

Dear Catechetical Colleagues,

As we enter into Advent, this week's newsletter has several resources to help us keep our hearts and minds focused on the true meaning behind Christmas. In particular, you might want to consider how current concerns for undocumented Latinos contained in this article [www.thenewstribune.com/2012/11/26/2380530/deportation-deferral-program-could.html](http://www.thenewstribune.com/2012/11/26/2380530/deportation-deferral-program-could.html) from the *Tacoma News Tribune* connects to the travels of Joseph and Mary surrounding the birth of Jesus. Justice for Immigrants [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org) and the USCCB's National Migration Week: [www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week](http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week) "We are Strangers No Longer: Our Journey of Hope Continues" also have several resources on this important topic.

Sr. Liz Tiernan offers a special and local Advent program that can be used in our classrooms. Finally, check out the USCCB's website on the New Evangelization for updated resources at [www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization).

In Christ,

*Anne*

Anne Frederick, Ed.D.  
Director of Parish and School Faith Formation

<p>Archdiocesan website for the <i>Year of Faith</i>: <a href="http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/yof">www.seattlearchdiocese.org/yof</a></p>
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## ADVENT CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS

FOR FIRST GRADE THROUGH MIDDLE SCHOOL

"THE ADVENT PRAYERS  
OF THE CHRISTMAS SYMBOLS"

*In Sixty Minutes or Less!*

Presented by

*Sr. Elisabeth Tiernan, SNDden*

In a joy-filled presentation, Sr. Liz will help your students prepare for the birth of Christ through the symbols of the Christmas season. From Santa Claus, to the snowman, to Christmas trees, lights and ornaments, Sr. Liz will invite your children, young and old, to feel themselves surrounded by God. Sr. Liz's storytelling style and use of visuals, lends itself to engaging the children in the wondrous experience of Advent. This presentation may be given anytime before Christmas.

For more information or  
to schedule a session for your  
students contact Sr. Liz at  
[liztiernan@aol.com](mailto:liztiernan@aol.com)  
(206) 323-5595

Cost: 1-2 hours, \$75 per hour  
3 or more hours, \$60  
Plus gas.

All fees are on a sliding scale and  
may be adjusted according to need.

ADVENT PRAYERS  
OF THE CHRISTMAS SYMBOLS  
COLORING CARDS  
ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE.



## **Busted Halo's Advent Calendar**



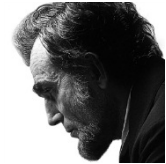
Advent is a precious time in the Christian calendar. The four weeks leading up to December 25 are meant to be a period of expectant waiting, as we prepare ourselves for the miraculous arrival of our Savior, in the form of a vulnerable infant born to humble parents.



The reality for most of us, though, is that these are anxious weeks of shopping and holiday planning leading up to a hectic Christmas Day. In the bustle of the holiday season, it's easy to forget what we're waiting for.



Completely avoiding the Christmas onslaught may be impossible, but we can make an effort to maintain some connection to the spiritual foundation of this season. Busted Halo's 2012 Advent Surprise Calendar is here to help a little with that.



In traditional Advent calendars, children open different windows throughout the season to reveal special surprises. Busted Halo's Advent calendar brings its sense of surprise by showing you the whole calendar, but not letting you open each day and find out what's behind the picture until that day comes along. This year, we turn our attention to matters of patience — hoping each day's Daily Jolt and MicroChallenge will help all of us come through Advent with our serenity intact.

## **How the digital Advent calendar works**



Each day, that day's link in the Advent calendar will start working, leading to a special Advent-themed Daily Jolt, with an opportunity for reflection and a microChallenge. Some of the reflections come from unlikely sources, and the challenges help you to take an action, usually a small one, based on the reflection.



This year we will give away a weekly prize based on a random drawing among all the contestants who entered that week. Contestants will also be entered into the grand prize drawing for an iPad mini!



