"We will redouble our efforts to fight for the dignity of life at all stages," Espada said. "This includes opposing assisted suicide and striving for an end to the death penalty in Indiana. We also will continue to encourage lawmakers to fund programs that support mothers,

babies and families, especially as historic inflation disproportionately affects the most vulnerable among us."

Last summer's special session, which also provided Hoosiers with relief from soaring inflation, included the allocation of \$45 million to support pregnant women, postpartum mothers, babies and families.

Fiscal concerns will top the agenda for this long session of the General Assembly, held every two years and culminating in passage of the state budget, likely in early May.

As in past legislative sessions, the ICC hopes to see a long-overdue update of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF is a federal government program that provides grants to the states for distribution to families in dire economic circumstances. Because of outdated state guidelines, the \$288 maximum monthly cash payment for a family of three in deep poverty has not been adjusted for inflation since 1988.

Much to the dismay of the ICC and other advocates for the poor, proposed legislation to update TANF has been passed over in the General Assembly.

"Even though TANF money flows to the states from the federal government and is readily available, Indiana has not offered an increase in monthly payments for the neediest of the needy in more than three decades," Espada said. "With inflation continuing to grip our economy, we need these changes more urgently than ever."

Other key priorities for the ICC that remain constant include supporting religious freedom and protecting the ability of families to make the best decisions for their children's education.

"There are so many other issues that fall under the umbrella of the common good," Espada said. "The Church, and

therefore the ICC, will continue to promote the dignity of workers and care for creation, for example."

In all its efforts, the ICC calls upon the Catholic faithful to stay informed and engaged on key issues and legislation and offers numerous resources to do so. The ICC website, [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org), provides access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive action alerts on important legislation and ways to contact their elected representatives.

The recently revamped website also includes access to a podcast hosted by Espada and Alexander Mingus, associate director of the ICC. In a recent podcast, "Faithful Citizenship," the two discussed the duty and responsibility that Catholics have to bring their faith to the public forum.

The ICC now has parish liaisons throughout Indiana to assist with communication and advocacy efforts but can always use more, Espada said. Information about the liaison role may be found on the website. In addition, Espada and Mingus welcome the opportunity to visit parishes to discuss their work and Catholic social teaching, which guides everything the ICC does.

"As we begin another legislative session that will affect Hoosiers in so many ways, we invite and encourage the faithful to partner with us in our efforts," Espada said. "In doing so, we can truly amplify the voice of the Church."

For more information and ways to get involved with the ICC and its mission, visit [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org).

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

## On New Year's, pope calls for taking the risk of changing the world

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The best way to usher in a truly "new" year is to stop waiting for things to get better on their own, and instead recognize what is essential and reach out now to help others, Pope Francis said.

"Today, at the beginning of the year, rather than standing around thinking and hoping that things will change, we should instead ask ourselves, 'This year, where do I want to go? Who is it that I can help?'" he said.

"So many people, in the Church and in society, are waiting for the good that you and you alone can do; they are waiting for your help," he said at Mass on Jan. 1, the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day.

While Pope Francis presided over the liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica and gave the homily, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, was the main celebrant.

In his homily, the pope reflected on how Catholics begin a new year by contemplating the motherhood of Mary, who "blesses us and brings us the tender love of God made flesh.

"Mary gives us hope," he said, and "at the beginning of this year, we need hope, just as the Earth needs rain."

Pope Francis asked people to pray to Mary to accompany the late Pope Benedict XVI on his journey "from this world to God." And, before leading the recitation of the *Angelus* prayer after the Mass, the pope asked that people "all join together, with one heart and one soul, in thanking God for the gift of this faithful servant of the Gospel and of the Church," who died on Dec. 31, 2022.

In his homily, the pope also asked people to pray to Mary "for her sons and daughters who are suffering and no longer have the strength to pray, and for our many brothers and sisters throughout the world who are victims of war, passing these holidays in darkness and cold, in poverty and fear,

immersed in violence and indifference!"

God wants to bring his peace into people's homes, hearts and world, he said. Yet to receive that peace the faithful must go "with haste" to encounter the Lord, just as the shepherds of Bethlehem did.

"If we are to welcome God and his peace, we cannot stand around complacently, waiting for things to get better," the pope said. "We need to get up, recognize the moments of grace, set out and take a risk.

"Today, amid the lethargy that dulls our senses, the indifference that paralyzes our hearts and the temptation to waste time glued to a keyboard in front of a computer screen, the shepherds are summoning us to set out and get involved in our world, to dirty our hands and to do some good," he said.

With the beginning of a new year, the pope said, people need to take time out from their busy lives to grow closer to God, "to hear his word, to say a prayer, to adore and praise him."

Devoting time to what really matters also includes dedicating time to others, he added, for example, by listening to others, especially the elderly, and talking "with our children, to ask them about how they really are, and not simply about their studies or their health."

In his *Angelus* address, the pope said that Mary reminds the faithful that "if we truly want the new year to be good, if we want to reconstruct hope, we need to abandon the language, those actions and those choices inspired by egoism."

People must "learn the language of love, which is to take care ... of our lives, of our time, of our souls; to take care of creation and the environment we live in; and even more, to take care of our neighbors, of those whom the Lord has placed alongside us, as well as our brothers and sisters who are in need and who call for our attention and our compassion," he said. †

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