

ST. PATRICK'S PARISH

In Focus



Singing in the darkness

Advent reminds us that we live in a time of waiting. We wait in restless impatience as we see a world filled with human suffering and violence, yet we live also in the joyful anticipation that peace, God's peace, will be born in us and our world.

In Luke's Gospel we meet Zechariah, who spent his entire life awaiting one who would liberate his people from the violence and cruelty of their oppressors. Toward the end of his days he became convinced that the dawn of a new era was coming with the birth of his own son, John, who would prepare the way for God's Messiah.

What was it that gave Zechariah the strength to wait his entire life—without any sign that the day would arrive—and yet not fall into despair? His

strength came from the sure confidence that God was in relationship with his people. Zechariah's faith in the unshakable nature of that relationship gave him hope and enabled him to live expectantly from one day to the next.

Have you ever heard the early morning darkness outside filled with the singing of dozens or even hundreds of birds? Even with no evidence of dawn, the birds somehow know dawn is on its way, and they greet it with song.

Isn't that who we are as Christians, people singing in the dark? People waiting, knowing dawn will break even when there is no evidence of it. People who, in the darkest month of the year, have the audacity to light candles of joy and peace because we believe the imaginative Creator who brought forth



fiery galaxies and fragile snowflakes is, in some inexplicable way, in relationship with us, is connected to us, is for us. Even in the darkest times of our lives.

You'll be sorry if you miss the North Pole Expo!

The St. Patrick's (Guild-sponsored) North Pole Expo will be here before you know it; Dec. 12 is but a few days off, with Christmas soon to follow. A few parishioners have been working hard making ornaments for sale at the Expo—watch especially for the "Angels Everywhere" ornament table. And the "sweets" table will be laden with plates of Christmas cookies and other portable delectables.

The popular auction will feature many unique items that will tempt you to bid, items that will grace your home or shorten your Christmas shopping list or add a tasty treat to your holiday table. (Watch for Rudolph and his sleigh!)

The North Pole Expo will be held on Sunday, Dec. 12, in the main hall. The "sweets" table and "Angels Everywhere" ornaments tables will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; the auction begins at 10:30 a.m.

Dialogue into the Millennium "Can We Live Simply?"

The theme for the Dec. 2 presentation in the lecture series is an appropriate question for us to ask ourselves as we light the first candle in our Advent wreaths: "Can we live simply?"

Although most of us fret about the commercialization of the pre-Christmas season and its emphasis on possessions, as well as the way we rush around from one task to another, we know in our hearts that it is not easy to *choose* to live differently.

Helping us to address this choice will be Rev. Lambert Reilly, O.S.B., who was elected by his fellow Benedictines in 1995 to serve as archabbot

of St. Meinrad Archabbey. The holder of multiple masters degrees in education and religious education, Fr. Reilly has conducted many parish missions and given retreats for his fellow

religious. He has also served frequently as retreat master for Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. It is a telling mark of his faith that for a collection of his homilies (published by Abbey Press in 1997) he chose the title *Because There Is Jesus*.

The evening will begin with introduction of Fr. Lambert Reilly at 7:30 p.m. His presentation will be followed by responses given by Jean Somers, a trustee of Holy Cross Parish, Champaign, and a volunteer at St.



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Communal Penance our call to reconciliation

One of the major breakthroughs in the revised Rite of Penance is the restoration to public consciousness of the social dimension of sin. Reconciliation with God goes hand in hand with reconciliation with our sisters and brothers who form the Church.

Especially in communal penance services, the ritual proclaims in word and action that as a community we acknowledge that no one is free from sin, that we are all called to a continual change of heart, and that we are all in need of God's merciful and healing love.

This year the local Church gathers for communal reconciliation

- Monday, Dec. 13, at Holy Cross
- Tuesday, Dec. 14, at St. Patrick
- Wednesday, Dec. 15, at St. Matthew

The service, the same each evening, begins at 7:00 p.m., with priests from the three parishes participating in each.



Welcome to new parishioners Paul and Wanpen Anderson, Cristy Cribbett, Amy Crump, Anne Hoeksema, Andy and Peggy Loftus, Thomas Thong Nguyen, Nick Schuneman, Bryan and Katherine St. Pere, Anne Villamil.

We welcome the following recently baptized into our faith community: Abigail Henry, Alexandra Henry, Joleeza Lynnea Alessandra Kinney, Lusiana Hadi, Sarah Leeann Acklin, John Melvin Acklin.

Please pray for deceased parishioners Bernard Huelsbusch, Sr.; Hazel Burgin Rodriguez, Ruth E. Shaw; Sr. Marie Golla; Lolly Schaller; Jerome B. McCabe; Walter Thomas.

From St. Patrick's "Gratitude Journal"

Three years ago author Sarah Ban Breathnach, with her national bestseller *Simple Abundance*, introduced the idea of daily recording in a journal moments of gratitude. Through years of disciplined gratitude, Ban Breathnach learned that "if you give thanks for five gifts every day, in two months you may not look at your life in the same way as you might now."

Recently parishioners were asked what they were thankful for. The composite list of their answers is St. Patrick's "Gratitude Journal," and surely makes all of us more aware of the simple abundance that surrounds us.

Members of the fourth grade religious education class said they are grateful for good news,



books, a free country, prayers, rich soil, and clean air. While eight second-graders said they are thankful for their families, three said they are thankful for upcoming birthdays!

