“O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant we pray, that we may share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”

God so loved the world that he refused to live without us. His deepest Love came in human form so that we might experience love. Glory and thanks to God for his indescribable gift!

May Christ come to you this Christmas with his gift of Love, the blessing of Hope, the promise of Peace, and the Joy of this season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Wanikiya Tonpi Wowiyuskin nahan Omaka Teca Oiyokipi! Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo!
God’s gift should continue to impact us every day

The adoration of the shepherds is depicted in this 17th-century painting by Bartolome Esteban Murillo. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated Dec. 25. (CNS/Bridgeman Images)

We are about to begin a very beautiful season in the Church’s year as we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation, God becoming man in the womb of the Virgin Mary — the Solemnity of Christmas. What we celebrate is a clear reminder of how God deeply desires to be with us. The Son of God became a child born into a human family. Through the Incarnation, God has demonstrated how he chose to experience human life so that he could not only be close to us, but so that he could save us. This reality calls forth from us deep reflection, because as Catholics, it expresses and gives clear focus in how we are to live from this reality in every day life.

In other words, it must extend far beyond just this time of the year. The real meaning of Christmas is part of the Christian past, but must also be part of our present and future. The real meaning of Christmas defines who we are and to what the birth of this child calls us. This gift should continue to impact us every day in how we choose to follow Christ. Our whole identity as human beings is bound up in this mystery of Christmas. But this birth is only a moment in the unfolding of God’s plan for both Christ and us.

For Christ, God’s plan was taking on your sins and mine, and the sins of all humanity in an ultimate act of love. The manger became the cross where eternal love was born into the world. For each of us God’s plan will continue to unfold as we continue to accept the grace and the gift of Christmas. A continuous reflection on this beautiful event will never cease to move us into a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Christmas is so often diminished to a one-day celebration, like a holy day or a Sunday which has a birthday party included with it. For many, Christmas ends when the decorations are taken down shortly after Christmas Day and life returns to its wintry normal. As the world moves into “ordinary time,” the birth of our Savior — the greatest expression of the Father’s love — will be just a memory. If we allow the Christmas reality to settle deeply into our hearts, we recognize more fully the power of this gift of incarnation and how it calls from us a response.

In the words of Pope Francis, “The power of this Child, Son of God and Son of Mary, is not the power of this world, based on might and wealth; it is the power of love. It is the power which created the heavens and the earth, which gives life to all creation: to minerals, plants and animals; it is the force which attracts man and woman, and makes them one flesh, one single existence; it is the power which gives new birth, pardons faults, reconciles enemies, and transforms evil into good. It is the power of God. This power of love led Jesus Christ to strip himself of his glory and become man; it led him to give his life on the cross and to rise from the dead. It is the power of service, which inaugurates in our world the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice and peace.”

In other words, this love and its power awaits each of us. In fact, it comes looking for us. In the birth of Jesus, God is truly close to each one of us, and he wants to meet us, wherever we are in this relationship. He desires to lead us to himself. There is always more for him to share with us. He is that shining star, that true light, which dispels the darkness that envelops our lives and the whole world.

The following Christmas card verse says it well: “Love has a name – Jesus; Love has a place – Our hearts; Love has a story. And it is not finished yet.” As we contemplate this mystery of love, the Lord draws us deeper into this relationship, and yes, it will shake the very foundation of our lives again and again, but in this way: we will come to know LOVE in a deeper way; we will come to love in a deeper way; the world will then be transformed by our love in a new way. Christmas is a timeless story, a story without end to be carried and lived through the ages.

As we celebrate this gift of Christmas, let us gaze upon this baby born into poverty with humility and trust. With the wise men and shepherds, let us enter into the real Christmas, bringing to Jesus all that we are and hope to be. Then we will enjoy the true experience of Christmas – the beauty and gift of being loved by a God who chose to enter into our world. Our response to this gift can only be: Thank you. Thank you, because I can never repay you!

Merry Christmas to all!
**Christmas and Solemnity of Mary Mass attendance**

Christmas is a holy day of obligation. So is every Sunday. Catholic are obliged on Sundays and holy days, including Christmas, to celebrate the Mass of the Sunday or the holy day. To celebrate the Mass of the day means to participate in a Mass in which the readings and the prayers are those of the Sunday or the holy day.

This year, Christmas falls on a Monday. Since it is a holy day of obligation, Catholic are required to participate in Mass in which the readings and prayers of Christmas are used. In addition, Catholic are required to celebrate a Mass with the readings and prayers of the Fourth Sunday of Advent which is December 23-24. Thus, Catholics will attend Mass twice between Saturday and Monday, once for the Fourth Sunday of Advent and also for Christmas. It is not possible to fulfill both obligations by attending one Mass on the evening of December 24.

The obligation for the Fourth Sunday of Advent can be fulfilled on Saturday evening, December 23 or on Sunday morning, December 24. The Christmas obligation can be fulfilled on Sunday evening, December 24 or on Monday, December 25. There is no single Mass that fulfills both obligations.

The following Monday, January 1 is also a holy day, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. The guidelines above apply in this case for scheduling Mass for Sunday and the solemnity. The Mass on Sunday is for the Feast of the Holy Family. The Motherhood of Mary will be celebrated on Monday. However, when this solemnity falls on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated (not obligatory).

Please check with your parish regarding the Mass times for these two weekends and holy days and which Masses are being celebrated on each day.

— Fr. Michel Mulloy  
Vicar General

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**Priest assignments:**

**Eagle Butte**

Bishop Robert D. Gruss has arranged for two priests from India to serve in the Diocese of Rapid City. He worked with Fr. Biju Joseph Chirathara, Superior of the Sanjeev Sadana Society (Holy Spirit Fathers) located in Telaganda, India. This religious congregation has a missionary charism to go out and share the joy of the Gospel.

**Fr. John Praveen Kumar Itukulapati**, and **Fr. George Vincent Savarimuthu**, have been assigned as parochial vicars to All Saints Church, Eagle Butte, and its missions. Eagle Butte is on the Cheyenne River Reservation and its seven mission parishes include: Immaculate Conception, Bridger; St. Joseph, Cherry Creek; Sacred Heart, Dupree; St. Catherine, Promise; St. Joseph, Ridgeview; Sacred Heart, Red Scaffold; and Sacred Heart, White Horse. They will serve with Fr. Dan Juelfs, pastor.

**Lower Brule**

Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, provincial superior from the Priests of the Sacred Heart, Hales Corner, Wis., has assigned **Fr. Mark Mastin, SCJ**, 60, to the Lower Brule Pastoral Team in November following his service with the U.S. Army. After four years as an active-duty chaplain, including a nine-month tour in Afghanistan, Father Mastin worked for the past year as a contract chaplain at Fort Gordon in Georgia.

Previous to his military service he served in parish ministry, as well as in the order’s vocation development. Father Mastin is no stranger to South Dakota; before entering the Army in 2011, he helped out for several months at St. James Parish in Chamberlain. He was ordained in 2007.

**New Deacon Couple**

A deacon from the Diocese of Sioux Falls, **Deacon John Steffen**, has been granted faculties to minister in the Diocese of Rapid City by Bishop Robert D. Gruss. He was ordained May 24, 2012, in the Diocese of Sioux Falls. He will be ministering in nursing homes and doing other parish work for St. Therese the Little Flower Church, Rapid City, and St. John the Evangelist Church, New Underwood. He is pictured with his wife, Rose. (WRC photo)
Let go of grudges, stop whining, find joy with Jesus

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians must be strong and let go of all the bitterness and negativity that prevent them from experiencing God’s consolation and joy, Pope Francis said. “So many times, we cling to what’s negative, we hold on to the wound of sin inside of us, and many times, the preference is to stay there, alone,” he said in his homily Dec. 11 at morning Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae. Instead, Jesus always tells people to “get up” and have no fear, because he is there to offer salvation, consolation and joy, the pope said. The pope’s homily focused on the day’s reading from Isaiah (35:1-10) in which the prophet foresaw the glory of the Lord, who will come “with vindication; with divine recompense, he comes to save you.” This is why people must “strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak” and “be strong, fear not” because of the coming of the Lord, the pope said.

God does not lead us into temptation,
Satan does, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Italian and English translations of the “Our Father” can give believers the wrong impression that God can and does lead people into temptation, Pope Francis said. The Italian bishops’ television channel, TV2000, has been broadcasting a series of conversations between the pope and a Catholic prison chaplain looking at the Lord’s Prayer line by line. The episode broadcast Dec. 6 focused on the line, “Lead us not into temptation.” Father Marco Pozza told the pope that friends have asked him, “Can God really lead us into temptation?” “This is not a good translation,” the pope said. The standard versions of the prayer are translated from the Latin, which was translated from the New Testament in Greek. While he said nothing about ordering a new translation, Pope Francis noted how the French bishops had decided that beginning Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent, French Catholics would change the line to the equivalent of “do not let us enter into temptation.”

