

# MINI-MESSENGER

Volume 43 Number 6, December 2014

## The Official Newsletter of the Diocese of Davenport

Published Monthly

Deacon David Montgomery, Director of Communication, Editor

### OFFICE CLOSING

The Catholic Messenger and Diocesan offices will be closed December 24-January 4, 2015. Business will resume on Monday, January 5.

### STEWARDSHIP OFFICE

**Complimentary Webinars:** These are provided by the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development of which the Diocese is a member. For questions contact Dan Ebener, [ebener@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:ebener@davenportdiocese.org).

**Complex Pastoring - Is Unity Always the Goal?**, January 22, 1:00 p.m. Central time. Presenter: Mark Mogilka. When serving multiple parishes, multicultural parishes, and consolidated parishes, pastoral leaders often believe that one of their goals should be to create "unity". There is the paradox "Unity in Diversity". The webinar will explore these challenges, consider revised expectations and provide practical tools for leadership in complex pastoring situations. To register go to <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/451515030>.

**The Shared Parish: Navigating Two (or more) Cultures in Parish Life**, March 19, 1:00 p.m. Central time. Presenter: Bret C. Hoover. As Catholic faith communities across the United States grow ever more diverse, many parishes have become shared parishes. Shared parishes allow cultural groups to maintain their own language and customs. Shared parish life is a long process of negotiation-how to share leadership, committees, worship, etc. We'll investigate strategies that can help pastors, pastoral staffs, and lay parish leadership in their struggle to facilitate their parish becoming a more holy and inclusive people of faith. To register go to <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/572555622>.

### SOCIAL ACTION OFFICE

**National Night of Prayer for Life** will be held December 8 at Sacred Heart Cathedral 9 p.m. to midnight. For more information contact Jeanne Wonio, 563-355-4188.

**Shop Fair Trade this Holiday Season:** Fair Trade supports farmers and craftspeople in developing countries who are socially and economically marginalized. Fair Trade is about making an impact on artisan and farmer communities while offering great products to the public. Go to <http://www.serrv.org/>.

**Catholic Campaign for Human Development Collection:** Thank you for participating in this year's collection. Your generous support will give those in poverty the support they need to make lasting changes. If you missed the collection, it isn't too late to make your donation payable to the Diocese of Davenport and marked CCHD Collection. You may submit it to your parish or mail it directly to the Diocese of Davenport, 780 West Central Park Ave., Davenport IA 52804-1901.

**2015 National Migration Week is January 4-10.** Migration Week materials are available at USCCB publishing, 800-235-8722 or <http://www.usccbpublishing.org/showproducts.cfm?FullCat=161>. The theme for this year is "We are ONE FAMILY under God".

**The 2015 Iowa Institute for Social Action** will be held Jan. 18-19 at Saints John and Paul Parish in Altoona. Online registration is at [iowasocialaction.eventbrite.com](http://iowasocialaction.eventbrite.com). The cost is \$20 (free to students). This is the premier social action/social justice event in Iowa. It not only features people of national prominence, but many of the parish and Iowa organizational folks working to bring justice to all. It is an exciting opportunity to learn and network with your counterparts from other areas of the state. For complete information go to <http://iowacatholicconference.org/2014/11/registration-now-available-for-the-iowa-institute-for-social-action/>. The Office of Social Action is looking at ways to get as many from our diocese to the Institute as possible. If you have an interest in attending contact Esmeralda Guerrero at [guerrero@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:guerrero@davenportdiocese.org), 563-888-4210.

**The Iowa Catholic Conference 2015 Legislative Concerns and Priorities** were approved by The Iowa Catholic Conference. They can be found at <http://iowacatholicconference.org/2014/10/2015-icc-legislative-concerns-and-priorities/>

## 2015 Rice Bowl

**Kick off Events:** The Social Action Office is working with three parishes to host Rice Bowl kick off events (breakfasts or evening meals consistent with what much of the world has to eat). The parishes are located in three parts of the Diocese to reduce the travel time to them. They will be a fun and exciting way to compare notes on the best ways to promote the Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl Lenten program. The Office will provide more details as planning progresses. For an introduction to parish Rice Bowl efforts go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VKYSNkiPVk>.

