

Heart to Heart

Corazón a Corazón



Sacred Heart Catholic Church • Anniston, Alabama
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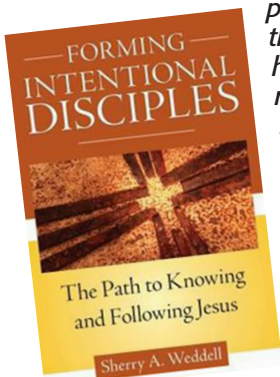
A CENACLE ADVENT Making Missionary Disciples



About two months ago I was visiting with some missionaries on the University of Alabama, Birmingham campus. One of them, Madeline, handed me a book and encouraged me to read it. As I went to the chapel for my prayer time, I started reading a section daily.

The book, "Forming Intentional Disciples," saddened me quite a bit at first because it was full of statistics about young people leaving the Catholic Church. Slowly, as I continued through the book, I came across a quote that struck me and it read:

"Discipleship begins when adult persons at last have the occasion to hear the kerygma, renew their own baptism, consciously choose Christ as their own personal Lord and Savior and commit themselves actively in the life of their Church."



If you are like me, then there is a new vocabulary term for you — kerygma. It's a Greek word which refers to the proclamation of "the nucleus Gospel" (the main parts that tell us we were made for relationship with God, that the relationship has been broken, and our savior Jesus Christ came to redeem it).

After meditating on this quote a few times, I realized it is what God is asking of our young adults in the Cenacle, to become missionary disciples. That in all things we may live to serve Him.

Advent is all about preparing our hearts to welcome the infant Jesus, and what better way than to embark on the journey of becoming His disciples just in time for Christmas. So, this year may our hearts become the welcoming manger in which He lays so peacefully.

— Mattie Jackson

Our Holy Family



As we approach Advent season, I can't help but be reminded of a very sweet bond I feel that I have with our Holy Mother Mary. I am quite certain you know just what I mean, and not just those called to motherhood. As mothers, we not only yearn for Mary's prayers, but we look to her for guidance and strength. Even those among us who will not bear children look to Mary as our very own mother. We are reminded in John 19:26-27, that it was Jesus's desire for Mary to become a mother to us all. Thank you, Jesus! Most importantly, she plays a critical role in bringing us in communion with her Son, when we invite her into our hearts and our homes.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, Please Pray for Us.

Then Joseph — I have certainly thought more about Joseph this year. Perhaps it is because I have spent more time with my husband, thanks to the pandemic! Consequently, I have been blessed to really be reminded of how he supports, calms, and guides our family, but does so, and is happy to do so, very indiscreetly. I am fortunate to know so many fathers like this!

I have always been aware of how important Joseph's role was in the Holy Family, but perhaps didn't necessarily feel as intimately connected with him as I always have with Mary.

Pope Benedict XVI sweetly reminded us that "to be a father means above all to be at the service of life and growth. Saint Joseph, in this sense, gave proof of great devotion." Thank you, God, for giving us this earthly father for Jesus, from whom we can all learn.

Saint Joseph, Pray for Us.

If we weren't convinced of the importance of "family" in our faith, never is it made more evident than in the birth of Jesus. It was certainly no accident, that the way God chose to reveal himself to us was through the Christ-child, a sweet infant, who was born unto us to be nurtured and cared for by His earthly family. This gives us — our families — hope and reassurance that this, too, was in the Divine Plan for our lives and for our salvation. We each have an integral role in fostering the love of Christ within our own families.

Jesus, Guide Us, Teach Us and Care for Us.

I recently read Joy to the World by Scott Hahn, which you may find helpful in "getting to know" the Holy Family in a real way. I always look forward to the holiday season because I make myself take time to slow down and enjoy books that I have been wanting to read.

I invite those of you who may be interested in another approach to learning this Advent season to sign up for "The Road to Bethlehem: A Digital Discipleship Program." The sign-up link and more information will be posted in the bulletin and on our website.

This year, despite all the uncertainty and chaos that 2020 has contained, we can rest assured that our Heavenly Father gave us the gift of the Holy Family to teach us how to build and foster our very own holy family and domestic church. This Advent season, may we all make time to learn some, reflect some, and focus on the gift of family.

— Kimberly Johnson

Nativity scenes at home . . .