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KAYE HAGGERTY, COMUNITA CENACOLO AMERICA
A HOPE IS REBORN

CHRISTOPHER MOTZ, SD CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER VISIT: WWW.TERRASANCTA.ORG OR AMY JULIAN, DIRECTOR OF FAMILY LIFE MINISTRIES: AJULIAN@DIORC.ORG
December 12, Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City, Bishop Robert Gruss celebrated a bi-lingual Spanish-English Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It is the largest Latino celebration held in the diocese and commemorates St. Juan Diego’s encounter with the Virgin Mary. She arranged flowers within his tilma and told him this would be the sign he was to present to his bishop. Inside the tilma, the bishop also found an image of the Virgin Mary.

The Dec. 12 Mass can be viewed on the website for Diocese of Rapid City, www.rapidcitydiocese.org. Additional photos can be seen Facebook, facebook.com/DioceseofRapidCity.
Serra Clubs support vocations through building friendships

By Laurie Hallstrom

Vocations Director Fr. Mark McCormick first heard of the Serra Club 34 years ago when he was a seminarian in St. John Vianney College Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. “They would have dinners at restaurants and invite us to tell our stories. I always wondered why our diocese never had a Serra Club.”

Last year, Al Wolf, from the Bismarck, N.D. chapter of the Serra Club, met with Bishop Robert Gruss and Father McCormick about chartering a Serra Club in the Diocese of Rapid City.

On November 30, an introductory meeting was held at Terra Sancta Retreat Center. About 60 people came to hear about the club: members of parish vocations committees, parents of seminarians and religious, and others who would like to help foster vocations in the diocese.

Opening the program, Father McCormick said, “Vocations are booming in our diocese, we want to create a culture where it’s normal for young men and women to think about a deeper relationship with Christ in their lives.”

He quoted statistics on vocations from a CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) study. (See box)

The Serra Club was founded by four Catholic men in Seattle who met in 1934 to discuss ways they could share their faith. They selected supporting seminarians and priests in their diocese. Later they chose Padre Junipero Serra, a Spanish Missionary, as their patron. He was canonized September 23, 2015. They modeled their new club on the service clubs which were popular in the United States. Today the Serra Club has more than 20,000 members in 30 countries.

Speakers included Greg Schwietz, President of Serra USA, from Omaha, Neb., discusses the possibility of forming a Serra Club in the Diocese of Rapid City, on Nov. 30, at Terra Sancta Retreat Center. (WRC photos by Laurie Hallstrom)

“If you live the life of a Serran, you are living a whole different life, you are living a life of experience, culture, and service. We need a better life for people, a more spiritual life. How would you feel if there was a young man who might be a priest, but he was never asked, no one talked to him about that possibility? What if no one was around to encourage him?” asked Wolf.

Region 8 Director Bill Olmstead, Diocese of Duluth, said the Serra Club’s mission is to foster and promote priestly vocations and encourage and affirm vocations to consecrated religious life. It also assists members in their call to holiness.

“Be confident, the Lord of harvest will never turn away,” said Olmstead.

Two of the Serra Club speakers were Dianne Breen, Diocese of Sioux Falls, and Al Wolf, Diocese of Bismarck, N.D. The information program was sponsored by the Office of Vocations.

Tuesday, January 23, 2018, at Terra Sancta Retreat Center, 7 p.m., there will be a second meeting. The purpose of that meeting will be to outline the steps necessary to charter the club, and the organizational structure of the organization as well as to talk about possible activities for the newly formed club. Everyone welcome.

Office of Vocations 605-716-5214.

Greg Schwietz, President of Serra USA, from Omaha, Neb., discusses the possibility of forming a Serra Club in the Diocese of Rapid City, on Nov. 30, at Terra Sancta Retreat Center. (WRC photos by Laurie Hallstrom)

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December 22, Friday
• *Simbang Gabi*: A Filipino Advent celebration with Fr. Jason Marco from the Diocese of Cheyenne. Held in Holy Cross Chapel, Terra Sancta, 6:30 p.m. Potluck to follow. All are invited. Facebook Event “Simbang Gabi in Rapid City” or 605-430-7392.

December 29, Friday

January 4, Friday
• Deadline for submissions. Paper mailed Tuesday, January 23. 605-343-3541
  ℡hallstrom@diorc.org
  ℡bberreth@diorc.org

January 5, Friday
• *World Apostolate of Fatima*: First Friday prayers and devotions 6 p.m. in the Sacred Heart Chapel, Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. First Saturday, January 6, begins with prayers at 7:45 a.m. followed by 8 a.m. Mass and exposition in Our Lady’s Chapel, Cathedral. Dr. Kopriva 605-343-6202.

January 9, Tuesday
• *Catholics Returning Home*: Six-week program for those who have been away from the church and are thinking about returning. Begins at 7 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Church. No charge. Dcn. Greg Sass gsass@diorc.org or ReturningCatholics.net.

January 12, Friday
• *Heart to Heart Weekend for the Engaged*: For engaged couples to deepen their relationship with each other and God by exploring the Catholic church’s vision of marriage. Required for couples doing marriage prep in the diocese. Ends January 14. terrasancta.org/heart2heart.

January 19, Friday

January 25, Thursday
• *Beginning Experience, Separated, Divorced, & Widow/ed Support Group, Coping with Life Alone*: Nine week, non-denominational group open to all Christian men and women hurting following a separation, divorce or death of a spouse. Begins at 7 p.m. at St. Therese the Little Flower Church, Rapid City. $30 registration fee, scholarships available. Amy 605-716-5214 or ajulian@diorc.org.

January 26, Thursday

January 27, Saturday
• *NPM Winter Meeting*: Begins at 9:30 a.m. at St. Isaac Jogues Church, Rapid City. Maria Munoz and Toni Wilkins will speak on “Successful Approaches to Music Ministry in a Bilingual, Multicultural Environment,” including a vote on bilingual songs for suggested use in the diocese. Amber Larsen will present “Worship Aids” including information on compiling, formatting, publishing, and obtaining copyrights. Pat McDowell 605-787-0639 or patmcdowell44@gmail.com by January 25.

• *Social Justice Winter Workshop, “Rock Bottom: Addiction, Prison, Suicide”*: How can we help our loved ones who are hurting? Speakers address prison ministry, addiction recovery, and suicide prevention. $25 pre-registration, $15 students. $35 at the door. terrasancta.org.

• *Natural Family Planning*: Seminar for engaged couples or anyone wanting to learn more about natural family planning. To be held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rapid City, from 9 a.m.-noon. Preregistration required. Amy 605-716-5214 or ajulian@diorc.org.

January 28, Sunday
• *Roe vs. Wade Memorial Observance*: Held at St. Therese the Little Flower Church from 1:30-3:30 p.m. with reception to follow. Includes speaker Stephanie Hatley and presentation of March for Life Scholarships. Diane Ange 605-721-3065.

January 29, Monday
• *Men in Black Basketball Game*: Begins with community dinner followed by games between students and teachers and the students and priests. A basketball signed by the priests will be auctioned off. Held at St. Thomas More High School.
• *Heal your grief Bereavement Support Group*: Eight-week, non-denominational support group for Christian adults grieving the loss of a loved one. Begins at 7 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. Janece Riemann 605-343-5547 or George Wallace 605-721-3811.

February 26, Monday
• *Directed Silent Retreat*: Led by Father Mark McCormick. Includes time for adoration, confession, rosary, Mass and quiet. Sponsored by the Offices of Faith Formation and Family Life Ministries. Amy 605-716-5214 or ajulian@diorc.org.

Events Schedule

Diocesan Masses for Life Matching Grant
Prayer is essential to ensuring a culture of life in South Dakota and throughout the nation. Again this year, the Diocesan Social Justice Commission will match total donations made for the Diocesan Masses for Life project, up to a total of $250. The Masses are coordinated by the Blessed Sacrament Parish Pro-Life Committee, but are offered daily at parishes throughout the diocese. This is the tenth year the diocese has matched funds for these Masses for the protection of all life. Please send donations to: Diocesan Masses for Life, c/o Mary Mitchell, 113 Berry Pine Rd., Rapid City, SD 57702. Donations must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2016.

Dome Mosaic
Msgr. Walter Rossi, rector of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, is pictured in a Dec. 1 photo. Msgr. Rossi said it was inspiring to see the work on the new Trinity Dome Mosaic progress, just as it is inspiring to witness the faith of the people who come to pray at the national shrine every day. The dome was dedicated Dec. 8. (CNS photo/Jaclyn Lippelmann, Catholic Standard)
In the middle of November, I took five young men to a live-in weekend at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Winona, Minnesota. Our young discerners were able to enter into seminary life and spend time with our seminarians, as well as with those from other dioceses. They were able to get a first-hand experience of seminary life by participating in the life of prayer, study and formation; plus they were able to enjoy several games of Ultimate Frisbee and attend several college classes while they were there. It was a great weekend!

Winona is about 620 miles straight east of Rapid City on Interstate 90. It can be a long and boring drive. As a way to prepare them for the road trip, I drew their attention to this year’s theme for the Office of Vocations, “I Call You Friends” from John 15:15.