Entries must be accompanied by both email and snail mail addresses. (Don't worry, this info won't be given out to anyone; it just makes it easier to track contestants and winners.) The 16GB iPad mini Grand Prize will be awarded after December 25 in a random drawing from all eligible entries received during Advent. See the contest rules [here](#).



All you need to do to enter each week is come back to our calendar, open a new day's link and fill out an entry form. You can enter up to once a week (and if you enter every week you increase your chances of winning the grand prize.)

As you await the coming of our Lord on Christmas Day, use the Busted Halo

**Welcome to Caritas Australia's Advent Calendar,** In Advent, the Jesse tree reminds us of Biblical characters and events that prepared God's people for the birth of Jesus. You can join them as they use the Jesse tree to learn, pray and act with and for our partners around the world at <http://www.caritas.org.au/advent/>.



This year, Christian Aid is offering a free online advent calendar that marks the days of the month of Advent in a more thoughtful manner. The calendar shows a dark background full of dimly lit faces, which gradually lights up with the addition of a new Advent Candle each day. Each candle bears the date and a brief message for the Christmas season. Advent began on Advent Sunday – 27 November – and a new candle will appear on the site every day until Christmas Eve, each one bearing a unique message. If you miss a day you can click its candle to bring it to the front of the calendar to read. Go to <http://worldofdifference.vodafone.co.uk/news/archives/6984>.

The Episcopal Church and the Society of St. John the Evangelist have teamed up to bring you an Advent calendar using the social network Pinterest. You do not have to have a Pinterest account to view the calendar. Beginning December 2, go to



<http://pinterest.com/iamepiscopalian/advent-calendar/> each day during Advent. Every day a new window opens offering you a moment of solace and reflection as to the true meaning of Advent and the coming Christmas Season. Each window will reveal a special Advent word, meditation and beautiful image.

### **Just One Thing: See Good Intentions**



I am becoming a Rick Hanson fan because he seems to add the spiritual dimension to psychology. This is his most recent post and I thought it a good bridge between Thanksgiving and the “Be vigilant” dimension of Advent. This is from the latest installment of Dr. Rick Hanson’s *Greater Good* blog, featuring posts from his [Just One Thing](#) (JOT) newsletter, which offers simple practices designed to bring you more joy, more fulfilling relationships, and more peace of mind and heart. In recognizing the positive intentions in others, says Rick Hanson, we feel safer, more supported, and happier. Here is the post.

Hustling through an airport, I stopped to buy some water. At the shop’s refrigerator, a man was bent over, loading bottles into it. I reached past him and pulled out one he’d put in. He looked up, stopped working, got a bottle from another shelf, and held it out to me, saying “This one is cold.” I said thanks and took the one he offered.

He didn’t know me and would never see me again. His job was stocking, not customer service. He was busy and looked tired. But he took the time to register that I’d gotten a warm bottle, and he cared enough to shift gears and get me a cold one. He wished me well.

I can see his friendly eyes as I write now, a week later. It was just a bottle of water. But I feel warmed by his kindness and buoyed by his good intentions.

Recognizing the positive intentions in others, we feel safer, more supported, and happier. And when others feel that you get their good intentions, they feel seen, appreciated, and more inclined to treat you well.



But it can be hard to recognize the goodwill in others. We're busy and distracted and stressed. Positive aims are often buried beneath negative behaviors. The brain's innate negativity bias is continually scanning for bad news, bad intentions. The brain also reacts to novelty, so it tends to ignore the many positive intentions that pervade most daily life while spotlighting the occasional negative ones.

So you have to actively look for good intentions. Then you'll find them all around you—a window into the deep goodness in every being, no matter how obscured.

Take a minute to recognize the many good intentions—aims, purposes, desires—that you have in a typical day.



Good intentions don't need to be saintly. Wanting to enjoy a cup of coffee, to eat a decent breakfast, to lock the door behind you, to get to work on time, to be conscientious, to feel safe, to care for a family, to be a decent person, to avoid trouble, to hurt less, to enjoy something sweet, to not quarrel, to live to see the sunrise—these are all good intentions.