**Collections starts Ash Wednesday, February 18:** Now is the time to place your order for your free CRS Rice Bowl 2015 materials to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rice Bowl. Materials will be shipped in early January. Place your order by calling 800-222-0025. If you have questions about the collection contact Loxi Hopkins, 563-888-4212 or [hopkins@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:hopkins@davenportdiocese.org).

**Project Rachel** is a confidential, post-abortion healing ministry of the Catholic Church offering hope and healing to women and men hurting from past abortions. Project Rachel staff understand the emotional pain that follows an abortion. Brochures are available by contacting Esmeralda Guerrero, [guerrero@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:guerrero@davenportdiocese.org). You may contact Project Rachel staff by calling the local Helpline: 563-888-4107 or email, [projectrachel@diodav.org](mailto:projectrachel@diodav.org).

There are two ways to support Project Rachel:



Purchase “*Humble Angel Honey*” at \$10 bottle. (The bottle is shaped like an angel and is 100% pure premium quality produced honey by midwest beekeepers.) To purchase contact Esmeralda Guerrero or stop by St. Vincent Center at 780 W. Central Park Avenue, Davenport.

Make a *financial contribution*, payable to the Diocese of Davenport. In the memo line write Project Rachel and mail to Diocese of Davenport, Project Rachel, 780 West Central Park Avenue, Davenport, IA 52804

**Project Rachel Bible Study:** January 15, 1:30 p.m. For more information contact Loxi Hopkins, 563-888-4107.

**Social Action E-Newsletter:** We have an e-newsletter filled with upcoming events and deadlines, calls to action and social justice news and views. You may view previous issues or subscribe to The Two Feet newsletter at <http://bit.ly/1mY1moJ> or email [kerstena@diodav.org](mailto:kerstena@diodav.org) to be added to the subscription list.

**St. Vincent Home Corporation:** Just a reminder that spring grants are no longer awarded. The next grant deadline will be **September 15**. For more information go to <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/socialaction/sastvincenthomecorporation.htm>.

## PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN

**To report child abuse contact:** Iowa Department of Human Services Child Abuse Hotline: 800-362-2178 and if it involves clergy or church personnel also notify Alicia Owens, Victim Assistance Coordinator: 563-349-5002, [vac@diodav.org](mailto:vac@diodav.org) or PO Box 232, Bettendorf, IA 52722-0004.

## FAITH FORMATION

**Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies - Summer 2015:** Do you work in youth ministry, or know someone who does? The Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies is perfect for all who work with middle and high-school aged youth! Presented by the Center for Ministry Development since 1979, this certificate program equips youth ministers and workers with the skills, experience, and tools for vibrant youth ministry in parishes, schools, and communities. The certificate can be completed in as few as two summers (eight courses) at St. Ambrose University, with an option for undergraduate or graduate credit. Four courses offered this summer on June 11-12, June 13-14, July 9-10, and July 11-12. A great program for youth ministers, high school ministers, retreat directors, and anyone who works with youth. Contact Chris Clow at 563-333-6189 or [ministry@sau.edu](mailto:ministry@sau.edu) to learn more!

## **MINISTRY FORMATION PROGRAM**

### **Basic Year II:**

**On-Site Format Schedule:** All courses held at the Diocese of Davenport, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

12/6/14: <b>Old Testament II</b> , Msgr. Drake Shafer	1/24/15: <b>Liturgical Themes I</b> , Dc. Frank Agnoli
2/21/15: <b>Liturgical Themes II</b> , Dc. Frank Agnoli	3/7/15: <b>Called &amp; Gifted Workshop</b>
3/21/15: <b>Canon Law</b> , Fr. Bill Reynolds	4/18/15: <b>New Testament I</b> , Dr. Matthew Coomber
5/9/15: <b>New Testament II</b> , Dr. Matthew Coomber	6/6/15: <b>Theology I</b> , Fr. Ed Dunn
7/18/15: <b>Theology II</b> , Fr. Ed Dunn	8/1/15: <b>Catechesis</b> , Marianne Agnoli
8/15/15: <b>Civil Law</b> , Dc. Bob Glaser	9/19/15: <b>Spiritual Themes</b> , Fr. Marty Goetz

### **DVD Format Schedule:**

The order of courses is as stated above; however each group will determine its monthly meeting time. Check with your facilitator about your schedule.