How to Display with Thought & Care

The Nativity Scene that many people set up in their homes at Christmas is known by many names. In French, it is the crèche, in Spanish, the pesébre, in Italian, the presepio, and in Tagalog, it is known as the Belen. Whatever we call it, it is an essential part of Christmas decorations for a Catholic home. Often, Christmas trees, Santas and Snowmen crowd out the humble manger scene, but it is this humble scene which brings us to the profound meaning of the Christmas Feast.

There are some traditional characters we find in our nativity scene, and it is nice to take each one out of the box carefully and prayerfully when we set up the Bethlehem scene in our homes. The first one to consider is St. Joseph.

St. Joseph is sometimes a little forgotten, but he was the one who was in tune with God through his dreams and prayers. Joseph went to work behind the scenes, in difficult times, to provide safety and security for the Holy Family. St. Joseph is the patron of the Catholic home as well as the whole Church, and we pray to him asking for protection and safety for our family in the coming year.

The next piece we take out is the figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary was prepared by God from all time in order to be the Mother of Our Savior. She was a young woman of prayer, and she knew a large part of the Scriptures by heart. She was ready to say yes to God, even when the future was not clear, and therefore, she sends consolation and blessing to us on earth who can't see the future either.

Next, we take the Angel Gabriel out of the box, remembering that he announced the will of the Father to Mary, and greeted her with a greeting never used for anyone else in the Scriptures.

From Gabriel's mouth come the words, "Hail Mary, full of grace!"

The Angel Gabriel dispels all fear, and announces the Good News to all humanity. We pray that we can proclaim the Good News in imitation of Him!

In many nativity scenes, there are also some shepherds. The shepherds were men of low status in the ancient world, because they spent their time outside with animals, they couldn't often wash, and they often had to eat unclean things. They were humble people, and it was because of this humility that they were able to understand the song of the heavenly host of angels when they proclaimed "Glory to God on High! Peace on earth to all people of good will!"

In many manger scenes, there are many animals, but above all, there is one really important animal that needs to be there – the little donkey! In the Scriptures, we see the donkey at different moments, and the donkey is always working to bring people closer to God, the little donkey is found carrying the Lord Jesus from when he was in Mary's womb until his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The faithful donkey reminds us we should also work hard to bring Christ to the places where He needs to be in this world.

There are a lot of other things we can add to the Nativity Scene we set up in our homes, but the main idea is that we make it something that represents the way Jesus is entering into our lives and our families. I remember Nativities set up in dry cleaners that had little irons and ironing boards in them, and I remember Nativities set up in restaurants that had little pizza ovens or little tables set with food in them. Jesus is coming to sanctify us, our work, and our world, and by making the Manger scene the center of our Christmas decorations, we will keep that idea in the forefront of our minds!

Christmas blessings to all!

– Rev. John McDonald



El Adviento



El Adviento es el comienzo del Año Litúrgico, empieza el domingo 29 de noviembre y termina el 24 de diciembre. Son los cuatro domingos anteriores a la Navidad y forma una unidad con la Navidad y la Epifanía.

El término "Adviento" viene del latín *adventus*, que significa *venida, llegada*. El color usado en la liturgia de la Iglesia durante este tiempo es el morado. Con el Adviento comienza un nuevo año litúrgico en la Iglesia.

El sentido del Adviento es avivar en los creyentes la espera del Señor. Se puede hablar de dos partes del Adviento:

Primera Parte

Desde el primer domingo al día 29 de noviembre, con marcado carácter escatológico, mirando a la venida del Señor al final de los tiempos.

Segunda Parte: sirve para reflexionar concretamente sobre el nacimiento de Jesús y su irrupción en la historia del hombre en Navidad. Desde el 17 de diciembre al 24 de diciembre, es la llamada "Semana Santa" de la Navidad, o popularmente conocida también "novenario de Navidad y/o "Las Posadas", se orienta a preparar más explícitamente la venida de Jesucristo en la historia.

Los padres de familia en su hogar con los niños, pueden hacer un calendario de adviento y proponerse de común acuerdo ciertos propósitos o prácticas, para ir preparando su corazón a la Navidad.

Por ejemplo:

Nov. 29.- Ayudaré en casa en aquello que más me cueste trabajo.