Most good intentions will be small. But they still matter. Just imagine the disasters if you replaced your good intentions with bad ones! Sure, some intentions aren't so good, such as desires to dominate, act out addictive cravings, or dump negative feelings on others. But for almost everyone, the great majority of intentions are good ones. Let it become a feeling, a strong sense in your body, that you are someone with good intentions.

Talking with a friend, be aware of his or her positive intentions. How does it feel to see them? Try this routinely with people you care about. I find that doing this helps me understand others better plus opens my heart. As appropriate, tell the other person what you've learned; hearing recognition of one's good intentions can be a powerful experience.

Try seeing good intentions in strangers walking down the street—or an airport. You'll see lots of courtesies, efforts to do a good job, desires to understand or be understood, loyalty to friends and causes, fair play, and kindnesses. This practice makes me happy, and gives me a stronger sense of our common humanity.

Also try this with people who are difficult for you. This is not to excuse them. But seeing good intentions amidst bad behaviors can, ironically, help you feel less affected—less stressed, irritated, or worried—by other people. You could also ask others to recognize the good intentions in you.

There's an ember of sanctity in each one of us, including the one looking back in the mirror. Recognizing good intentions blows on that ember, adds fuel to it, and helps it grow into a warm and beautiful flame.

## The Price of a Miracle



This 4 ½ minute film captures the essence of giving. A little girl embarks on a quest to save her younger brother.

"A miracle is an event which creates faith."

- George Bernard Shaw

You can watch it at

[http://spiritclips.com/films/miracles?utm\\_source=112012free&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=miracles](http://spiritclips.com/films/miracles?utm_source=112012free&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=miracles).

## Who invented the nativity scene?



The following article appeared in the on-line version of *US Catholic*. This information was posted on November 19 by

If you missed the feast of Francis of Assisi in October, the Christmas season offers another opportunity to commemorate the saint. Anyone who has erected a nativity scene is following Francis' 13th-century example.

On Christmas Eve 1223, the saint created the first nativity in the Italian city of Greccio. With the help of a local nobleman, Francis celebrated the birth of Jesus in a cave outside the town. The liturgy featured a hay-filled manger in front of the temporary altar, and as Francis preached, the nobleman arranged to have an ox and a donkey stand at the altar as well.

The Franciscans quickly spread the practice of creating nativity scenes with live animals and actors. Living scenes remained popular, but static nativities also developed, allowing the scene to remain on display for longer periods for meditation. As the tradition was introduced to new regions throughout the world, nativity scenes adapted to local tastes and customs. Incorporating local elements was especially popular in Francis' native Italy, where the participants in the scene looked less like biblical figures and more like characters from the local village. A few years ago, however, there were complaints that this localism had gone too far when a figurine of former Italian prime minister, the scandal-plagued Silvio Berlusconi, appeared in a nativity scene in Naples.

By the 19th century Protestant churches, which initially rejected nativity scenes as a form of idolatrous Catholic superstition, slackened their opposition to the scenes, and their popularity spread through the wider Christian world. Last Christmas, a church in Southampton, England gathered shepherds, angels, and wise men of all sizes in an attempt to break the record for the largest living nativity. At 298 participants, however, they fell well short of the record of 567 people.

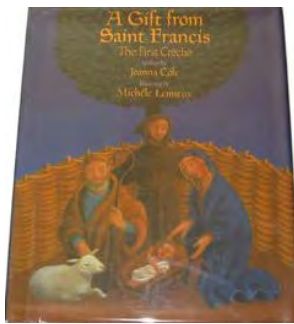
Francis' original nativity was inspired by his trip in 1221 to the Holy Land and Jesus' traditional birthplace. He was deeply moved visiting the site where God became fully human. Hoping others could enjoy the same profoundly spiritual experience, Francis

encouraged believers to make pilgrimages to Bethlehem. By 1223, however, conflict among the powers vying for control of the Holy Land made the trip too dangerous for pilgrims. Francis decided to do the next best thing—bring Bethlehem to the pilgrims.