Jesus made it abundantly clear to the Apostles that they were to be his friends. Jesus showed his chosen friends that he was willing to lay down his life for them by sharing with them the life he had with the Father. The Apostles were privy to the thoughts and actions of Jesus, making them his true friends.

Because of our theme of friendship, I asked the five men to limit their use of cell phones, video games and watching movies on the long ride to the seminary. I encouraged them to use this time of grace and discernment to interact and get to know one another and the other students at the seminary.

Franciscan Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, the pontifical household preacher, says that the essence of friendship is founded on a common search for the good and the true. Our drive there and back was really grounded in this common search for the good news in our lives.

We all shared with one another something about ourselves, the desires of our hearts, the things we wanted the Lord to do for us on this weekend and what the Lord wanted to do for us. The Lord does amazing things when we are able to be even the least vulnerable with him and one another, especially as men.

One of my favorite parts of the trip home was the praise and worship music to which we listened. The young men spent a lot of time creating their own beat box versions of the songs. Listening to the different rhythms and sounds they were coming up with made the hours and the miles go by quickly.

I was thankful that I encouraged them to limit their use of social media on the trip. It would have been easy for them to put their earbuds in and to get lost in their own worlds, forgetting about the person sitting next to them, who has much to offer them in friendship, and who can assist them in finding the good and the true.

By asking them to limit their time on their cell phones, I actually freed them up to enjoy each other, with time for turning out toward one another rather than the turning in on themselves.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow said, “Time is the life of the soul.” In the prayer after Communion on Thanksgiving Day we hear, “Help us, we pray, to reach out in love to all your people, so that we may share with them the good things of time and eternity.”

Time becomes a true gift and a blessing, especially when we use it to build our relationship with Christ, the Church and one another. The Psalmist reminds us, “So you teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom” (90:12). The gift of wisdom, which we receive at Confirmation, strengthens our faith, deepens our hope, and helps us focus our life on Christ — to keep Jesus at the center of our lives. This, in turn, affects the way we relate to one another and the world.

Since this trip, I have been reflecting on the way we use our time. The time we spend in prayer, time with our families and friends, time at work, and time at play. Do we make the connection to use the time we are given to prepare for eternal life or do we waste our time, using it for our own selfish desires, without even thinking about life eternal?

Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response, a pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops on stewardship, states: “A true understanding of stewardship begins with taking care of and sharing the gift of time. Stewardship of time involves the realization that none of us ‘owns’ time. Each of us is given only so much of it, and planning a careful schedule in order to have the time to work, to rest, to play, and to pray is vital in the stewardship of our physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual lives. How we spend our time is perhaps the clearest indication of our progress in the life of Christian discipleship.”

In this season of Advent and as we anticipate the Christmas season, with plenty of opportunities to be connected with family, friends, coworkers, neighbors and parish communities, look for opportunities to search out the good and true in one another. Make it a priority to become friends with one another in the Lord.

Be attentive to each other. Learn to put the cell phone down and to limit your consumption of media so you can focus on the things that matter the most — time and friendship in the Lord.
‘There is enough to inspire love here’

On September 29, 1952, the publication of the complete Revised Standard Version of the Bible was celebrated at the National Guard Armory in Washington, D.C., and the principal speaker was the U.S. Secretary of State, Dean Acheson. The son of the Episcopal bishop of Connecticut, Acheson movingly described the ways in which the King James Bible, which the new RSV was to supplant, had once shaped American culture and our national life:

“In the earliest days in the Northeast, the Book was All. The settlers came here to live their own reading of it. It was the spiritual guide, the moral and legal code, the political system, the sustenance of life, whether that meant endurance of hardship, the endless struggle against nature, battle with enemies, or the inevitable processes of life and death. And it meant to those who cast the mold of this country something very specific and very clear. It meant that the purpose of man’s journey through this life was to learn and identify his life and effort with the purpose and will of God …”

That biblical vision helped form the bedrock convictions of the American idea: that government stood under the judgment of divine and natural law; that government was limited in its reach into human affairs, especially the realm of conscience; that national greatness was measured by fidelity to the moral truths taught by revelation and inscribed in the world by a demanding yet merciful God; that only a virtuous people could be truly free.

“But this … did not exhaust the teachings of this Bible,” Secretary Acheson continued. “For it taught also that the fear of God was the love of God and that the love of God was the love of man and the service of man.”

At this perilous moment in our national history, when contempt and hatred seem far more characteristic of our civic life than charity and solidarity, it’s worth pondering how far we have come, and why. To claim that “the Book is All” today would be risible. On the contrary: As Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, remarked at a pre-opening celebration of the splendid new Museum of the Bible in the nation’s capital, the Bible has been systematically “bleached out” of our national life over the past several decades. And that bleaching has not produced a more tolerant people, but a far more intolerant civic life, of which the recent awfulness in Charlottesville, Virginia, may stand as a vile symbol.

At Thanksgiving-2017, too many voices in America seem to suggest that some of us must hate others of us if America is to flourish, even survive. But the great Dean Acheson had an answer for that essentially totalitarian claim, too: “In order to love our country we do not have to hate anyone. There is enough to inspire love here … Out of many, (Americans) are one. (Ours) is a unity (amidst a) great and vigorous diversity based on respect for man, the individual … And this, indeed, is the source of our strength, and of the lasting power of our society. For the solidarity which is built, not upon servility, but upon the common loyalty of free men, is resilient and enduring.”

We may, and should hope, that Secretary Acheson’s confidence in the resilience of America has not been falsified by the secularist “bleaching” of which Cardinal Wuerl spoke. That hope has been strengthened by the opening of the Museum of the Bible on November 17. Three blocks from the U.S. Capitol, we now have a striking witness, in architecture, art, and artifact, to the enduring power of the Word of God. The museum is thoroughly ecumenical and interreligious; all of the people of the Book, be they Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, or Jewish, will find much to learn there, in a series of both classic and interactive displays that nourish the mind and soul. Anyone who cares about the Bible owes the donors who made this striking facility possible, and the men and women who designed it with evident care, an enormous vote of thanks.

For if it succeeds in its mission, the Museum of the Bible will help reverse the bleaching out from our culture of what is arguably its deepest, noblest, and most important wellspring: the Word of God, molding the lives of the readers of the Book.
In all healthy people there's a natural reticence about revealing too much of themselves and a concomitant need to keep certain things secret. Too often we judge this as an unhealthy shyness or, worse, as hiding something bad. But reticence and secrecy can be as much virtue as fault because, as James Hillman puts it, when we're healthy we will normally “show the piety of shame before the mystery of life.”

When are secrets healthy and when are they not? When is it healthy to “cast our pearl” before others and when is it not? This is often answered too simplistically on both sides.

No doubt secrets can be dangerous. From scripture, from spirituality in every tradition, from what’s best in psychology, and, not least, from the various “12-Step Programs” that today help so many people back to health, we learn that keeping secrets can be dangerous, that what’s dark, obsessive, and hidden within us has to be brought to light, confessed, shared with someone, and owned in openness or we can never be healthy. Scripture tells us that the truth will set us free, that we will be healthy only if we confess our sins, and that our dark secrets will fester in us and ultimately corrupt us if we keep them hidden. Alcoholics Anonymous submits that we are as sick as our sickest secret. Psychology tells us that our psychic health depends upon our capacity to share our thoughts, feelings, and failings openly with others and that it’s dangerous to keep things bottled up inside ourselves. That’s right. That’s wise.

There are secrets that are wrongly kept, like the dark secrets we keep when we betray or the secrets a young child clutches to as an exercise in power. Such secrets fester in the soul and keep us wrongly apart. What’s hidden must be brought into the light. We should be wary of secrets.

But, as is the case with most everything else, there’s another side to this, a delicate balance that needs to be struck. Just as it can be bad to keep secrets, we can also be too loose in sharing ourselves. We can lack proper reticence. We can trivialize what’s precious inside us. We can open ourselves in ways that take away our mystery and make us inept subjects for romance. We can lose our depth in ways that makes it difficult for us to be creative or to pray. We can lack “the piety of shame before the mystery of life.” We all need to keep some secrets.

Etymologically to keep a secret means to keep something apart from others. And we need to do that in healthy ways because a certain amount of honest privacy is necessary for us to nurture our individuality, for us to come to know our own souls. All of us need to keep some secrets, healthy secrets. What this does, apart from helping us know more deeply our individuality, is that secrets protect our mystery and depth by shielding them under a certain mystique, from which we can more richly offer our individuality to others.

We derive both the words mystery and mystic from the Greek word μυεῖν which is a word that’s used to describe what we are left looking at when a flower closes its petals or a person closes his or her eyelids. Something’s hidden then, something of beauty, of intelligence, of wit, of love. Its depths are partially closed off and so that individual flower or person takes on a certain mystique which triggers a desire within us to want to uncover those depths. Romance has its origins here, as does creativity, prayer, and contemplation. It’s no accident that when artists paint persons at prayer normally they are depicted with their eyelids closed. Our souls need to be protected from over-exposure. Just as our eyes need to be closed at times for sleep, so too our souls. They need time away from the maddening crowd, time alone with themselves, time to healthily deepen their individuality so as to make them richer for romance.

