

NORTH COAST CATHOLIC

A PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER 2022 VOLUME XIII ISSUE

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Peace on earth begins with *you*.

A person stands on a beach at sunset, with the ocean and sky reflected in the water. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon. The person's silhouette is centered in the lower half of the frame, standing on the wet sand. The water in the foreground is calm, creating a clear reflection of the person and the vibrant colors of the sunset. The horizon line is low, emphasizing the vastness of the sky.



Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!



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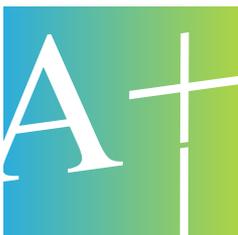
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NORTH COAST CATHOLIC
THE NEWSPAPER OF
THE DIOCESE OF SANTA ROSA

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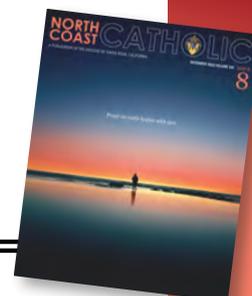
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St. Francis de Sales,
pray for us.





FROM *the* BISHOP

NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL - IV -

Saint John Vianney, described the attitude which we ought to have when approaching the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the attitude of Mary as she approached Calvary. The words of Pope Francis, that the celebrant needs to avoid “a rushed briskness or an overemphasized slowness” as well as “a sloppy carelessness or an excessive finickiness”, could be viewed as the fruit of reflection on this idea of Saint John. In the Instruction, provided in the Ordination Rite for priests, we find this admonition: “*Understand, therefore, what you do, and imitate what you celebrate; as a celebrant of the mystery of the Lord’s Death and Resurrection, may you strive to put to death whatever is sinful within you and to walk in newness of life.*” We could envision Pope Francis saying, “Since you are a celebrant of the Lord’s Death avoid both a rushed briskness and a sloppy carelessness. Since you are a celebrant of the Lord’s Resurrection, avoid both an overemphasized slowness and an excessive finickiness”.

The tendency to treat the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as something that the congregation does in order to lift themselves up or to achieve some type of ‘*spiritual high*’ needs to be put to rest. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (both a Sacrament and a Sacrifice) is the action of making present again the events of that original Holy Week. As we pray in the Eucharistic Prayers: “We recall the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord”. While the Holy Father’s words apply, in a special way, to the priest presider they also apply to every participant in the pews. Everyone who comes to Mass comes with the duty to enter into the events being made present, a duty to focus on them, a duty to be attentive to them and a duty to dwell reflectively on them. Properly celebrating Mass by the priest and properly participating by the congregation, requires genuine effort, personal discipline, and

preparation. It requires reverence, attention and devotion. The tendency of participants to put 100% of the responsibility for “getting something out of the Mass” on the shoulders of the priest is easily done but not entirely justified. Every person coming to Mass has a responsibility, regardless of the quality of the “*ars celebrandi*” of the priest, to recognize that Christ has been made present, on that altar, in that Church, at that time by the words accurately spoken. It is personally very rewarding when the music is just right and the diction of the priest is clear, without distracting accent, when the sermon is balanced and relatively brief, when the congregation is duly attentive and reverent, when it is neither too hot nor too cold and all of the ambient elements are just right, but this is not often, if ever, the case. There are, indeed, many noticeable imperfections and these are regrettable but none of those imperfections negate the presence of Christ which has come about through those necessary words spoken at the heart of the Mass: *THIS IS MY BODY. THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD!*

A fruitful meditation on this great mystery of our Lord’s presence in the Eucharist under the simple external forms of bread and wine leads to a profound appreciation of the greatness of this gift and a desire to be as worthy as possible to be in the Lord’s presence. Our sense of the greatness of this gift must heavily overshadow any tendency to dismiss the gift because some of the aspects of the “*ars celebrandi*” were lacking or even defective. Unfortunately, our American tendency seems to be to place more value on the *ars* than on the reality of the Lord’s Presence. I understand that the appeal to our aesthetic nature is important and desirable but we must not allow that appeal to cloud our faith vision or our faith conviction about what really happens at the Eucharist.

Saint John Newman had something similar to say in his Plain and Parochial Sermons. In one titled: “Religion, a weariness to the natural man”, we find, “Once more; that religion is in itself a weariness is seen even in the conduct of the better sort of persons, who really on the whole are under the influence of its spirit. So dull and uninviting is calm and practical religion, that religious persons are ever exposed to the temptation of looking out for excitements of one sort or other, to make it pleasurable to them.” While Saint John may not have been referring exclusively to the Liturgy of the Eucharist, he does indicate that the present, i.e., modern, emphasis on experience and feeling is not something limited to our age. It is, rather, part of our human nature, our natural self, which can be enlisted to help foster a deeper commitment to true worship. On the other hand, this temptation to look for ‘excitements’ can severely compromise authentic worship of God.

Pray for me as I promise to pray for you.

Bishop Robert F. Vasa





From *the* Editor *Repair Ye the Way!*



By Chris Lyford
Editor, North Coast Catholic

As we enter the second half of Advent 2022 may you be blessed with a renewed zeal in your spiritual journey as you prepare the way for the celebration of Christmas in your heart, in your home and in your church community!

Maybe you haven't had a chance to start your preparations; or maybe it's one of those years where it's more 'repair ye the way' than 'prepare ye the way'.

A visit to your local parish during the week for daily mass or just a 15-minute visit can really help in remembering the graces from Christmases past. Spending 15 minutes before the Blessed Sacrament is sometimes best if we spend most of the time quietly listening. This time of year, in the beautifully appointed Advent oriented environment of any local parish you can spill your heart out to the true presence of Jesus just as the shepherds could during that first Christmas, "at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold"*.

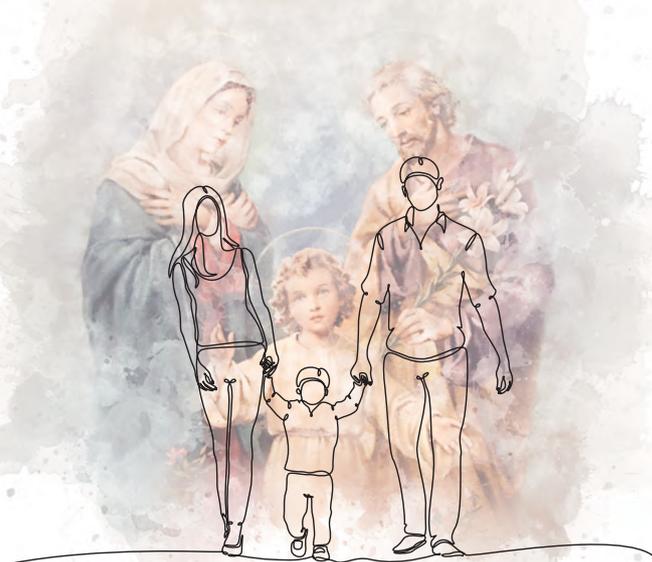
Come, let us adore Him Who came to us in complete vulnerability to show us how to live. Let us offer our vulnerability to Him in honor of His coming to us and placing Himself literally into the hands of Joseph and Mary whose own vulnerability brought them to a stable where they placed their newly born King of Kings in a manger.

May we all spend a little time as we approach the days of Christmastide to thank God for His Divine providence in our lives. For our gift of health, home, food, family, friends, and all that we value. May we thank God for the freedom to enter into our place of worship and publicly proclaim our faith.

And let us start each day by taking more time in silence in order to watch and pray with joyful expectation so as to prepare the way for the moment when each of us will meet Jesus. May our lives be lived in that context especially in these next few weeks, and may Our Lord answer all our prayers and "grant our desires through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother"*. Amen! ☩

*Words from the beautiful St. Andrew Christmas Novena

Celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family



Greetings Family;

This is the time of year when many families gather and share in the glory of the incarnation and birth of Jesus at Christmas. The Feast of the Holy Family, which is normally celebrated on the first Sunday after Christmas, is on Friday, December 30th this year, as the first Sunday after Christmas will be January 1st, the Solemnity of Mary.

The Holy Family is the model for us all of what it means to be a family. A new family begins when a man and a woman get married and commits their whole life to each other and to any children that might come from that union. One important aspect of a marriage ceremony is when the couple vows to be open to life and to accept children willingly from God. With the arrival of children, the husband and wife can now celebrate becoming a father and a mother!