Accounts of Francis' original nativity do not include much information about the congregation that gathered. We do not know if the Italian villagers standing in the cold on Christmas Eve nearly eight centuries ago were as moved as Francis was by the idea of an omnipotent God so capable of love and humility that he took the form of a vulnerable infant and was born outdoors among the animals.

The popularity of nativity scenes, however, indicates that over the centuries people were drawn to the possibility of building their own Bethlehem. Setting up a nativity scene not only allows us to remember and celebrate the drama of Jesus' birth but also the saint so enraptured with that drama that he brought it to life.

### [A Gift from Saint Francis: The First Creche](#)



The first part of the book covers Francis' love for the poor, separation from his father, preaching to the birds, and his love of Christmas, which leads into the second half about his creating the first Creche. Every other page is a full page, full color painting by Michele Lemieux. The pictures are beautiful and simple earth tone paintings that seem to capture what things really looked like at the time when Sr. Francis was walking the streets of Assisi. You can order [A Gift from Saint Francis: The First Creche](#).

### [Saint Francis of Assisi](#)



I am a fan of the award-winning author Demi and her art in this book is no exception. It was released on the feast of St. Francis but I missed it. The pictures really do carry the story forward and set fire to the imagination, exactly what I expect from a good picture book. The last line of the book states that Saint Francis of Assisi is the most popular saint after Christ. I realize this is the author's opinion but if I was reading the book, I might skip that line and would definitely discuss it, if children were reading it on their own. In fact, it would be a great discussion about what makes a saint popular, how some saints are more popular in one country than another and maybe even if there is an implication that Demi thinks Christ was a saint by the way the sentence is worded. Nevertheless, I would buy this book for the art alone. You can order [Saint Francis of Assisi](#).

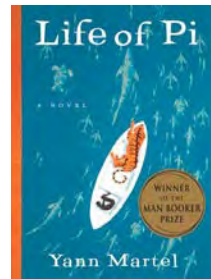


## Life of Pi

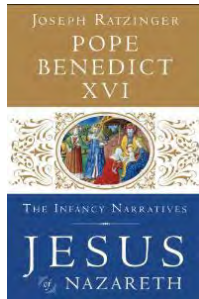


The film based on Yann Martel's award-winning book—about an Indian boy who believes in Hinduism, Islam and Christianity but whose faith in God is tested—opened this week. “You have to go through suffering and pain. You have to be in awe. You have to go through tests to believe in God—or not believe in God, in some cases,” says movie director Ang Lee. Watch *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly* six (6) minute preview of the film and read an excerpt from the novel at

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/november-16-2012/life-of-pi/13854/>. You can order the book *Life of Pi*. You can watch the official movie trailer at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GbXVo9DdZo>



## Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives



The Nativity story, like the whole story of Christ, is not merely an event in the past, but has unfolding significance for people today, with implications for such issues as the limits of political power and the purpose of human freedom, Pope Benedict writes in his momentous third and final volume on the life and teachings of Jesus. You can order the Pope's new book *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*. The other two books in the series are *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* and *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two, Holy Week: From the Entrance Into Jerusalem To The Resurrection*.

## Joy to the World!: Christmas Stories from Around the Globe



It's not an Advent book but it does contain five stories so that one could be read for each Sunday of Advent and the fifth could be read on the first Sunday after Christmas to continue the Christmas season. “Read how the lost little camel's perseverance, resourcefulness and bravery led him back to his mother and baby Jesus' manger; How an old Baker woman's kindness and ingenuity saves the life of Baby Jesus and feeds a starving village; The story of a how a goat-herding father and daughter, guided by angels, journey to meet the newborn Savior and present him with weeds that have been transformed into beautiful red Christmas flowers; How selfless little Kumbi puts the needs of others before her own and is rewarded with a gourd of overflowing water to replenish supplies amid drought in her village; Lastly, a Russian variation of the Father Christmas story, where Babushka delivers presents to children from her bottomless basket of toys.” You can order *Joy to the World!: Christmas Stories from Around the Globe*.

