



# SDNB

Salina Diocesan News Bulletin <http://salinadiocese.org/home/sdnb>

Volume 418

November 2015

## **OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

**THE SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS** is Sunday, November 1, 2015 and **COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED (All Souls' Day)** is commemorated on **Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>**.

**NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK** is November 1-7, 2015.

### **SEMINARIAN COLLECTION WEEKEND – November 14 & 15**

The Seminarian collection is scheduled for the weekend of **November 14 & 15**. Thank you for picking up your materials at the Priest's Renewal Days. Please continue to promote this collection from the pulpit in the next few weeks. I am grateful for your assistance in promoting much needed vocations in our Diocese. Additional information on this collection is in the Development Office section of this SDNB.

- **AGAIN THIS YEAR** ~ we are requesting that names and addresses of any Parishioners that give \$100.00 or more to the Seminarian appeal please be forwarded to Syndi Larez at the Chancery. Please process these donations as you normally would and submit just the usual parish check to the Chancery.

**PROMOTION OF OUR DIOCESAN NEWSPAPER – *The Register*, Renewal Weekend Nov 14-15.** Please refer to last month's edition of the SDNB for my letter two letters and also further information, including Bulletin Inserts from the Register Editor for this important renewal information. Your assistance in promoting our Diocesan Newspaper is critical and most appreciated.

**COUNCIL OF PRIESTS' MEETING** is set for Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 10-3 in Victoria

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT** is Nov. 29, 2015

**THANKSGIVING** is a special time to not only thank God for his abundant blessings, but also to extend our thanks to all of the people who have touched our lives and have given so much in service to the Church. Thank you for all that you do for those whom you serve and for being a channel of God's blessings to me. **The Chancery will be closed November 26 – 27, 2015**

**BISHOP'S FUND** – The Bishop's Fund with the Catholic Community Foundation is currently taking applications for needs at a Parish or Parish School. This includes any active ministries in the parish. **The application process is now conducted online.** The application can be found on the diocesan website on the Development page. The **deadline for application is December 4, 2015**. Please contact Syndi Larez with any questions by either email at [syndi.larez@salinadiocese.org](mailto:syndi.larez@salinadiocese.org) or call her at [785-827-8746](tel:785-827-8746).

**SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**—Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> is a Holy Day of Obligation. **The Chancery will be closed.**

## **OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL**

**CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COLLECTION (CCHD) – Nov. 21-22, 2015** - Please refer to *The Register* and to the promotional materials you should have received in giving support to this important national program of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, across the country and in our own local communities by working to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ”...*to bring good news to the poor...release to captives...sight to the blind, and let the oppressed to free” (Luke 4:18.* The belief that those who are directly affected by unjust systems and structures have the best insight into knowing how to change them is central to CCHD by helping low-income people to break the cycle of poverty and by helping them participate in decisions that affect their lives, families and communities. **CCHD offers a hand up – not a hand out.**

**2015 RETIRED RELIGIOUS COLLECTION, Dec. 12-13, 2015.** See Bishop’s letter attached dated November 2015 which will also go in the Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Register* along with further information promoting this important collection.

## **OFFICE OF FINANCE**

Clergy Health and Retirement Board:

Last spring when I met with several retired clergy in our diocese, it was suggested by some of them that they would be willing to go into parishes and help out on an “as needed basis”. Their suggestions were to: 1) teach adult education courses, 2) teach a class in RCIA, 3) help with Catholic school or PRE classes, 4) conduct a week long mission, 5) a small group of retired priests come into the parish for a week and offer to meet about annulments, personal issues, liturgical concerns, etc. If you are interested in any of these options, please reach out to a retired priest in our diocese and ask if he is interested. Or you may contact me and I will send out a bulk e-mail to the retired priests asking if anyone is interested. Compensation for these services would be negotiated between the pastor and the retired priest. Thank you! --Fr. Keith

## **OFFICE OF VOCATIONS**

### **SEMINARIAN COLLECTION – November 14 & 15**

The Seminarian collection is scheduled for the weekend of **November 14 & 15**. See Bishop’s section for more information.

**SEMINARIAN RECOGNITION DINNER - SAVE THE DATE** – The Seminarian Recognition Dinner will be on Thursday, June 2, 2016. Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend. More information will follow in the future.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**November 1-7 National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW)** is an annual week-long celebration of the Catholic Church in the United States dedicated to promote vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life through prayer and education, and to renew our prayers and support for those who are considering one of these particular vocations.

One suggestion for the promotion of vocations during this week is to simply tell your vocation story to your parish. *A personal testimony is always powerful.*

**November 14,15,16 – Encounter Weekend at Conception Seminary** The diocese will again be taking young men interested in the seminary to the encounter weekend. I would ask you to be proactive in inviting young quality men to consider making this trip. Feel free to contact Fr. Gale at [pastor@saintxparish.org](mailto:pastor@saintxparish.org) about this.

**December 28 – Seminarian Christmas Gathering and Running Revs Game**

If any priests would like to join us for the Christmas Dinner and the Mass prior please contact Fr. Gale – [pastor@saintxparish.org](mailto:pastor@saintxparish.org)

**Intercessions for vocations**

For those parishes who have been using the intercessions for vocations, they can be found at the following website: [http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/vocations/voc\\_intercessions.aspx](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/vocations/voc_intercessions.aspx)

**OFFICE OF RURAL LIFE**

Another Rural Life event is sponsored by the Hays DCMC, part of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church.

**FARMING FOR THE L O N G HAUL, Protecting the Legacy, Helping it Happen**

A public meeting looking at the need to prolong the life of the Ogallala Aquifer in order to keep on farming in NW KS. **Saturday, November 7, 2015 3:00-7:00 P.M.** in the **Quinter United Methodist Church, 218 W. 4th, Quinter, KS.**

Speakers will include: **Ms. Julene Bair**, author of *The Ogallala Road*; **Dr. Allyn Lockner**, a retired economist, former Kansas Water Office, Director and Secretary of Environmental Protection in South Dakota.

A panel discussion will include speakers and area irrigation farmers. The panel will invite questions and comments from the audience. The meeting will conclude with a light meal featuring local foods.

**Registration cost of \$10.00**, payable at the door, includes the meal. Everyone is welcome to attend!!!

**OFFICE OF NEW EVANGELIZATION**

Evangelization in and through the Family: November is the last month in the 2015 liturgical year of Evangelization in and through the Family. It is also the month that Catholics observe All Saints Day and All Souls Day. During this month of remembrance an individual or family could visit the grave of a family member. An accompanying prayer could be:

I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38-39)

Lord God, whose days are without end and whose mercies beyond counting, keep us mindful that life is short and the hour of death unknown. Let your Sprit guide our days on earth in the ways of holiness and justice, that we may serve you in union with the whole Church, sure in faith, strong in hope, perfected in love. And when our earthly journey is ended, lead us rejoicing into your kingdom, where you live for ever and ever. Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,

And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May their soul and souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen.

(As in *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001.)

The Jubilee Year of Mercy begins on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 (The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception) and concludes on Sunday, November 20, 2016 (The Solemnity of Christ the King.) Pastoral resources for observance of the Year of Mercy are available at the Pastoral Center website [www.PastoralCenter.com](http://www.PastoralCenter.com). Resources are available for both youth and adults, in English and in Spanish.

The Diocese of Salina will be observing the Year through

- Pilgrimage destinations of Jubilee Year doors at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina and St. Fidelis Basilica in Victoria.
- An extraordinary opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation at a common time in October, 2016, all across the diocese.
- Stay tuned for news about other observances of the Jubilee Year of Mercy!

## **OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR MEETINGS:** Please mark your calendar for your meeting in your vicariate. These are the dates:

November 2-----Colby, Sacred Heart Church, 1-3:30 p.m.

November 3-----Plainville, Sacred Heart Church, 1-3:30 p.m.

November 5-----Manhattan, St. Thomas More Church, 9-11:30 a.m.

All Religious Education Coordinators are encouraged to attend.

**TOTUS TUUS:** If you would like to reserve a week for this program in summer 2016 for your parish please call Karen Taylor. All weeks except June 6-10 have openings.

**VIRTUS:** Please make sure all your teachers, Religious Education Coordinators, and Youth Ministers are up to date on the VIRTUS and Background Check requirements. A Background Check is good for five years. Records need to be kept up to date in the local parish. For questions contact Sr. Carolyn Juenemann or Wendy, 785-827-8746, in the Office of Safety and Security.

## **OFFICE OF YOUTH MINISTRY**

**NCYC:** A big Thank You to all sponsors for their efforts in getting legal papers and payments sent into our office. More information packets will be forthcoming.

**ALL Adult Sponsors/Chaperones going to NCYC MUST attend a meeting in their vicariate.**

Attending the meeting, receiving information, and getting questions answered will help save time for the parish contact persons in the future. The dates:

November 2-----Colby, Sacred Heart Church, 7 p.m. (West Vicariate)

November 3-----Hays, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 7 p.m. (West Central Vicariate)

November 9-----**Note date change to the 9<sup>th</sup>**. Manhattan, St. Thomas More Church, 7 p.m. (East Vicariate)

**DIOCESAN CYO CONVENTION:** April 9 and 10, 2016, St. Mary Grade School Gym, Salina.

**JR. CYO CAMP:** May 28-31, 2106, Rock Springs Ranch, Junction City. Youth able to attend are 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders this current school year.

**PRAYER AND ACTION:** Host parishes are needed (one in the east and one in the west) for summer 2016. Please encourage your church community to consider this program for your youth. If you have questions contact Ellsworth and Stockton parishes for their feedback. Call Karen Taylor if you would like to host Prayer and Action in your parish.

### **OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT**

**SEMINARIAN COLLECTION-** The Development Office is once again helping to coordinate the Seminarian Collection. Please see Bishop's Section for more details.

**SEMINARIAN RECOGNITION DINNER - SAVE THE DATE** – The Seminarian Recognition Dinner will be on Thursday, June 2, 2016. Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend. More information will follow in the future.

**BISHOP'S FUND** – The Bishop's Fund with the **Catholic Community Foundation** is currently taking applications for needs at a Parish, Parish School or Catholic Ministry in the Diocese of Salina. This includes any active ministries in the parish. **The application process is now done online.** The application can be found on the development page of the diocesan website under the Catholic Community Foundation under "grants". The **deadline for application is December 4, 2015.** If you have any questions, please either email: [syndi.larez@salinadiocese.org](mailto:syndi.larez@salinadiocese.org) or call Syndi at 785-827-8746.

**CATHOLIC COMMUNITY ANNUAL APPEAL** - We are in the last quarter of the year and we making positive progress toward our Diocesan goal of 1.125 Million to assist the many ministries in the Diocese. We continue to be grateful for any promotion that you can give to this appeal. This fund helps to fund many of the ministries we have available in the diocese.