Members of the youth group CREW included in their "Gratitude Journal" thankfulness for democracy, freedom of speech and press, family and friends, high school football, and God (surely not necessarily in that order!).

A St. Patrick's parishioner who is homebound stated that she is thankful to those who bring Communion to her each week. Other homebound parishioners said they are grateful for visits with family and friends, for life, and for the love of God.

One member of the Parish Council wanted more time to decide what s/he is thankful for (perhaps matter for a resolution at the next meeting?). The "Gratitude Journal" of other members includes good health, children, faith, the ability to give and to receive, an understanding spouse, fellow helpers at St. Patrick's, and the protection of the saints.

By taking the time to reflect on items for which we are grateful on a daily basis, not just at Thanksgiving, we will become increasingly aware of the simple abundance in our lives—and of the Giver of all abundance.

God sings his love song in our hearts

One day my husband and I were walking through a shopping mall with our two-year-old son. Josh was in a particularly cantankerous mood, fussing and struggling to pull free. Frustrated, David tried everything to quiet our son, but nothing seemed to help; Josh simply would not obey.

Then David scooped him up and, holding him close to his chest, began singing an impromptu love song. None of the words rhymed. He sang off-key. And yet, as best he could, David began sharing his heart. "I love you," he sang. "I'm so glad you're my boy. You make me happy. I like the way you laugh."

As we went from one store to the next, David quietly continued singing off-key and making up words that did not rhyme. Josh relaxed in his father's arms and became still, listening to this strange and wonderful song. Finally, we finished our shopping and went to our car in the parking lot.

As David opened the door and prepared to buckle Josh into his car seat, Josh lifted his head and said, "Sing it to me again, Daddy! Sing it to me again!"

I tell you this story because it seems to me that prayer is a little like that. With simplicity we allow ourselves to be gathered up into our Father's arms, and he sings his love song to us. We may not always hear the singing, but we know the song in our heart of hearts.

—J. W.

Name withheld on request.



Help Wanted!

The Communications Committee needs volunteers to page *In Focus*. If

you can use paging software (PageMaker or QuarkXpress) and can spare a few hours 3-4 times a year, call Mary Lee Brady (344-3752) or Mary Lou Menches (344-1125).

We couldn't do it without you!

In Focus is not the work of only one person, not even the work only of the parish committee (Communications) charged with communicating parish news to the parish—it is the work of many, many members of this parish, and occasionally some who are not.

Those of us who serve on the Communications Committee are grateful to all who give us feedback, even feedback on our mistakes and omissions, and all who let us know what our readers might like to find in coming issues of the newsletter. So let us here say a word of thanks to each and every one of you who made *In Focus* possible in 1999.

Thanks to the staff, who take time to look at a draft of the issue in a rather primitive form to look for errors of fact or concept. Special thanks to Fr. George Remm, our busy pastor, who can be relied upon to find typographical errors as well!

Thanks to the many individuals and committees who lend us snapshots taken at parish events to heighten reader interest. Thanks especially to Fr. Remm, the parish's unofficial recorder of parish life, who shares his photos with us (and you) in the pages of *In Focus*—check out the scrapbooks in the parish center lobby sometime! Thanks too to Cathy Salika and Lucille Salika, who regularly take photos of people and activities on request.

Thanks to all of you excellent cooks who have shared your recipes with us this year through the good offices of Lori McDonough. This year, we shared "quick fixin's" from the kitchens of Joan Causeman, Donna Smith, Joanne Arie, Anne Britsky, Frances Johnson, Mary Sleeter, Pat Doebel, Cathy Salika, Meg Grady, Judy Conover, and (in this issue) Sophia Zeigler. (Lori is always on the lookout for new recipes for *In Focus*—you can leave one of yours for her in the Communications mail box in the parish center!)

We have a lot of help getting words on paper about parish events past and

future. Committee members write some of the pieces in *In Focus*, but we frequently call on others better prepared or more knowledgeable than we to write about specific topics. Thanks to so many of you who have produced articles for us, at times on very short notice. Although we do not put the writer's name with each article, we do acknowledge all of them under our masthead for each issue.

This year our thanks go to writers Ellen Amberg, Joyce Baird, Carol Bosley, Mary Lee Brady, Mike Bullard, Artha Chamberlain, Sr. Charlene Cesario, Judy Conover, Micah Cottingham, Jean Daly, Teresa Davito, Mary Fonner, Meg Grady, Julie Herman, Carol Humpherys, Tom Kacich, Sr. Lori Kirchman, Gary Laumann, Mary Long, Cliff Maduzia, Rosemary Mathy, Leon Mayer, Alice McLaughlin, Mary Lou Menches, Emily G. Millsap, Frank Modica, Marilyn Murphy, Lenore Nagele, Nikki Parker, Hugh Phillips, Lu Pillar, Carole Rebeiz, Deborah Riley, Cathy Salika, Peggy Shannon, Nancy Steerman, Margaret Stewart, Elizabeth Talbot, Joe Tobias, Bill VanCleave, Linda Weber, Peggy Whelan, Barbara Wysocki.