## Christmas Story Book



If I was to buy one anthology of Christmas stories, this would be it. I have given away more copies of this book at Christmas than almost any other Christmas book. At 430 pages, it is a bargain. "These stories tell of the experience of people who lived at the time of the birth of the Child, and who--each in their own way--sought to worship the newborn king. This book is a colorful collection carefully chosen to show the spirit of Christmas in many different facets. The stories are divided into five sections: Advent, the Birth of the Child, the Christmas night, Christmas in the world, and the Three Kings' time." You can purchase [The Christmas Story Book](#).

## The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree: An Appalachian Story



This book addresses the values of family, material things, memories, nature, and history. Life cycles, the seasons, and holidays are so important to the family in the book. It teaches how a family values relationships and plans for the future to insure those relationships. You can order [The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree: An Appalachian Story](#).

## If You're Missing Baby Jesus: A True Story that Embraces the Spirit of Christmas



I was born and raised in North Dakota so this story has a special place in my heart but I think you will find it heartwarming yourself. *If You're Missing Baby Jesus* illustrates the true meaning of Christmas. The fact that it is a true story makes the book even more attractive. If someone was "missing Baby Jesus", would they know to call on YOU? You can order [If You're Missing Baby Jesus: A True Story that Embraces the Spirit of Christmas](#).

## Additional On-line Advent Calendars/Resources



### **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:**

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-resources/advent/>. Advent devotions including the [Advent](#)

[wreath](#), remind us of the meaning of the season. The USCCB Advent calendar can help you fully enter in to the season with daily activity and prayer suggestions to prepare you spiritually for the birth of Jesus Christ. New this year are audio retreats in English and Spanish for the four Sundays of Advent and the three Sundays of the Christmas season, which concludes on January 13, 2103, with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Other resources on the website include liturgical notes on Advent, a commentary on the proper prayers of the season from the Roman Missal, a list of recommended holiday-themed movies from USCCB, and prayers and blessings

from the USCCB publication *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*. All these Advent resources and more are found on the website at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-resources/advent/>.

### Holy Family Hospital Foundation:

<http://birthplaceofhope.org/advent/>. Each day, one box in the Advent calendar will be unlocked to reveal various reflections, videos and special entries from friends we have met through the years – all leading us to the celebration of Our Lord's birth.



**The Institute for Christian Formation** (Cincinnati, OH) has devised a calendar for **2013: Year of Grace** (<http://tiny.cc/uonpow>) (December 2, 2012 – January 13, 2013) that includes activities and resources for each day.

**Paperless Christmas** (<http://www.paperlesschristmas.org.uk/>) from the UK in 2011 is still lots of fun! Be sure to start with the Angel Gabriel. Probably great for Middle Schoolers.

**Loyola Press** (<http://www.loyolapress.com/childrens-advent-calendar.htm#first>) offers an online calendar or downloadable version for children and families. Many people like to use a special calendar to help them mark the days until Christmas. You can use this Web calendar to remind you to do something each day to share the meaning of the season.



**Here is one you can print:** An Advent **Devotional Calendar** (<http://tiny.cc/pxnpow>) for downloading from Thomas Mousin of Massachusetts. There are also some Advent poems.



**Here is one you can make:** **Praying in Color** (<http://prayingincolor.com/advent-calendar-templates-2012>) offers templates in which to create your own Advent calendar. Instead of opening daily doors like on many commercial calendars, I draw and pray on a calendar template.



In the past I have prayed for people, pondered words appropriate to the season or just decorated the space in quiet. You can do any of those activities or choose your own.

### **"The Virgin Mary Perfectly Incarnates the Spirit of Advent"**



Here is a translation of the address Benedict XVI gave Sunday before and after praying the midday Angelus in St. Peter's Square.

Dear brothers and sisters!