What a joy, a privilege, and a responsibility it is to become parents. The Holy Family is the example, the ideal model for us. We can learn what it means to be parents and faithful spouses by their actions. Fathers can ponder on the virtues of St. Joseph. Though scripture does not record any of his spoken words, his actions spoke louder than words. He had great moral strength, was chaste, faithful, humble, industrious, and a steadfast protector, willing to escape to Egypt with his family to guard them from harm. St. Joseph provided food, shelter, and clothing and educated Jesus in the faith and taught him a trade. Fathers, these too are your duties to your wife and children.

Mothers, ponder Mary's virtues. Mary was receptive to God's will, giving her fiat, her "Yes" to the angel Gabriel. She too was chaste, moral, faithful, generous of her time, visited her pregnant kinswoman Elizabeth, created a nurturing home for her own family, and lovingly cared for her child, Jesus. And in the Gospel of John 2:5 she sets the example for all of us when she tells the waiters at the wedding feast in Cana, "Do whatever He (Jesus) tells you."

As parents, remind your children of their value and dignity as God's (and your) beloved children. Encourage them to develop their talents and skills as they grow and mature. Teach your sons to embrace their masculinity and live the virtues of moral strength, courage, and humility. Teach your daughters to embrace the dignity of their femininity and to live the virtues of purity, sensitivity, and generosity. But most important of all, frequent the sacraments with your children as a family, especially the Eucharist at Mass and frequent Confession.

So on this Feast of the Holy Family (December 30th), do something special with your family. Some ideas are: go on a hike, cook a meal together, play a board game, if you don't already, start the tradition of praying a family rosary together, or go around the dinner table and share a virtue you most admire in each family member. As the Holy Family is an example for us all, be a "Holy Family" to those around you, by doing whatever Jesus calls you to do.

We wrote a prayer that we hope you will offer for your family on the Feast of the Holy Family:

O God, our most heavenly Father;

You have created us out of love and saved us in your mercy, and through the bond of marriage, you have established our family and willed that it should become a sign of Christ's love for His Church.

We pray that you shower your blessings upon our family gathered together here. Enable each one of us to love and support one another in the spirit of the Holy Family. Give us the strength to be responsive to the needs of our family and loving witnesses to our Catholic faith in all we say and do.

We ask you Father, to protect and watch over our family, so that by the strength of your grace we may enjoy health and prosperity, possess the gift of your peace, and, we, as the Domestic Church, may bear witness in this world to your glory.

Dear Holy Family, pray for us.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen. ☩



Blessings on your family,

**Carlin &
Deacon Dave
Gould**

*Co-Directors of the
Marriage
& Family Life Office*

2022



WRAP UP

ANNUAL MINISTRY APPEAL



It is hard to believe that the liturgical season of Advent is upon us. As we close the calendar year and begin the new liturgical year, we reflect with gratitude on the gifts God has given us. We also extend a warm thank you to those who supported the 2022 Annual Ministry Appeal.

For more than two decades, the Annual Ministry Appeal (AMA) has provided funding for ministries which impact every member of our Diocese either personally or through loved ones and fellow parishioners. Much of the time, the work of the diocesan ministries goes unnoticed, but if you or someone in your family were baptized, confirmed, or married in the Church, funding from the AMA played a role in their preparation through our diocesan ministries. The impact of the ministries is irreplaceable but they would not exist without the ongoing dedication and support of parishioners and pastors across the Diocese.

Thanks to this dedication, more than half of the parishes have met or exceeded their parish goals, with more than **\$200,000** projected to return to those parishes for use in local ministries. A complete listing of parishes and level of goal achieved is below.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, parish goals for this year were largely held constant, allowing a time for recovery. For the 2023 AMA, the goal setting process will return to normal.

The AMA is currently providing 40% of the funding necessary to operate the diocesan ministries. The remainder of their funding comes from grants from other Catholic organizations, savings from prior years, and the parish operating

assessments. The ministries should be funded as much as possible by the AMA as funds raised by the AMA can only be used for the ministries and other resources are not always available. This year, roughly 3% of the registered households of the Diocese participated in the AMA. Even a small increase of participation in the AMA would bring the goal of fully funding the ministries through the AMA closer.

The funds generated by the AMA are allocated to the ministries according to need as illustrated below. The distressing announcement in this Issue concerning Diocesan Bankruptcy should not affect our various ministries or the need to fund them. AMA funds are restricted for the purposes for which they have been solicited.

If you participated in the appeal this year, thank you for your generosity and support. We are grateful for each gift and pledge that they will be invested in the service of our Diocesan faith community.

If you have not had the opportunity to make a gift in the past, consider doing so this year by visiting srdioocese.org "GIVE". Gifts received before December 31 will be counted toward the 2022 AMA; new gifts received after that date will be applied to the 2023 Appeal.

You will soon be receiving pledge information for the 2023 Annual Ministry Appeal which kicks off January 2023. If you prefer to make your gift online, please visit www.srdioocese.org and look for the "Give" tab. Be sure to identify your parish so that your gift will be applied to the parish goal. Together, we can continue to spread the love of Christ in northern California. 🇺🇸

AMA 2022 Parish Report Numbers as of November 11, 2022

PARISH	2022 GOAL	PLEDGES	IDENTIFIED DONORS	GIFTS RECEIVED	PARISH REBATE	% OF GOAL
ST. ELIZABETH SETON, ROHNERT PARK	\$18,744	\$47,322	175	\$43,772	\$25,028	234%
ST. ALOYSIUS	\$1,106	\$3,020	11	\$2,520	\$1,414	228%
CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION	\$9,609	\$18,853	48	\$17,298	\$7,689	180%
ST. JAMES	\$36,104	\$69,051	195	\$64,811	\$28,707	180%
CATHEDRAL OF ST. EUGENE	\$47,267	\$89,918	183	\$84,418	\$37,151	179%
ST. FRANCIS SOLANO	\$22,991	\$39,147	148	\$37,511	\$14,520	163%
ST. JOAN OF ARC	\$17,207	\$33,489	101	\$27,216	\$10,009	158%
ST. JOSEPH, COTATI	\$21,313	\$33,486	176	\$31,184	\$9,871	146%
OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL	\$12,312	\$18,150	37	\$17,710	\$5,398	144%
ST. ROSE	\$42,216	\$65,599	220	\$58,220	\$16,004	138%
RESURRECTION	\$35,437	\$51,725	214	\$47,961	\$12,524	135%
ST. JOHN, HEALDSBURG	\$21,069	\$29,027	60	\$28,407	\$7,338	135%
ST. JOSEPH, FORTUNA	\$13,667	\$22,974	82	\$18,289	\$4,622	134%
ST. PHILIP THE APOSTLE	\$13,754	\$17,926	37	\$17,704	\$3,950	129%
HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH	\$32,801	\$43,350	126	\$41,870	\$9,069	128%
CHRIST THE KING CHURCH	\$6,067	\$7,651	28	\$7,583	\$1,516	125%
ST. JOHN, NAPA	\$40,947	\$70,473	369	\$49,831	\$8,884	122%
ST. APOLLINARIS	\$67,516	\$85,257	173	\$80,737	\$13,221	120%
OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP	\$4,000	\$5,140	17	\$4,540	\$540	114%
STAR OF THE VALLEY	\$28,352	\$31,661	87	\$31,365	\$3,013	111%
ST. HELENA CHURCH	\$21,489	\$24,453	39	\$23,403	\$1,914	109%
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL	\$45,981	\$50,536	124	\$49,916	\$3,935	109%
ST. SEBASTIAN	\$22,851	\$26,841	81	\$24,266	\$1,415	106%
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS	\$15,417	\$16,554	60	\$16,279	\$862	106%
ST. LEO THE GREAT	\$26,974	\$28,274	16	\$28,274	\$1,300	105%
OUR LADY OF THE REDWOODS	\$1,776	\$1,878	9	\$1,778	\$2	100%
SACRED HEART	\$18,558	\$19,520	49	\$18,550		100%
OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE	\$34,032	\$41,651	184	\$32,486		95%
ST. BERNARD	\$28,097	\$27,469	91	\$26,549		94%
ST. JOSEPH, MIDDLETOWN	\$12,480	\$12,218	64	\$11,478		92%
ST. MARY, ARCATA	\$22,586	\$20,800	46	\$20,450		91%
OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE	\$13,023	\$14,057	46	\$11,612		89%
ST. MARY, UKIAH	\$17,501	\$13,238	38	\$12,248		70%
ST. JOSEPH, CRESCENT CITY	\$10,458	\$6,755	23	\$6,450		62%
ST. MARY, LAKEPORT	\$12,377	\$7,648	39	\$7,208		58%
ST. ANTHONY, WILLITS	\$4,250	\$2,425	10	\$2,225		52%
ST. ANTHONY, MENDOCINO	\$6,285	\$3,225	11	\$3,175		51%
ST. ELIZABETH SETON, PHILO	\$4,000	\$2,150	5	\$1,625		41%
ST. PETER	\$15,808	\$5,688	21	\$5,688		36%
ST. ELIZABETH, GUERNEVILLE	\$9,243	\$2,890	15	\$2,890		31%
HOLY FAMILY CHURCH	\$24,509	\$7,456	11	\$7,436		30%
VIETNAMESE MARTYRS	\$12,774	\$700	2	\$700		5%
NO PARISH AFFILIATION		\$2,260	15	\$1,910		
TOTAL	\$872,948	\$1,121,905	3486	\$1,029,543	\$229,896	