Thanks also to Morene Christman, who faithfully produces information for "Holy Cross Newsline"; to Frances Drone-Silvers, who informs us about great reading materials "in our parish library"; to Judy Conover, who sits up all night after the Parish Council meeting to write up her notes for "Parish Council News" so we have up-to-date information about significant considerations and decisions affecting the parish; to Leslie Risatti, parish secretary, who gives us the names of people who are new to the parish and of parishioners who have left the area, have been married, buried, baptized; and to Fr. Gene Kane, who responds to questions about Catholic practice or Catholic teaching in "Q & A."

We are especially grateful to those who have shared their time and talent by paging *In Focus*: Linda Jackson (congratulations on your baby!), Joan and Ed Poletti (teamwork in action), and Andy Hunt (one member's former colleague who hasn't yet learned to

say no). And to Arden Howey, who will soon page his first issue (your offer gladdened our collective heart!).

Thanks to Marty Perry and Cathy Salika, who rotate responsibility for gathering and presenting information about parish doings in the *In Focus* calendar. Thanks also to Lori and Tom McDonough, who insert the copies of *In Focus* into the weekly bulletins and take them over to the church for distribution after Mass. It probably seems like a big job only when they do it alone!

These heartfelt thanks come to all of you from all of us: Mary Lee Brady, Tim Brenner, Artha Chamberlain, Mary Lou Menches, Frank Modica, Cathy Salika, and Peggy Whelan, members of St. Patrick's Communications Committee (new members and visitors always welcome). We certainly couldn't produce the newsletter without you. God bless each and every one of you!

If we've forgotten to mention anyone who has helped to make *In Focus* possible, please accept our apology along with these thanks!



St. Patrick's In Focus is published on the last weekend of the month in Urbana, Illinois. News items and information may be submitted by mid-month for the next issue. Written materials must include the name and telephone number of the writer.

Please leave news items in the Communications Committee mail bin in the parish center, or call a committee member. All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. By-lines are generally omitted.

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Articles and information for this issue were contributed by Carol Bosley, Mary Lee Brady, Morene Christman, Judy Conover, Frances Drone-Silvers, Julie Hernan, Fr. Gene Kane, Lori McDonough, Mary Lou Menches, Emily G. Millsap, Frank Modica, Lenore Nagele, Hugh Phillips, Leslie Risatti, Cathy Salika, Elizabeth Talbot, Peggy Whelan, Sophia Zeigler. This issue was paged by Andrew Hunt.



in our parish library

The parish library coordinator, Frances Drone-Silvers, has fielded several questions lately about the library and answers some of them here.

What are the library hours?

The parish library does not have set hours, but you are welcome to use it when the parish center is open and the room is not being used for classes or meetings. (Religious education classes are held there, usually on the first three Sunday mornings of the month.) You can borrow a key to the library at the parish office.

How do I check out materials?

Each book has a checkout card inside the front cover. Remove the card, print on it the current date, your name, and your telephone number, and leave the card in the basket on the bookshelf near the door.

How long may I keep materials?

We have a very flexible policy on this: 2-4 weeks is a reasonable time. If you need the materials longer, that's okay too—just don't forget to return them eventually. Some items are marked for a shorter loan period; you'll find that noted on the items themselves.

How do I return borrowed materials?

You don't have to return materials to the library itself. You may leave them in the parish center mailbox designated for the library (where staff and committee mailboxes are).

Do you have "something a little different" for Advent?

Is music a form of prayer for you? There are several cassettes of Advent music in the library. These make for good listening and can help us to slow down and focus when we feel as though we're racing from place to place in this season of preparation. Stop in and check out the cassettes and other Advent materials—they're on the left as you enter the library.

Do you have the book Fr. Remm mentioned recently in his homily about Jubilee?

The book Fr. Remm mentioned was *Proclaim Jubilee!* by Maria Harris. There are several copies of this book in the library, on the New Books shelf. Since a

high demand is expected for them, they are available for short loan periods only.

If you have trouble locating books or other materials in the library, or want to know whether the library has a book about something of interest to you, please call Frances Drone-Silvers (398-1458), parish library coordinator. She will be pleased to help.



Q: I haven't been to Confession for a long time and I was thinking I'd like to do this before Christmas. But I wondered, do I really have to go to Confession if I haven't committed any serious sins?

A: Well, there are two or three things to remember here. One is that no one is without sin; therefore, each of us has something to "confess," whether serious or not. Another is that sin has a social dimension that cannot be ignored; when we sin, our sin affects not only us but also our relationships with others, with the Church and with God. And finally, we Catholics are a sacramental people; we look to the sacraments for help in leading a good Christian life, for developing and growing in a dynamic, life-giving relationship with the Church (remember, you and I and all of us together are Church) and with God. The sacrament of penance is central to the Church's ministry of healing, of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Pope John Paul II, in an exhortation to the whole Church on reconciliation and the sacrament of penance in 1983, explained that Christians come to sacramental penance for reasons other than regaining grace lost by mortal sin. Among those reasons he mentioned a need to assess one's spiritual progress, a desire to escape from spiritual apathy and religious crisis, and a need for a broader spiritual direction that is readily linked with the sacrament of penance.

Individual confession offers enormous and important spiritual advantag-

An Amazing Presence

I am touched to the core with a presence I cannot explain;

A loving plan enfolds me. Someone is always believing in me, calling me forth, calling me on. I am standing in grace, filled with mystery, touched with the eternal. I cannot get away from goodness. I think we name you, God.