Nov.30.- Rezaré en familia por la paz del mundo.

Dic. 1.- Rezaré por los niños que no tienen papás ni una casa donde vivir.

2.- Obedeceré a mis papás y maestros con alegría.

3.- Compartiré mi almuerzo con una sonrisa a quien le haga falta.

4.- Hoy cumpliré con toda mi tarea sin quejarme.

5.- Ayudaré a mis hermanos en algo que necesiten.

6.- Ofreceré un sacrificio por los sacerdotes.

7.- Rezaré por el Papa.

8.- Daré gracias a Dios por todo lo que me ha dado.

Así sucesivamente hasta el día de Navidad.

Los niños diario revisarán los propósitos para ir preparando su corazón a la Navidad.

— From *aciprensa.com*
with added suggestions from Sister Josefina

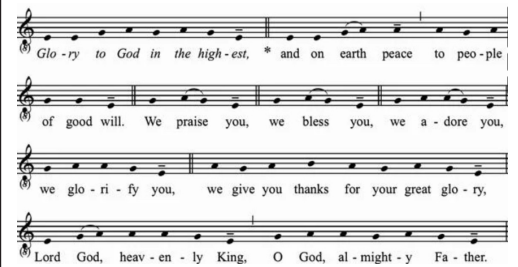
A Musical Note



Why Is The Gloria Omitted During The Sundays Of Advent?

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to prepare the music for the Feast of the Archangels mass. I searched the topic "music about angels" on my computer. The Gloria (Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will) from Luke 2:14 appeared multiple times.

The Gloria is an ancient hymn that glorifies God the Father and the Lamb. It is the message of the Angels proclaiming God's goodness and mercy. It is known as the "Angelic Hymn" because it contains the words sung from the heavens by the angels on the night of Christ's birth. We sing the Gloria because it is a song of absolute joy and praise to God. What better way to start the mass than to glorify God!



Advent is a season of penance and anticipation. The definition of anticipation is "expectation of something, the hope that builds as we wait". By reserving the Gloria for the festive season of Christmas, the liturgy emphasizes Advent's character of waiting with great expectations.

On a side note — the Gloria is also omitted during the Sundays of Lent. Being a more sorrowful penance season, the alleluias are also omitted.

— Mary Jones Rhodes

SACRED HEART SCOUTING TROOPS

Boy Scouts of America has REVERANT as one of the twelve tenets of the Scout Law. The Scout Oath starts out with the words: On my honor, I will do my duty to God ...

In the United States of America, Catholic Churches are the number one sponsor of BSA Troops, Packs and Crews. When Father John McDonald

came to Sacred Heart he asked, "Why doesn't Sacred Heart have a scouting ministry here?" There was no good answer to his question.

Sacred Heart Scouting was established for the youth of our parish. As Father John said, "We have a need for Catholic Scouting!" One might ask, 'How is Catholic Scouting different than other scouting?' The answer is ... we go to Mass as part of our outings. When we travel to other towns and cities for our weekend trips, we visit the Catholic Churches there and attend Mass there. Catholics in Alabama make up only around 4% of the total population. Our youth realize that they are a distinct minority in Alabama and the South. Seeing other Catholics elsewhere shows them that they are NOT ALONE geographically nor religiously.



BSA Troops 4006G (girls) and 4006B (boys) are youth ages eleven to eighteen years. Yes, these scouts spend a lot of time outdoors. They test themselves mentally and physically on hikes and floats. Scouts visit interesting historical and natural wonders around Alabama and

Sacred Heart Scouting includes scouting opportunities for youth of virtually every age. Scouting is much more than camping and sitting around a campfire. Scouting teaches teamwork and leadership as well as traditional woodcraft and outdoor skills.

BSA Pack 4006 is for both boys and girls ages five to ten years of age. These scouts learn about scouting with mom and dad present. They learn the Scout Oath and Scout Law as part of their Bobcat Trail. Yes, even Cub Scouts learn to work together and get to cook and clean at meal time. They learn that work can be fun and they learn that sense of accomplishment for doing a Good Deed. Cub Scouts go on outings to learn about their community and how they are a part of America.

the Southeast United States. Additionally, these young adults work on Merit Badges to broaden their horizons as well as hone their outdoor skills.