Jesus warns us to not give to the dogs what’s sacred or throw pearls to swine. That’s strong talk, but what he’s warning us about merits strong language. Soul is a precious commodity that needs to be properly cherished and guarded. Soul is also a sacred commodity that needs to be accorded its proper reverence. We protect that preciousness and sacredness when we confess openly our sick secrets and then properly guard our healthy ones.

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‘Tis the Season

An Advent wreath is depicted in a stained-glass window at Christ the King Church in Commack, N.Y. Advent is a season of joyful expectation before Christmas.
(CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)
**Christmas shopping**

By Regina Lordan
Catholic News Service
The following books are suitable for Christmas giving:


“The Watcher” is a rare treasure in the world of children’s books: The verse is poetic, the illustrations are a compelling blend of photographs and drawings, and the story is a gripping tale of bully and victim ... or is it? The narration unfolds and reveals that the instigator is really just a lonely child desperate for a friend. Influenced by Psalm 121, which attributes all help to God’s loving protection and care, it is written in “golden shovel” form, in which the last word of each verse is a word from the psalm. Ages 6-10.


“Be Yourself” is a place for Catholic girls and young women to indeed learn how to be themselves, just the way God intended them to be. Colorful, interactive and brimming with saint spotlights, prayers and biblical quotes, “Be Yourself” will encourage Catholic girls to, as author Amy Brooks writes, nourish their relationship with God to better know his will for them and to use the journal to “navigate that relationship — on good days and bad days.” Ages 9 and up.


Advent is a time of anticipation and waiting, but it can also be a time for reflection and mindfulness of today ... if we take the time to look. Author Laura Alary welcome children to be aware, appreciate and change during Advent within a biblical and present-day context. She tells the story of Jesus’ birth within the framework of children’s daily lives, and she encourages children to anticipate Christmas by preparing to say “yes” to God with simple, practical activities and works of service. Ages 5-10.


Intended for young men and women preparing to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation, but appropriate for all teens, “Anointed” is a compilation of the teachings of Pope Francis brightly illustrated with graphics and photos, Bible verses and prayers. “Anointed” makes the pope’s teachings accessible and engaging, and invites readers to openly receive the gifts that God has given us. Ages 12-18.


Father Prak was puzzled: A group of curious children, beautiful in their multicultural diversity, were preparing for Christmas Mass when they started asking questions about the statue of the baby Jesus. Why didn’t he look like many of them, and why didn’t he look like Jesus most likely did, with dark skin, hair and eyes? The priest turned to God for help while an innocent parishioner in the church overheard the discussion. Answering Father Prak’s prayers through the eavesdropper’s clever idea, the children discovered that through the gift of Christmas, Jesus has come to save each and every one of them, no matter what they look like. Ages 4-10.


Beginning with Jacob’s ladder and ending with the angel appearing at Jesus’ tomb, author Charlotte Grossetete adapts biblical passages of God’s celestial messengers into children’s short stories. Children will enjoy the illustrations of the five stories, created by three artists with varying styles, and the narratives of God intervening in human lives with his angels out of love and care. Ages 5 and up.

**“The Secret of the Santa Box”** by Christopher Fenoglio, illustrated by Elena K. Makansi. Treehouse Publishing Group (St. Louis, 2017), 32 pp., $16.95.

There comes a time in every parent’s life when a child anxiously asks them, “Is Santa real?” Many parents struggle with this answer, knowing that with the loss of belief in the jolly old man comes the loss of a part of childhood. But fear not, the Catholic faith shows us that the real joy of Christmas is Jesus’ birth itself and the joy of the mystery of Christmas comes not from Santa but from everyone but Jesus himself. “The Secret of the Santa Box” is a needed book for curious children ready to move past the secular stories of Christmas and into a deeper relationship with the true meaning of Christmas. It gently explains the sometimes sensitive topic in cheerful and thoughtful rhymes and illustrations. Ages 7-10.


One in a series, “Molly McBride” helps normalize discussions about religious vocations through its cheerful and accessible narratives about a young girl and her women religious friends. Molly wants to be one of the “Purple Nuns,” and she wears her purple habit everywhere. But she will be attending Catholic school soon and will have to wear a school uniform. Thankfully, a fun-loving priest and his parents help Molly understand that Jesus’ love is much deeper than the clothes she wears. Children will love Molly and her cute wolf pet named Francis. Ages 4-8.

Lordan is a former assistant international editor of Catholic News Service.

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**Lego kit brings mystery of the Mass into homes**

ST. PAUL, Minn. (CNS) — Stephen and Jennifer Maas’ family business, Domestic Church Supply Co., carries one product: a Lego kit that brings the mystery of the Mass into the living rooms of families around the world. “Father Leopold Celebrates Mass” began as a quirky passion project, but it has morphed into a popular and successful ministry for Stephen, 39, and Jennifer, 42, and their five home-schooled children. The oldest is 10-year-old Leopold, whom they call “Leo.” It started that way, but it can also be a time for reflection and mindfulness of today ... if we take the time to look. Author Laura Alary welcome children to be aware, appreciate and change during Advent within a biblical and present-day context. She tells the story of Jesus’ birth within the framework of children’s daily lives, and she encourages children to anticipate Christmas by preparing to say “yes” to God with simple, practical activities and works of service. Ages 5-10.


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Lordan is a former assistant international editor of Catholic News Service.
From His fullness, we have all received Grace Upon Grace.

John 1:16

For more on the many graces experienced at Terra Sancta in 2017, please visit: http://terrasancta.org/GraceUponGrace

Five Years of Grace from the Lord

As Terra Sancta Retreat Center celebrates five years of ministry, with a heart of gratitude we remember all those who have made these first five years full of grace upon grace:

We pray for the Sisters of St. Martin’s Monastery and for their beautiful gift that started Terra Sancta Retreat Center. Their decades of love and ministry to the Diocese of Rapid City and their steadfast commitment to education, health care, and community development are unmatched and we are forever indebted.

We pray for the Terra Sancta Retreat Center staff and volunteers who bring the spirit of the Lord to life through their ministry of hospitality. May their acts of service be a blessing to the retreat center and all the guests who visit.

We pray for the donors of Terra Sancta Retreat Center and those who worked to make it a reality through the We Walk by Faith campaign. May their generosity be blessed and their gifts be utilized for generations to come through the mission of Terra Sancta.

We pray for those who generously provided support to the vision through the Terra Sancta Guild. May their faith be fortified and blessed.

We pray for you and for all the guests of Terra Sancta. That all who visit may find a place they can come away and rest in God, knowing how loved they are as a child of God.

Come Away and Rest in God + http://terrasancta.org/stay

Thank you for your hospitality and generosity. God uses this place to touch people. May He continue to bless your work!

I enjoyed the extreme beauty and peacefulness while here. I never want to leave. God’s presence is everywhere here.

From His fullness, we have all received Grace Upon Grace.

John 1:16

Terra Sancta Retreat Center

For more on the many graces experienced at Terra Sancta in 2017, please visit: http://terrasancta.org/GraceUponGrace
Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss  
Bishop of Rapid City  
606 Cathedral Dr.  
Rapid City, SD 57701

Dear Bishop Gruss:
We are writing to inform you that the Diocese of Rapid City is in compliance with the data collection requirements for the 2016/2017 Charter audit period. We have reviewed this information and will be forwarding the documents to the Secretariat of Youth and Child Protection for use in the 2017 Audit Report.

Thank you for your cooperation and for participating in the data collection process.

Sincerely,

StoneBridge Business Partners
Rochester, New York

cc: Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection

Remembering Veterans
Bonafide Youth Group, from St. Francis of Assisi Church in Sturgis, laid 170 wreaths on graves at the BH National Cemetery as a Spiritual Work of Mercy on December 9. Back Row: Jacob Palmer, Reegin Kehn, Brady Buchholz and Joshua West. Front Row: Mairen McGrath, Emily Pi, Nate Andersen, and Molly Buchholz. (Courtesy photo)

STM Legacy Brick Memorial
The goal of Campus Ministry is to connect students to Jesus and to the larger community of believers, to help students grow in faith and their life of prayer, to equip them for living and sharing their faith, teaching them to serve one another in love, and to glorify God with their lives.

We invite you to join the mission of Campus Ministry with a personalized brick. Bricks are available for a $250 donation. Each brick will be personalized to your specifications. Your donation and personalized brick will be a permanent part of our STM Legacy Brick Memorial. Your sponsorship of a brick will allow our ministry to continue to grow to meet the needs of our students.

A Mass will be celebrated every month for the intentions for those whose names are inscribed in the STM Legacy Brick Memorial. In addition during each November when the church remembers all the deceased, an outdoor Mass will be offered on the memorial grounds.