[Source unknown]

es, especially when we remember that the sacrament of penance looks particularly to the future, giving us grace to examine the direction of our lives and deal with pride, selfishness, greed, and other sources of sin deep within us.

In communal penance services, the ritual proclaims in word and action that as a community we acknowledge that no one is free from sin, that we are all called to a continual change of heart, and that we are all in need of God's merciful and healing love.

It is important to remember, too, that God is not much interested in the past. He wants our hearts, our commitment, our future, our love. The healing sacrament of reconciliation frees us to make this commitment, opens our hearts to the gift—and the giving—of love. Why hesitate?

Questions about Catholic practice or Catholic teaching may be sent to the Communications Committee in care of the parish office.

In Focus regrets

In the November issue of *In Focus*, Deacon Dan Murphy was incorrectly linked with the parish Evangelization program. Dan, with his wife, Priscilla, is spiritual director of the parish renewal program WATCH; Sr. Charlene Cesario, SCCM, assisted by coordinator Mary Long, directs the Evangelization program.

RCIA, a journey of faith

Those participating in St. Patrick's RCIA program (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) are coming to the end of the Inquiry part of their journey of faith and entering into the Catechumenate stage of the journey. On Dec. 5, the Second Sunday in Advent, the group will celebrate the Rite of Acceptance into the Catechumenate.

The men and women taking this step have been studying the basics of the Catholic Faith, sharing who God is for them and how God has entered their lives. With the assistance of the RCIA team, they have spent time in prayer and discernment and in reflecting on God's Word, allowing it to touch their hearts.

This decisive moment in the journey of faith celebrates the covenant that is being made between the catechumen and the local faith community. The catechumen promises to continue the journey of faith within and at the heart of the community and to offer to the community the witness of a seeking heart. The community promises to witness to the fullness of the Christian message and to provide all that is needed, especially prayer, to support the catechumen on this journey.

The Rite declares that the instruction the catechumens receive during this period should be of a kind that, while presenting Catholic teaching, also enlightens faith, directs the heart toward God, fosters participation in the liturgy, inspires apostolic activity, and nurtures a life complete in accord with the spirit of Christ (#78).

Many recent catechetical documents have pointed out that ecclesial catechesis is three-dimensional, characterized (in *Synod's Message to the*



People of God) as word, memory, and witness.

Word refers to the total heritage of the faith, what the Christian community has come to know of Jesus Christ.

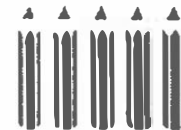
Memory refers to the Christian act of remembering, which is at the heart of all public and private prayer. Prayer is learned by praying, thus prayer is an important element of the catechumenate sessions.

Witness refers to the ongoing living out of what is being learned and believed. From the Gospels it is clear that when people meet Jesus, their lives change. It is hoped that the fervor of the catechumens will challenge the faith community and that the wisdom and experience of the faith community will be a support to the new believers.

The ministry of the catechumens is precisely this: their seeking challenges us to continue our own journey of searching out the face of God. "The people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized" (RCIA, #9).

Please keep these men and women in your prayers.

Holy Cross Newsline



On Nov. 9 Dr. Ted Mittler, principal of the High School of St. Thomas More, spoke to parents of Holy Cross students about progress in readying the school for classes in Fall 2000 and about his plans for the future of the school.

Two November fund raisers were held to benefit Holy Cross School: a book fair on Nov. 12 and a bake sale on Nov. 21.

Rich Kelley has resigned as co-Athletic Director for reasons of health. Wally Oliveira has been hired to monitor home games.

Students donated books for their Make-a-Difference Day project and \$360.50 to the Family Resource Center in Peoria during Respect Life week.

They also participated in field trips to the Lake of the Woods Early American Museum in Mahomet and the Anita Purves Nature Center in Urbana. As part of the Fine Arts program, students saw performances of "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" and "Tomato Plant Girl" at the Kranert Center for the Performing Arts.

Focus on ministry

Choirs



Rehearsed and more skilled than the congregation, the choir opens up another area of worship. In addition to motets, anthems, and service music, the choir enriches the assembly's singing with artistic beauty and musical complexity.

The parish choral music program provides several opportunities for parishioners who wish to participate in it:

- The 9:00 Mass choir sings folk and contemporary styles of music, often complemented with guitars, keyboard, percussion, and other instruments. Both singers and players are needed. High-schoolers welcome. Rehearsal: Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

- The 10:30 Mass choir's repertoire ranges from Gregorian chant to traditional classics to contemporary

choral music; some music-reading experience is desirable. High-schoolers welcome. Rehearsal: Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

- The *funeral schola* provides music at parish funeral liturgies, usually on weekday mornings. Rehearsal: Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.

- The *children's choir*, open to third-through sixth-graders, sings at one Mass each month and on special occasions. Rehearsal: Wednesdays, 5:15 p.m.

- Skilled *instrumentalists* of all ages are welcome at almost any Mass. Their music serves to enhance our parish liturgies.

Music Director: Dr. J. Mark Baker, 367-2665, bakerlo@soltec.net

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Jude Catholic Worker House, and by Larry Wilson, pastor of the First Mennonite Church, Urbana.

Afterward all are invited to stay for conversation and refreshments. There is no admission fee for the lecture series.