Today the Church begins a new liturgical year, a journey that is subsequently enriched by the Year of Faith, which we observe 50 years after the opening of the Second Vatican Council. The first part of this journey is Advent, constituted, in the Roman Rite, by the 4 weeks that precede the Christmas of the Lord, that is, the mystery of the Incarnation. The word “advent” means “coming” or “presence.” In the ancient world it indicated the visit of the king or emperor to a province; in the language of Christianity it refers to the coming of God, to his presence in the world; a mystery that involves the entire cosmos and all of history, but that knows 2 culminating moments: the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The first is precisely the Incarnation; the second his glorious return at the end of time. These 2 moments that are chronologically distant – and it is not given to us to know how distant – touch each other in their depths, because with his death and resurrection Jesus has already realized that transformation of man and the cosmos that is the final goal of creation. But before the end, it is necessary that the Gospel be preached to all nations, Jesus says in the Gospel of St. Mark (cf. Mark 13:10). The Lord’s coming continues, the world must be penetrated by his presence.

Our collaboration is required in this permanent coming of the Lord in the proclamation of the Gospel; and the Church, which is like the Bride to be, the Betrothed of the crucified and risen Lamb of God (cf. Apocalypse 21:9), in communion with her Lord collaborates in this coming of the Lord in which his glorious return already begins.

The Word of God reminds us of all this today, describing the conduct that is necessary to ready for the Lord’s coming. In the Gospel of Luke Jesus says to the disciples: “Do not let your hearts be weighed by dissipation, drunkenness and the troubles of life ... be vigilant, therefore, praying at all times” (Luke 21:34, 36). So, sobriety and prayer. And the apostle Paul also invites us to “grow and super abound in love” among ourselves and toward others, to make our hearts strong and blameless in sanctity (cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13). In the midst of the upheavals of the world, or in the deserts of indifference and materialism, Christians welcome the salvation that comes from God and bear witness to it with a different way of living, like a city set on a hill. “In those days,” the prophet Jeremiah announces, “Jerusalem will live in peace and be called ‘the Lord our justice’” (33:16). The community of believers is a sign of God, of his justice, which is already present and active in history but is not yet fully realized, and because of this is always awaited, invoked, sought with patience and courage.

The Virgin Mary perfectly incarnates the spirit of Advent; this spirit is one of listening to God, of profound desire to do his will, of joyous service to our neighbor. Letting ourselves be guided by her, so that the God who comes does not find us closed and distracted, but can, in each one of us, extend a part of his kingdom of love, of justice and of peace.

## **2013-2016 - USCCB STRATEGIC PLAN: THE NEW EVANGELIZATION** **JOURNEY WITH CHRIST: FAITH – WORSHIP – WITNESS**



To make the New Evangelization a reality is to become pilgrims on a journey or pilgrimage with Jesus Christ- much like the journey of Jesus meeting the disciples along the road to Emmaus. The journey or pilgrimage includes moments for a deepening of our faith, increasing our participation in the sacramental life of the Church, and leads finally to our destination of being Christian witnesses.

"A new evangelization is synonymous with mission, requiring the capacity to set out anew, go beyond boundaries and broaden horizons. The new evangelization is the opposite of self-sufficiency, a withdrawal into oneself, a status quo mentality and an idea that pastoral programs are simply to proceed as they did in the past. Today a 'business as usual' attitude can no longer be the case. Some local Churches, already engaged in renewal, reconfirm the fact that now is the time for the Church to call upon every Christian community to evaluate their pastoral practice on the basis of the missionary character of their program and activities."—Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of Christian Faith, Lineamenta*, #10

The Year of Faith, as a doorway that engages us in the work of the New Evangelization, is a “summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the One Savior of the world” (*Porta Fidei*, 6). The Year of Faith, is a first instance to be engaged in the new evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith, is an opportunity for Catholics to experience a conversion— to turn back to Jesus and enter into a deeper relationship with him. The “*door of faith*” is opened at one’s baptism, but during this year Catholics are called to open it again, walk through it and rediscover and renew and deepen their relationship with Christ and his Church.