To purchase a brick visit www.RCCSS.org/campusministry
The “Bitter Pill” of false liberation

A major study published on December 7 in the New England Journal of Medicine concludes that hormonal contraception increases the risk of breast cancer for women. The research used all of Denmark as its sample, following nearly 1.8 million Danish women of childbearing age for over a decade. The study, as described by the New York Times, “upends widely held assumptions about modern contraceptives for younger generations of women,” especially the view that “newer hormonal contraceptives are much safer than those taken by their mothers or grandmothers.” It also establishes that the risk to women increases with longer periods of use. Major media outlets have done their best to minimize the implications of the study and “soften the blow” for the millions who, for decades, have faithfully embraced a “contraceptive mentality.”

This mentality has promoted contraception, especially the Pill, as a path for women to move toward equality with men by enabling them to reap the “benefits” of the sexual revolution.

But Mary Rice Hasson, J.D., director of the Catholic Women’s Forum at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. notes that the reality for women is very different, and “our lived experience has shown that this is a false promise.” Countless women, she emphasizes, have ended up being vulnerable to, and harmed by, the sexual revolution and its promotion of contraception as “the solution.” They have been given a “bitter pill” in the form of the Pill.

In a remarkably prescient passage dating back to July, 1968, Pope Paul VI already foresaw this in his encyclical Humanae Vitae, the momentous and beautiful document explaining not only the moral problems with contraception, but also its devastating effects on men, families and women in particular.

Contraception, he writes, opens a wide and easy road “towards conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality. Not much experience is needed in order to know human weakness, and to understand that men — especially the young, who are so vulnerable on this point — have need of encouragement to be faithful to the moral law, so that they must not be offered some easy means of eluding its observance. It is also to be feared that the man, growing used to the employment of anti-conceptive practices, may finally lose respect for the woman and, no longer caring for her physical and psychological equilibrium, may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and beloved companion.”

Paul VI offers a profound, but unpopular, observation — that contraception is harmful to women, and is, in fact, anti-woman. The widespread adoption of the “contraceptive mentality” has led inexorably to a new perspective on women, namely, that they should be more like men, and therefore they should, like men, become impregnable, through the ongoing practice of contraception. Very young women, sometimes just entering puberty, are now placed onto regimens of hormonal contraception that can continue for years or even decades. From this perspective, their ability to conceive life becomes tantamount to a malady needing to be remedied, a “defect” that renders them “unequal” to men. Strikingly, though, ever greater numbers of women are discovering an authentic and liberating form of feminism as they come to the awareness that, in the words of Hasson, “we don’t have a design flaw. Being a woman is good … and it’s a wonderful thing.”

Wonderful, too, is that confident feminism and liberating sense of self-control that enables a woman to choose abstinence before marriage, rather than contraception, and, once married, to choose periodic abstinence in agreement with her husband if their circumstances indicate they ought to avoid a pregnancy.

Hormonal contraceptives, meanwhile, throw a wrench into the works on a number of different levels. Beyond setting up a woman to be “used” by men, the Pill (and hormone-releasing IUD’s) cause significant alterations in her delicately-balanced physiology. These include restricting her ability to ovulate, altering her cycles and secretions, and modifying her uterine lining — in effect, forcing her body into a pseudo-pregnant state to exclude the possibility of a real pregnancy. Whenever a woman takes these drugs that wreak havoc on her biology. The church’s ageless teaching on anti-conception respects and uplifts women. It supports them in an authentic feminism that affirms their uniquely important maternal role in family and society, and esteems their fruitfulness in marriage not as a defect, but as a real gift.

Well-documented risk of thrombotic stroke, myocardial infarction (heart attack), and — as confirmed by the recent study — breast cancer. A woman’s body doesn’t stand in need of being “fixed” by these powerful drugs that wreak havoc on her biology. The church’s ageless but countercultural teaching on contraception respects and uplifts women. It supports them in an authentic feminism that affirms their uniquely important maternal role in family and society, and esteems their fruitfulness in marriage not as a defect, but as a real gift.
Bishops to put together pastoral plan for marriage, family life ministry

BY CAROL ZIMMERMANN

BALTIMORE (CNS) — U.S. Catholic bishops acknowledged that Catholic families and married couples need more support from the church at large and hope to offer it by giving parishes plenty of resources through a pastoral plan for marriage and family life.

A proposal for such a plan was introduced to the bishops on the second day of their annual fall assembly in Baltimore Nov. 14 and was approved by paper ballot with 232 votes in favor.

The pastoral plan was described by Bishop Richard J. Malone of Buffalo, New York, a member of the bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, as a response to Pope Francis' 2016 apostolic exhortation “Amoris Laetitia” (“The Joy of Love”). Bishop Malone, who introduced the idea to the bishops, was filling in for Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, the committee's chairman, who was in Rome for preparatory meeting for the Synod of Bishops in 2018.

The bishop said he hoped the pastoral plan would encourage long-term implementation of the pope's exhortation and also encourage a broader reading of it. Several bishops who spoke from the floor echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that the document was more than just one chapter — referring to Chapter 8's focus on the possibility of divorced and remarried Catholics receiving communion which gained a lot of media attention.

Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles, founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, said a pastoral plan focused on the exhortation lets the Catholic Church "seize control" of its message after the "blogosphere was forcing us to read it in another way." Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, similarly noted that the exhortation's Chapter 8 "got all the headlines" and he hoped a new plan based on the text would get more people to read the entire document and "read it slowly."

A new pastoral plan for marriage and families would not be "the pastoral plan," as in the be all end all addressing every detail, but it should provide a framework to help parishes work in this area, Bishop Malone said. Discussion from the floor about this plan was overwhelmingly positive. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Anchorage, Alaska, said the church should look for ways to lift up marriage and thank couples for all they do.

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco said the church should offer more than just marriage preparation programs and should provide something for couples after they are married. They should know about marriage before they come to church to set up their wedding, he said, emphasizing that catechism needs to start much earlier … the aim of the pastoral plan was to provide married couples with resources they would need to strengthen their marriage and families.

Travel ban to be implemented as legal challenges continue

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. Supreme Court said Dec. 4 that President Donald Trump's travel ban restricting entry into the United States by nationals from some countries can be fully implemented while legal challenges to the ban work their way through the lower courts.

In a brief unsigned order, the high court stayed a preliminary injunction on implementation of the ban, granting the Trump administration's request to allow its latest ban, released in late September, to go into effect. The order also urged the two appeals courts with cases before them to render "with appropriate dispatch" a decision on whether the ban is constitutional.

Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor "would deny the application," according to the order. The Supreme Court's order means that the Trump administration can fully carry out the ban — which is now in its third iteration. It currently restricts travel to the United States from eight nations, six of them predominantly Muslim. Most citizens of Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Chad and North Korea will be barred from entering, along with some Venezuelan government officials and their immediate family.

A friend-of-the-court brief filed on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in mid-September said the travel ban was "cruel and inhumane treatment" and that "denying refugee children life-saving entry to the United States based on an executive order clearly motivated by anti-religious bias, is both un-Catholic and un-American."
Strengthening Family Ties

Christmas is when we think of others. A time for family, feasts, and presents and when expectations are rarely fully realized. In the midst of all our rushing to complete our lists of ‘have-to’s and should-do’s’, I hope you find a moment of peace. A moment to enter into the stable and to recall God does not want to judge us or focus on our struggles, as He knows the stresses of life.

Christmas reminds us He entered into a stable, a place meant to house animals, not a palace fit for a king.

Throughout his life, Jesus too, felt pressed on every side and also knew the world many single mothers experience. “My God, why have you abandoned me?” reminds us that he knows the alienation shared by many recently divorced or the fear some face who live in a world filled with violence. He knows what it is to have tried to stretch the five loaves and two fish of our lives, to meet the demands around us, only to fall again and wonder if we have the strength to rise again.

The only difference is He had a choice. He chose to enter into our world to prove that love could conquer all. He entered the world knowing it is not as it should be, because He loved us and wanted to show us just how much. May we know, both now and forever, the peace He has come to share with us. Thanks for all you have done to extend this love to others this past year, through your support of Catholic Social Services.

*Merry Christmas from the Staff and Board of Catholic Social Services*

Please join us in our mission of service
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March 25, 2018
Begins at Noon
Ramkota Convention Center in Rapid City

Your sponsorship helps defray brunch expenses, allowing Catholic Social Services to direct all proceeds raised during the event to those in need of CSS services.

As a Major Sponsor you are cordially invited to attend a reception party Saturday evening March, 24, 2018. You will have the opportunity to meet Bishop Robert Gruss and Sister Donna Markham, OP, keynote speaker for the brunch.