Parish Council News

At their November meeting Council members discussed what steps might be taken to meet the challenges the parish may face with the opening of St. Thomas More High School. It was suggested that a meeting be held with representatives of all committees to consider the various ways our parish may be affected, e.g., religious education and social action programs, financial support needed by parish students enrolled, etc. A task force is being formed, but the broader issues suggest the need for input and planning from several quarters.

Father mentioned that Shirley Splittstoesser and Teresa Krassa have agreed to serve as parish representatives on the high school's education commission.

Mike Brunk, Urbana arborist, presented his suggestions (with drawings) for landscaping the parish grounds, including perennials and some indigenous plants, at an estimated cost of about \$10,000 over 2-3 years. He would also train volunteers from the parish to provide maintenance, perhaps offering half-hour workshops from time to time to help the volunteers understand better what they are about. The Building and Grounds Committee may present the plans as a new program in January for the Council's consideration.

Leon Mayer, with Mary Fonner (who is on the Matthew House Board), visited the godparent facility funded by a \$3000 donation from St. Patrick's last year. Favorably impressed by what they learned, Leon recommended that the Council renew parish support of the facility for another year, at a cost of \$3300; without this funding, he was told, the facility will not be able to continue. The matter was tabled until the next Council meeting.

Plans are underway for the parish's Jubilee Celebration on the eve of the new millennium. The dinner of lasagna, garlic bread, salads, and desserts will be served by parishioners to invitees nominated by local agencies. About 30

helpers will be needed for welcoming all comers, serving the dinner, and providing transportation as needed. Entertainment may be in the form of board games, card games, etc., with background music.

Alice McLaughlin has gathered a group to plan the midnight ecumenical prayer service, probably along the lines of the service outlined in Maria Harris's *Proclaim Jubilee!* Local churches are being invited to participate in the service, which will include music, prayer, and reflection.

Deb Riley, representing the parish youth group CREW, presented the group's plan to assist Habitat for Humanity with the building of 55 townhouses for the needy in Washington, D.C., next summer. Expenses for food and accommodations at Catholic



Las Posadas, a Mexican Christmas "novena"

During the last nine days of Advent many Mexican families observe the custom of *Las Posadas* ("lodgings"). It is the most important Christmas custom for Mexicans everywhere. Throughout the U.S., especially in areas where Mexicans have lived for hundreds of years, the practice continues. Recent immigrants and migrant workers look to this custom to help them feel "at home."

The ritual begins on Dec. 16 and continues for the following eight nights, concluding on Christmas Eve—the time it took Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem.

In villages and urban neighborhoods families and friends participate in a procession to search for shelter each night, just as Mary and Joseph did. The people divide into two groups, the innkeepers and the travelers. Houses are chosen ahead of time, with one selected as the final inn. The travelers carry statues of *la Virgen Maria* and *San Jose*; others carry candles. They sing and ask for lodging as they walk from house to house, but the innkeepers always answer, "No, there is no room in the inn."

University are expected to be about \$22-25,000 for about 50 teenagers and 12 adults making the 5-day trip. The group has several fund raisers in mind, one of which is the cookbook already in the works. The group is seeking the Council's approval of the trip as a "new program," with a donation from St. Patrick's to help fund it. The Council gave provisional approval for the group's December and January fund-raising activities: sale of the cookbook, Christmas wrap, and frozen tamales, and Bingo.

The next Council meeting will begin at 7 p.m. on Dec. 16. All parishioners are welcome to attend these open parish meetings.

For interested parishioners, minutes of Council meetings are posted in the church vestibule and on the bulletin board in the office wing of the parish center.

Finally the last innkeeper recognizes the holy couple and says, "Yes, I can offer you lodging." At this point the whole group enters, eats, and celebrates. On Christmas Eve, the final night of *Las Posadas*, a figure of the Baby Jesus is carefully placed in the manger scene at the final stop, before the celebration begins.

That night many families enjoy a Christmas supper of tamales, *champurrado* (corn gruel), and other traditional dishes. Special foods, such as fried sugar tortillas and Mexican hot chocolate, are offered all around. Gaily decorated *pinatas* are broken, spilling out candy and gifts into eager hands. In many places the celebration continues late into the night, culminating in Midnight Mass at the local church.

Las Posadas helps us remember that Jesus came as a poor and humble child. Unless there is hospitality to all strangers, unless we open our doors to Christ, there can be no Christmas.



Deadline for submission of information, articles, and news items for the next issue of In Focus is December 5.

The CREW Review CREW kickoff a success

The CREW kickoff went really well, for the most part. I think a lot of people had mixed feelings in the beginning, but by the end of the night everyone seemed to be having a good time.

The CREW members from last year's group made an extra effort to make everyone feel welcome and comfortable, which helped loosen things up. The games they had planned involved a lot of person-to-person interaction.

One of the games had to do with how humans evolve from an egg. A person starts out as an egg and has to evolve through certain stages before becoming human. To evolve from one stage to another, a person had to win by playing Rock, Paper, Scissors. This game was one of my favorites.

We closed the evening of fun-filled events in prayer, led by Father Remm. I think everyone went home knowing at least one other person who was in



CREW hosts fall kickoff for newcomers to the youth group.

some way or other like himself or herself.

As for me, I went home knowing that I wasn't the only one who couldn't live without having Italian food at least once a week!