The *New Evangelization* as a journey of faith, worship and witness, presents three opportunities or audiences for the transmission of the Christian faith:

- To engage more intently those who are faithful and need to be renewed with increased catechesis;
- To reach out to those who have never heard the gospel proclaimed; and



- To re-engage those who are baptized but have lost a living sense of the faith in their daily lives

The *New Evangelization* is an opportunity, a pilgrimage (journey) to rediscover the joy and confidence of believing in the Triune God and to enthusiastically profess that faith as “a true encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ. Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions which lead to his encounter between the person and Jesus Christ.” (*Instrumentum Laboris*, #18)

***The New Evangelization/Journey With Christ: Faith-Worship-Witness*** has a natural progression that engages the work of the Church and the USCCB in a three-fold movement during 2013-2016 through a focus on: Church and the USCCB in a three-fold movement during 2013-2016 through a focus on:

1. Faith: Inviting Catholics to a deeper relationship with Christ, and a deeper understanding of and relationship with his Church, and knowledge of the faith.
2. Worship: Inspiring confidence in the gospel and the teachings of the faith expressed in a vibrant community and sacramental life, most intensively in the Eucharist and Penance, but also through Marriage and greater appreciation of the family as the domestic church.
3. Witness: Strengthening of our understanding of the Christian vocation lived through a public witness to Jesus Christ and to the life and dignity of the human person where believers, living out their vocation to be witnesses, affirm the freedom of religion and work to transform society through living and sharing their faith in Jesus Christ and giving recognition to the life and dignity of the human person.

For more information, including the USCCB Road Map, please go to <http://www.usccb.org/about/2013-2016-priority-plan-roadmap.cfm>.

## **Churches and the Disabled**

### **Religion & ETHICS** NEWSWEEKLY

but people who can help.” As more and more congregations learn how to value people with disabilities, we visit Northland, a megachurch in Orlando that welcomes and accommodates people with special needs. *Originally broadcast May 11, 2012*

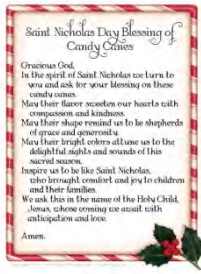
To read/listen, please go to

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/may-11-2012/churches-and-the-disabled/10968/>.

“The disabled,” says religion writer Mark Pinsky, author of *Amazing Gifts: Stories of Faith, Disability, and Inclusion*, “are not just people who need help,



## **Blessing of the Candy Cane**

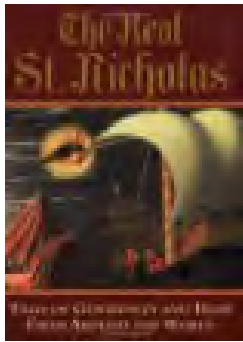


Thanks to Kathy Hendricks at her blog on Sadlier's *We believe and Share*, for her *Saint Nicholas Day Blessing of Candy Canes*. She writes that "The candy cane is a treat often associated with Saint Nicholas, the patron and protector of children. The crook symbolizes the gentle image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Celebrate Saint Nicholas Day with a blessing and sharing of candy canes!" Go to [Saint Nicholas Day Blessing of Candy Canes](#) for more information and to



download your prayer blessing cards.

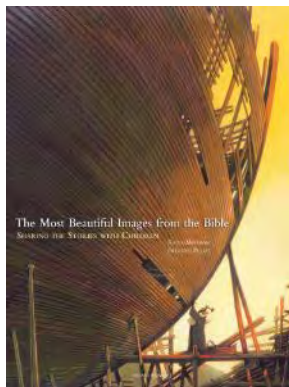
## **The Real St. Nicholas: Tales of Generosity and Hope from around the World**