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Catholic Schools OUTPERFORM ON “THE NATION’S REPORT CARD”



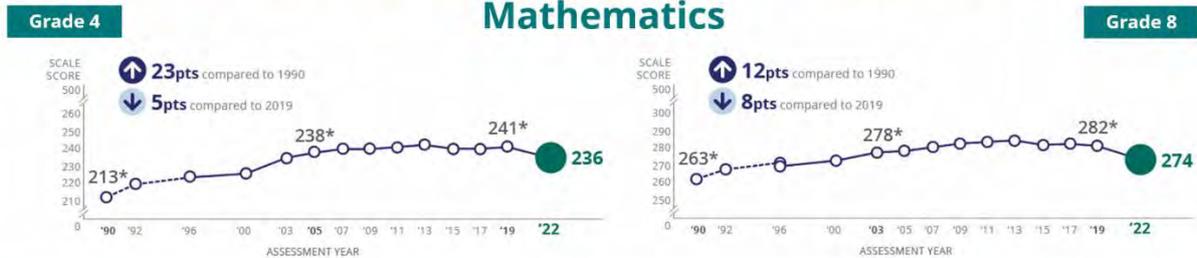
October 24 marked the release of National Assessment of Educational Progress test results for 2022. NAEP, popularly known as “The Nation’s Report Card,” assesses what the nation’s students in grades 4 and 8 know, and are able to do in reading and mathematics. In all, 224,000 students and 5,700 schools in Grade 4, and 222,000 students and 5,100 schools in Grade 8 participated in the assessment. Private schools are included in NAEP’s sampling, and the scores of

participating private school students are included in the national data. Unfortunately, an insufficient number of private schools participated in this year’s administration of NAEP to constitute a nationally representative sample, meaning that national results for private schools as a group could not be reported. Happily, a sufficient number of sampled Catholic schools did participate. Their top-line results can be found, below.



REVIEW OF THE TOP-LINE NATIONAL RESULTS:

SCORES DECLINE DURING PANDEMIC



A FEW TAKEAWAYS FROM A FAIRLY SHALLOW DIVE INTO THE DATA:

MATH:

- Scores are down 5 points in 4th grade and 8 points in 8th grade across the board. No state or district saw gains.
- Among 8th graders, 38% scored below NAEP Basic. Among 4th graders, **25%** fell below NAEP Basic.
- Black and Hispanic students experienced the largest ever score declines in 4th grade math, 7 points each.

READING:

- Scores are down in both grades: 4th graders declined 3 points; 8th graders declined 3 points.
- **37%** of 4th graders are performing below NAEP Basic; 30% of 8th graders are performing below the NAEP Basic level.
- White students declined the most in 8th grade reading. They dropped 4 points.
- Female students experienced bigger score declines than male students in 8th grade reading. They dropped 4 points.

OTHER:

- Lower-performing students (*students scoring at the 10th percentile*) declined more than higher-performing students (*students at the 90th percentile*):
 - 6 points in 4th grade reading
 - 7 points in 4th grade math



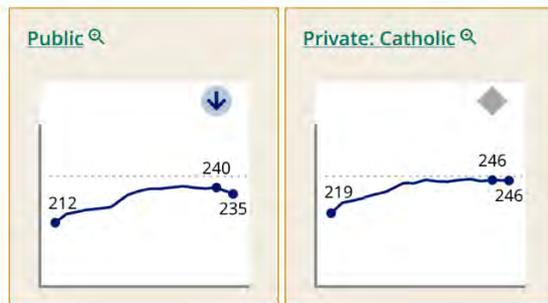
The exception was in 8th grade math where students at all achievement levels experienced steep declines, ranging from a 6- to 9-point decline, and in 8th grade reading, ranging from a 2 to 4-point decline.



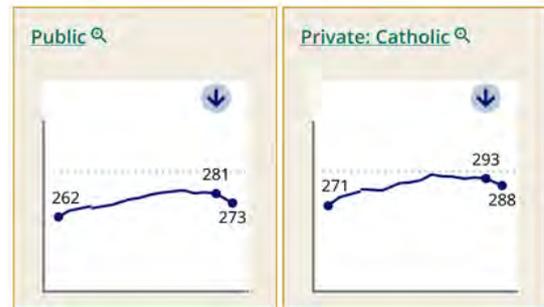
HOW DID THE NATION'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FARE?

Here's a graphic overview that compares average scale scores of Catholic school and public school students. **Blue-shaded down or up arrows** represent statistically significant changes from the previous administration of NAEP; **grey diamonds** represent no statistically significant changes from the last administration of NAEP (in 2019):

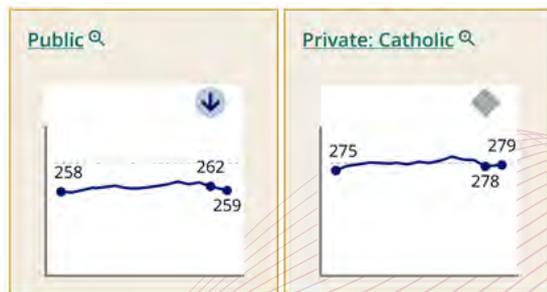
MATH: 4TH GRADE



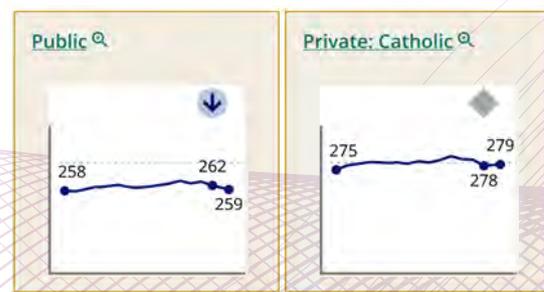
MATH: 8TH GRADE



READING: 4TH GRADE



READING: 8TH GRADE



As the data suggest, Catholic schools were able to weather the pandemic without students suffering significant learning loss in three of the four assessments. And though Catholic school students experienced a statistically