By Emily G. Millsap

"The CREW Review" serves as a forum for parish teens to write about their experiences with the youth group, CREW (Christ Renews Everyone's World). Please pray for our teen group and for a continued outreach to all young people.

Hanukka: Light in the darkness

Our Jewish neighbors celebrate Hanukka Dec. 3-10 to raise consciousness of a dark world in need of light, love, and concern.

The story of Hanukka begins about 170 B.C., when King Antiochus Epiphanes, an heir of Alexander the Great, forced Greek customs on all his subjects. The worship of Greek gods replaced Jewish Temple rituals. The Jews rebelled and waged guerilla warfare until their leader, Judas Maccabeus, overcame the Greeks and rededicated the Temple.

These events are recorded in the Old Testament's first book of Maccabees. The Hanukka story as we know it continues with details from an apocryphal source:



When Judas entered the Temple after his triumph, he found in the darkness only one small container of oil, enough to burn for one day. With the oil the Jews lighted the eight branches of the Temple menorah (candelabrum) and, miraculously, the menorah burned for eight days.

Hanukka as it is celebrated today commemorates the end of Greek tyranny, but even more the miracle of the burning oil. Each of the eight nights one more candle is lighted, using a ninth, or "helper," candle. Special blessings are prayed. The menorah is usually placed in a window so passers-by can see the lights. Families hope to become more aware of the light of compassion and affection in their homes and lives.

The fact that Hanukka is observed so close in time to Christmas has made the exchange of gifts an important part of the holiday in most American Jewish families.

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Nicholas Thompson, Andrew Wszalek.

Branden Jones, William Penning, and Tayler Stipes will receive this sacrament for the first time at a later ceremony.

Pray for them all, these young parishioners, and may their excellent witness lead us also to the font of mercy and forgiveness in the sacrament of reconciliation this Advent!

But... but... that's not a psalm!

Have you ever said this to yourself as you take up the Responsorial Psalm at Mass? The psalms used at Mass and in the Liturgy of the Hours are not taken from the Book of Psalms in the Bible, but from a liturgical book called the Psalter. The Psalter includes all 150 psalms from the Book of Psalms and also all of the canticles from the Old and New Testaments. In some medieval bibles, the canticles appear right after the Book of Psalms. So it happens that on the Third Sunday of Advent the Responsorial Psalm at Mass will be the Cantic of Mary, also known as the Magnificat, taken from St. Luke's Gospel.

The canticles are songs of praise for God's faithfulness and actions, so they

make good reading for the season of Advent. They are all known as "the canticle of ...," followed by the name of the person who sings them. Here is a list of the canticles and their singers. How many of them do you recognize?

Miriam, Ex 15:1-18
Moses, Deut 32:1-43
Hannah, 1 Sam 2:1-10
David, 1 Chron 29:10-13
Tobit, Tob 13:1-8
Judith, Judith 16:13-17
Sirach, Sir 1:1-13
Isaiah, Is 20:1-6
Isaiah, Is 45:15-25
Hezekiah, Is 38:10-20
Jeremiah, Jer 31:10-14
Three Youths, Dan 3:52-88
Habakkuk, Hab 3:2-19
Zechariah, Lk 1:68-79
Mary, Lk 1:46-55
Simeon, Lk 2:29-32

John the Baptist still prepares the way for Jesus

John, a prophet and a martyr, prepared the people of his time for the work his cousin, Jesus, was to do. And he continues to prepare the way for Jesus today with a call to us to reform our lives, as we hear in readings for the Second and Third Sundays of Advent.

John the Baptist doesn't get much press in the New Testament. Unlike so many others, he doesn't even have a book named after him. He is mentioned in fewer than 80 verses of the New Testament, with references in short narratives in the four Gospels and scattered passages in the Book of Acts.



We hear of his miraculous conception and birth, his public ministry, and his death in those brief passages, but only one meeting with Jesus. Yet Jesus himself recognizes the importance of John and his ministry, beginning his public life only after receiving baptism at John's hands. It is Jesus who gives John his greatest tribute: "I assure you, there is no man born of woman greater than John."

We do well, then, to listen to and to ponder John's message, his call to mend our ways, to prepare our hearts for Jesus.

The five themes of Jubilee The first theme: Liberation

The five themes of Jubilee, spoken of these days in reference to the new Millennium, are the *way* in which to conduct ourselves through life, conducting ourselves with ourselves, with God, and with others. Christ's *way* was the way of *love*: for the Father, for others, and for ourselves.

The theme *liberation* refers to any of the many ways in which a person may be held captive and so not able to attain full human growth or a fulfilled life. Political, racial, and economic injustices thwart humans at every level of life all over the world.

In the past fifty years many countries and religious bodies have tried to address this problem: South Africa, Central America, the Philippines, Namibia, North and South Korea, to name just a few. The bishops of South America brought their efforts together in a document highlighted by the now well-known statement "We must give a preferential option for the poor" since the poor suffer such deprivation.

We have experienced in our own country this effort to free African Americans, immigrants, persons with handicaps or disabilities, gay and lesbian men and women, and women as a whole. In addition, the injustices of

corporate powers here and abroad have kept children at hard labor, farmers incapable of living a humane life, and pressures that may be technically high powered but destroy the human spirit. The labor movement has tried to protect our work force from such inhumanity.