An application form and additional program information may be found on the diocesan website, [www.davenportdiocese.org](http://www.davenportdiocese.org) (Chancery-Faith Formation-Lay Ministry-MFP Forms). For information regarding the courses or the Ministry Formation Program contact Marianne Agnoli, [agnolim@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:agnolim@davenportdiocese.org), 563-888-4242.

## **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

**Marriage & Family Resource Inventory:** Each parish/cluster is asked to participate in an on-line diocesan inventory. The results of this instrument will be used to better determine the direction of marriage and family program development in the diocese. In addition, it will also serve as a way to share resources among our parishes/clusters. A shared database of programs and contact information will be made available as soon as we have this information back from all of you. Using the link below, please have one person in your parish/cluster **complete the on-line inventory by December 20**. If you are part of a cluster and the majority of your marriage and family programming is conducted as a cluster please complete one inventory for the cluster as a whole. If the majority of programming is more parish specific please complete an inventory for each parish.  
<https://adobeformscentral.com/?f=8jaGJkgkCLLXaJEio4fwSw>

A copy of your completed inventory will be immediately sent to the e-mail address of the person providing the information. Your timely response to this request is greatly appreciated. It is hoped that the information obtained through this inventory will enable all of us to more effectively develop marriage-building programs within our parishes/clusters and to better serve the needs of the families throughout the diocese. If you have questions or concerns pertaining to this inventory contact Marianne Agnoli, 563-888-4242 or [agnolim@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:agnolim@davenportdiocese.org).

**National Marriage Week:** February 7-14, 2015 is National Marriage Week. Begin planning how your parish/cluster can intentionally affirm and enrich the Sacrament of Marriage within your community during this week. Contact Marianne Agnoli, Family Formation Coordinator, 563-888-4242, [agnolim@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:agnolim@davenportdiocese.org) to discuss possible program options.

**World Meeting of Families:** September 22-27, 2015, Philadelphia. Registration is open for attendance at the World Meeting of Families. Go to <http://www.worldmeeting2015.org>. Preparatory Catechetical Resources on the ten themes of family church teaching are available at the site above by clicking on “The Catechesis.” It has been confirmed that **Pope Francis** is scheduled to be in attendance and is expected to celebrate a public Mass on September 26 on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

**Natural Family Planning Link:** A complete Billings Ovulation Method NFP course is available on line at <http://learnnfponline.com>. Engaged couples are encouraged to begin NFP instruction four to six months prior to the wedding date. A certificate of completion will be issued. Additional information and NFP contacts can be found on the diocesan website, <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/Marriage%20and%20Family.htm>.

**Marriage and Parenting Resource:** Attached is the December issue of “Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers.” These may be used in parish bulletins or as links on parish websites.

**Marriage Preparation:** The Diocese of Davenport offers several marriage preparation program formats. **One-Weekend and One-day**

- January 31, 2015: Bettendorf, St. John Vianney, *registration deadline is January 23 (space is limited)*
- February 28, 2015: Bettendorf, St. John Vianney, *registration deadline is February 20 (space is limited)*
- April 25-26, 2015: Williamsburg, St. Mary, *registration deadline is April 17*
- August 8-9, 2015: Mt. Pleasant, St. Alphonsus, *registration deadline is July 31*

The fee is \$125 per couple. The registration form and more information can be found on the diocesan website at <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/Marriage%20and%20Family.htm>. If you have questions contact Barb Butterworth, 563-888-4240, [butterworthb@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:butterworthb@davenportdiocese.org).

**Online:** Go to <http://www.marriageministries.com/courses/catholic-marriage-prep-class/>.

### **ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY**

***An Ambrosian Christmas:*** Dec. 6, 7 p.m., Christ the King Chapel. This sacred concert, “Lessons and Carols” will feature the University Chorale and Chamber Singers. The free public performance will also feature a premiere of a new composition by William Campbell, associate professor and chair of the Music Department, based on a hymn attributed to Saint Ambrose. Readings interspersed with carols and hymns — and audience participation — will comprise an hour-long narration of the Biblical story spanning from Genesis to the birth of Jesus to the mystery of the incarnation. For more information, contact Terri Flynn at 563-333-6001.