BSA Venture Crew 4006 is a co-ed group of young adults older than fourteen years old that have excelled at leadership within the Sacred Heart Scouting organization. To be selected to join the Crew, a youth must meet certain criteria. Regardless of age, Scouting is all about challenging yourself to overcome obstacles. No one is ever taunted nor 'made-fun-of' in Scouting – leaders and youth may challenge you to try something, but no one is ever allowed to feel that they are a failure. The Cub Scout Motto is DO YOUR BEST! Whatever that is for each scout is all that will ever be asked.

— Ted Heathcock



Dani enjoys a watermelon break



Scouts at Mass



Dylan is ready to camp



Hello from the church office!

Let's take a moment and talk about our church membership records. Currently in our office we utilize an online parish management software, ParishSoft, to maintain our church records. The good news is that this wonderful software has a function where you, the parishioner, can help maintain your own records.

Exciting, right?

You can utilize this system whether you are already currently registered or if you are a new parishioner. This feature is called My Own Church.

The easiest way to connect to our ParishSoft is to log onto our website, www.sacredheartanniston.org and scroll down the page just a bit until you see ParishSoft and membership forms. There is a button to select online registration.

Follow the prompts and you will select NEW USER. Select our parish as your organization, then create your own User Name. Complete the rest of the information for one member of your household family. If you are a registered parishioner you will be able to connect to your current registration for the entire family.

From there you can update your address, email, phone number, family members and make updates to you or your children's sacramental records. You will also be able to view your personal giving history.

If you are not a registered member, you can use this same feature to register with our parish.

• **HELPFUL HINT** •

Make sure you select Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church Anniston – not Cullman!

If you have any problems, please let me know. I will be able to help you in the process.

— Laura Pratt

Bereavement Meal Teams

"Food, like a loving touch or a glimpse of divine power, has that ability to comfort." — Norman Kolpas

In the days following her mother's death, Sacred Heart parishioner, Mandi King, was contacted by a group of ladies from the parish. "They had cooked a meal for my family," she said. "No one will ever know how much that meant to me. At a time when I was hurting so badly, those ladies reminded me that I had a whole other family out there and they shared my loss."

A few weeks later, Mandi was at a parish council meeting when she expressed her surprise that our church even had such a ministry. "We don't," responded Fr. Richard Donohoe. "But we need to start one." Without missing a beat, Father added, "Mandi, you're in charge of it."

Mandi laughed at the memory but admits that's exactly how the Bereavement Meal Teams came into being more than 20 years ago. "We've learned a lot as we've gone along," she said. "But our mission was always to provide comfort in the most basic way we could – with food."

Here's how it works

All members of the Bereavement Meal Ministry are divided into teams of 15-20 people with one or two serving as captains. With Mandi having retired to Florida, the entire ministry is now overseen by Noreen Pettitt.

Upon the death of a Sacred Heart parishioner, Father John notifies Noreen, who contacts the family. She informs them the Bereavement Meal Ministry wants to bring a meal to their home. She tries to find out how many people the team will be feeding to make sure enough food is supplied and also, if there are any special dietary restrictions. She even sets a time for when the food will be brought to the family's home. "Most times, the meal is dropped off during the funeral mass so it will be there when the family returns," she said.

Noreen then checks to see which team is up next. She contacts the captain and passes along all the information.

That way, the captain doesn't have to contact the family. "We don't want to intrude on them with a lot of phone calls," she explains.

The captain then plans a menu, contacts team members and then goes about ordering certain items from supermarket delis or area restaurants – and preparing others. The captain purchases everything that is needed and is then reimbursed by the team members. That cost ranges from \$10 to \$20 per team member depending on how many people are being fed.

There are currently four teams in operation. "But we need more," says Noreen. "Ideally, twice that many."

Currently teams are called upon to write a check two or three times a year, but if the amount of teams could be doubled, that would change to about once a year. "And really, not even then," Noreen says. "Because some families prefer not to receive food." The committee completely understands and respects those decisions. "One of the

things I've learned from this

ministry is that people grieve in different ways," Noreen said. "We just want the family to know that our hearts are with them."

It's important to note that with the addition of more teams, each team would need a captain (or co-captains) to handle meal organization and delivery, then collect reimbursement funds. It's really not as daunting as it may sound.