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Native saints and servants of God spiritual experiences

By Deacon Marlone Leneaugh
Director of Native Ministry

Saint Juan Diego
Cuauhtlatotzin (the Talking Eagle) was born in 1474 in Cuautitlan near Mexico City, Mexico. He chose to live a life of poverty even though he was actually an Aztec prince. Even though he practiced the Aztec’s religion, he showed signs of having a mystical sense of God in his life. When he was around fifty years of age, he and his wife were among the first indigenous people of the region to accept baptism and convert to Catholicism at the teachings of some early Franciscan missionaries. In the year 1531, Juan Diego was hurrying to attend Mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception when he was stopped by the beautiful sight of a radiant woman who introduced herself as the “ever perfect Holy Mary Mother of God.” He went on to be canonized on July 31, 2002 and became the first indigenous Saint.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha
A saint who was spiritually mature beyond her age was the Mohawk Maiden Tekakwitha. She encountered Christ in her Mohawk settlement. According to the priest, she was well informed about the Catholic faith and asked for the privilege to be baptized. It was quite obvious that she was a soul with many gifts and graces. Such mystically advanced souls need guidance, but they are clearly chosen by God. What was really amazing was that Tekakwitha was a child of the wilderness and not someone who had formal training or teaching. Encountering such a youthful mystic was very unusual and perplexing. She exhibited such spiritual awareness and a strong will of God in her life. After her death, her body took on a lustrous radiance and small pox scars disappeared from her face as the mourners watched in astonishment. The message following her death needed no explanation and was simple, “the saint is dead” and all understood. She was canonized on October 21, 2012.

Antonio Cuipa & 81 Companions, Servants of God
A Cause for Canonization that was opened October 12, 2015 was that of the Florida Martyrs. Eighty-two missionaries and Native Americans were killed between 1549 and 1706. They are better known as Antonio Cuipa and 81 companions.

Antonio was an Apalachee Indian from San Luis Mission who was converted by Franciscan missionaries. His studies suggest that he was studying for the priesthood and served as a leader and catechist among his people. He was a younger man that devoted his life to God and at an early age often spoke about spiritual matters and had the desire to serve God. He was nailed to a cross and set on fire by another tribe of Native Americans. Witnesses to the event claimed that Antonio saw the Blessed Virgin Mary and could be heard saying to others being tortured with him, “Our Lady is near, be strong, be strong. Our Lady is here with us.” The Martyrs gave their lives in witness of their faith. They chose martyrdom rather than renounce the faith they had accepted and they died knowing their belief was worth dying for.

Nicholas Black Elk, Servant of God
A more local Cause for Canonization was opened on October 21, 2017, for the Oglala Holy Man, Nicholas Black Elk. At the age of nine, he received a vision from WakanTanka and was later baptized in 1904. He became an energetic Catholic catechist, retaining Lakota practices that paralleled his Catholic faith. He showed how Native American culture and spirituality can enrich the Body of Christ. He was able to utilize his Native spirituality as well as share Catholic teachings in his ministry. He was often seen praying with his pipe and rosary.

Nicholas had a genuine sense of God in his life and his spirituality was truly Lakota and truly Catholic. Perhaps Black Elk was gifted with more vision than anyone anticipated and he saw oneness in the Great Spirit and the Catholic God. He saw in Jesus a messiah whose message of love transcends skin color, culture and language to reach the hearts of all peoples who come from the flowering tree.

The common thread of these four historical figures is their early awareness of the Spirit moving in their lives. God blessed them at an early age and they recognized how God was leading them to be leaders among their tribal people. They experienced a God whom they recognized through other cultures and peoples. They did not have to give up their identity in order to become Catholic, but they retained their Native culture and spirituality.
Deacon LeRoy DeCory, 79, served in St. Francis and Rapid City

LeRoy Francis DeCory was born on May 23, 1938, in St. Francis to Caroline (Bordeaux) and Dallas DeCory. He moved with his brother, Cedric and parents to Scottsbluff, Nebraska a few years later. He graduated from Scottsbluff Senior High School and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He worked in California and then moved back to St. Francis and was employed and retired from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Road Department. He was also a Fire Chief for the St. Francis Volunteer Fire Department. He then resided in Rapid City until he moved back to St. Francis.

LeRoy married Phyllis (White Eyes) DeCory on August 17, 1981, at the St. Charles Borromeo Church in St. Francis. He was ordained as a deacon of the Catholic Church on August 17, 1994, by Bishop Charles J. Chaput and served in the St. Charles Parish in St. Francis and St. Isaac Jogues Parish in Rapid City. LeRoy served the Lakota people with prayers, comforting words and actions. He was always encouraging and supportive to the many people he knew and to his family, relatives and friends.

He always made you smile and laugh with his stories and teasing. LeRoy was a generous, kind, giving and positive man. He will be greatly missed by his family, relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his son George, his brother, Cedric (Maxine), parents Dallas and Caroline DeCory and many relatives.

He is survived by his wife Phyllis, his children Sue Lynn, Yvonne (Robert Paradis), Kevin; 36 grandchildren; 19 great grandchildren; his sister Sharon (Caroline, Iliyah, and Ivan), Sean (Jessica and Aden), and many nieces and nephews, and cousins

A rosary wake was held Dec. 8, at Digman Hall at St. Francis, Mission followed by a Veterans Roll Call.

Mass of Christian Burial was Dec. 9, at St. Charles Church, St. Francis. Fr. Jim Kubicki, SJ and Fr. Jim LaFontaine, SJ, concelebrated.

Burial was at the Sicangu Akicita Owicahe Cemetery, White River.

Sr. Marion Pasdiora, BVM, 89, served in Lead

Sister Marion Pasdiora, BVM, 89, died Nov. 24, at Mercy Medical Center in Dubuque, Iowa. Burial is in Mount Carmel cemetery, Dubuque.

In the Diocese of Rapid City, Sister Marion taught at St. Patrick Elementary School in Lead from 1952-59. She also taught elementary school in Boone, Iowa, and Wilmot, Wis. She taught secondary school business classes in Sioux City and Fort Dodge, Iowa, and Chicago, Ill.

In Mundelein, Ill., she served on a secondary school office staff as bursar/treasurer and business manager, was a university secretary, and later volunteered as assistant sacristan.

Jean Victor Pasdiora was born in Chicago on Aug. 29, 1928, to Victor and Barbara (Bouland) Pasdiora. She entered the BVM congregation Sept. 8, 1947, from St. Andrew Parish, Chicago. She professed first vows on March 19, 1950, and final vows on Aug. 15, 1955.

She was preceded in death by her parents and brothers: Victor, Raymond, Robert, Lawrence and Edward, Sr. She is survived by nieces, nephews and the Sisters of Charity, BVM, with whom she shared life for 70 years.

Memorials may be given to the Sisters of Charity, BVM Support Fund, 1100 Carmel Drive, Dubuque, Iowa 52003, or online at www.bvmcong.org/whatsnew_obits.cfm.

In Your Prayers


Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord

Born to Eternal life, additions to the November West River Catholic memorial listings

Kennebec, St. Michael
8/20/17 Carmen Madsen

Lower Brule, St. Mary
10/1/16 Ryan LeCompte
12/19/16 Margaret Goodface
4/26/17 Aurelia Pourier
5/11/17 Victor Grassrope, Sr.
6/2/17 Curtis Allen Middletent

Names provided by parishes.
**Ciao from Rome**

Nancy and Richard Boyd, parishioners of St. Joseph Church, Spearfish, just returned from a trip to Rome and Venice. While in Rome they visited with Fr. Mark Horn (center), who is studying canon law there. He expects to finish his studies next June. He gave them a tour of St. Peter’s Cathedral and several other landmarks in Rome. “Fr. Mark sends his prayers to all the wonderful people of the Diocese of Rapid City and he is looking forward to returning home,” said Richard Boyd. (Courtesy photo)

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**New Oblates**

On Nov. 11, feast of St. Martin, Kay Schwandt and Therese Brockmeyer made their final oblation and became full members of the Oblates of St. Martin Monastery. They made their oblation during a short prayer service in the Benedictine monastery chapel in the presence of the sisters and other oblates. The Oblates of St. Martin Monastery are Christian women and men, Catholic or non-Catholic, lay or ordained, who are spiritually united with the monastic community in seeking God according to the Rule of St. Benedict. They have discovered that the guidance of the rule can help them develop a balanced lifestyle that will strengthen and enhance their commitment to Christ, regardless of their vocation. Ecumenism is strengthened by the participant’s respect for the religious traditions and insights of each member.

Persons interested in being Oblates are invited to enter into a novice year, where they study the Rule of St. Benedict, pray daily, and discern whether this is where God is calling them. At a simple ceremony they receive a copy of the Holy Rule. After the year of novitiate if they desire to become Oblates, they sign an oblation paper, and receive a Benedictine pin, and are received into full oblate membership.

For more information contact Sr. Therese Marie Furois, Oblate Director, 343-8011. (Courtesy photo)

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**Rosebud Suicide Prevention Hotline benefits from Extension holiday fund**

Catholic Extension staffers in Chicago put Geraldine Provencial and the Suicide Prevention Program she runs at St. Francis Mission on their Christmas list this year.

Each year during Advent, Catholic Extension employees choose one ministry from among more than 90 mission dioceses to be the beneficiary of an office-wide holiday fundraising campaign.