At 230 pages, "This charming volume presents little-known legends and tales from Russia, Spain, Greece, Ireland, Germany, Holland, France, Italy, and Armenia---to name a few of the countries represented in this book. While slimmer than jolly old Santa, the historical saint is much larger in character. Celebrated as protector of the wronged and patron saint of children, Nicholas is, in essence, a Western bodhisattva: an enlightened being who serves those in need. This book restores him as an important lost archetype of the Wise Old Man, clustering stories according to such appealing themes as rescuing, nurturing, outwitting evil, and healing." You can order [The Real St. Nicholas: Tales of Generosity and Hope from](#)

[around the World](#)

## **The Most Beautiful Images from the Bible: Sharing the Stories with Children**



This is a new book that is a visual feast for the eyes. Needless to say, children will want to look at these pictures and study them. Most pictures cover 5/6 of the page with the text

The twenty stories, from both the Old and New Testament, will be familiar to most people. Nevertheless, I believe you will find the meditative text to be brief, appealing and easily understood.

You can order [The Most Beautiful Images from the Bible: Sharing the Stories with Children](#).

## **Buoy Your Days With Appreciation and Gratitude**



A montage of sparkling people and places found around the globe is a fitting background for this gentle and wise reminder of how to see your life in a new way. This inspirational video, a *Moving Art* original short, was well responded at TED conferences and filmmaker Louie Schwartzberg motivates those around him as happiness is revealed. Spoken word and music montage created and composed by Gary

Malkin. Narration written and spoken by Brother David Steindl-Rast. Make each day fresh with thoughts of gratefulness and appreciation for the coolness that is life on planet Earth. I have shared this before but it seemed appropriate as we begin another new liturgical year. You can watch this six (6) minute video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nj2ofrX7jAk>.

## **Vatican II After 50 Years: Dialogue and Catholic Identity**



You can go to <http://www.georgetown.edu/vatican-II-dialogue.html> and read the presentation or watch the video of the following talks from the October conference at Georgetown entitled *Vatican II After 50 Years: Dialogue and Catholic Identity*.

**Keynote Lecture: "Dialogue and the Identity of the Council"** (<http://tiny.cc/85ypow>)  
**VIDEO** (<http://tiny.cc/f8ypow>)

*John W. O'Malley, S.J.*

University Professor, Georgetown University

**"Recollections of an Insider"** (<http://tiny.cc/22ypow>) **VIDEO** (<http://tiny.cc/g4ypow>)

*Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P.*

Original staff member, later consultor for the Secretariat for Christian Unity;

Past President, Paulist Fathers & Rector of Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem

**"Catholic and Irrevocably Ecumenical"** | **VIDEO** (<http://tiny.cc/q1ypow>)

*Catherine Clifford*

Vice Dean & Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology, St. Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

**"Discovering Catholic Identity through Encounter with People of Other Religions"**  
(<http://tiny.cc/spypow>) **VIDEO** (<http://tiny.cc/fyypow>)

*Archbishop Michael L. Fitzgerald, M.Afr.*

Apostolic Nuncio to Egypt and Delegate to the League of Arab States; Past President and Secretary, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

**"Vatican II and the Synagogue's Continuing Importance to the Church"** | **VIDEO**  
(<http://tiny.cc/qnypow>)

*Elena Procaro-Foley*

Brother John G. Driscoll Professor of Jewish-Catholic Studies, Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Iona College, New Rochelle, NY

**"The Battle over Gaudium et Spes -- Dialogue with the Modern World"**

(<http://tiny.cc/akypow>) **VIDEO** (<http://tiny.cc/1lypow>)

*Massimo Faggioli*

Department of Theology, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Panel: "Georgetown University and the Continuing Implementation of Vatican II" |**

**VIDEO** (<http://tiny.cc/ciypow>)

**Recordings of *The Emerging Models* and Other Past Webinars NOW Available**



Recordings of the past Webinars are available in case you missed them or want to listen to them again. The last webinar featured the former Executive Director of NCCL, Neil Parent, and can be viewed at

<http://tiny.cc/7gvpow> or on the picture below. Other past webinars are available at

<https://www.avemariapress.com/webinar-videos/>.