**PARISHIONER LIST** – Thank you for reviewing the returning your Parish List to Lois. IF you have not returned it, please do so by November 17, so that we will be able to update our records. We ask that you please review it and submit any changes including: address changes/additions/deletions/ deceased names/ and those that are no longer in the parish. You can either email them or send a hard copy to Lois Yost at the chancery. Her email is: [lois.yost@salinadiocese.org](mailto:lois.yost@salinadiocese.org)

### **YEAR-END GIFTS**

It is never too early to put something in your bulletins promoting year-end giving. A large amount of gifts are given to entities during the last quarter. Let your parishioners know that they can support your parish, school or other catholic ministry through these year-end gifts. If you need any assistance, please contact Syndi Larez.

### **OFFICE OF FAMILY LIFE**

**SINGLE PARENT NETWORKER** is usually relevant for all parents, not just Single Parents. Many of the articles pertain to all parents. Please distribute to your Family Life Coordinator.

**NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK:** From November 15-21, 2015, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops invites families, parishes, schools and other Catholic Groups to participate in National Bible Week in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of "Dei Verbum." Enclosed in this mailing is a flyer that provides the USCCB website where resources and activities are made available.

**HELP EDUCATE YOUNG CHILDREN ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY:** As we have had inquiries from parents about how to approach their children in discussing pornography, we are recommending this book as a way for parents to begin the discussion with their young children. "Good Pictures, Bad Pictures" by Kristen A. Jensen, MA and Gail Poyner, PhD is rated 5 stars with 260 reviews at Amazon. It's a

comfortable, read-aloud story of a Mom and Dad who teach their child what pornography is, why it's dangerous, and how to reject it. The 5-point "CAN DO PLAN" teaches kids how to avoid the brain-warping images of pornography and minimize the troubling memories of accidental exposure. For more information go to [www.pornproofkids.org](http://www.pornproofkids.org).

**MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ENRICHMENT:** Since the Diocesan Family Life Directors attended the World Meeting of Families, they are available to speak about the WMOF and "Love is our Mission, The Family Fully Alive" to parishes or couples' groups. This program can also be offered as a 6 week Lenten study. Other topics available for a Lenten study are: "God's Plan for Marriage," "Living a Joy Filled Marriage," "Six Dates for Catholic Couples" or "An Introduction to Theology of the Body." Any parish or group of couples that wants to have a six week Marriage Enrichment Program for Lent, with the approval of your pastor, should contact the Family Life/NFP Office, 785-827-8746, Ext. 40 or [familylife@salinadiocese.org](mailto:familylife@salinadiocese.org).

#### **ENGAGED ENCOUNTER DATES FOR 2015-2016**

November 6-8, 2015 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria  
 Feb. 19-21, 2016 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria  
 Mar. 11-13, 2016 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria  
 Apr. 22-24, 2016 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria  
 June 10-12, 2016 - Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life-Victoria

#### **GOD'S PLAN FOR A JOY FILLED MARRIAGE SEMINAR DATES FOR 2015-2016**

Dec. 5, 2015 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Concordia  
 Feb. 20, 2016 - St. Nicholas Parish-Hays  
 Mar. 5, 2016 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Concordia  
 Apr. 9, 2016 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Concordia  
 June 18, 2016 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help-Concordia

**BULLETIN INSERTS OR HANDOUTS:** Thanksgiving, and Celebrate Advent at Home are enclosed.

#### **OFFICE OF RESPECT LIFE**

The Respect Life Office is on Facebook! Like the page at <https://www.facebook.com/officeofrespectlife>. This will be a great way to get news on pro-life activities within the diocese and beyond!

We received **Homily Background Helpers and Prayers of the Faithful, Christ the King One-Pager (English), Cristo Rey One-Pager (Spanish)** to be used for the **Solemnity of Christ the King on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 from the USCCB**. The material may be useful for educating the faithful about the Solemnity of Christ the King and its connection to religious liberty. We have added the material to this SDNB.

**Kansans for Life** has developed a church bulletin project entitled "**In the beginning**". It follows the development of a child named "Chris" in the womb. The bulletin messages begin on March 15<sup>th</sup> to prepare for Feast of the Annunciation on March 25<sup>th</sup> and ends at Christmas on December 25<sup>th</sup>. It mirrors the fetal development of Jesus Christ. This is a great way to spread the pro-life message while honoring the child Jesus. The bulletin announcements are included in this SDNB.

#### **Bulletin Announcements**

**THE DIOCESE OF SALINA RESPECT LIFE OFFICE** will sponsor a bus trip to the **March for Life** in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20-24, 2016. The trip includes bus fare, hotel for two nights, Mass, the March For Life, National Shrine of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, sightseeing, and the Life is VERY Good Rally, [www.arlingtondiocese.org/youth/lifeisverygood.aspx](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/youth/lifeisverygood.aspx) (optional, additional cost) Cost

of the trip is \$325 per person. Complete payment at [salinadiocese.org/respect-life](http://salinadiocese.org/respect-life), final payment is due December 1st. For more information contact Eric and Jaclyn Brown, 785-650-2474, or [respectlife@salinadiocese.org](mailto:respectlife@salinadiocese.org).

**CANTERBURY PILGRIMAGES & TOURS** will host a “fly” option to the March for Life in Washington, D.C., Jan. 21-24, 2016. This round-trip airfare from Kansas City Airport will include hotel in the Greater D.C. area, breakfast daily at the hotel, participation in the Pro-Life Rally and March, three dinners at restaurants in the greater D.C. area, motor coach transportation, celebration of Mass with others from around the country as well as the other pilgrims from the Diocese of Salina, and sightseeing. Cost for trip starts as low as \$995 per person. For more information or to reserve online visit [salinadiocese.org/respect-life](http://salinadiocese.org/respect-life), or pick up a form from your parish office.

**The Diocese of Salina Respect Life Office** will sponsor a bus trip to the **March for Life in Topeka, KS** Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. The trip includes bus fare, breakfast, Rally, Mass, and March for Life in Topeka. The cost of the trip is \$70 if you register by November 20<sup>th</sup>. Late registration is \$75 after November 20<sup>th</sup>. Registration deadline is December 11<sup>th</sup>! Register at [www.salinadiocese.org/respect-life](http://www.salinadiocese.org/respect-life). (Bulletin Insert provided)

On Tuesday, December 8th from 8:00 pm to December 9th 12:00 am, our parish will participate in the **National Night of Prayer for Life**. The purpose is to unite our prayers with Catholics throughout the country in an effort to help bring back the world to Christ and to bring about an end to abortion. The hours are chosen to coincide with Our Lady of Guadalupe’s appearance to Juan Diego. The U.S. bishops’ annual novena **9 Days for Life** takes place Saturday, January 16 – Sunday, January 24, 2016. Pray for the respect and protection of all human life with new intentions, brief reflections, and more each day. Download the novena online, or participate through Facebook, email, text message or an app. Join at [www.9daysforlife.com](http://www.9daysforlife.com)!

**Pro-Life Intercessions for Mass**

- For children who are unwanted by their parents:** that God's grace might send others to love and care for them; We pray to the Lord:
- For a growing love of God's little ones,** in the womb, in the nursing home or at death's door: That we might love with the love of Jesus; We pray to the Lord:
- For all who live in nursing homes,** and especially for those who are alone or in pain: that we might cherish the gift of their wisdom, and the perduring example of their faith; We pray to the Lord:
- For all expectant families at Mass today:** that we might rejoice with them in the gift God brings us through their love; We pray to the Lord:
- For everyone who is haunted by the memory of abortion:** that they might know repentance, mercy, and peace; We pray to the Lord:

**CONTINUING EDUCATION OF PRIESTS**

ADVENT DAY OF PRAYER: December 1 in Victoria

JANUARY RENEWAL DAYS: will be January 25-28, 2016.

ANNUAL RETREAT 2016: September 19-22, 2016.

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES

### **Adopt-A-Family for Christmas**

Catholic Charities is now accepting applications for families needing help at Christmas in all office locations. Please let us know if you have any families you would like to refer. Each office has its own application and procedure process, so for more information, please contact the office nearest you:

<b>Hays</b> (122 E. 12 <sup>th</sup> )	785-625-2644
<b>Manhattan</b> (323 Poyntz)	785-323-0644
<b>Salina</b> (425 W. Iron)	785-825-0208

### **2015 Annual Appeal**

Thank you for supporting the Catholic Charities 2015 Annual Appeal. Our current total now exceeds \$232,000 and continues to grow a little each week. We are including with this edition of the SDNB a list of donations by parish. If your church sent a check combining donations from multiple parish members, we would greatly appreciate *a list with each contributor's name, address and donation amount*. This will enable our office to thank these donors and provide them acknowledgements for their tax records. Please send this list to Catholic Charities at P.O. Box 1366, Salina, KS 67402 or to [jwarner@ccnks.org](mailto:jwarner@ccnks.org) via email. Please direct any questions you may have to Jeanie Warner at **785-825-0208**.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### UPDATES FOR THE DIRECTORY:

1. Fr. Daryl Olmstead is the new Moderator for the SDCCW (pg. 15)
2. Delete – Fr. Al Brungardt (pgs. 67 & 100)
3. Fr. Gale Hammerschmidt – Delete St. Joseph, Brookville as a Mission – pg. 70
4. Fr. Carlos Ruiz-Santos is now a member of the Vocations Boards – pg. 14
5. Updated email address for the Rector at St. Meinrad: [rector@saintmeinrad.edu](mailto:rector@saintmeinrad.edu) – pg. 93
6. Name change: MICHEAL, Rev. David, HGN – pg. 86
7. Victoria: Jeanette Brungardt is the Youth Minister (not the Tri Parish coordinator) pg. 50
8. Victoria: CYO sponsor is Shanna Dinkel – pg. 50



# December 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Clergy Advent Day of Prayer, Victoria	2	3	4 Deacon Formation Great Bend	5 God's Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage, Concordia Deacon Formation Great Bend
6 Deacon Formation Great Bend	7	8 Immaculate Conception Chancery Closed National Night of Prayer for Life	9	10 4:00 Diocesan Finance Council	11	12
13 Retired Religious Collection	14	15 Catholic Community Foundation Mtg.	16	17	18 4:00 Lay Review Board	19
20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Chancery Closed	25 Christmas Day Chancery Closed	26
27	28 Seminarian and parents Mass and luncheon- Cathedral 11:00 AM Runnin' Revs game SHHS	29	30	31 New Year's Eve Chancery Closed		



## Diocese of Salina

103 N. Ninth  
P.O. Box 980  
Salina, Kansas 67402-0980

Office of the Bishop

November 2015

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our parishes will be conducting the Retirement Fund for Religious collection the weekend of December 12-13, 2015. This annual appeal benefits some 33,000 senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests – women and men who have consecrated their lives to serving God and the Church.