This year, it selected Provencial’s work with addiction, recovery and suicide prevention on the Rosebud Reservation as the recipient. “I am sincerely grateful, on behalf of the St. Francis Mission Suicide Prevention Program, for Catholic Extension’s support,” Provencial said.

The exact amount of the Christmas gift won’t be known until the campaign closes in the fourth week of Advent, according to Robert Anderson, senior director of missions for Catholic Extension.

Provencial plans to spend the extra funds to host a community feed and suicide awareness event next spring to promote and advertise the mission’s Suicide & Crisis Hotline. The hotline is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week by trained volunteers and takes calls from the reservation and beyond.

The hotline’s motto is “No matter what. No matter when. 605-319-1280.”

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**Pope asks Mary’s help in fighting fear, indifference**

ROME (CNS) — Celebrating the Dec. 8 feast of the Immaculate Conception, the pope recited the Angelus prayer at noon with visitors in St. Peter’s Square, visited the Rome Basilica of St. Mary Major, and laid a basket of white roses at the foot of the Marian statue near the Spanish Steps.

In his prayer near the Spanish Steps in the heart of Rome, Pope Francis thanked Mary for watching over him and over the people of Rome, especially “the sick, the aged, all the poor, the many people who have immigrated here from lands of war and hunger.”

He prayed that Mary would help people “develop antibodies against some of the viruses of our times: the indifference that says, ‘It’s not my problem’; civic rudeness which ignores the common good; the fear of what is different and of the foreigner.”

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Refuel: An opportunity to draw near to Christ and rejuvenate

BY BECKY BERRETH

“If we are enthusiastic and excited about what the Lord is doing in our lives, then the faith becomes contagious to others,” said Bob Rice. “That is when faith becomes a joyful activity for everyone.

“One of my favorite lines from Pope Francis’s Evangelii Gaudium is when he wrote that an evangelizer should not look like he just came out of a funeral! The church has said many times that the first way we evangelize others is through the joyful witness of our lives. I think sometimes we who do ministry within the church can get so caught up in the ‘what of what’ we say that we forget to also give attention to how we say it.”

Rice is this year’s featured speaker at the annual “Refuel — Diocesan Religious Educators Conference” held January 19-20 at the Terra Sancta Retreat Center. He is a professor of catechetics at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, and will speak to this year’s theme, “Sharing the Joy of the Gospel,” while connecting the theme to the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment as well as Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation, Evangelii Gaudium.

“This year, in anticipation of the upcoming synod, we wanted to bring in a speaker who could help us prepare and make the most of it,” explained Susan Safford, diocesan director of faith formation. “At the same time, we wanted the topic to be broad enough to be relevant for those who work in all variety of ministries.”

According to Safford, the conference is based on a long ago youth ministers rally the diocese had sponsored. She wanted something where the presentations were encouraging, informative, and engaging and came at a time during the year when people needed a boost. When she began her work in the Office of Faith Formation and Youth & Young Adult Ministry in 2012, she surveyed the dioceses and found a need to revive the event, but open it to all who minister in the church — in faith formation, youth ministry, music ministry, liturgy, marriage and family, business and administration.

“There was need to bring people together for prayer, support and helpful presentations — to be with the Lord and receive him,” she said. “Everyone who serves the mission of the church, in whatever capacity — anyone who wants to learn more about “Sharing the Joy of the Gospel” — sign up. This is a great opportunity to be re-energized for the call that the Lord has for us, to learn more and grow in our work for the church. It is a chance to be with people from around the diocese for fellowship and sharing of ideas, and especially to be with the Lord in prayer and receive what he wants to give us.”

Safford hopes the conference will give participants an opportunity to draw near to Christ and allow him to rejuvenate and reinvigorate those in attendance for future work in their church.

Rice agreed saying, “My prayer is that everyone who comes will feel energized, educated, and empowered to grow deeper in their faith and be able to joyfully share that with others.

“Plus, I am incredibly good looking. I mean … dang. Just wait until you see me,” he added jokingly.

The conference begins with Mass at 5:30 p.m. on January 19, followed by dinner and the opening presentation. There will be time for adoration and confessions to end the night. Saturday sessions begin at 8:30 a.m. and will end at 4 p.m. The day will include presentations, prayer, and daily Mass.

Registration forms can be found online at www.Refuel18.com. Register before December 24 and receive $10 off the $65 registration fee. For more information contact Susan Safford or Susan Thompson at 605-716-5214 or email ssafford@diorc.org or stthompson@diorc.org.
In July of this year the “Characteristics of a Stewardship Parish” was completed as part of the Office of Stewardship’s work toward meeting the goal of the diocesan pastoral plan. They are being sent to pastors on request. It is a tiered structure which is called for by Bishop Robert Gruss in Through Him, With Him and In Him: A Spiritual Guide to the Diocesan Priority Plan.

December 1, Our Lady of the Black Hills Parish, Piedmont, was recognized as the first Foundational Parish in the Diocese of Rapid City. It is the inaugural step in being recognized as a Stewardship Parish.

“A foundational parish has in place the foundational structures necessary to foster stewardship in the parish. After this, there will be three additional benchmarks, each more challenging than the previous one, requiring a greater number of criteria be met. Parishes meeting these benchmarks will be designated as hospitable parishes, lively parishes and then, finally, stewardship parishes,” said Office of Stewardship Director Fr. Mark McCormick.

Father McCormick and Administrative Assistant Shawna Hanson, met with the Piedmont parish’s Stewardship Council and recommended Bishop Gruss grant the designation. “We prepared a report outlining the things we learned from them regarding foundational characteristics reflected in their church,” said Hanson.

According to the “Characteristics” parish self-assessment, there are three primary lenses drawn from the diocesan priority plan. The Diocese of Rapid City views Stewardship as — Generous Hospitality: invitation, welcome and fellowship; Lively Faith: prayer, study and formation; and Dedicated Discipleship: to love God and to love neighbor with an intentional heart. “Living a life of stewardship means whole-heartedly peering through these three indispensable lenses so that we may truly live a ‘Catholic Way of Life,’ hearing the voice of Jesus, following him and imitating his way of life,” said Fr. McCormick.

“There are seven other parishes that have requested the assessment tool and are entering into the process,” said Hanson. See the characteristics on the Office of Stewardship page on the diocesan website at www.rapidcitydiocese.org/stewardship/.

Starting Theology

As a first year theology student, Adam Johnson petitioned Bishop Robert Gruss for permission to receive the Rite of Admission to Candidacy. Bishop Gruss extended his permission and on October 19, Johnson was accepted into Candidacy for Orders at St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. Johnson is in the center of the front row standing next to Bishop Andrew Cozzens, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Also in the center is Seminary Rector Msgr. Aloysius Callahan. Adam is the son of Michael and Kathy Johnson, Blessed Sacrament Church, Rapid City. (Courtesy photo)

OLBH, Piedmont, first Foundational Parish

Vocation Events

Beloved: Vocation Weekend for Young Women
Join us Jan. 26-28, 2018, for a Vocation Weekend for Young Women at Terra Sancta Retreat Center in Rapid City. Open to young women ages 16-30. Directed by sisters from the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary. For more information or to register, please visit, gods-call.org/events or call the Office of Vocations at 605-716-5214. Deadline to register is Jan. 19.

Men in Black Basketball Game
The Men in Black are back! Join us Monday, Jan. 29, 2018, at St. Thomas More High School. Community dinner will begin at 5 p.m. Tip-off for the basketball game between the priests and students will begin at 7 p.m. For more information visit gods-call.org or contact the Office of Vocations at 716-5214.

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BRINGING CULTURE ALIVE: LAKOTA STUDIES AT RED CLOUD

On a frigid November morning, a small group of Red Cloud students gathered before dawn and traveled together to Slim Buttes, a few miles from campus, to take part in a buffalo hunt. The night before they had participated in an inipi ceremony — which takes place in a sweat lodge — to purify themselves and to ask a buffalo to sacrifice his life in order to nourish them. They had worked for months to prepare for this cultural rite of passage, learning how their ancestors had relied on the buffalo for thousands of years, using every part of the animal to sustain their communities on the plains. And after the hunt was finally complete, they brought the animal back to Red Cloud to lead the entire school in a sacred buffalo harvest.

As a drum group shared a ceremonial buffalo song, the students and their mentors — teachers of Lakota language, history, and spirituality — led the gathering in a prayer to thank the buffalo for his life and to honor the entire buffalo nation. For the next several hours, each student cleaned and butchered sections of the buffalo, as Philomine, an elder and fluent Lakota speaker, spoke to the group about each piece of the animal and what it could be used for.

Bella '18, one of the seniors who helped to lead the harvest as her senior community service project, says helping to bring the community together to experience a traditional Lakota ceremony is one way she can help strengthen Lakota culture for future generations. And for Bella, having Lakota culture integrated into her education is what makes being a Red Cloud student so special.