If you are not yet a member of a Bereavement Meal Team, Noreen asks that you give serious consideration to joining. "We need everyone's help to keep this ministry going," she said. "Please come be a part of it."

To sign up for a team or to get more information, contact Noreen Pettitt at 256-473-1726 or pettittnoreen@gmail.com

— Donna Barton



Photos from Publix Deli

Helping Those in Need at The Center of Concern

Everyone at Sacred Heart is familiar with the All Saints Interfaith Center of Concern – which we usually refer to as just “the Center.” The agency has been around since the 1950’s, supplying food, clothing and other necessities to those in need in our community.

The challenges associated with COVID-19 has forced the Center to change the way they normally conduct business. For example, people applying for assistance must remain outside where a table with clipboards and paperwork rests.

Another big change is with the clothing closet. Since no one can come inside to search out wardrobe items, that area is temporarily closed. With limited storage space, the Center can no longer accept clothing donations.

These days most people are coming to the Center in need of food or for help with things like prescription medication, rent or past due utility bills.

Meet the Director –

The Center’s director, Beverly Hill, can relate to those needing a helping hand. There was a time in the past when she, herself, struggled to make ends meet.

In 1999, she was a single mom, raising two children in Lineville, Ala. She suddenly found herself out of work when her factory job of 16 years was farmed out to Mexico.

To compensate for the job loss, she was offered two years of paid tuition to the college of her choice. She was 36 years old at the time and jumped at the opportunity. Her family always believed she’d be the first of her siblings to go to college, and as it turns out, they were right.

“It just took me a long time to get there,” she said, with a laugh.

She set her cap for an Associates degree in business and, after graduation, handled accounting for a large manufacturer where her only office companion was a calculator. It was a lonely job and not at all what she had envisioned for herself.

She later applied for a position with the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. It was there she discovered a passion for helping others – “from birth to death,” she said. “I could help people at any point in their lives.”

While working full-time, she went back to school, enrolling at JSU to pursue a Bachelors degree in social work, followed by a Masters in public administration.

By this time, her son was also in college. It was a grueling schedule and one that stretched her finances to the limit.

“I never want to eat another Vienna sausage again,” she said, shaking her head. “I lived off of those and the dollar menu at Wendy’s.”

It was during this hectic time when Beverly’s daughter, Davida, was diagnosed with inflammatory breast cancer. “She was only 23 years old and I was so scared for her,” Beverly said.

Beverly wanted to drop out of school to see her daughter through it, but her JSU advisor, along with Davida, talked her out of it. “My classmates rallied around me,” she said. “They took notes whenever I had to miss class.” (FYI: Today Davida works as a medical assistant at UAB Hospital in Birmingham and has been cancer free for 16 years.)

Overcoming obstacles to provide a better life for her family put Beverly in a unique position to counsel clients facing hardships of their own. She’s a big believer in the old adage about teaching a man to fish. “I’m always happy to help someone create a resume,” she said. “I stay in touch with a staffing agency for job opportunities.”

What she doesn’t want to do is encourage anyone to become dependent on charitable assistance. “Everyone has a rough time of it now and then, but I don’t want to be an enabler,” she said. “I want to help others learn how to take care of themselves.”

Coping With COVID-19

In the days of this pandemic, the Center is seeing more and more people who have lost jobs. They are in danger of being evicted from their homes or of having their utilities disconnected.

While the Center’s operational funds are supplied by the Diocese of Birmingham, money for direct relief comes from grants, donations and fundraisers.

In the past, the Center hosted a variety of fundraising events, including a Celebrity Roast, where local “celebrities” such as



The Center of Concern is located at 1513 Noble Street in downtown Anniston



Center Director Beverly Hill

Director, Beverly Hill, can relate to those needing a helping hand. There was a time in the past when she struggled to make ends meet.

JSU Prrsident, Bill Meehan, or city council member, Millie Harris, agreed to be roasted by a panel of their peers. There was also an annual softball game – Red vs. Blue – pitting the Anniston police department against the fire department. The last game (from 2019) brought in more than \$17,000. That kind of money went a long way helping families who are having a hard time getting by.