The Jubilee Year is meant to free people, to celebrate the one family of the Lord we call human, and what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do for us for an eternity. We must be free and recognize with reverence the freedom of others.

Next month: the theme of *connectedness*. Meanwhile, think of such persons as John L. Lewis, Rosa Parks, Gandhi, and John Paul II.



Youngsters celebrate First Reconciliation

On Nov. 30 several boys and girls will gather with family and friends to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation for the first time. Advent is a good time for this celebration since it underlines the themes of joyful watchfulness and preparation for the Lord's coming, clearly appropriate for children as well as for adults.

The children and their parents have spent several weeks together in preparation for this sacrament. They will be grateful for our prayerful support for this wondrous occasion; do remember them in prayer:

Michael Althaus, Kyrie Arenas, Valerie Arenas, Jacob Bayles, Josh Bayles, Gretchen Booth, Liesel Booth, Molly Cinker, Shane Conerty, Amanda Dixon, Renee Durant;

Tyler Faught, Alejandro Gonzalez, Rachael Graham, Austin Griswell, Lusiana Hadi, Christina Helregel, Zita Hubler, Adam Jessee, April Jessee, Allison Jones;

Laura Kadzere, Karolina Kalbarczyk, Mary Kimball, Andrew Koch, Johanna McCarthy, Lydia McDonald, Matthew Melander, Samuel Noonan, Santiago Orias, Courtney Osmond;

Jordan Panepinto, John Patterson, Colleen Peters, Bryan Shoda, Nolan Sons, Kammie Sturdyvin, Ben Thompson,

Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . .

Sophia Zeigler

Easy Fantasy Fudge

3/4 c (1.5 sticks) margarine	1 jar marshmallow creme
3 c sugar	1 c chopped nuts (optional)
2/3 c evaporated milk	1 t vanilla
1 12-oz pkg semisweet chocolate chips	

Lightly grease a 9 x 9 inch or 9 x 13 inch pan. Mix margarine, sugar, and milk in a heavy 2.5- or 3-quart saucepan; bring to full rolling boil on medium heat, stirring constantly.

Continue boiling 5 minutes on medium heat, or until candy thermometer reaches 234 degrees F, stirring constantly to prevent scorching.

Remove from heat. Gradually stir in chocolate chips until melted. Add remaining ingredients, and mix well. Pour into prepared pan. Cool at room temperature; cut into squares.





Santa's coming for lunch!

St. Patrick's annual Lunch with Santa will be Sunday, Dec. 5, from noon to 2 p.m. in the parish center main hall. Lunch, crafts, and a visit and "photo op" with Santa have all been arranged by St. Patrick's Social Committee for the children of the parish and their parents.

Tickets, \$5 for kids and \$3 for adults, may be purchased today (Nov. 28) at Coffee Shop after the 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. Masses. Today is the last day for purchase of tickets—don't miss this opportunity to get your Christmas wish list into Santa's own hands at this merry annual event!



Twenty-eight parishioners enthusiastically completed St. Patrick's first WATCH weekend, Sept. 24-26. WATCH, an acronym for We Are The Church, is a program that offers a parish-wide opportunity for renewal, especially significant as we prepare to enter the Jubilee Year. WATCH calls people to a deeper relationship with God, and a richer relationship with one another in the Body of Christ. The next WATCH retreat weekend will be Feb. 25-27.



On behalf of the family of Ruth Shaw, a heartfelt thank you is extended to everyone who sent flowers and cards and to those who offered Masses and donations to St. Patrick's Education Fund in her memory. Additionally, we deeply appreciate all who donated food for the luncheon, volunteered their time to serve and clean up afterward, sang in the funeral schola, ushered, or assisted in other ways. We will always remember our mother's deep love for the community of St. Patrick's.

The Family of Ruth Shaw

Advent 1999 Calendar

The Jubilee year 2000 is the celebration of the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus. That is why it is called "The Great Jubilee." This Jubilee is to be intensely eucharistic in its celebration, a time to rejoice and be glad for the greatest of all God's gifts—Jesus, who gave himself so that the world might know God's love. The Advent Calendar in this issue can be used by the whole family as a source of Advent prayer and activity. (Reproduced courtesy of *Catechist* magazine)