“Our culture is still struggling to stay alive, and this event really helps, especially in getting the younger kids more interested in rebuilding our culture for the future,” she said. “My culture is a huge part of my life, and it means so much to be able to incorporate it into my school life too.”

Lakota Studies at Red Cloud

The buffalo harvest is just one way that Lakota culture, language, and spirituality is integrated into education at Red Cloud. The unique curriculum, developed by administrators and teachers over the last several decades, gives students a deeper understanding of sacred Lakota ceremonies and the beliefs of their ancestors. And because language is a foundation of Lakota culture, Red Cloud developed the nation's first K-12 Lakota language curriculum. Students speak Lakota every day at school, and they have the chance to experience a number of sacred ceremonies first-hand.

Russ Cournoyer, who has been a teacher and administrator at Red Cloud for well over a decade, says teaching Lakota spirituality has a powerful effect on his students.

“I think our Lakota studies curriculum really reinforces to them who they are and where they come from,” he said.

“We have many students who may not initially believe they are very traditionally Lakota. But when they go off to college, many come back and tell us they realize how much they value our beliefs and cultural practices. Some say that just being able to smudge themselves with sage or sweetgrass and doing a simple prayer really helped them through a difficult time. They realize, in a time of need, that they can reach out to the Creator and get help and direction and understanding. And that really empowers them.”

Cournoyer was raised as a Catholic but as a high school student he was introduced to traditional Lakota ceremonies. He has been immersed in understanding and practicing them ever since. He joined the Spiritual Formation team and to begin teaching the school’s first class, called Lakota Rites, devoted entirely to Lakota spirituality. There wasn’t really a curriculum for him to use, so he developed his own drawing on readings and lessons from his own experience.

“In Lakota Rites, I want to give my students a general understanding of the purpose of the ceremonies we have, as well as the history behind them,” he explained.

“At the beginning of the semester, I have each student do a research project to understand our spiritual practices in the pre-reservation era. We look at how they evolved over time and how we got to where we are today,” he explained.

In addition to teaching about them in the classroom, he is one of the primary teachers and mentors who leads students through ceremonies held on campus. Red Cloud has its own sweat lodge on campus, and students have the opportunity to take part in the ceremony. While not every student participates, he’s seen many students drawn to this sacred, traditional practice in times of need.

“This fall, a student here became very ill and was hospitalized and many friends and classmates were really shaken. They came to us and asked for a sweat, and we put one together that day, so they could meet their spiritual needs and pray for their classmate,” said Cournoyer.

“It makes me proud our students to learn our traditional ways of prayer — to make a commitment to them and understand that there are sacrifices we need to make to ensure our prayers are heard.”

(Article and photo provided by Red Cloud Indian School. Read more about the school at https://www.redcloudschool.org)

RCCSS begins raffle Jan. 18

The Rapid City Catholic School System is once again partnering with Catholic United Financial to offer the Catholic Schools Raffle. Beginning January 12, students will be selling raffle tickets for $5 each. All of the proceeds go to the RCCSS. Last year students raised over $35,000, which helped fund technology upgrades and tuition assistance. Now in its ninth year, the Catholic Schools Raffle has raised $209,460 in the Diocese of Rapid City.

“Catholic United’s mission since our founding 140 years ago has included supporting Catholic education,” explained Catholic United President Harald Borrmann. “Keeping all the monies raised with the schools is something unique and greatly benefits the children and their teachers.”

This year the grand prize 2018 Chevy TRAX or $20,000 in cash. Ticket sales end February 25. The Grand Prize drawing takes place on, March 7 at the Catholic United Financial Home Office in St. Paul, Minn. Raffle updates can be followed on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CatholicSchoolsRaffle.

Tickets can be purchased from a RCCSS student or mail a check for the total amount of tickets you would like to purchase to St. Thomas More Middle School, 424 Fairmont Blvd., Rapid City, SD, 57701.

Spend some quiet and peaceful time with family and friends this Christmas season watching entertaining and spiritual movies. At the Mustard Seed, we have many DVD titles for every age and interest from Veggie Tales to documentaries.

Pop some popcorn and settle in for the evening with one of these suggestions:

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TWENTY SOMETHING

The art of giving, the challenge of Advent

Oprah Winfrey sings and claps when presented with the $69 lunch box that makes her 2017 “Favorite Things” list.

“I loooove!” she belts out in mock falsetto.

She doesn’t need to finish her sentence by naming the object of her love. It is expansive, and today, in a video of the selection process for her biggest gift guide, it covers 102 items, totaling $13,400 in value and ranging from a $2,000 55-inch Samsung high-definition TV down to a $10 earbud case.

“People spend the best years of their lives either trying to untangle their charger cords or track down missing earbuds,” Oprah quips in the December issue of her magazine, O, which pictures all her favorite things.

It includes a $600 espresso maker, a $200 bird house, a $200 automated dog bone and a $250 “lip vault” by Ulta containing 25 tubes of “lip mousse.” Oprah claims to have ordered them “for every woman I know,” and, incidentally, they were sold out before Thanksgiving.

There’s plenty of warm-fuzzy — buffalo plaid on slippers, shirts, pajamas, blankets and boots — and frivolous, like $50 blueberries. “My new definition of everyday luxury,” Oprah writes, “a five-pound box of organic wild blueberries frozen within 24 hours of harvest from Josh Pond Farm in Maine.”

It seems every so-called “influencer” now curates a gift guide if, for nothing else, the kickback from Amazon affiliate links. Online shoppers take the expert’s word, making transactions that require a nanosecond of engagement.

And so goes the drumbeat of commercialism: more, more, more.

All the while we Christians are called to answer Advent’s hushed invitation for less, less, less. To clear out our closets and turn off our phones, to resist the click-and-produce in favor of the wait-and-wonder. What a challenge it is to make space for the other, for the divine. Filling sets off all our bells and whistles; emptying requires discernment and allows for quiet.

Americans prefer the former. We have so much self-storage space, the Self Storage Association once pointed out, it is physically possible that every American could stand at the same time under the canopy of self-storage roofing.

I’ve been reflecting on the art of gift giving, what it can do for us, at its best, and what it neglects to do at its harshest. The more you put in, the more you get out.

What happens in baptism?

In baptism we become members of the body of Christ, sisters and brothers of our Redeemer, and children of God. We are freed from sin, snatched from death, and destined from then on for a life in the joy of the redeemed (1262-1274, 1279-1280).

Being baptized means that my personal life story is submerged in the stream of God’s love. “Our life,” says Pope Benedict XVI, “now belongs to Christ, and no longer to ourselves. … At his side and, indeed, drawn up in his love, we are freed from fear. He enfolds us and carries us wherever we may go — he is life itself” (April 7, 2007).

Why did Jesus allow John to baptize him, although he was without sin?

To baptize means to immerse. In his baptism, Jesus descended into the sinful history of all mankind. By doing so he established a sign. In order to redeem us from our sins, he would one day be submerged in death but, through his Father’s power, he reawakened to live (535-537, 567).

Sinners — soldiers, prostitutes, tax collectors — went out to the prophet John the Baptist because they were looking for the “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Lk 3:3). Strictly speaking, Jesus did not need this baptism, because he was sinless. The fact that he submitted to this baptism shows us two things: Jesus takes our sins upon himself. Jesus understands his baptism as an anticipation of his Passion and Resurrection. At this sign of his willingness to die for us, the heavens open: “You are my beloved son” (Lk 3:22b).

The Baptism of the Lord is celebrated January 8.

Do not say ‘I am only a youth’

A “YouCat” nugget courtesy of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Youcat.org

Star Wars: The Last Jedi (Disney)

Engrossing sci-fi epic in which the leading general (Carrie Fisher) of an embattled group of rebels sends a messenger (Daisy Ridley) to the distant planet on which her brother (Mark Hamill), a famed warrior, is living in self-imposed exile to summon his help in the desperate struggle against their fascistic enemies (led by Andy Serkis). Though he refuses to join the conflict, the veteran fighter does agree to train the envoy in the ways of the Force, the mysterious spiritual energy from which he derives his prowess. She will need its power when she eventually confronts her leader’s son (Adam Driver), an originally good person who has gone over to the side of darkness, but whose ongoing moral struggle has the potential to sway the outcome of the intergalactic war. Though it gets off to a slow start, once it hits its stride writer-director Rian Johnson’s eighth episode in the saga initiated by George Lucas in 1977 sweeps viewers along with stirring action and audience-pleasing plot twists. Teens able to take the “Jedi religion” as no more than the myths of a fantasy world will benefit from lessons about the value of hope and the true nature of heroism. Frequent but bloodless combat violence, a scene of torture, a couple of mild oaths, a few crass terms. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Classifications

Lady Bird ..................................................L
The Disaster Artist ...................................A-II
The Man Who Invented Christmas ..........A-II
Classifications used by the USCCB are: A-I, general patronage; A-II, adults and adolescents; A-III, adults; L, limited adult audiences, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling: O, morally offensive. For more information, visit http://www.catholicnews.com/movies.htm.