During this Year of Consecrated Life, Pope Francis calls on the faithful to recognize the special witness that consecrated women and men offer our Church and world. In a letter marking the inauguration of this special year, he says, “I ask the whole Christian people to be increasingly aware of the gift which is the presence of our many consecrated men and women.” He goes on to note the spiritual influence that Religious such as Saint Benedict and St Teresa of Avila continue to have on our Church and faith today.

As we reflect on the saints of the past, many of us may also recall women and men religious whom we would consider saints in our day. With gratitude, we remember the sister who penitently helped us learn our multiplication tables or the brother who coached our high school team, teaching us that faith must be lived out even on the basketball court.

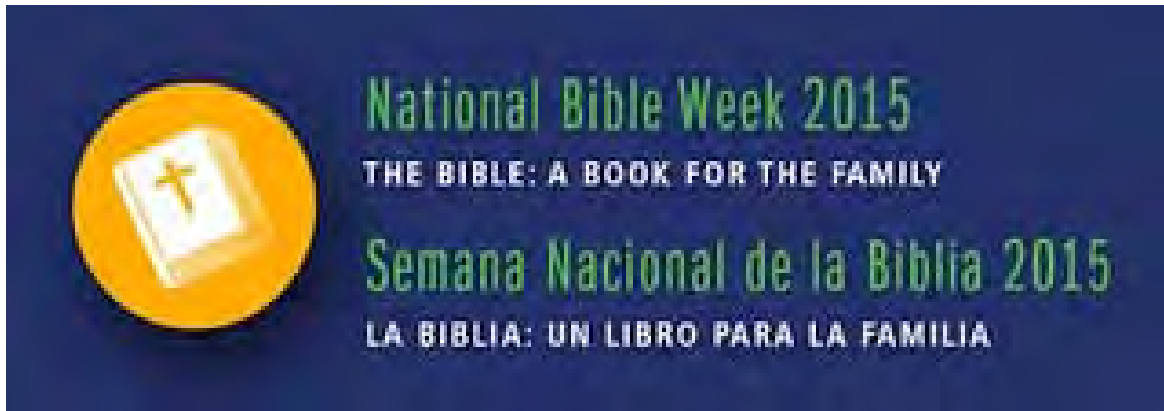
Today, many of these sisters, brothers, and religious order priests – these saints in our midst – are elderly. While some continue in volunteer ministry, others are frail and need care. Most worked for years for small stipends, leaving their religious communities without adequate savings to meet growing retirement and eldercare needs.

So I ask you to join with Pope Francis in acknowledging the gift of consecrated life. This is an opportunity for each of us to be the presence of Jesus to our senior consecrated religious. Please pray for God’s blessing on all religious and give what you can to the Retirement Fund for Religious the weekend of December 12-13, 2015. Please join me in supporting this important drive and in praying for God’s continued blessings on our elderly sisters, brothers and religious order priests.

Very sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger  
Bishop of Salina

# National Bible Week



From [USCCB](#):

WASHINGTON—Families, parishes, schools and other Catholic groups can participate in National Bible Week, November 15-21, with resources provided in English and Spanish and available on the website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The theme of the observance is “The Bible: A Book for the Family/ La Biblia: Un Libro para la Familia.”

The Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* will celebrate its 50th anniversary on November 18, 2015. National Bible Week logos and a variety of resources that highlight the Bible in Catholic life are available online: [www.usccb.org/bible/national-bible-week/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/national-bible-week/index.cfm)

Resources for families include “Enthroning the Bible in the Family” (Cómo entronizar la Biblia en la familia), “Making the Word of God a Part of Your Home” (Cómo hacer que la Palabra de Dios sea parte fundamental del hogar), “Ever Ancient, Ever New: The Art and Practice of Lectio Divina” (Siempre Antigua, Siempre Nueva: El Arte y la Práctica de Lectio Divina) and “Sharing the Word of God at Home” (Compartiendo la Palabra de Dios en el Hogar).

Resources for parishes include a faith formation session on reading and understanding the Bible, a guide for starting and maintaining a parish Bible study, a family retreat, tips for using the Bible in catechesis and prayer, and a Scripture vigil on the themes of Catholic Social Teaching.

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine will act as a clearinghouse for activities undertaken by dioceses and other groups, including the Association of Catholic Publishers, the American Bible Society and the Catholic Biblical Federation.

# THANKSGIVING

## *Grace for Thanksgiving Day Meal*

**Leader:** We gather at this table with grateful hearts. For the many gifts that surround us...

**All:** We thank you God.

**Leader:** For our family and friends and for our being together today...

**All:** We thank you God.

**Leader:** For this good food and for all those who grew it, packaged it, transported it, and prepared it...

**All:** We thank you God.

**Leader:** *Invite all guests to name one thing they are most grateful for at this time in their lives. After each prayer of thanks, all respond:*

**All:** We thank you Lord.

**Leader:** We praise and thank you, loving God, for all your gifts. Turn our hearts toward those who do not have enough food to celebrate this day, nor friends to share it with. Let gratitude move us to charity toward our family gathered here and toward the whole human family. Amen.

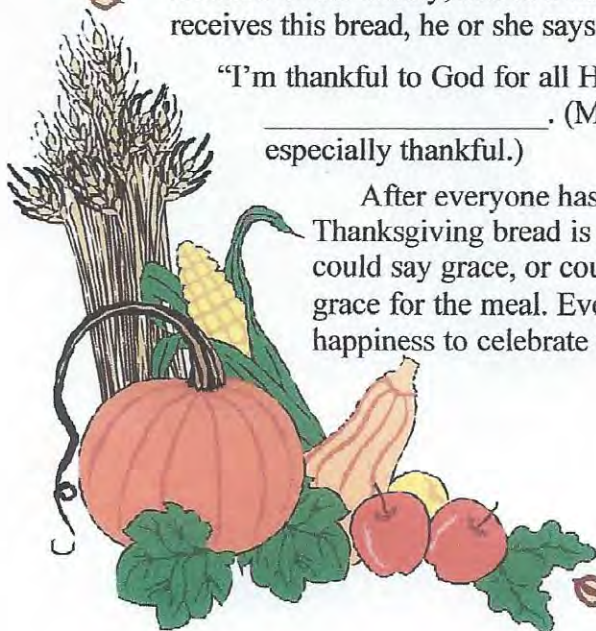


## *A Family Thanksgiving Bread Tradition*

When you are ready to eat your Thanksgiving meal, place your loaf of Thanksgiving bread on your table. When everyone is seated, pause for a few moments of silent prayer and thanksgiving. Then the head of the family breaks off a piece of Thanksgiving bread and hands it to each member of the family, one at a time. As each member of the family receives this bread, he or she says something like the following:

"I'm thankful to God for all His gifts, but especially today for \_\_\_\_\_ . (Mention something for which you are especially thankful.)"

After everyone has said a prayer of thanksgiving, the Thanksgiving bread is eaten. Then the head of the family could say grace, or could use the Thanksgiving prayer as grace for the meal. Everyone continues in a spirit of joy and happiness to celebrate this happy day.



Taken from *Faith and Fest*  
© 2004 The Catholic Archdiocese of Omaha



Advent means “coming” and is four weeks of *preparing hearts and minds for Jesus* who is at once with us and coming again.

The following ideas for celebrating Advent at home serve a two-fold purpose: to enrich the family’s spiritual life while helping combat commercialism by placing the emphasis on Jesus’ coming rather than on material goods.

### Advent Wreath

Make or purchase an advent wreath and place it on a table or in a special advent prayer space in your home. Light it daily at meal or bedtime and pray the weekly prayers together.

Read them aloud so the whole family hears the good news of the season.

### Advent Calendar

Make or purchase a calendar with daily reminders of Jesus’ coming. Open one door each day, emphasizing the good news the Christian tradition celebrates during this season. Check your local religious-goods store for a variety of calendar types.

### Straw for the Crib

Place an empty crib in your special Advent space at home. Next to it, leave a basket of straw or narrow strips of paper. When family members do a kind deed or seek forgiveness from someone, they can add one piece of straw to the crib. By Christmas, the crib is softly lined and ready for Jesus. On Christmas Eve, place the Jesus figure in the crib, thanking God for the gift of His Son, Jesus.

### Advent Chain

Make small strips of purple paper in a box or basket available to family members. As each kind act or favor is done in your home, family members can add one link to the advent chain by gluing the strip into a circle and attaching it to the chain. Acts of service and sacrifice help prepare hearts for Jesus’ coming.

### Tell the Story

Encourage children to read and act out the Christmas story. Let each child have a nativity set of his/her own. Puppet plays or dress-up versions of the Bethlehem story help remind children of the real meaning of Christmas.

### Advent Scripture Reading

Read the daily scripture for the Advent season. Many books are available with meditations on each day’s reading, or ask the person who prints your parish bulletin to list the daily scripture reading during Advent.

### Reconcile Differences

Prepare the way for Jesus’ coming by asking and granting forgiveness among family members. Say an act of contrition together around the advent wreath and reflect together on how family members treat one another. Ask forgiveness for hurts. Go to church together to celebrate the sacrament of

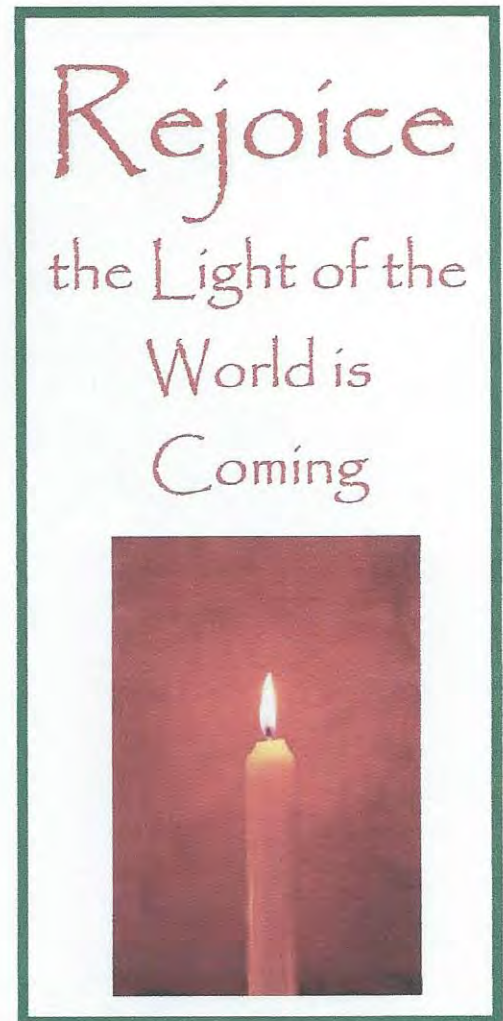
Reconciliation during Advent. Also, Advent is a good time to renew a broken or hurting friendship or to heal a family feud.

#### Give to the Poor

Select a local charity or cause to donate your sacrificial gifts during Advent. Decorate a box or jar to collect coins. Decide together what sacrifice will merit placing a coin into the jar: going without a movie or dessert, or turning off the TV for one night. You may also choose to drop in a coin for each act of kindness to a neighbor or friend.