December, 1999

St. Patrick's Parish
Urbana, Illinois

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Because the In Focus calendar is prepared in advance of scheduled events and meetings, please check the weekly bulletin to confirm dates and times for specific listings. The deadline for the next issue of In Focus is December 12, 1999.</p>			5:00pm SVDP 5:15pm Children's Choir 6:00pm Children's Rel Ed. Urbana 7:00pm RCIA	7:00pm Choir 7:30pm Building and Grounds Com 7:30pm "Dialogue" Lecture by Lambert Reilly, OSB	10:45am Mass Champaign County Nursing Home 6:00pm Senior Citizens Potluck	
9:00am & 11:00am Children's Rel Ed 9:00am RCIA 10:15am Children's Liturgy Noon-2:00pm Lunch with Sista 6:30pm Jr/Sr High Rel Ed	7:00pm Centering Prayer 7:00pm Education Com 7:00pm Finding God in Daily Work 7:00pm Pro-Life	5:15pm Mass Immaculate Conception 7:00pm Financial Affairs 7:30pm Parish Council Exec Com	Immaculate Conception Masses 7 (Dec. 12-18) 5:15pm 9:30am School 5:15pm SVDP 5:15pm Children's Choir 6:00pm Children's Rel Ed Urbana 7:00pm RCIA 7:30pm Lenten Service Comm. time 7:30pm Penance	7:00pm Baptism Prep 7:00pm Choir	10:30am Mass Care Center 10:45am Mass Champaign County Nursing Home	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:00am & 11:00am Children's Rel Ed 9:00am RCIA 10:15am Children's Liturgy 6:30pm Jr Sr High Rel Ed 8:30am -2:00pm Guild Expo 10:30am Auction	7:00pm Centering Prayer 7:00pm Communal Penance, Holy Cross	7:00pm Communal Penance, St Patrick's	5:00pm SVDP 5:15pm Children's Choir 6:00pm Children's Rel Ed Urbana 6:00pm RCIA 7:00pm Communal Penance, St Matthew's	7:00pm Choir 7:00pm Parish Council	10:30am Mass Clark-Lindsey 10:45am Mass Champaign County Nursing Home	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:00am & 11:00am Children's Rel Ed 9:00am RCIA 10:15am Children's Liturgy 10:15am Knights of Columbus Noon Teen Liturgy	7:00pm Centering Prayer	7:00-8:00pm Individual Confession	5:00pm SVDP 5:15pm Children's Choir	2:00-5:00pm Individual Confession	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	7:00pm Centering Prayer	7:00pm Family Prep	5:00pm SVDP	7:00pm Communications Com	New Year's Eve 6:30-8:30pm Supper for the Homeless 11:00pm-12:30am Ecumenical Prayer Service	
26	27	28	29	30	31	

“Live the Jubilee” Advent Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>November 28 “With the Lord, a thousand years is like one day.” (2 Peter 3:8) <i>Imagine life without clocks, calendars, and schedules of any kind—just living in the full presence of the Lord, forever happy.</i></p>	<p>November 29 “Let the trumpet resound.” (Leviticus 25:9) <i>Blow someone else’s horn rather than your own.</i></p>	<p>November 30 “Be reconciled to your brother or sister.” (Matthew 5:24) <i>Mend a quarrel.</i></p>	<p>December 1 “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Matthew 25:35) <i>Smile and introduce yourself to a newcomer.</i></p>	<p>December 2 “That they may all be one.” (John 17:21) <i>Pray the Lord’s Prayer.</i></p>	<p>December 3 “Be still before the Lord.” (Psalm 37:7) <i>Find a quiet place to listen to the Lord.</i></p>	<p>December 4 “Rejoice in the Lord always.” (Philippians 4:4) <i>Whistle or sing while you do chores.</i></p>
<p>December 5 “On the seventh day you shall rest.” (Exodus 23:12) <i>Rest from worries and care as well as your work.</i></p>	<p>December 6 “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35) <i>Go to Mass and Communion an extra time this week.</i></p>	<p>December 7 “Be rich in good works.” (1 Timothy 6:18) <i>Join a parish group dedicated to good works.</i></p>	<p>December 8 “I am the handmaid of the Lord.” (Luke 1:38) <i>Pray a Hail Mary together.</i></p>	<p>December 9 “Be patient until the coming of the Lord.” (James 5:7) <i>Count the days until Christmas with kindnesses for one another.</i></p>	<p>December 10 “You are a letter of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 3:3) <i>Write a personal Christmas letter to someone who is alone or sick.</i></p>	<p>December 11 “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12) <i>Let go of a grudge.</i></p>
<p>December 12 “Rejoice with those who rejoice.” (Romans 12:15) <i>Be happy for the good fortunes of others.</i></p>	<p>December 13 “Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God.” (Micah 6:8) <i>Work hard at being a fair person.</i></p>	<p>December 14 “Every good tree bears good fruit.” (Matthew 7:17) <i>Think about good people you know and the good they do.</i></p>	<p>December 15 “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” (Psalm 34:8) <i>Thank God for the gift of taste and good things to eat.</i></p>	<p>December 16 “Remember those who are in prison.” (Hebrews 13:3) <i>Pray for prisoners.</i></p>	<p>December 17 “Eat your bread with enjoyment.” (Ecclesiastes 9:7) <i>Share a meal with good friends.</i></p>	<p>December 18 “Return, every one of you, to your family.” (Leviticus 25:10) <i>Look at your family album and share family stories.</i></p>
<p>December 19 “This is my Body.” (Luke 22:19) <i>Spend time before the Blessed Sacrament.</i></p>	<p>December 20 “Bless those who persecute you.” (Romans 12:14) <i>Pray for your enemies.</i></p>	<p>December 21 “Give some of your food to the hungry.” (Tobit 4:16) <i>Give time and food to a soup kitchen.</i></p>	<p>December 22 “Those who wait for the Lord renew their strength.” (Isaiah 40:31) <i>Exercise and strengthen your heart by doing kindnesses for someone who needs friends.</i></p>	<p>December 23 “A glad heart lights up the face.” (Proverbs 15:13) <i>Light up the face of someone who is old and alone.</i></p>	<p>December 24 “As you received Christ, walk in him.” (Colossians 2:6) <i>Walk through your neighborhood singing Christmas carols.</i></p>	<p>December 25 “And the Word became flesh.” (John 1:14) <i>Kneel before the manger scene and think about what that very first Christmas meant for the future of the world.</i></p>