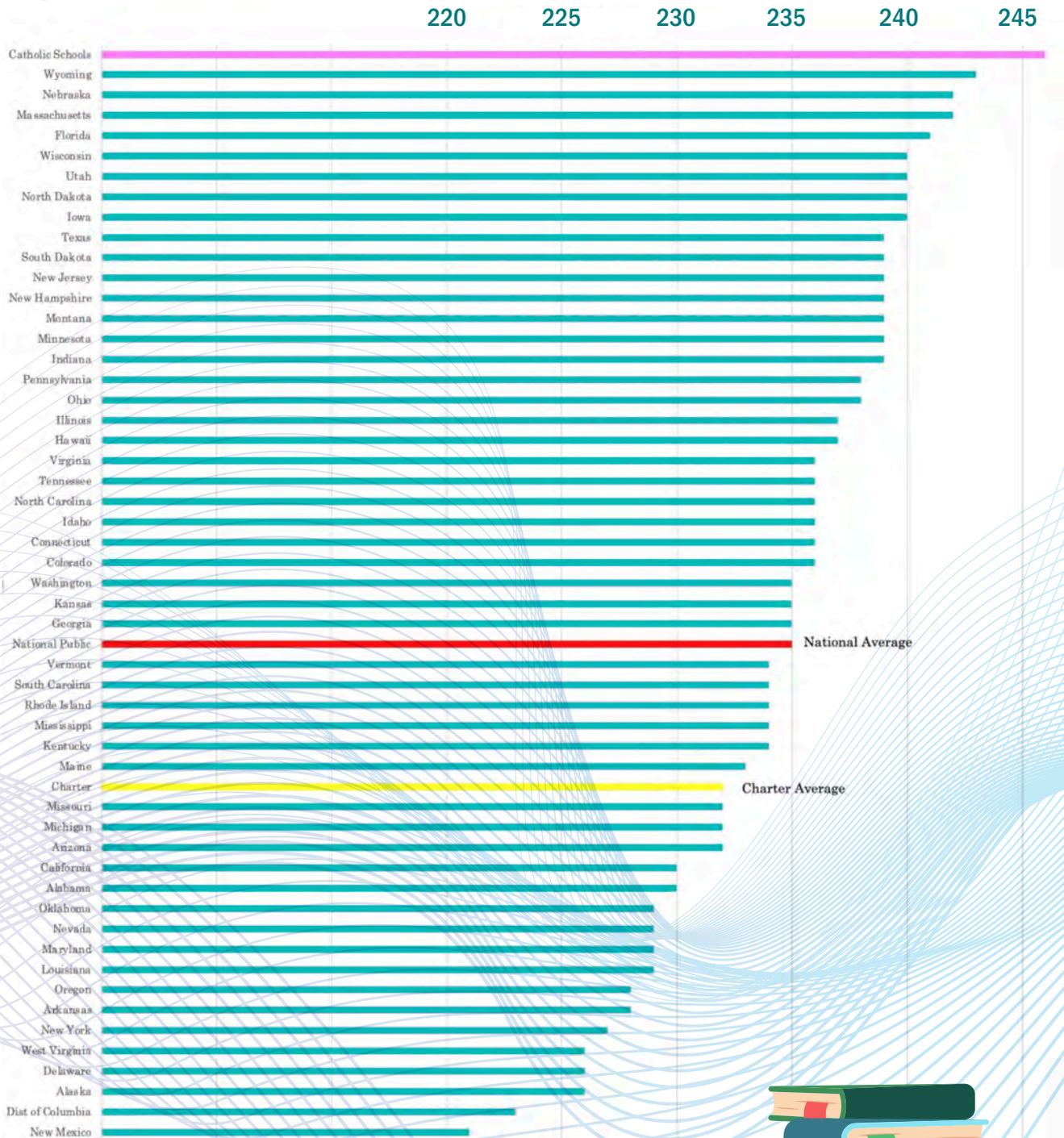
significant 5-point drop in 8th-grade math, Catholic school students' average scores remained 15 points higher than the average scores of their 8th-grade public school peers. In fact, average scale scores for Catholic school

students are considerably higher than those of their public school counterparts at each grade level in both subjects. (A deeper dive into the data will show that these differences are statistically significant.)

If Catholic schools comprised a 'state,' here's a rough graphic representation of how Catholic school students' performance on The Nation's Report Card would look like:

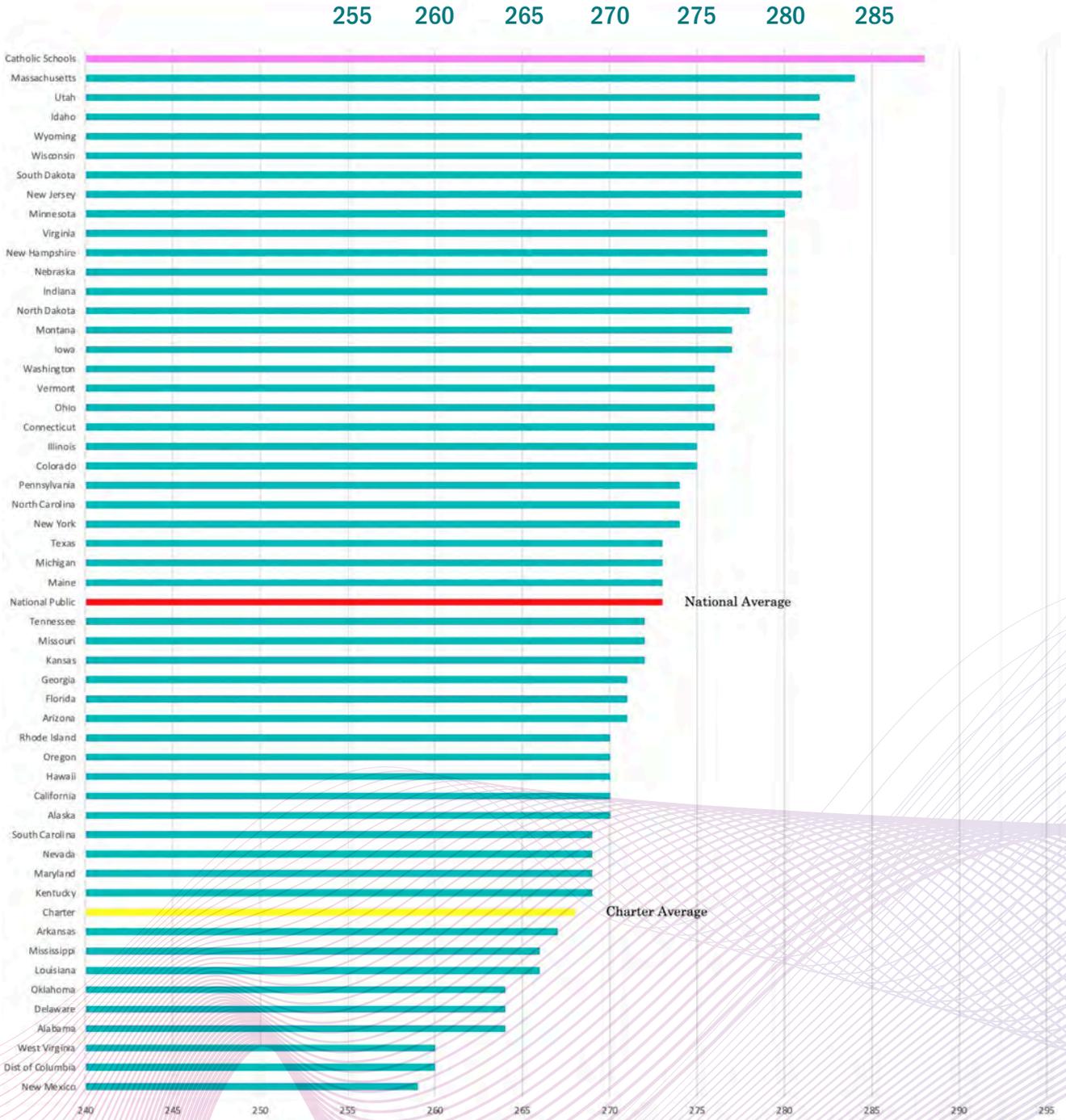


MATH: 4TH GRADE



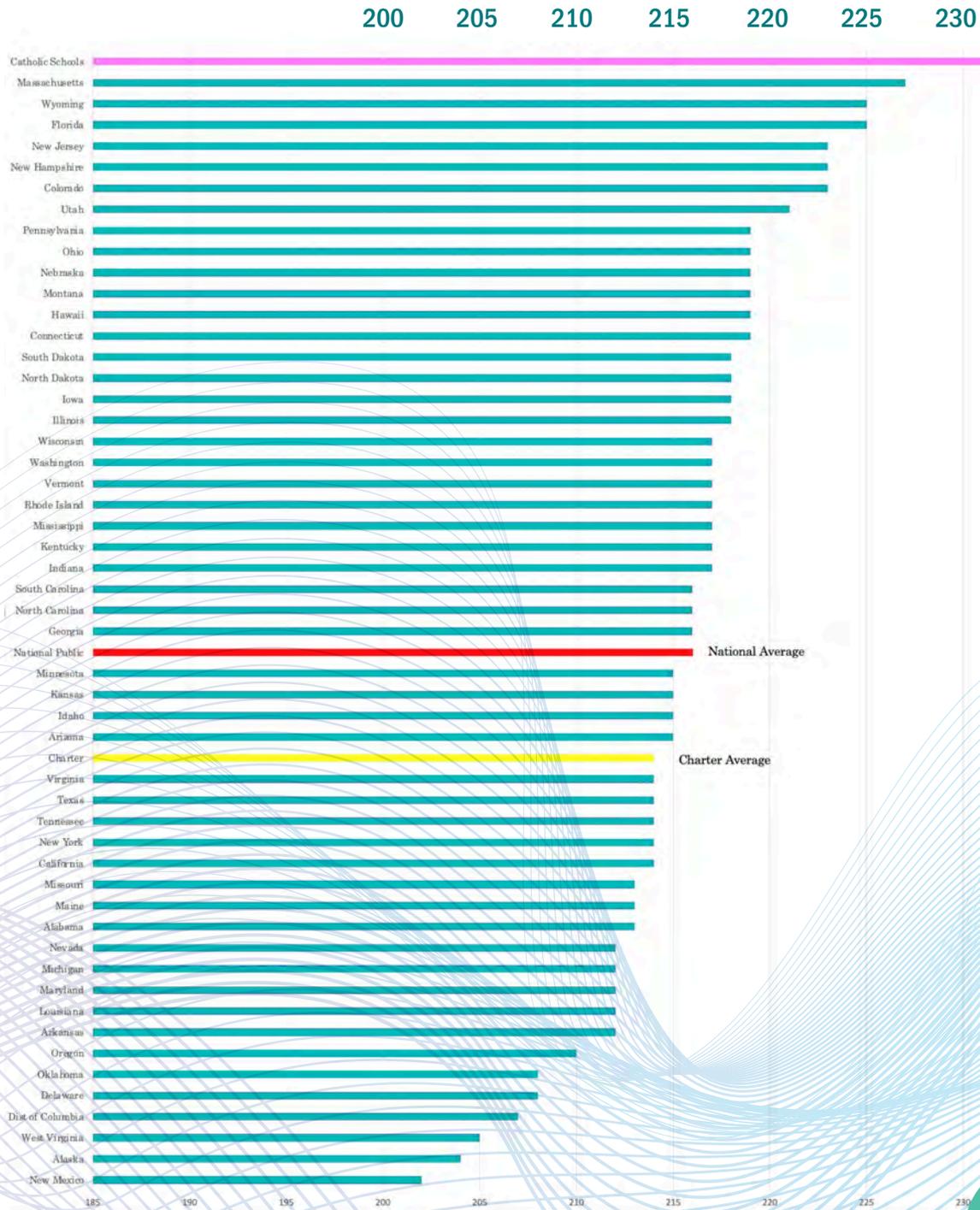


MATH: 8TH GRADE



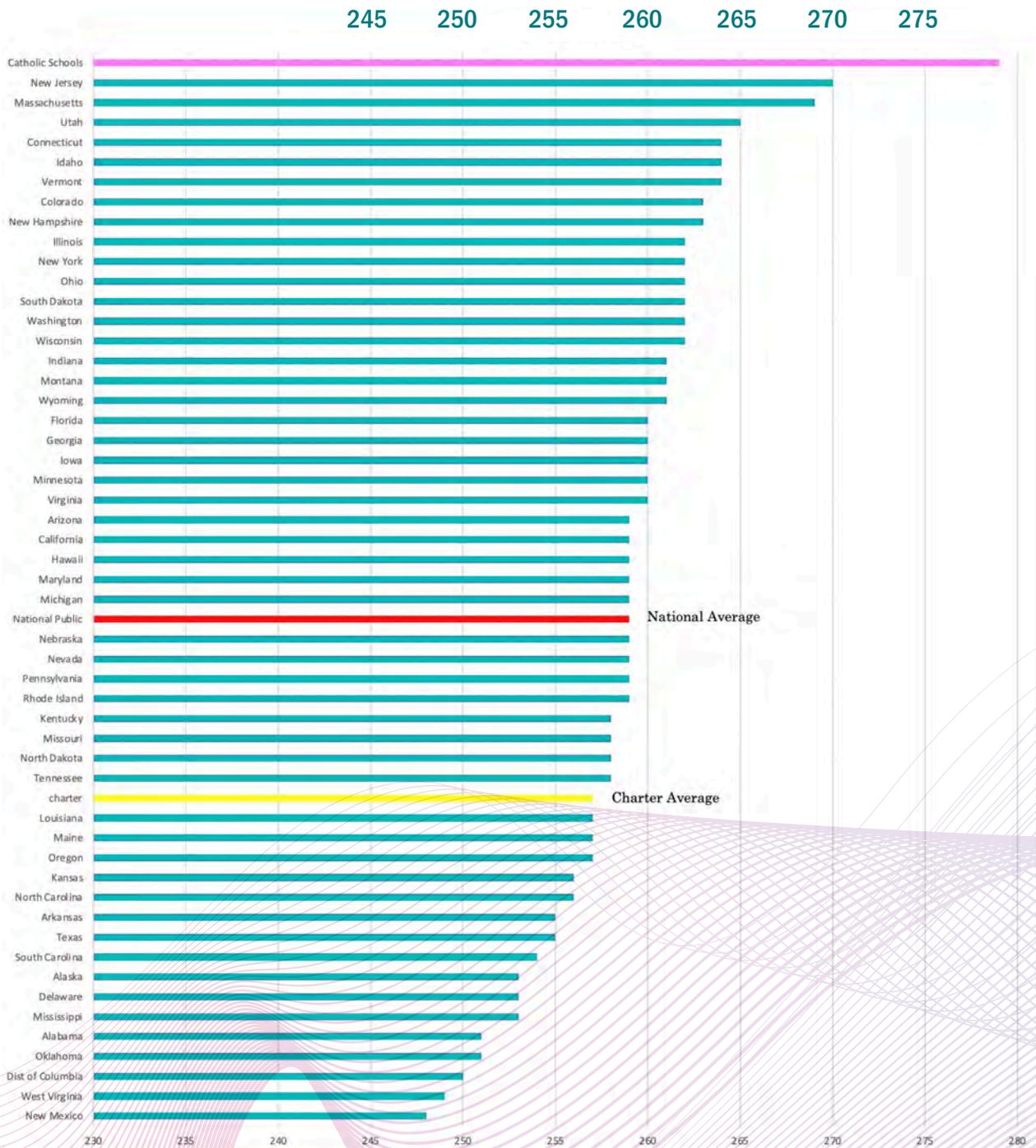


READING: 4TH GRADE





READING: 8TH GRADE





WHAT ABOUT CALIFORNIA?



Math: 4th Grade the average scale score dropped from 235 (in 2019) to 230*
Math: 8th Grade the average scale score dropped from 276 (in 2019) to 270*
Reading: 4th Grade..... the average scale score dropped from 219 (in 2019) to 216*
Reading: 8th Grade..... the average scale score dropped from 262 (in 2019) to 259*
**denotes a statistically significant difference.*

2022 NAEP results can be found on the web at the link appearing below:
www.nationsreportcard.gov/
 Those wishing to take a “deeper dive” can use the NAEP Data Explorer:
www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/data/

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SANTA ROSA DIOCESE SCHOOLS NEAR YOU

PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

HEALDSBURG

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

TK-8th
 Founded 1950

SANTA ROSA

ST EUGENE

Preschool-8th
 Founded 1953

NAPA

ST APOLLINARIS

TK-8th
 Founded 1959

SANTA ROSA

ST ROSE

Preschool-8th
 Founded 1931

PETALUMA

ST VINCENT ELEMENTARY

Kindergarten-8th
 Founded 1888

ST VINCENT HIGH SCHOOL

Founded 1916

SONOMA

ST FRANCIS

Kindergarten-8th
 Founded 1945

UKIAH

ST MARY OF THE ANGELS

Kindergarten-8th
 Founded 1953

FORT BRAGG

SAN JOSÉ SÁNCHEZ DEL RIO SCHOOL

Kindergarten-6th
 Founded 2020

DIOCESAN SCHOOL

SANTA ROSA

CARDINAL NEWMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Founded 1964

PRIVATELY OPERATED CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

EUREKA

ST BERNARD ACADEMY

Preschool, 7-12th
 Founded 1912

NAPA

KOLBE-TRINITY

Kindergarten-12th
 Founded 1980

JUSTIN-SIENA

HIGH SCHOOL

Founded 1966





DEL OBISPO

REAVIVAMIENTO EUCARISTICO NACIONAL

- IV -

San Juan Vianney, describió la actitud que debemos tener al acercarnos al Santo Sacrificio de la Misa como la actitud de María al acercarse al Calvario. Las palabras del Papa Francisco, de que el celebrante debe evitar una “prisa precipitada o lentitud acentuada”, así como el “descuido desaliñado o refinamiento excesivo”, podrían verse como fruto de la reflexión sobre esta idea de San Juan. En la Instrucción, que provee el Rito de Ordenación de los presbíteros, encontramos esta amonestación: “Comprende, pues, lo que haces, e imita lo que celebras; como celebrante del misterio de la muerte y resurrección del Señor, que te esfuerces por hacer morir todo lo que hay de pecado en ti y por caminar en una vida nueva”. Podríamos imaginar al Papa Francisco diciendo: “Dado que eres un celebrante de la muerte del Señor, evita tanto la prisa precipitada como el descuido desaliñado. Puesto que eres el celebrante de la Resurrección del Señor, evita enfatizar ambas cosas, lentitud acentuada así como también el refinamiento excesivo”.