#### Work for Peace

To help prepare the way for the “prince of Peace,” involve your family in peace-making efforts outside your home. Write to your congressional representatives and senators about military spending. Join Bread for the World or another international organization that seeks peace through justice. Contact your local Peace and Justice Office for ideas.



# Single Parent Networker



ARCHDIOCESE of OMAHA  
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**FAMILY LIFE**  
FORMATION

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## Celebrating the Holidays as a Blended Family

By Sam Quick, PHD



Holidays, such as Thanksgiving, or Christmas, may be challenging for blended families. Unresolved feelings, animosity, and mixed loyalties can sidetrack what should be a happy time.

However, with forethought and creativity, your blended family can enjoy pleasant and enriching holiday celebrations. In a blended family, at least one adult has a child or children from a former relationship. These children regularly visit or live with the couple. A blended family may be small, consisting of an adult couple and one child, or larger, perhaps consisting of her, his and their children.

Custody arrangements may result in the parents building a family around full-time, shared, or weekend step parenting. If you are one of the growing numbers of blended families, consider these suggestions that may help you manage the challenges of the holiday season:

**Be Flexible.** Who says your family has to celebrate a given holiday on its official date? Who says all members of your blended family need to be together on a particular holiday?

Do your best to stay out of

power struggles with former spouses and other family members about where the children will spend the holiday. If you adopt a flexible mindset, you'll discover many satisfactory ways to celebrate holidays.

For example, in your family you may decide to celebrate Thanksgiving on the following Sunday. In the short run, this may ease the stress on everyone. After doing this for a year or two, you will have a new tradition in your family. Creating new ways of celebrating encourages the growth of bonds between family members and creates pleasant memories that are not rooted in the more distant past.

**Encourage Expression of Feelings.** Let youngsters, grandparents, and others share their feelings. Listen sensitively without interrupting or trying to fix problems they share with you.

You may not agree with everything a person says (and you certainly will not be able to accommodate everyone's preferences), but family members will appreciate your listening to them and taking their needs

into account.

Allow time and space for the child whose biological parent is not present to express sadness, regret, or guilt. Sometimes a child will feel disloyal to the absent parent. Acknowledging such emotions helps the child move through these feelings rather than getting stuck in them.

Reassure the child who will not be with you that he will be missed, but that you will be all right. Give him permission to enjoy himself with the parent he visits. If you have conflicting emotions, confide in a caring adult rather than your child.

**Plan Ahead:** Discuss options and plan in advance of a given holiday. Encourage family members to share their ideas, as it helps everyone voice their opinions and avoid unrealistic expectations. Deciding how to celebrate the holidays may not be easy, but planning in advance can help you bypass problems. Particularly when young children are involved, it is nice to anticipate the holidays without the stress of last-minute planning. Remember, keep the plans simple.

**Sidestep Competition.** In blended families, stepparents, former spouses, grandparents, and other adults may compete for the time, favor and attention of children in the family. Sometimes children, taking their cues from adults, compete for the favor of others, too.

This competitiveness, while subtle, damages family well-being and promotes an unhealthy air of tension. Realize that the competitiveness is usually rooted in jealousy and feelings of personal inadequacy. Focus on being the best person you can be. Appreciate your positive qualities and those of your family. Enjoy yourselves. Sidestep feelings of jealousy and unhealthy competition.

**Avoid Over-commitment.** Three complete holiday meals in one day is too much for anyone's stomach! This example is just one way blended families may over-commit during a holiday.

Do less, better. Keep your celebrations manageable and enjoyable. End family get-togethers before fatigue sets in, and plan activities that leave everyone relaxed when they're over. If you share gifts, be thoughtful, fair, and creative, making sure you don't spend more than you can afford.

**Rise above Animosity.** Make it a game to see if you can be calm and even-minded in challenging circumstances. Children in blended families are relieved and adjust best when the adults are at least pleasant to one another.

Children may not care all that much when, where, or how they celebrate a holiday. However, it is very important to them that the adults they love get along with each other. Look upon challenging relationships as a test of your

creative ability, kindness and inner strength. When you focus on changing yourself rather than trying to change others, you set an invaluable example for children.

**Enjoy Your Family's Uniqueness.** Expect your stepfamily to be very different from a first-marriage family. A blended family is no better or worse than any other family, but it is unique. Learn to appreciate the advantages of your family and the strengths of each person in it.

Avoid blaming problems on the blended family. Kids will be kids and adults will occasionally be immature whether in a first-marriage family or a stepfamily. The idea of perfect families who celebrate perfect holidays is a myth. All families struggle, and it's through these difficulties that we grow in understanding.

Appreciate your family as a training ground for love. Discuss what is right in your family, and express appreciation for one another. Do it until it becomes a habit.

**Maintain a Sense of Humor.** All stepfamilies go through hard times. It is tempting to bring the heaviness of the past into the present. Sidestep this tendency.

Focus on having fun, even if you must be a little outrageous. For youngsters and older folks, gloom disperses quickly when someone gets silly, breaks into a grin, or makes a funny comment. Especially during the holiday season, blended family members need permission to let the past stay in the past and to enjoy the present.

<http://secondwivescafe.com/articles/blendedholidays.shtml>

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## Parenting Pointers

649. Nov. 6: "This poor widow put in more than all the other contributors..." (Mark 12:43) Our faith (and common decency) calls us to share our resources with those who have less. BUT, how much is a fair amount to give? A 10% tithe is easier for a person of wealth than a person who is poor. Review with your kids how your family donates money and time. Between now and Thanksgiving, how will you be generous?

650. Nov. 13: "We share the pain of couples who struggle without success to conceive a child. We admire and encourage families who adopt a child [or] become foster parents" ([Follow the way of Love](#)). November is National Adoption month. Have you ever considered this way to give life?

651. Nov. 20: "A mother's soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience." (*Emily Dickinson*) Although written by a woman about mothers, could this same sentiment be said about fathers? Hopefully, yes. Check your language and family life for unnecessary gender stereotypes this week.

652. Nov. 27: Do you have a family tradition for how you spend the day after Thanksgiving? (shopping, eating leftovers, playing games, etc.) Decide together how best to use your precious family time this weekend. Don't let shopping rob you of what's really important.

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## How Will You Prepare for Jesus this Advent?



Advent begins on Sunday, November 29th. It is a time of waiting and preparation for the coming of Jesus on Christmas Day. There are many ways we can use this time to prepare our own hearts for the coming of our Savior.

Advent means waiting. The hurriedness of the Christmas season can teach us much about waiting. We wait in traffic, we wait in line at the grocery store, we wait for our children at school. Sometimes waiting is difficult to do. We are busy, we have things we need/want to do and the waiting seems endless. But isn't that what Advent is? Waiting on the Lord? We are preparing our hearts for the him to enter on Christmas Day. Demonstrating our ability as parents to do patient waiting is important to show our children.

By observing Advent using the Advent wreath to pray with our children we are teaching them about keeping our thoughts focused on the coming of Jesus and not allowing the business of other things to distract us.



## Thanksgiving Sharing

When your guests arrive for Thanksgiving dinner, give them each a leaf you and your children have designed and cut out. Tell them while they are waiting for dinner to begin to write down one thing about each of the guests at the table that they love or admire. Prior to saying grace go around the table and have each person read what they have written about the family and friends that have gathered at the Thanksgiving table. It's a wonderful way to get everyone involved in giving thanks for each other.

*All Saints Day, November 1*

*All Souls Day, November 2*

*"Eternal rest grant unto their souls,  
O Lord, and let perpetual light  
shine upon them."*

*November is the month the church reminds*

## Building Memories

When you think back to your childhood, what sensory memories come to mind? Maybe it is the smell of the turkey made especially for Thanksgiving, the aroma of the Christmas tree or a certain gum that was provided as a special treat. Does it make you want to shut your eyes and go there?

These memories and smells stimulates a child's senses for creating that unique place called home.

Single parents have an even more pressing need to create warm, sense-filled memories of home. To a child who has known loss, the sensations of home life become an even greater treasure.

Such experiences create security in a child's changing and seemingly unstable world. Imagine a child who clings to a blanket. Touching and holding that blanket gives him a sense of security. Stimulating other senses repeatedly gives children a chance to become familiar with certain experiences—the smell of muffins baking every Saturday morning, the soft night light leading the way to the bathroom, a decoration that appears on a certain holiday. That familiarity produces security.

Keep in mind that a parent's touch is also important for creating security. Greet your children at the door with hugs. Hold their hands during mealtime prayer. It takes little time and no money, but the benefits are immeasurable.

## Thanksgiving Day Prayer

God, our Father, we gather together with those we love on this Thanksgiving Day to celebrate your many gifts to us.

You are truly a loving Father who cares for all our needs.

We also remember that many of your children cannot celebrate today because they are hungry or homeless or have no one to love them.

Please show us how we can share our gifts with them.

Amen



# CHRIST THE KING

## A KINGSHIP THAT BEARS WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

Each year at the conclusion of the liturgical year, we fittingly celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. As the Apostle St. Paul teaches us, “In [Jesus Christ] everything in heaven and earth was created... and continues in being” (Col 1:16-17). He is the ‘Alpha and Omega’, the ‘Beginning and End’, the ‘Way, Truth, and Life’. Indeed, Christ promises to His faithful friends the gift of salvation, the pledge of everlasting life through His Resurrection. Therefore, faithfulness to Christ, our King, opens the door to our eternal happiness.

**Origin of the Feast:** In 1925, Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in the encyclical *Quas Primas* (from Latin, “In the First”) to respond to secularism—the adoration of ‘idols’ of the earthly world, such as money and fame, above God. Pope Pius XI recognized that secularism would breed hostility against the Church. In fact, during the 20th century, governments in Mexico, Russia, and Europe, infiltrated by secularism, threatened not only the Catholic Church but also civilization itself. *Quas Primas* gave Catholics the hope that while governments may crumble, Christ’s Kingdom, unlike the kingdoms of this world, would last forever.

**Christ’s Kingship:** Although *Quas Primas* was written almost 90 years ago, it continues to ring true today. For instance, secularism continues to separate people from God, as evidenced by the rejection of Church teachings and the denial of God Himself. In addition, recent Pew Research Center data shows the worldwide increase of religious hostilities. Now more than ever, we must celebrate that Jesus Christ is King of the Universe, including in the following ways:

- **In Christ, we must preserve our fundamental rights.** Jesus Christ reveals the fulfillment of the truths of creation found in the book of Genesis: “God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31). Therefore, “made in [His] image and likeness,” each of us possesses an immeasurable goodness (Gen 1:26). And, this goodness from Christ, given to the heart of man, calls us to fight for what is justly ours: the right to life, freedom of conscience and religious freedom.