### **SISTERS OF HUMILITY, DAVENPORT**

Contact Sisters of Humility, 563-323-9466 or visit [www.chmiowa.org](http://www.chmiowa.org)

**Holiday Movie and Gift Swap:** Dec. 4, 6:00-8:30 p.m., Humility of Mary Center, Davenport. Doors open 6 p.m. with movie beginning at 6:15. Cost: Free. The movie is “**The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism & Community**”. Climate change is taking place. Will we have the wisdom to survive? The film features thought leaders and activists in the realms of science, economics and spirituality discussing how we can evolve in the face of climate disruption. With Bill McKibben, Joanna Macy, Roger Payne and young pioneers like Herschelle Milford, Quincy Saul, and more. *“This film is deeply moving and profoundly engaging. Indeed, it has the potential to transform lives because it provides visions of how we should live in the midst of massive environmental challenges. I cannot recommend it more highly!” -Mary Evelyn Tucker, Forum on Religion & Ecology at Yale* (for more about the movie go to <http://olddogdocumentaries.org>).

After the film participate in the Holiday Gift Swap. As a way to reduce, reuse and recycle everyone is invited to bring new or gently used items that are perfect for-gifting ... then shop the swap for that perfect gift for one or more on your list! No money necessary. Leftover items will be donated to Humility of Mary Housing and Shelter programs. Also enjoy homemade goodies and visit with the sisters!

### **OUR LADY OF THE PRAIRIE RETREAT, WHEATLAND**

To register contact: 563-336-8414 or [olpretreat@gmail.com](mailto:olpretreat@gmail.com). All programs include a delicious homemade meal prepared with local and organic ingredients. To learn more about Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat visit [www.chmiowa.org](http://www.chmiowa.org)

**Wed, December 3 | 10am – noon**

**Advent and the Life of Christ Mini-Retreat with Father Bill Kneemiller**

Mass at 10am, “Advent and the Life of Christ” program, lunch following. Fee: \$8 for lunch (Come early, stay late!)

**Sun, December 7 | 5pm**

**Taize’ Vigil Service**

Taize’ is an ecumenical movement, drawing Christians of all denominations together in unified and compassionate prayer. Friends of The Prairie and churches of all faith traditions in the area are invited to participate. Supper following. Free will offering.

**Tues, December 9 | 9:30am – 3:30pm**

**Come to the Quiet – Dark of Winter**

Savor solitude as we enter into the dark time of Earth. Prepare for the warmth and light of Christmas and the holidays as we cherish our loved ones. Fee: \$20

**SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS, CLINTON**

For more information call 563-242-7611 or visit [www.clintonfranciscans.com](http://www.clintonfranciscans.com).

**Prayer vigil of mourning and remembrance:** December 11, 6 p.m., The Canticle, Clinton. This is in commemoration of the second anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy, as well as the 60,000 American victims of gun violence since December 2012. The vigil will be part of a nationwide tribute in partnership with the Newtown Foundation, Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence and States United to Prevent Gun Violence.

**BENET HOUSE RETREAT CENTER/ST. MARY MONASTERY, ROCK ISLAND, IL**

Events held at Benet House Retreat Center or Sr. Mary Monastery, 2200 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, Rock Island, IL 61201-7649. To register, contact Sr. Jackie Walsh at 309-283-2108 or [retreats@smmsisters.org](mailto:retreats@smmsisters.org).

**Advent: Jesus Comes – Do I Make Room For Him?** Dec. 6, 9 am-12 pm; free will offering. Come for a morning of prayer and quiet shared with like-minded people seeking Christ in our daily lives: shared Lectio, quiet reflection time, and an opportunity to share insights. Bring a sack lunch, beverages will be provided. Facilitator: Sr. Charlotte Sonnevile, OSB, MS pastoral ministry and graduate work in Bible Studies.

**New Year's Eve Retreat: Where Have You Been? What Will 2015 Bring?:** New Year's Eve, Dec. 31, 7 pm-Thurs. Jan. 1, 1 pm. Skip the parties and pause to look back on the challenges and changes of 2014. Join other single, Catholic women, 18-50 years old, who want to review, reflect and explore the future together. There is no cost; you are our guest! For information contact Sr. Stefanie MacDonald, OSB 309-283-2300 or [vocation@smmsisters.org](mailto:vocation@smmsisters.org).