La tendencia a tratar el Santísimo Sacrificio de la Misa como algo que la congregación hace para elevarse a sí misma o para lograr algún tipo de ‘alcance espiritual’ debe dejarse de lado. El Santo Sacrificio de la Misa (tanto Sacramento como Sacrificio) es la acción de volver a hacer presentes los acontecimientos de aquella Semana Santa original. Como rezamos en las Plegarias Eucarísticas: “Recordamos la Pasión, Muerte y Resurrección del Señor”. Si bien las palabras del Santo Padre se aplican, de manera especial, al sacerdote que preside, también se aplican a todos los participantes en las bancas. Todo el que viene a Misa viene con el deber de entrar en los acontecimientos que se están haciendo presentes, el deber de fijarse en ellos, el deber de estar atento a

ellos y el deber de detenerse reflexivamente en ellos. La celebración adecuada de la Misa por parte del sacerdote y la participación adecuada de la congregación requiere un esfuerzo genuino, disciplina personal y preparación. Requiere reverencia, atención y devoción. La tendencia de los participantes a poner el 100% de la responsabilidad de “sacar algo de la Misa” sobre los hombros del sacerdote es fácil de hacer pero no del todo justificada. Cada persona que viene a Misa tiene la responsabilidad, independientemente de la calidad del “ars celebrandi” del sacerdote, de reconocer que Cristo se ha hecho presente, en ese altar, en esa Iglesia, en ese momento por las palabras pronunciadas con precisión. Personalmente, es muy gratificante cuando la música es perfecta y la dicción del sacerdote es clara, sin acentos que distraigan, cuando el sermón es equilibrado y relativamente breve, cuando la congregación está debidamente atenta y reverente, cuando no hace demasiado calor ni demasiado frío y todos los elementos ambientales son perfectos, pero este no se da con frecuencia, si es que alguna vez lo es. De hecho, hay muchas imperfecciones notables y estas son lamentables, pero ninguna de esas imperfecciones niega la presencia de Cristo que se ha producido a través de esas palabras necesarias pronunciadas en el corazón de la Misa: ESTE ES MI CUERPO. ¡ESTE ES EL CÁLIZ DE MI SANGRE!

Una fecunda meditación sobre este gran misterio de la presencia de nuestro Señor en la Eucaristía bajo las sencillas formas externas del pan y del vino conduce a una profunda apreciación de la grandeza de este don y al deseo de ser lo más dignos posible para estar en la presencia del Señor. Nuestro sentido de la grandeza de este don debe ser mucho más grande que cualquier tendencia a descartar el don debido a que algunos de

los aspectos del “ars celebrandi” son escasos o incluso defectuosos. Tristemente, nuestra tendencia estadounidense parece darle más valor a las ars que a la realidad de la Presencia del Señor. Entiendo que la atención a nuestra naturaleza estética es importante y deseable, pero no debemos permitir que esa atracción nuble nuestra visión de fe o nuestra convicción de fe sobre lo que realmente sucede en la Eucaristía.

San Juan Newman tenía algo similar que decir en sus Sermones Sencillos y Parroquiales. En uno titulado: “La religión, cansancio del hombre natural”, encontramos, “Una vez más; que la religión es en sí misma un cansancio que se ve incluso en la conducta de la mejor clase de personas, quienes realmente en general están bajo la influencia de su espíritu. Tan aburrida y poco atractiva es la religión tranquila y práctica, que las personas religiosas siempre están expuestas a la tentación de buscar emociones de un tipo u otro, para que les resulte placentera”. Si bien es posible que San Juan no se haya referido exclusivamente a la Liturgia de la Eucaristía, sí indica que el énfasis actual, es decir, moderno, en la experiencia y el sentimiento no es algo limitado a nuestra época. Es, más bien, parte de nuestra naturaleza humana, nuestro yo natural, que se puede utilizar para ayudar a fomentar un compromiso más profundo con la adoración verdadera. Por otro lado, esta tentación de buscar “emociones excitantes” puede comprometer severamente la auténtica adoración a Dios.

Reverendísimo Robert F. Vasa
Obispo de Santa Rosa



Historia de las Posadas Navideñas



¿De dónde vienen y por qué las hacemos? Como tantas tradiciones de México, la historia de las posadas navideñas tiene su origen en el proceso de evangelización de los pueblos prehispánicos.

Durante los siglos XVI y XVII, los frailes encargados de convertir a los nativos del Nuevo Mundo al catolicismo hacían uso de su creatividad para conseguir su objetivo. El modo de obrar siempre era el mismo:

1. Encontrar un punto en común con las creencias prehispánicas, que ellos consideraban “paganas”.
2. Adaptar la creencia o tradición prehispánica para que encaje con el cristianismo. Si es necesario, mezclarlas.
3. Sustituir las creencias y celebraciones con las nuevas versiones cristianizadas.

Los Aguinaldos

Ese fue el caso de las famosas posadas navideñas, cuya historia se remonta a las misas de aguinaldos. Representan una ofrenda a Jesús, nuestro Mesías que esta por nacer. Durante este tiempo, se realizaban representaciones del nacimiento de Cristo. La primera vez que se celebraron en la Nueva España fue en 1587, bajo la supervisión de fray Diego de Soria. El 25 de diciembre, que marca el solsticio de invierno para los habitantes del hemisferio norte, es una fecha festejada a lo largo y ancho del planeta. El catolicismo lo adoptó a la religión Romana para la Navidad. En el México prehispánico, se celebraban a los dioses como Quetzalcóatl y Huitzilopochtli.

Para deshacerse de esas fiestas y popularizar las misas de aguinaldo, los evangelizadores de San Agustín Acolman crearon las primeras posadas. Todas las noches, del 16 al 24 de diciembre se hace una representación de la Natividad terminando con un banquete y, de postre, pequeñas estatuas de tzoatl, precursoras de las famosas alegrías de amaranto.

Al principio, se realizaban solo en las iglesias, pero con el tiempo, las posadas eran organizadas en las calles, las casas de los pueblos, y las ciudades. Para el siglo XIX, esta tradición ya era parte fundamental de las costumbres navideñas en México.

Para simbolizar este acontecimiento, los invitados hacen dos grupos, uno de ellos debe salir de la casa acompañados de figuras que representan a los peregrinos, José y María, los cuales piden posada en la puerta. Los peregrinos son la representación física que simboliza a Jesús y María en su peregrinaje de Nazaret a Belén

Es importante mencionar que durante la posada, todos los integrantes llevan consigo velas y un cuaderno con las letanías. Una vez concedida la posada comienza la convivencia entre los participantes. La cual llega a su máximo esplendor al momento de romper la piñata, llena de fruta, dulces y colación.

LA PIÑATA

El papel de la piñata en las posadas simboliza el triunfo de la fe sobre el pecado. La piñata tiene siete picos, representando los siete pecados capitales: soberbia, avaricia, gula, lujuria, pereza, envidia e ira. Tener los ojos vendados simboliza la fe ciega.

La gracia de Dios es simbolizada por los dulces y la fruta. Dios es representado por el palo y las personas alrededor simbolizan a la iglesia quien indicará el camino para vencer el pecado.

Esta es la historia de las posadas navideñas en México. Aunque la razón original tiene que ver con la enseñanza de la doctrina cristiana, actualmente los mexicanos celebran las posadas navideñas como una forma de convivir con los vecinos, amigos, compañeros de trabajo y familia, en una época en la que se respira un ambiente de cordialidad y unión. 📌

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Statement from Bishop Robert F. Vasa

After months of careful and prayerful consideration, and after having consulted the priests of the Diocese as well as the Diocesan Finance Council, and professionals retained by the Diocese, it has become clear to me that it is necessary for the Diocese of Santa Rosa to file for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy protection. This decision was made necessary due to the overwhelming number of sexual abuse lawsuits filed against the Diocese after the statute of limitations was lifted for a three-year 'window'. We now are facing more than 130 claims dating from 1962 when the Diocese was established to the present. A vast majority of the cases date from the 70's and 80's.