FOR THIS I WAS BORN,  
AND FOR THIS I HAVE  
COME INTO THE  
WORLD, TO BEAR  
WITNESS TO THE  
TRUTH.

JOHN 18:37

- **In Christ, we must evangelize in love.** Christ, both meek and humble of heart, is the perfect servant of God: Through His teaching and His life, Jesus intended to confirm, not to coerce, others in faith (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 11). Through our daily action, let us follow Christ’s loving example of showing the truth to others.

- **In Christ, we must proclaim the truth.** Christ’s Kingship “bear[s] witness to the truth” (John 18:37). In bearing this witness, Christ acknowledges government authority, “rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” (Matthew 22:21). Nonetheless, we are asked to speak out “against governing powers which oppose the holy will of God” (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 11).

Bearing witness to the truth in this age can be difficult. But Christ has shown us that ‘kingship’ must always be at the service of the good of mankind. Therefore, with His grace and in hope of His gift of salvation, let us bear witness to the truth, even when it is unpopular or costly to do so. In this way, we become faithful servants of Christ, preparing the way for His Kingdom, both on earth and in heaven.

What can you do to ensure the protection of religious freedom at home and abroad?

Text the word “Freedom” to 377377 for updates from the bishops on current threats to religious liberty. Also, please visit [www.usccb.org/freedom](http://www.usccb.org/freedom) for more information on how you can protect religious liberty.

# CRISTO REY

## UN REINO QUE DA TESTIMONIO DE LA VERDAD

Cada año, en el último domingo del año litúrgico, celebramos la Solemnidad de Cristo Rey. El Apóstol San Pablo nos enseña: “En [Jesucristo] fueron creadas todas las cosas en el cielo y en la tierra,... y todo tiene en él su consistencia” (Col 1,16-17). Él es el Alfa y la Omega, el Principio y el Fin, el ‘Camino, la Verdad y la Vida’. En efecto, Cristo promete a sus amigos fieles el don de la salvación, la promesa de la vida eterna por medio de su Resurrección. Por lo tanto, la fidelidad a Cristo, nuestro Rey, abre la puerta a la felicidad eterna.

**Origen de la fiesta:** En 1925, mediante su encíclica *Quas Primas*, el Papa Pío XI instituyó la fiesta de Cristo Rey en respuesta al creciente nacionalismo y secularismo —la adoración de “ídolos” del mundo terrenal, tales como el dinero y la fama, por encima de Dios. El Papa tuvo la visión de percibir que el secularismo pronto podría generar mucha hostilidad en contra de la Iglesia. Durante los primeros años del siglo XX, en México, Rusia y otras partes de Europa infiltradas por el secularismo esta desviación amenazaban no solo a la Iglesia Católica sino a la civilización misma. *Quas Primas* renovó en los católicos la esperanza de que, aunque a su alrededor los gobiernos se derrumbaran, el Reino de Cristo duraría para siempre.

**El Reino de Cristo:** Aunque *Quas Primas* fue escrita hace casi 90 años, sigue siendo tan cierta y actual como entonces. Por ejemplo, el secularismo sigue separando a las personas de Dios, como lo demuestra el rechazo de las enseñanzas de la Iglesia y hasta la negación de Dios. Además, datos recientes del Pew Research Center muestran que por todo el mundo se advierte un aumento de las hostilidades religiosas. Ahora más que nunca, debemos celebrar que Jesucristo es el Rey del Universo, incluso en las siguientes maneras:

- **En Cristo, necesitamos preservar nuestros derechos fundamentales.** Jesucristo revela el cumplimiento de las verdades de la creación que se encuentran en el libro del Génesis: “Dios vio que todo cuanto había hecho era muy bueno” (Gen 1,31). Por lo tanto, “hechos a su imagen y semejanza”, cada uno de nosotros posee una bondad incommensurable (Gen 1,26). Esta bondad de Cristo, implantada en el corazón del hombre, nos llama a luchar por lo que por derecho pertenece a cada uno de nosotros: el derecho a la libertad religiosa.



YO DOY TESTIMONIO  
DE LA VERDAD, Y PARA  
ESTO HE NACIDO Y HE  
VENIDO AL MUNDO.

JUAN 18,37

- **En Cristo, necesitamos evangelizar con amor.** Cristo, manso y humilde de corazón, es el perfecto siervo de Dios: mediante su enseñanza y su vida, su intención era la de confirmar, no coaccionar a otros en la fe (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 11). Con nuestras obras cotidianas, sigamos el ejemplo de mostrar la verdad de Cristo a los demás.

- **En Cristo, necesitamos proclamar la verdad.** El Reino de Cristo “da testimonio de la Verdad” (Juan 18,37). Al dar este testimonio, Cristo reconoce la autoridad del gobierno “den al César lo que es del César” (Mateo 22,21). Sin embargo, se nos pide “contradecir al poder público, cuando éste se opon[e] a la santa voluntad de Dios” (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 11).

Dar testimonio de la verdad en esta edad puede ser difícil. Pero Cristo nos ha enseñado que la realeza consiste siempre en servir el bien de la humanidad. Por lo tanto, con su gracia y la esperanza en el don de su salvación, demos testimonio de la verdad, incluso cuando sea impopular o costoso. De esta manera, nos convertimos en verdaderos siervos de Cristo que preparan Su Reino en la Tierra y en Cielo.

¿Qué puede hacer para asegurar la protección de la libertad religiosa?

Envía texto LIBERTAD al 377377 para recibir actualizaciones de los obispos sobre amenazas actuales a la libertad religiosa. ¡También, visite [www.usccb.org/freedom](http://www.usccb.org/freedom) para más información y como participar para proteger la libertad religiosa!

**November 22, 2015**  
**Solemnity of Christ the King**

**Readings, Suggested Homily Background Notes, and Prayers of the Faithful**

**Readings**

**Reading 1: Daniel 7:13-14**

As the visions during the night continued, I saw  
one like a Son of man coming,  
on the clouds of heaven;  
when he reached the Ancient One  
and was presented before him,  
the one like a Son of man received dominion, glory, and kingship;  
all peoples, nations, and languages serve him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
that shall not be taken away,  
his kingship shall not be destroyed.

**Responsorial Psalm 93:1, 1-2, 5**

R. (1a) The LORD is king; he is robed in majesty.  
The LORD is king, in splendor robed;  
robed is the LORD and girt about with strength.  
R. The LORD is king; he is robed in majesty.  
And he has made the world firm,  
not to be moved.  
Your throne stands firm from of old;  
from everlasting you are, O LORD.  
R. The LORD is king; he is robed in majesty.  
Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed;  
holiness befits your house,  
O LORD, for length of days.  
R. The LORD is king; he is robed in majesty.

**Reading 2: Revelation 1:5-8**

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness,  
the firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth.  
To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,  
who has made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father,  
to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.  
Behold, he is coming amid the clouds,  
and every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him.

All the peoples of the earth will lament him.  
Yes. Amen.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God,  
“the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty.”

### **Gospel: John 18:33b-37**

Pilate said to Jesus,  
“Are you the King of the Jews?”  
Jesus answered, “Do you say this on your own  
or have others told you about me?”  
Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I?  
Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me.  
What have you done?”  
Jesus answered, “My kingdom does not belong to this world.  
If my kingdom did belong to this world,  
my attendants would be fighting  
to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.  
But as it is, my kingdom is not here.”  
So Pilate said to him, “Then you are a king?”  
Jesus answered, “You say I am a king.  
For this I was born and for this I came into the world,  
to testify to the truth.  
Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

### **Suggested Homily Notes**

#### **Overall:**

In the United States, the Solemnity of Christ the King, which we celebrate today, may be more difficult to appreciate because we are not used to the idea of a king, thinking that kingship tends to lead to oppression and is contrary to our ideals of freedom and equality. However, the kingship of Christ gives human freedom both its firmest foundation and final goal.

#### **First Reading:**

1. In the First Reading from the Book of Daniel, the prophet Daniel sees a vision of one like a Son of Man receiving dominion all peoples, nations and kingdoms. When Jesus stood before Caiaphas, He spoke of the fulfillment of that vision in Himself. See Matt. 26:64. Jesus Himself will judge all nations, and He works through His Church in the world.
2. When we look at the world around us, this vision may seem like it is not being fulfilled. We see many countries of Western Europe turning from the faith. We see Christians persecuted by tyrannies and war in the Middle East, Africa, China, and in other places. And in this nation, we see threats to the Church by secularization and by attempts to force Christians and others who

believe in natural law to leave their faith at the door when it comes to business, education, charitable works, or government. We should not be surprised at this struggle to make the kingdom of God present, for it has ever been a struggle for the faithful. Daniel saw this vision when his people were in exile in Babylon. And the vision recounted in this reading begins with a prophecy of four terrible powers on earth imposing war and oppression. Likewise, the Church has often faced oppression, from pagan Rome to the present.

3. However, over the course of time, all the powers of this earth fade away, while the accomplishments dedicated to the kingdom of God remain. After all, the Roman Empire has long since vanished, but the Church has preserved what was best in it, such as the Latin language, the Augustinian and Benedictine orders built upon great Roman thought, and the city of Rome itself. The kingdoms of the Middle Ages are long since gone. But the Church has preserved the best of that era in such things as the idea of a university, Gothic architecture and the notion of cathedrals, the ideals of chivalry, and the Franciscan, Dominican and Carmelite orders. Time brings an end to all nations on earth, but the best of every land is redeemed by Christ.

### **Responsorial Psalm 93**

1. In today's Psalm, the Psalmist celebrates the glory and the permanence of the reign of God and of His precepts. Once again, when we look at the world as it is now, it may seem like this vision is not being fulfilled, but instead there is so much war, chaos, and division.

2. But in the midst of all of this chaos and strife, the truth of God shines through and in fact increases throughout this time. The Church teaches the same faith she has ever taught. And in response to errors, she increases in the understanding and explanation of it through such things as the Second Vatican Council and the writings of St. John Paul II. Likewise, while the specific rubrics change over time, we celebrate the same Mass and all of the same sacraments and other liturgies that have united the faithful throughout the centuries. And the Church, despite all of our different backgrounds, and even disagreements about how to proceed, unites all peoples of the earth together in the common pursuit of truth, charity, holiness, and the splendor of God. This common quest brings about a true peace among nations and a unity that does not suppress each nation's individuality, but rather allows the different nations to live together in harmony. Speaking of globalization in Philadelphia, Pope Francis affirmed this vision of unity among nations: "But a globalization which attempts to bring everyone together while respecting the uniqueness and gifts of each person or people is a good globalization; it helps all of us to grow, and it brings peace. I like to use a geometrical image for this. If globalization is a sphere, where every point is equidistant from the center, it cancels everything out; it is not good. But if globalization is like a polyhedron, where everything is united but each element keeps its own identity, then it is good; it causes a people to grow, it bestows dignity and it grants rights to all."