**Sunday Brunch at the Monastery:** First Sunday of each month; Lauds 9:30 am; Mass 10:30 am; Brunch 11:30 am. Single, Catholic women 18-50 years of age are invited to join Sr. Stefanie at St. Mary Monastery for liturgy, brunch and conversation about life as a Catholic Sister. Brunch will be served in the Sisters' dining room overlooking the lake. You will have the opportunity to be with other women who are exploring religious life. Guests are invited to stay longer and use campus amenities for further prayer and reflection. There is no cost; you are our guest! For information contact Sr. Stefanie MacDonald, OSB (309) 283-2300.

**Pizza and Prayer:** Interested in learning more about religious life and the Sisters of St. Benedict? Single Catholic women 18-50 years old are welcome to join us for pizza and prayer. Last Wednesday of each month through June 24. There is no cost; you are our guest! For information contact Sr. Stefanie MacDonald, OSB (309) 283-2300 or [vocation@smmsisters.org](mailto:vocation@smmsisters.org).

**SHALOM SPIRITUALTY CENTER, DUBUQUE**

To register call 563-582-3592 or send check payable to Shalom Spirituality Center with your contact information to: 1001 Davis St., Dubuque, IA 52001. [www.shalomretreats.org](http://www.shalomretreats.org), [info@shalomretreats.org](mailto:info@shalomretreats.org)

**Celebrating the Holidays in a New Way:**

**Dinner, Sharing and Prayer for Those Who Have Lost a Spouse or Significant Other**

Thursday, Dec. 4, 5:00 - 7:30pm

Facilitators: Barbara Meloy Callahan and Marci Blum OSF

Holidays can be a difficult time for those who have lost a spouse or significant other. Yet in the company of others, life is shared and made new. Join friends or make new friends while tipping a sparkling beverage, sharing stories, enjoying a festive meal and concluding with Advent Taize Prayer.

Offering: \$23, includes dinner. Register by noon, Monday, Dec. 1.

**Advent Retreat Day: *In Quest of the Jewish Mary***

Saturday, Dec. 6, 9:00am - 3:00pm

Presenter: Mary Christine Athans, BVM, Ph.D

In her quest for the Jewish Mary, Mary Christine Athans, BVM draws on the latest in historical research, theological and spiritual reflection, the fruits of post-Vatican II Jewish-Christian dialogue, and the insights of feminist theology. Using the method of Ignatian contemplation, she offers meditations integrating Hebrew prayers which might have been extant in the first century in order to rediscover the Jewish Mary - a woman of enormous courage, strength and prayers.

Mary Christine Athans, B.V.M., is Professor of Church History at the Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN and adjunct faculty at Loyola University Chicago and Catholic Theological Union. She is the author and editor of books and articles on American Catholicism and Jewish-Christian relations. Offering: \$50. Register by Dec. 1.

**Coming into the Light: Shalom’s Annual Advent Evening for Women**

**Monday, Dec. 8, 6:00 - 9:00pm**

Presenters: Ruth Jackson SVM and the group “Lydia” (Lydia was Paul's first European convert.) The tradition continues! Once again, Sr. Ruth and her friends will lead us in a prayerful and inspirational celebration of the season. Join us for conversation and friendship around a relaxing social and dinner followed by prayer and song in chapel. Offering: \$23, includes social and dinner. Registration deadline: Dec. 3, if not already sold out.

**The Crib - Impossible Hope?**

**An Evening of Advent & Christmas Music & Readings**

Monday, Dec. 15, 6:00 - 9:00pm

Presenters: Carol Hemesath OSF and your favorite Dubuque Area Musicians

With glad hearts we gather to enjoy a bountiful meal! Then we nourish our spirits with the joyful music, readings and prayer of the season. Join us for a joyful evening that will hopefully open our hearts and minds to the realization of God within us and around us.

Offering: \$23, includes dinner. Registration deadline: Dec. 10, if not already sold out.