Our present plan is for our attorneys to file for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy protection after December 31 and before March 1, 2023. Our Diocese joins a growing list of Dioceses in the United States to make such a filing.

In many ways, this is not a freely chosen decision. It is the inevitable result of an insurmountable number of claims. I am convinced, however, that choosing this path will allow us to achieve two very important goals. First, it will provide a process to carefully evaluate and compensate, as fairly as possible those who have come forward with allegations of sexual abuse. Chapter 11 is a process designed to bring all parties together in one place to resolve difficult claims fairly and finally, with the supervision of the bankruptcy court. A bankruptcy allows the Diocese to deal with all these issues collectively rather than one at a time. At the same time, the process will provide a way for the Diocese to continue the various charitable ministries in which it is engaged.

It is important to remember that the only entity filing for bankruptcy protection is the corporation sole known legally as the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Santa Rosa. The parishes and Catholic schools within our Diocese are separate civil corporations or separate ecclesial entities and should not be parties to this filing. There are many matters to be discerned by the bankruptcy court and so absolute certainty about the degree of participation by any other entities such as parishes and schools will be determined in the course of the proceedings.

Since we began discussing this possibility more than a year ago, I have been moved by the understanding, patience and support expressed by the clergy and by the various people in the Church with whom I have previously shared this information. I am deeply grateful.



FBI Investigating Crimes Against Churches, Pro-life Groups, Director Affirms

Kevin J. Jones (CNA)
November 18



FBI Director Christopher Wray has reaffirmed the bureau's commitment to investigating crimes against pro-life groups and churches, reporting that they face about 70% of abortion-related threats since the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision.

"My view — plainly expressed to all of our people, including in the context of abortion-related violence — is that I don't care what side of the issue you're on, you don't get to engage in violence, and we are equal-opportunity when it comes to that," Wray said at a Nov. 15 hearing of the U.S. Senate Homeland Security Committee, Fox News reports.

He spoke in response to Sen. Rick Scott, R-Florida, who questioned Wray about the FBI's response to crimes against churches, pro-life pregnancy centers, and other pro-life organizations motivated by pro-abortion sentiment.

Wray said the FBI has "quite a number of investigations" into "attacks or threats against pregnancy resource centers, faith-based organizations, and other pro-life organizations."

The FBI director said that since the Dobbs decision in late June, "probably in the neighborhood of 70% of our abortion-related violence cases or threats cases are cases of violence or threats against ... pro-life organizations."

As of Sept. 22, CNA had recorded attacks on 33 churches, 55 pregnancy centers, three political organizations, and one maternity home since early May where the public evidence points to a pro-abortion motive. The crimes include vulgar graffiti, property damage, threats, theft, and even arson.

Peaceful protests, as well as crimes, followed the leak in May of a draft of the Supreme Court's Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health decision, which revealed that Roe v. Wade would be overturned and end a nationwide requirement that states allow legal abortion.

Wray told the Senate hearing that the bodies investigating crimes against pro-life churches and organizations include "about 20 field offices," he said, as well as joint terrorism task forces. He cited the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, known as the FACE Act, which since 1994 has barred the blocking of access to abortion clinics and places of worship. The Department of Justice has said the legislation also protects pro-life pregnancy centers.

"We take it very seriously," Wray said. "And again, I don't care if you're motivated by pro-life views or pro-choice views. You don't get to use violence to express it," he said.

Last month Republican lawmakers in the House and Senate asked why the FBI and the Department of Justice appear to be targeting pro-life people disproportionately under

the FACE Act. They contrasted these actions with an apparent lack of investigations or Department of Justice prosecutions related to the rise in violence against pro-life individuals and institutions.

At the Nov. 15 hearing, Sen. Scott pressed Wray about whether the public thinks the FBI is more concerned about prosecuting pro-life advocates and not those who threatened him.

"We don't have the time for me to tell how frustrated I sometimes get by some of the news reporting about our work and the misreporting of our work," he said. "The circumspection that we display with regard to discussing our investigations is based on rules and practices that are important to people having confidence in the integrity of our work and go back decades, multiple administrations."

The Department of Justice continues to have a National Task Force on Violence Against Reproductive Health Care Providers. It was established in November 1998 after an abortionist was shot and killed in western New York. According to the task force's website, its functions appear to focus on investigating violence against abortion clinics and providers. **■**



U.S. Bishops Advance 3 Women ‘Transformed by God’s Love’ Toward Sainthood

Katie Yoder (CNA)
November 16

The U.S. Catholic bishops voted to advance the causes for sainthood for three American women on Wednesday: a mother and Catholic convert considered to be a mystic, a young campus missionary who struggled with cancer, and a religious sister who ministered to the poor and to the African American community.

During their fall general assembly in Baltimore, the U.S. bishops supported advancing on the local level the causes of beatification and canonization for Servants

of God Cora Louise Evans, Michelle Duppong, and Mother Margaret Mary Healy-Murphy.

“Today we are blessed to hear about three women, each of whom followed unique paths,” Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI of Milwaukee, chair of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance, told his fellow bishops.

He added: “But each used their individual gifts to serve others — sometimes during great suffering and adversity — but who allowed themselves to be transformed by the

love of God and which moved them to share the Lord’s joy and peace through the ordinary circumstances of their lives.”

Under Church law, diocesan bishops promoting a sainthood cause must consult with the regional bishops before the cause can advance.

“We are not being asked to approve the causes,” ListECKI clarified. “We are invited to offer any observations related to a cause’s advancement in view of the social, religious, and even political significance.”

Here are the stories of these three women



Cora Louise Evans

Born in 1904, Cora Louise Evans was raised a Mormon in Utah. Her first of many mystical experiences — an apparition of the Blessed Mother — came when she was only 3 years old, according to the website promoting her cause: www.coraevans.com. But her search for the Catholic faith began on her wedding day.

“I was without a God and religion but had gained a very wonderful husband,” she said

after her marriage ceremony, according to the site. “As I looked at him and learned to love him more and more, I resolved to help find a God for him. After 10 years of searching, we found the One True God in the Roman Catholic Church.”

During that search, Cora and her husband, Mack, welcomed three children: two daughters, LaVonne and Dorothy, and one son, Bobby, who died when he was a baby.

Cora encountered Catholicism in a new way one day after listening to a Catholic program on the radio while lying sick in bed. This led her to visit the local Catholic church and ask the parish priest questions about the faith.

Less than a year later, in 1935, Cora was baptized and received her first Holy Communion. Her husband and daughters did the same soon after.

The parish priest, Father Edward Vaughn, later wrote that Cora’s efforts inspired hundreds of Mormons to convert to the Catholic faith.

Still, in 1941, the family decided to move to California because her husband faced religious and cultural prejudices while trying to hold a job, the website reads. Five years later, in 1946, Cora said that Jesus asked her to promulgate the mystical humanity of Christ, or, as the website for her cause describes, “a way of prayer that encourages people to live with a heightened awareness of the indwelling presence of Jesus in their daily lives.”

In addition to her mystical experiences, Cora is considered to have had the ability to bilocate — to appear in two places at once — and to have suffered from the stigmata, Christ’s wounds on the cross present in her own flesh.

She died exactly 22 years after her baptism, on March 30, 1957, in Boulder Creek, California. Before her death, she hoped, as St. Thérèse of Lisieux did, to spend her life in heaven doing good on earth.



Michelle Duppong

Michelle Duppong dedicated her life to God, serving as a Catholic campus missionary for six years before becoming the director of adult faith formation for the Diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota.

During a surgery in 2014 intended to remove ovarian cysts, the surgeon discovered something else: stage 4 cancer.

Michelle Duppong, about whom the Diocese of Bismarck has opened an investigation with a view to a cause for beatification. University of Mary

“Upon hearing this, I knew that this was God’s will and that he would be with me in the midst of whatever would happen,” she wrote in one of her columns published by the Dakota Catholic Action newspaper. “God also allowed me to know that this cross was an invitation to me to help bring others closer in their relationship with him.”

She had two months to live, doctors said, but she lived another 12 – until Christmas Day in 2015. She was 31.