### **Second Reading**

1. In this passage from the Book of Revelation, John sees Jesus as the great ruler of the kings of the earth, who makes His people a free kingdom, freed from sin and able to be "priests for his God and Father". This vision describes what true freedom is, namely freedom from sin and

freedom to participate in the love of God. Americans rightly value freedom but often misunderstand what it is. If one asks people what freedom is, the most common response would probably be the ability to do whatever one likes. However, that is the freedom of a wild animal, which is really the dominance of one's desires over one's calling to holiness and true love. As Jesus says, "He who commits sin is a slave of sin." John 8:34; see Romans 6:5-14.

2. Rather, as St. John Paul II said in Chapter 8 of his last book, *Memory and Identity*, "Freedom is for love." For love is the one thing that cannot be compelled. It must be freely given and freely received; otherwise, it is not love. And love, so freely given and received makes us, as St. John says, born of God and able to know Him. See 1 John 4:7.

3. In this context, we see the rightful basis for freedom and human rights. We are entitled to certain rights because we have the calling to live out the love of God in many ways. As Pope Benedict wrote in section 42 of *Caritas in Veritate*, "it is important to call for a renewed reflection on how rights presuppose duties, if they are not to become mere license." This connection between rights and duties may seem like a limitation, but it is in fact the only sure foundation for human dignity and liberty. Our Founding Fathers saw this connection between human rights and the law of God, for in the Declaration of Independence they grounded their actions "upon the law of Nature and of Nature's God" and upon the inalienable rights given to us by our Creator.

## **The Gospel of John**

1. Here in today's Gospel, we see the great paradox of Jesus showing His power by suffering. At a superficial level, it seems that Pilate is the one in power. And Jesus seems like the failed leader, whose supporters were not with Him. But, with sacred wisdom, we see the reverse. The seemingly powerful Roman governor is in fact cowering before the mobs, allowing a death he knows is unjustified, and in general only keeping the pretense of order. By contrast, Jesus, fulfilling the ideal of kings leading their armies into battle, heads triumphantly to confront sin and death, preparing to defeat them.

2. Like Rome, this nation has a glorious ideal. The United States has become great because of her noble vision, of the rights given by God and of the willingness to accept different traditions, whether religious or national, into our common quest. Pope Francis called attention to America's tradition of pluralism when he encouraged Hispanic immigrants in Philadelphia, saying, "I ask you not to forget that, like those who came here before you, you bring many gifts to this nation. ... By contributing your gifts, you will not only find your place here, you will help to renew society from within. Do not forget what took place here over two centuries ago. Do not forget that Declaration which proclaimed that all men and women are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights and that governments exist in order to protect and defend those rights."

3. Religious liberty was ever central to this notion of American human rights. For example, the Magna Carta, which is considered to be the foundation of Anglo-American law, begins with an affirmation of the liberty of the Church from the government. And the Constitution's Bill of Rights begins with a guarantee of the free exercise of religion. Thomas Jefferson was so proud



of the precursor to this guarantee that his gravestone reads, “Here lies Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and of the Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty, and Founder of the University of Virginia.”

4. However, as Pilate faltered in the face of worldly pressure, so this nation, like many places in the West, is faltering from its dedication to religious liberty in face of the pressure of secularization. As Pope Benedict went on to warn the American bishops, “Today, that consensus has eroded significantly in the face of powerful new cultural currents, which are not only directly opposed to core moral teachings of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but are also increasingly hostile to Christianity as such. It is imperative that the entire Catholic Church in the United States comes to realize the grave threats to the Church’s public moral witness in the cultural and political spheres.”

5. In the face of such challenges, the Church and all people of good will must stand firm in defending this right to live out our faith in practice. Pope Francis encouraged American Catholics in his White House speech: “American Catholics are committed to building a society which is truly tolerant and inclusive, to safeguarding the rights of individuals and communities, and to rejecting every form of unjust discrimination. With countless other people of good will, they are likewise concerned that efforts to build a just and wisely ordered society respect their deepest concerns and their right to religious liberty. That freedom remains one of America’s most precious possessions. And, as my brothers, the United States Bishops, have reminded us, all are called to be vigilant, precisely as good citizens, to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it.” The question is not whether the Church will survive these threats. She has ever outlasted her persecutors, for as Jesus promised, the jaws of death cannot prevail against His Church. *See* Matt. 16:18. The question is about the future of this nation. The question is whether, as we celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Magna Carta and almost 250 years of independence, the vision of our beginning will falter, or whether this nation will continue to be a shining example of a land that can welcome people of all faiths united together in the rights that God has given us, especially the right to uphold His worship and His law.

6. I will end with Pope Francis’s words to Americans in a speech he gave on religious liberty at Independence Hall in Philadelphia during his recent visit to the U.S. He asked us to “defend these rights, especially your religious freedom, for it has been given to you by God himself.” ([http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150926\\_usa-liberta-religiosa.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150926_usa-liberta-religiosa.html))

[(Optional paragraph for those parishes participating in the CCHD collection Nov. 22): One of the ways we live out our faith in practice is through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, or “CCHD”. The CCHD is an instrument of the Catholic Church working to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ, “... to bring good news to the poor ... release to captives ... sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free” (Luke 4:18). Pope Francis has told us to “never tire of working for a more just world...” (Apostolic Journey to Rio de Janeiro). The CCHD is dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty by funding community programs that encourage independence. You are essential to its success. Your generous donations to the CCHD collection today will give those in poverty the support they need to make lasting changes.]

## **Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)**

*Celebrant:*

**Aware that only in Christ do we find true freedom, let us present our prayers, interceding for all in need, as we respond, *Lord, hear our prayer.***

*Deacon/Reader:*

- 1. For Pope Francis, our Bishop N., and all the ministers of the Church, that their preaching and example may encourage the faithful to stand firm in their beliefs as witnesses of the Gospel, *we pray to the Lord...***
- 2. For our President, Governor, legislators, judges, and all in service to the common good, that through the gift of heavenly wisdom, they may never tire in their work to uphold religious freedom and conscience protection for all, *we pray to the Lord...***
- 3. For those discerning God's call in their lives: may they be open to listen to the Lord's voice and find support to say 'yes' to his invitation to serve freely in love, *we pray to the Lord...***
- 4. For the many ministries of the Church that reveal God's power and love to the world, especially our educational institutions, health care facilities, community centers, and charitable services, especially the Catholic Campaign for Human Development: may they enjoy full protection to fulfill their mission, *we pray to the Lord...***
- 5. For the sick who long for healing, for the dying, and for those called to heal and comfort the sick and suffering: may they be free to follow their faith, while fulfilling their professional duties, *we pray to the Lord...***
- 6. For all of us who gather in prayer, trusting in God's grace to save: may we, through the gifts of the Spirit, have the wisdom to know God's will and find courage to stand up in witness to his love, *we pray to the Lord...***
- 7. For those who have died and for all who grieve and mourn their passing from this life: may the promise of resurrection for the just give hope to all, *we pray to the Lord...***

*Celebrant:*

**Almighty eternal God,  
in whom we find true freedom and lasting peace,  
look with favor, we pray, on our needs  
and, seeing the faith that inspires us to pray to you,  
grant what we truly need, especially the freedom to serve you in love.  
Through Christ our Lord and King. Amen.**

# In the Beginning . . .

This is a series of bulletin messages describing the fetal development of “Chris.” Traditionally, Christ was conceived on March 25<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of the Annunciation. We will watch the parallel development of “Chris” in the womb from March 25<sup>th</sup> to December 25<sup>th</sup>.

These are titled, *“In the beginning...”* Each week we will highlight the development of the child in the womb and the changes the mother is facing. We also include an appropriate biblical passage.

These messages may be changed to fit into the space in your church bulletin.

## For the bulletin on March 15<sup>th</sup>

March 25<sup>th</sup> is the Feast of the Annunciation when Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Nine months later, He was born on Christmas. Next week will begin a series of bulletin messages about the development of the child in the womb – just like the development of Jesus in Mary’s womb.

Together, we will learn of the miracle of our earliest days of life.

## For the bulletin on March 22<sup>nd</sup>

The Feast of the Annunciation, March 25<sup>th</sup>, commemorates the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she would conceive Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Traditionally, 9 months later, Jesus is born. We are going to follow the development of a child in the womb from now till Christmas.

The Holy Spirit, *“the Lord, the Giver of Life,”* cooperates with man and woman in creating a new human being.

At conception, when we were just one cell, our DNA is completed. Everything physically about us was determined then. The color of our hair, the color of our eyes, how tall we will be, whether we will have diabetes later in life, whether we will need to wear glasses, everything physical is determined by our DNA in the beginning.

*“I am the handmaid of the Lord, said Mary!”* Luke 1:38

## For the bulletin on March 29<sup>th</sup> (week 1) Palm Sunday

The Miracle of Life. At conception the gender of the child is determined by the father's sperm. We are going to name this tiny new human being, "Chris." Chris has not implanted into the wall of the uterus yet, so no one but God knows of Chris' existence. God has known of Chris' existence before He created the universe. Jesus died for us and rose from the dead so that we may have eternal life. Alleluia!

God said, *"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you."* Jer. 1-5

## For the bulletin on April 5<sup>th</sup> (week 2) Easter Sunday

Chris has implanted in the wall of the uterus, which usually takes place 10 to 14 days after conception. Immediately, physical changes start taking place with the mother. The placenta starts to form. The placenta protects the child and provides nutrients to the new baby. The mother's uterus will increase its capacity by 1000 times during pregnancy! Luke's Gospel says that Mary went in "haste" to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Jesus, an embryo, was greeted by a fetus (John) who leaped with joy at the presence of his Savior.

*"for nothing is impossible with God."* Luke 1:37

## For the bulletin on April 12<sup>th</sup> (week 3) Divine Mercy Sunday

Chris' heart started beating 18 days after conception. Chris may have a different blood type than the mother's. Chris' neural tubes are forming and will develop into the nervous system. Already, Chris has the foundation for thought, senses, feeling, and more. The amniotic sac, which will house Chris, is formed and the amniotic fluid will cushion Chris throughout pregnancy. Chris now has a yolk sac which supplies blood and nutrients until the placenta has developed and is ready to take over.

*"Your own hands shaped me, modeled me."* Job 10:8

## For the bulletin on April 19<sup>th</sup> (week 4)

Chris' heart is now pumping blood. All four chambers of the heart are working. The umbilical cord forms like a lifeline for the baby in the "space" of the womb. The lungs start to appear along with the brain. Arm and leg buds start to appear. Soon Chris will be doing somersaults and back flips in the spacious world of the womb.

Mother also is undergoing some major changes. She is probably tired and may experience morning sickness as her body adjusts to a baby.

*"It was you who created my inmost self, and put me together in my mother's womb, for all these mysteries I thank you."* PS 139:13 He is Risen!