To support the ministry of your parish, school and the diocese these groups automatically receive the *Mini-Messenger*:

Deacons	Diocesan Corporate Board	Youth Ministers	Pastoral Associates	Directors/Coordinators of Faith Formation
Parishes	Catholic Foundation Board	Sisters	RCIA Parish Contacts	Diocesan Liturgical Commission
Priests	Parish Lay Directors	Bookkeepers	Diocesan Board of Education	Diocesan Planning Commission
Seminarians	Diocesan Pastoral Council	Principals	Parish Life Coordinators	

Other interested persons are welcome to subscribe. If you have questions regarding your subscription contact Laurie Hoefling, [hoefling@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:hoefling@davenportdiocese.org).



# **Save the Date**

**Saturday, March 7**

**8:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

**St. Patrick Church**

**Iowa City**

**Registration Information  
Available Soon**

## **What is the Called & Gifted workshop?**

This one-day, interactive workshop will help you:

- Learn about our common mission to the world as Church, your role in that mission, and your spiritual gifts, “given for the common good” (1 Cor 12:7)
- Explore Church teaching on the laity and lay ministry; the nature of spiritual gifts, call and vocation; and how to undertake the process of discernment.
- Discover resources to help you put your gifts into action in your parish community and beyond.

## **Who should attend?**

Parish staff, parish leaders and council members, faith formation and ministry volunteers, RCIA teams, catechists, parents, young adults, people in transition, new or returning Catholics...

*...all are welcome!*

## Marriage Moments & Parenting Pointers

December 2014

**FOR MORE** extended marriage and parenting articles, plus archived Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers, go to: [www.SusanVogt.net](http://www.SusanVogt.net) \***BLOG:** *Living Lightly*. [www.SusanVogt.net/blog](http://www.SusanVogt.net/blog)

**TWITTER:** [@Vogt\\_Susan](https://twitter.com/Vogt_Susan) \***EDUCATORS, LEADERS, & MINISTERS:** You are welcome to reprint these MM's and PP's in bulletins, newsletters, and on your website with proper credit, ("By Susan Vogt, [www.SusanVogt.net](http://www.SusanVogt.net)"). When used on a website, please also link to my website: [www.SusanVogt.net](http://www.SusanVogt.net)

### **MARRIAGE MOMENTS**

602. Dec. 8: December 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception - an angel, Mary, a life changing message. It's almost too surreal to believe. What's our take away? Ponder the angel's greeting to Mary, "Do not be afraid." What do my beloved and I worry about? Remember: "Nothing is impossible for God."

603. Dec. 15: A trip down Memory Lane #9: The Honeymoon. Not everyone takes a honeymoon after their wedding but whether you did or not, savor the early days of your marriage. What made them special? What did you learn about each other?

604. Dec. 22: It's almost here - Christmas of course. It's easy to feel pretty frantic and busy at this time of year. We want to get a nice gift for our spouse, the kids, whoever, decorate, etc. Take some time out today. It needn't be long; just a pause. Look at each other and be thankful.

605. Dec. 29: As the year comes to a close, many people review its ups and downs. Share the happiest and saddest time for each of you this past year. Is there anything you want to change to love each other better next year?

### **PARENTING POINTERS**

601. Dec.5: With Christmas approaching this is a good time to talk with your child about selecting one or several toys to pass on to other children. It's consistent with the "one in - one out" principle for keeping a simple home. It doesn't have to be a favorite toy, but it should be something they think will bring joy to another.

602. Dec. 12: December 12 is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe - Patroness of the Americas. Tell your children the story of Juan Diego. One thing that is important about Mary's appearance is that she took on the look of this Mexican peasant. How do I think Mary would look if she appeared to me today?

603. Dec. 19: The Christmas Vigil uses the genealogy of Jesus as the Gospel (Matthew 1:1-25). Do your children know their heritage back several generations? Talk with them about their relatives dead and alive and their ethnic roots. Perhaps go to a map and help them visualize the way they came to the place you now call home.

604. Dec. 26: It's the day after Christmas. Perhaps the house is a mess - but hopefully it's a happy mess. Presumably your child has gotten some nice gifts. Take time to enjoy them together this weekend. Play some games. Rejoice in each other's company. Relax.