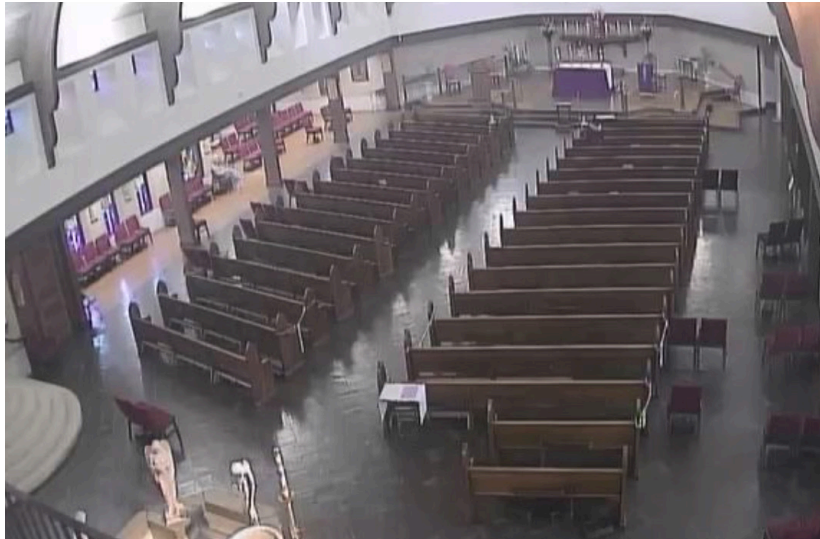
But sadly, the coronavirus has put an end to such events, at least for the time being. The Center must rely on community donations while applying (and crossing their fingers) for grants.

If you would like to make a monetary donation to the Center, please make your check payable to the Center of Concern and mail it to 1513 Noble Street, Anniston, AL 36201.

– Donna Barton

Keeping the House in Good Order

There is an old and famous phrase: "When the house is finished, the hearse is at the door!" In dealing with physical plant issues and maintenance, there is never a lack of things going on in our Sacred Heart Community. Since we have been careful about gathering and maintaining our distance in the time of pandemic, many have not seen some of the important improvements around our church campus.



Right when the pandemic shut the churches down, we were in the process of fitting new kneelers for the church, a project that had been long awaited. Some of you have been able to take advantage of the greatly improved kneelers, and some will have this treat waiting in store when we return to normal operations. Great thanks to Mr. Tony Moyer who coordinated a lot of this work and kept everything running smoothly.

Also, lights were installed in the bell tower in order to illuminate the bells at night. Energy saving LED lights were installed, and it makes for a very pleasant effect. Thanks are due to Mr. Gary Gardner for helping to coordinate this work. There have also been several roof repairs done in order to prevent leaks here and there in the roof, nothing major, but still important

maintenance to make sure greater problems don't occur. I am grateful to Mr. Jim Coverstone for his care and vigilance in keeping a vigilant eye on our church, especially when there is bad weather.

Our heating/cooling system is breathing its last, but recently, in order to get the maximum efficiency out of our current system, we have installed new thermostats to keep things more efficient and comfortable for all. Also, recently one of the hammers that strikes the bells at the quarter hour wore out, and a new part was installed by our bell company.

At the activity center, we have been able to outfit one of the rooms there for an office for our Guadalupe Sisters to operate from, and I am grateful to Mr. Mario Delgado for his help painting and preparing a pleasant environment there.

Our DRE, Mrs. Kim Johnson, has also worked hard to create a nice space for our PSR classes to take place in the activity center with social distancing and facilities to make our family-based catechetical program work so well! I am also indebted to Mr. Jerry Speciale for constructing a television screen cabinet to enable us to have a screen in the gym and at the same time protect it in moments of sports activity.

Also, I would like to thank Mr. Tim Barton for his hard work in improving our security camera system both at the church and the activity center. He has also helped us in innumerable other ways with our different electronic systems and repairs, and I think no one knows our church more up close and personal, both inside and out!

As you see, so many of our dedicated parishioners are giving of their time and energies to further the mission of Our Lord in His Church. Even the smallest effort for the Lord brings great fruit for the Kingdom! Please know how truly humbly grateful I am for all that is done, and I know that there are many more hidden things happening to support our parish that are known to Him alone.

— Rev. John McDonald

Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church

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