### For the bulletin on April 26<sup>th</sup> (week 5)

Chris is now 10,000 times larger than the original fertilized egg – and developing rapidly. The heart is pumping increasing quantities of blood through the baby. The placenta forms a unique barrier between mother and her baby. The baby likely has a different blood type, different DNA, and is not part of the mother's body. Five fingers can now be seen on the hand.

*“Just as you do not know the way of the wind or the mysteries of a woman with child, no more can you know the work of God who is behind it all.”* Eccl. 11:5

### For the bulletin on May 3<sup>rd</sup> (week 6)

Chris's brain waves can now be detected. Wonder what Chris is dreaming? Did you know that over the remaining months, Chris's brain will develop over 100 billion neurons? The brain begins to control movement of muscles and organs. The nose is developing and the eyes darken as pigment is produced.

The mother has probably confirmed that she is pregnant.

*“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my savior”* Luke 1:46-47

### For the bulletin on May 10<sup>th</sup> (week 7) **Mother's Day**

Chris begins to move. Chris's arms are bending and flexing like a child taking a Karate class. Fingers are developing and will soon become Chris's first toy. Chris started swimming and can do a mean backstroke. Chris is also doing back flips – getting ready for the 2032 Olympics. The mother may have to buy some Clearasil.

*“Is anything too wonderful for Yahweh?”* Gen. 18:14

### For the bulletin on May 17<sup>th</sup> (week 8)

Chris is a little under an inch long. Chris's name changes from embryo to fetus, which is Latin for “young one”. Everything is now present that will be found in a fully developed adult. If Chris would have kept growing all 9 months as fast as this second month, Chris would have been born as big as two overfed elephants. Whew! Thankfully, development slows down.

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you came to birth I consecrated you...”* Jer. 1:4-5

## For the bulletin on May 24<sup>th</sup> (week 9) Pentecost Sunday

Chris's fingerprints are already evident. The fingers can curve around an object placed in the palm. Now Chris can feel pain but who would want to hurt Chris? Chris is having a wonderful time wriggling, shifting, dancing and playing with the toys in the womb – other fingers, toes, nose, ears – such fun! If only we had a window to the womb. The mother is coping with many changes – nurturing a baby is hard work.

*“You know me through and through, from having watched my bones take shape when I was being formed in secret...”* Ps 139:15

## For the bulletin on May 31<sup>st</sup> (week 10)

The most critical part of Chris's development is now complete. Now Chris enters into a period of rapid growth. Eyelids fuse closed and won't open again until about 26 weeks. Eye color is already determined and Chris can squint and swallow. Chris is over an inch long and is moving quickly about the womb.

Mother's waistline is starting to disappear.

*“Did you not...clothe me with skin and flesh, and weave me of bone and sinew?”* Job 10:13

## For the bulletin on June 7<sup>th</sup> (week 11)

Chris is almost 2 inches long. Fingers and toes are separated. Chris could easily stand on daddy's little finger nail. Chris's feet are the size of the Precious Feet pins that have become the symbol of the pro-life movement. Finger nails and hair are starting to grow. The placenta is now providing nutrition from the mother. Chris likes pizza.

*“They, no less than I, were created in the womb by the same God who shaped us all within our mothers.”* Job 31:15

The Holy Spirit is “the Lord the giver of Life,” to each of us, and to the Church.

## For the bulletin on June 14<sup>th</sup> (week 12)

Chris now sleeps, awakens, and exercises the muscles energetically (we should take some lessons from this). Turning of the head, curling of the toes, making a fist, opening and closing the mouth while “breathing” the amniotic fluid to help develop the respiratory system, Chris is very active in the womb. Chris is still a lightweight – weighing about one ounce – about as much as a letter. If the doctor uses a Fetal Doppler, it won't be the weather that is seen but the baby's heartbeat is heard which sounds like galloping horses.

*(continued next page...)*

*“But the angel said to him, ‘Zechariah, do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard...’”* Luke 1:13

### For the bulletin on June 21<sup>st</sup> (week 13) Father’s Day

Chris now has teeth buds for all 20 teeth. Teething will come later. Chris is almost 3 inches long and weighs in at one ounce. Chris is still exercising and practicing inhaling and exhaling. All Chris’s nourishment is now coming through the placenta. Vocal cords begin to form, and although they may not be ready for a rock band, Chris will use them immediately following birth for that first cry!

Now mother usually feels better and has more energy. She’s spreading the good news.

*“God blessed them (Adam and Eve), saying to them, ‘Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth...’”* Gen. 1:28 Gen. 9:1

Chris’ body is forming, just like The Body of Christ was formed in the womb of Mary. **Happy Father’s Day!**

### For the bulletin on June 28<sup>th</sup> (week 14)

Chris’s taste buds are working! “I drink more amniotic fluid and it tastes sweet. My skin is transparent and is very sensitive to pain except for my back and the top of my head. I may be small, but I am growing fast!”

Mother enjoys fireworks and celebrates the birth of our nation, but Chris won’t hear anything, yet.

*“I set before you life and death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live.”* Det. 30:19

### For the bulletin on July 5<sup>th</sup> (week 15)

“Soon I will be able to grasp with my hands. What will I grasp? My other hand! Did you know that I have my own unique fingerprints now? My fingernails and toenails are growing. I also have an adult’s taste buds. My eyebrows and hair on my head are sprouting. But it will probably change color and texture after birth. I’m kicking, twisting, and flailing really hard.” But, mother can’t feel Chris moving in the womb, yet.

*“Did you not . . . clothe me with skin and flesh, and weave me of bone and sinew?”* Job 10:13

**OR**

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”* Declaration of Independence

## For the bulletin on July 12<sup>th</sup> (week 16)

“I’m getting a little baby fat under my skin. My heart is pumping as much as 6 gallons a day at a rate about double my mom’s. I can swim and kick and do somersaults! I’m the same size as my placenta now. I’m not a lightweight anymore – I weigh almost six ounces and I am about three inches long.” Chris will keep growing until about 23 years of age. The mother might be able to hear tiny thumps of Chris’s heartbeat with an external monitor now.

*“They, no less than I, were created in the womb by the one same God who shaped us all within our mothers.”* Job 31:15

## For the bulletin on July 19<sup>th</sup> (week 17)

“When I am sleeping, I have REM (rapid eye movements) which means I am dreaming, but I can’t remember my dreams. My vocal cords have formed but I don’t make a sound – must be because there is no air in here. Isn’t it amazing that I’m able to breathe “underwater,” inhaling and exhaling small amounts of amniotic fluid?” Chris is working on developing great lungs. Mother may start to feel Chris as a flutter in her lower abdomen.

*“Is there anything too wonderful for Yahweh? At the same time next year I shall visit you again and Sarah will have a son.”* Gen. 18:13-14

## For the bulletin on July 26<sup>th</sup> (week 18)

“I like sucking my thumb. I can hear my mother’s heartbeat and some other funny noises she makes. I’m beginning to know her voice. My umbilical cord (that’s where I get my food from) is really awesome – an engineering marvel.” Chris’s umbilical cord transports 300 quarts of fluid per day and completes a round-trip of fluids every 30 seconds. Wow! Mother is probably starting to “show” now.

*“Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.”* Gen. 25:21

## For the bulletin on August 2<sup>nd</sup> (week 19)

“If you were to shine a very bright light on my mother’s abdomen, I may slowly move my hand in front of my eyes. If you make a very loud noise, I may cover my ears with my hands. But I can also hear my mom’s voice, and when she sings a lullaby, it soothes me, and helps me sleep.”

Chris’s private parts are clearly visible now, but no peeking, after all Chris is naked. Doesn’t Chris have a right to privacy?

Mom may be able to feel kicks now. Don’t forget those prenatal vitamins.

*“Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.”* Heb. 11:1



## For the bulletin on August 9<sup>th</sup> (week 20)

“Hair is starting to grow on my head. I wonder what color it is? I am 20 weeks old now, and in another 20 weeks I will be born! My legs are getting stronger, so soon mom will really feel my kicks. I like sleeping in the same position now. I’m over 6 inches tall when I stretch out, and I weigh over 10 ounces.”

Mom can distinguish two heartbeats if she lies quietly and flat on her back, locates her own heartbeat by finding her pulse, then lays her hand on her belly. Chris’s heart pumps about six gallons of blood every day.

*For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”* Luke 1:44-45

## For the bulletin on August 16<sup>th</sup> (week 21)

“My tongue is fully formed now. I’m practicing giving people a raspberry! I can hear noises from the outside. Some loud ones scare me. I know mom’s voice and like the music she listens to. I now have fingernails and fingerprints. I’m not as little as I used to be just a few weeks ago. Now I am about 10 inches long if I could stand up straight! “

Mom is waiting to find out if Chris is a boy or girl.

*“and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* Philippians 2:11

## For the bulletin on August 23<sup>rd</sup> (week 22)

“I can hear mom’s conversations more clearly now. I can hear her read, sing and talk. I like to kick back, suck my thumb, and listen to her read to me. My eyelids and eyebrows are fully formed. My fingernails have grown to the end of my fingers.

My brain is growing really fast so I’m going to be very smart.”

Chris weighs nearly a pound now.

Dads, did you know: Low-frequency sounds, mimicking a male voice, penetrate the abdomen and uterine wall better than the higher frequencies of the female voice?

*“Teach them (God’s ordinances) to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”* Det. 6:7



## For the bulletin on August 30<sup>th</sup> (week 23)

“I have fine hair all over my body that is there to protect my skin. I’m a little thin at this point but am putting on more baby fat. My eyes are formed, but the iris does not have color – I’d like brown eyes!” Chris will lose all this body hair before birth. Chris now weighs over a pound and is about a foot long. 50 years ago, if the baby was born at this age, the child could not have survived. But today, with modern technology, babies born at this age have a fighting chance (about 50%) of survival.

*“Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”* Matthew 10:30-31

## For the bulletin on September 6<sup>th</sup> (week 24)

“I’m really beginning to bulk up. I gained 6 ounces this week! I think most of it was muscle but also some bone mass and some organ development. My taste buds allow me to distinguish bitter, sweet and sour. My lungs have developed so well, I’m now officially considered viable.” Chris could live outside the womb.

Each parent contributed 15,000 genes that determined not only what Chris looks like but how Chris interprets tastes, Chris’s athletic abilities, allergies, health, and much more.

*“Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast.”* Psalm 22:9

## For the bulletin on September 13<sup>th</sup> (week 25)

Thousands and thousands of brain cells are growing in Chris’s head every day! Soon Chris will have billions of brain cells. “I can make a fist and grasp things. My spine is beginning to form to protect my spinal cord. I’m covered by a white cheesy substance that protects my skin. Don’t worry, it will come off right after birth.”

Mom can tell if her baby gets the hiccups.

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”* Jer. 1:4-5



## For the bulletin on September 20<sup>th</sup> (week 26)

Chris's taste buds continue to form. "I can taste sweet things now. My mom likes chocolate and so do I. A bright light can be seen by me though my mommy's tummy. I have eyelashes and eyebrows now. My fingerprints are fully formed. My toenails and fingernails are growing and may need to be clipped when I'm born."