Born in Colorado in 1984, Michelle was one of six kids and grew up on her family’s farm in Haymarsh, North Dakota. She went on to study horticulture at North Dakota State University in Fargo, where she graduated in 2006, before serving as a student missionary for FOCUS at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, South Dakota State University, the University of South Dakota, and the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota.

According to her obituary, she loved farm life, working in the gardens and vineyards, and taking part in campfire singalongs.

In another column, she addressed sainthood and “seeking holiness in the ordinary.”

“You were made to be a saint. Do you believe that? Do you think you can do it?” she wrote. “I want to remind you that there’s no doubt in God’s mind that you CAN do it!”

Before dying, Michelle consoled her Aunt Jean, who was dying of brain cancer, Michelle’s mother told the National Catholic Register.

“They cried and held each other,” Mary Ann remembered. “Jean told her that sometimes she didn’t feel Jesus with her. Michelle told her, ‘Sometimes, I don’t feel him either. Tell Jesus how you feel. He wants to know everything. Just turn to him.’”

“That’s what Michelle did,” her mother said. “She told Jesus everything.”



Mother Margaret Mary Healy-Murphy

More than 100 years ago, in 1893, Mother Margaret Mary Healy-Murphy founded the first order of women religious in Texas: the Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate. She began the order after spending years as a laywoman ministering to the poor, African Americans, and Mexican Americans.

Born in Ireland in 1833, Margaret Mary emigrated to the United States in 1845, according to her order’s website. For a time, she lived in Mexico, where she met her future husband, John Bernard Murphy.

Mother Margaret Mary Healy Murphy. Credit: Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate

The couple married in 1849 and later moved to Corpus Christi, Texas, where her husband worked as a lawyer and served as mayor. According to the Black Catholic Messenger, the well-to-do couple owned slaves there. While they had no biological children, the couple adopted three young girls who needed a home – two of whom later entered religious life.

In 1884, John died, leaving Margaret Mary a widow. Her life dramatically changed again, three years later, when she moved to San Antonio and heard a letter from the U.S. bishops read from the pulpit. In that letter, the bishops called on Catholics in the South to minister to the

post-Civil War African American population, her order’s website details (www.shsp.org/history).

Margaret Mary decided to answer that call. That same year, she funded construction for the first Catholic free school and church for African Americans in San Antonio. It was dedicated a year later.

Facing constant criticism and racial prejudice, she struggled to maintain a teaching staff, and the local bishop suggested that she start a religious congregation to help. That’s when, in 1892, she and three other women became novices with the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, the website details. A year later, the four made their first vows and the Sisters of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate began.

By the time of her death, the order had grown to 15 sisters and two postulants. She died in 1907 at age 74.



When Does Christmas Actually End?

By **Christine Rousselle**
Washington, D.C. Newsroom



How many days is Christmas? When should you finally take those lights off the porch, or remove the tree? Read on for some of the arguments for and against commonly agreed-upon end dates for Christmas.

Christmas is one day

This, of course, is the simplest answer. Christmas is typically celebrated on Dec. 25 for most of the world, and on Jan. 7 for Churches using the Julian calendar, and on Jan. 6 for yet another, considerably smaller, part of the world. On this day, the liturgy celebrated is the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. Priests wear white vestments on Christmas, which is different from the violet they wear during Advent.

Christmas is eight days

There's also an argument to be made that Christmas is eight days long. The Church regards Christmas as an octave, or eight-day celebration. The octave of Christmas begins on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and concludes on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on Jan. 1.

During the eight days of Christmas, clergy wear white, except during St. Stephen's Day and the Feast of the Holy Innocents, when they wear red.

Christmas is 12 days

We've all heard the Christmas carol "Twelve Days of Christmas." While it's unclear as to why someone would give someone 23 separate birds, a pear tree, and the services of 50 people over a 12-day period, there actually is a liturgical precedent for claiming that Christmas is 12 days long.

Twelve days after Christmas is the Feast of the Epiphany. This day marks when the Magi encountered Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and gave Jesus the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

In the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church, Epiphany celebrates the revelation that Jesus was the Son of God. It focuses primarily on this revelation to the Three Wise Men, but also in his baptism in the Jordan River and at the wedding at Cana.

In the Eastern rites of the Catholic Church, Theophany — as Epiphany is known in the East — commemorates the manifestation of Jesus' divinity at his Baptism in the River Jordan.

But here's where it gets a little confusing. While the traditional date for the feast is Jan. 6, in the United States the celebration of Epiphany is moved to the second Sunday after Christmas in the Novus Ordo. Because

Christmas 2021 fell on a Saturday, Epiphany was observed on Jan. 2, which was just eight days after Christmas Day.

During the 12 days of Christmas, clergy wear white, except during St. Stephen's Day and the Feast of the Holy Innocents, when they wear red.

Christmas ends Jan. 13

In the *usus antiquior* of the Roman rite, per the general rubrics of the Roman Breviary, "Christmastide" includes both "the season of Christmas" (the 12 days seen earlier) and "the season of Epiphany," which is the eight days from the Epiphany on Jan. 6 to the commemoration of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 13.

What is now called the season of Epiphany was, until 1955, observed as the Octave of the Epiphany.

Christmas ends on Candlemas

Now we're talking.

Candlemas, or the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, is Feb. 2. On this day, many Catholics bring candles to the church to be blessed. They can then light these candles at home during prayer or difficult times as a symbol of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

Candlemas is the last day that the Alma Redemptoris Mater is the Marian antiphon appended to hours of the Divine Office. The Alma Redemptoris Mater is used from the beginning of Advent through Feb. 2, and so Candlemas has come to be associated with the close of the Christmas season.

Candlemas is still observed with public, Christmas-esque celebrations throughout the world, including in Peru, Puerto Rico, France, and Belgium.

On the other hand, Septuagesima Sunday — which is definitely not part of Christmas — has been known to fall before Feb. 2, giving the lie to the Christmas-is-until-Candlemas party.

What do the U.S. bishops say?

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the liturgical season of Christmas ends with the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord.

The Baptism of Christ, which the USCCB states is the end of Christmas, is observed on the first Sunday after Jan. 6 in the Novus Ordo. This year, that is Jan. 9.

After the Baptism of Christ, clergy are to wear the green vestments of Ordinary Time.

So when does Christmas end?

The exact right time to observe the end of the Christmas season? That is largely a personal call, based on your own traditions, customs, and other factors. For safety reasons, CNA recommends that you take your tree down as soon as it starts shedding a ton of pine needles, but other than that, there's an argument for leaving things up as late as Feb. 2. Of course, your neighbors may disagree, but that's a "them" problem, not a "you" problem. 📧

Merry Christmas!



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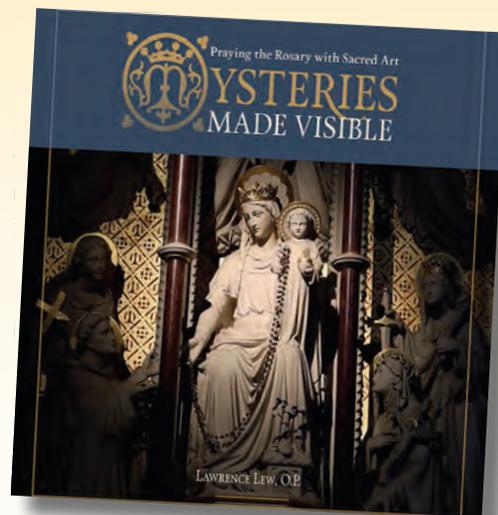
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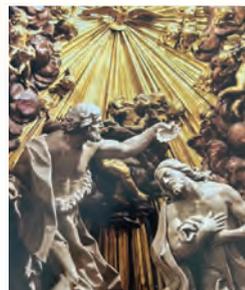
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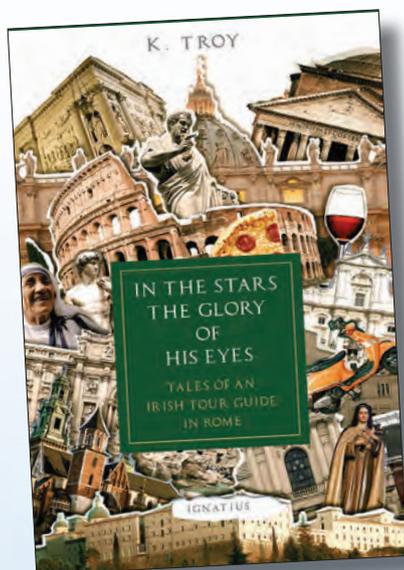
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