Mom may be feeling like a "Soccer Mom" now that her uterus is the size of a soccer ball.

*"How sweet are your words to my **taste**, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*

Psalm 119:102

*"The Lord gives sight to the blind..."* Psalm 146:8

## For the bulletin on September 27<sup>th</sup> (week 27)

"Whoa! I've had trouble with my balance but it is getting better. You could hear my heartbeat if you put your ear on my mother's tummy." Chris weighs about 2 pounds. I try to stretch out and mom can feel me move about.

Mom's talking about different names for me. How about Chris?

*"Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation."* Psalm 95:1

## For the bulletin on October 4<sup>th</sup> (week 28)

"I am about 14 inches tall now and growing really fast. If Chris were born now, Chris would have an 85% chance of survival because Chris's lungs have been getting stronger. I'm going to be in my first Life Chain today. The cars may not notice me but my mom will. Not much room to wave in here. My eyes are opening so I will practice blinking at people." Sometimes moms have cravings. Pickles and ice cream make a good snack.

*"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

## For the bulletin on October 11<sup>th</sup> (week 29)

Chris has doubled in size over the last 4 weeks and is getting cramped in the womb. "I don't have as much room to do my exercises. My muscle tone is getting much better and my body is filling out with baby fat. Hair is growing on my head – nice fine hair. I can recognize my mom's voice." The third trimester is filled with aches and pains and general discomfort for mother but she knows that soon she will see her baby.

*"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward."*

Psalm 127:3

## For the bulletin on October 18<sup>th</sup> (week 30)

I must be getting younger. The wrinkles I had everywhere are slowly disappearing as I gain more and more weight. I used to have a big head, but now my body is catching up. I can move my eyes but it is still pretty dark in here. I can hear my mom. I can't wait to see her.

The baby takes mom's breath away as Chris kicks her lungs and ribs. Fatigue is her constant companion.

*"I was a stranger and you made me welcome . . . in so far as you did this to one of the least of these bothers of mine, you did it to me."* Mt. 25:35,40

## For the bulletin on October 25<sup>th</sup> (week 31)

It's really cramped now, so Chris has assumed the fetal position. "I weigh three pounds now and will gain about a half pound each week until birth. I can see but I don't have 20/20 vision and I won't have 20/20 vision until I'm 7 to 9 years old – hopefully."

Mom is pretty uncomfortable. Sleeping on her left side may help as it will remove some pressure on the nerves and blood vessels in her back.

*"For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made..."*  
Wisdom 11:22

## For the bulletin on November 1<sup>st</sup> (week 32) **All Saints Day**

Chris weighs over 3 pounds and may weigh about 7 pounds at birth. My brain is growing very fast. I'm starting to have regular sleep and awake time. I have dreams but I keep them secret between God and me. I'm using my four senses of vision, hearing, taste and touch. I try to stretch out but there is not enough room.

Mom is planning a Baby Shower. I don't know why, it's always wet in here. She prays for me. She wants me to be a saint.

*"Listen to my words: 'When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.'"* Numbers 12:5-7

## For the bulletin on November 8<sup>th</sup> (week 33)

Chris has started to move head down because 96% of babies are born that way. I'm almost 17 inches long but I'm all curled up so it is hard to see how tall I am. I like to look around when I'm awake but it is hard to see anything – it's all fuzzy. Ouch! I scratched myself with my long fingernails.

Mom's uterus is stretching and is pushing her organs every which way causing heartburn, constipation, indigestion and breathlessness.

*"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me."* Mt. 18:5

## For the bulletin on November 15<sup>th</sup> (week 34)

Chris' immune system is really beefing up. Chris will be ready to fight infections and illnesses right after birth. The amniotic fluid has reached its peak so Chris has lots of padding. Chris' skull is pliable and soft, ready for delivery. "I'm going to decide when I will be born."  
Mom feels she has to go to the restroom frequently – the pressure is on. *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ...all things were created through him and for him."* Colossians 1:15,16

## For the bulletin on November 22<sup>nd</sup> (week 35)

Chris weighs about 5 and half pounds now. Chris is really putting on baby fat which will help keep Chris warm after birth. "I'm still eating leftovers from Thanksgiving." The lungs are almost complete. You may be able to see Chris' body parts as the uterine wall gets thinner – feet, head, and hands.  
Mom is looking for a pediatrician to examine the baby after birth. She's getting ready in case Chris is ready.  
*"So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming."* Mt. 24:42

## For the bulletin on November 29<sup>th</sup> (week 36)

Chris is absorbing about a gallon of amniotic fluid per day. Chris is now receiving valuable antibodies from mom to fight off infections. Fat is deposited in Chris' cheeks this week and the muscles that help Chris suck are helping to fill Chris' little face. Chris is about 6 pounds and over 20 inches in length. "I'm a little plump but I'm ready for my first picture."  
Mom is probably seeing the doctor every week and should take a Group B Strep test.  
*"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."* Romans 15:7

## For the bulletin on December 6<sup>th</sup> (week 37)

Chris is now considered full-term but continues to gain and grow every day. Lungs are days from completion. "I'm practicing breathing with my amniotic fluid." It is easy to grasp things with Chris' little fingers. Typically, boys will weigh more than girls at birth. Only 4% of babies are actually born on their due date.  
Mom, pack your bags and don't forget the camera for those all-important pictures of the baby.  
*"they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God."* Isaiah 35:2

## For the bulletin on December 13<sup>th</sup> (week 38)

Chris now weighs between 5 and 9 pounds. The average size baby is 7 pounds. "It's really crowded in here and it's very hard to move." The umbilical cord doesn't have any nerve endings (this means that neither mom nor Chris will feel any pain when it is cut!) and is about 20 inches long and about ½ inch thick.

The good news for mom is it's easier to breathe because the baby is moving down. The bad news is mom may be running to the bathroom every two minutes.

*"Then God, who had specially chosen me while I was still in my mother's womb..." Gal. 1:15*

## For the bulletin on December 20<sup>th</sup> (week 39)

The final week – then we see what love the Lord has given us. Celebrate! Don't be surprised at how Chris looks after birth. Chris' head may be misshapen and the skin may be discolored with patchy looking rashes. Chris, like all babies, is made in the image and likeness of God. Even though childbirth is frightening, it helps to keep positive support people around you.

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy His favour."*  
Luke 2:14

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**Kansans  
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**2015 CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
ANNUAL APPEAL**

PARISH	
Abilene - St. Andrew	\$7,312.00
Angelus - St. Paul	\$995.00
Antonino - Our Lady, Help of Christians	\$1,560.00
Atwood - Sacred Heart	\$6,321.20
Aurora - St. Peter	\$1,285.00
Beardsley - St. John Nepomucene	\$1,800.00
Belleville - St. Edward	\$3,655.00
Beloit - St. John the Baptist	\$3,535.00
Bird City - St. Joseph	\$425.00
Brookville - St. Joseph	\$125.00
Catharine - St. Catherine	\$1,085.00
Cawker City - Saints Peter & Paul	\$800.00
Chapman - St. Michael	\$1,370.00
Clay Center - Saints Peter & Paul	\$5,665.00
Clifton - St. Mary of the Assumption	\$2,195.00
Clyde - St. John the Baptist	\$2,940.00
Colby - Sacred Heart	\$7,885.00
Collyer - St. Michael	\$1,297.00
Concordia - Our Lady of Perpetual Help	\$2,555.00
Cuba - St. Isidore	\$810.00
Damar - St. Joseph	\$1,000.00
Dorrance - St. Joseph	\$995.00
Downs - St. Mary	\$1,245.00
Ellis - St. Mary	\$2,364.25
Ellsworth - St. Bernard	\$2,540.00
Elmo - St. Columba	\$705.00
Esbon - Sacred Heart	\$1,135.00
Glasco - St. Mary	\$325.00
Goodland - Our Lady of Perpetual Help	\$2,846.00
Gorham - St. Mary, Help of Christians	\$492.35
Grainfield - St. Agnes	\$1,325.00
Greenleaf - Sacred Heart	\$260.00
Grinnell - Immaculate Conception	\$1,426.00
Gypsum - St. Patrick	\$275.00
Hanover - St. John the Baptist	\$2,213.00
Hays - Comeau Catholic Campus Center	\$950.00
Hays - Immaculate Heart of Mary	\$12,651.59
Hays - St. Joseph	\$6,670.00
Hays - St. Nicholas of Myra	\$1,970.00
Herington - St. John the Evangelist	\$1,275.00
Herndon - Assumption of Mary	\$1,350.00
Hill City - Immaculate Heart of Mary	\$2,006.00
Holyrood - St. Mary	\$1,510.00
Hope - St. Phillip	\$1,695.00

PARISH	
Hoxie - St. Frances	\$5,482.00
Junction City - St. Francis Xavier	\$5,685.00
Kanopolis - St. Ignatius Loyola	\$500.00
Leoville - Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	\$1,765.00
Lincoln - St. Patrick	\$1,800.00
Logan - St. John	\$963.00
Manhattan - Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary	\$6,410.00
Manhattan - St. Isidore Catholic Student Center	\$4,695.00
Manhattan - St. Thomas More	\$20,936.00
Mankato - St. Theresa	\$760.00
Miltonvale - St. Anthony	\$700.00
Minneapolis - Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	\$2,485.00
Munden - St. George	\$1,325.00
Munjor - St. Francis of Assisi	\$1,265.00
New Almelo - St. Joseph	\$1,025.00
Norton - St. Francis of Assisi	\$2,515.00
Oakley - St. Joseph	\$4,315.00
Oberlin - Sacred Heart	\$1,500.00
Ogden - St. Patrick	\$270.00
Osborne - St. Aloysius	\$1,330.00
Park - Sacred Heart	\$1,540.00
Phillipsburg - Saints Philip & James	\$3,479.18
Plainville - Sacred Heart	\$1,955.00
Russell - St. Mary	\$2,670.00
Salina - Sacred Heart Cathedral	\$4,663.69
Salina - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	\$9431.81
Salina - St. Mary Queen of the Universe	\$11,566.00
Schoenchen - St. Anthony	\$357.00
Seguin - St. Martin of Tours	\$100.00
Selden - Sacred Heart	\$1,120.00
Sharon Springs - Holy Ghost	\$3,950.00
Smith Center - St. Mary	\$550.00
Solomon - Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary	\$1,630.00
St. Francis - St. Francis of Assisi	\$520.00
Stockton - St. Thomas	\$2,685.00
Tipton - St. Boniface	\$1,700.00
Victoria - The Basilica of St. Fidelis	\$1,991.00
Vincent - St. Boniface	\$210.00
Wakeeney - Christ the King	\$3,170.00
Walker - St. Ann	\$371.00
Washington - St. Augustine	\$1,159.00
Wilson - St. Wenceslaus	\$2,092.00
Parish Undesignated	\$7,007.54