

Last-Minute Christmas Gift Guide 2017

The remaining days of Advent are few. The celebration of Jesus' birthday is almost here! The Register offers more Christmas gifts for everyone on your list.

We hope that these gift ideas will ease your shopping schedule and allow you ample time to prepare your heart and home for the coming of Christ.

(Prices subject to change.)

To order: EWTNRC.com or (800) 854-6316 (unless otherwise noted).



NATIVITY SCENE LOG BOOK DIPTYCH

With the rustic appearance of a hollowed-out log, this diptych reveals a beautiful rendering of the Nativity when opened for display. On the right is a three-dimensional image of the Holy Family, and on the left, also in relief, are the Three Kings bringing their gifts in adoration of the newborn King of Kings! Made of resin, this sturdy display measures approximately 9 inches high x 13 inches wide and folds up for easy storage. Item: 31423, \$54.



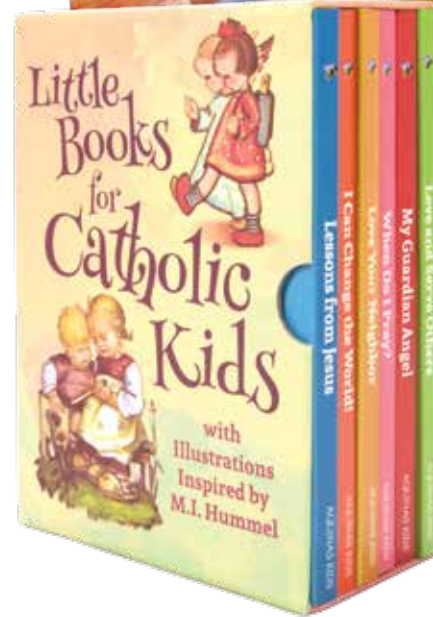
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THE GREATEST GIFT 1,000-PIECE PUZZLE

This 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle features a beautiful picture of the birth of Jesus surrounded by the Magi, shepherds and six adoring angels. Building this puzzle can be a fun and inspirational way for families to spend quality time together during the holy seasons of Advent and Christmas. Measures 24 inches x 30 inches. Item: VC122, \$16.

LITTLE BOOKS FOR CATHOLIC KIDS BOXED SET

These delightful board books with illustrations inspired by Sister M.I. Hummel® feature life lessons for children ages 3-6, including when to pray, how to help others, what it means to be a good example and more. Set includes the following six titles: *Love and Serve Others*; *My Guardian Angel*; *Love Your Neighbor*; *When Do I Pray?*; *I Can Change the World*; and *Lessons From Jesus*. Small (4 1/4 inches x 5 3/4 inches) board books. 15 pages each. Packaged in storage box. Item: B2257, \$24.



CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY BOOKS

This set of five Aquinas Kids® "Growing in Faith Activity Books" will help children learn about Advent and Christmas: "Jesus & Me," "The Mass," "The Rosary," "The Saints" and "Christmas A-Z." Each 32-page book contains pictures to color as well as puzzles, mazes, dot-to-dots and more. Recommended for ages 5-9. Item: 3002X, \$10.



RESTFUL HOLY FAMILY

This beautiful statue shows the Holy Family cuddled together as they rest peacefully on their long journey to Egypt, showing their total trust in God. Hand-painted with precise detailing, this polyresin statue measures approximately 9 1/2 inches wide x 5 1/2 inches deep x 6 inches high. Item: 13033, \$49.



MOTHER'S KISS STATUE AND STONE PLAQUE

This pretty image of Our Blessed Mother tenderly kissing her newborn Son offers us a glimpse into the astounding reality that God became man and dwelt among us. The statue is made of a resin-stone mix, hand-painted with bold colors and beautiful details, and measures 7 1/2 inches high. The plaque measures 8 inches wide x 8 1/2 inches high x 3/8 inches deep and comes with a hanger on the back as well as a black wire easel so it can be displayed either on a table or by hanging on a wall. Statue, Item: PC287, \$30; Stone plaque, Item: YC573, \$35.



NATIVITY CHRISTMAS TREE

This Old World-style piece tells the Christmas story in a unique and elegant way. Designed to look like a wood-carved statue in the shape of a tree, it shows the Holy Family, the three Magi, a shepherd and an angel all gazing in adoration upon the newborn Christ Child. Measures 20 1/2 inches from the beautifully decorated base to the golden star at the top. Item: RC815, \$60.



KNEELING MADONNA WITH CHILD

From the sublimely beautiful Galleria Divina collection by Veronese Design, this statue of Our Lady is hand-painted in soft pastel colors. The fine matte finish gives it the elegant appearance of cold-cast porcelain. It is made of a resin-stone mix and measures 6 inches high x 4 inches wide x 4 inches long. Item: 41976, \$48.



Christmas Morning Feasting

BY EMILY STIMPSON CHAPMAN

In 2002, I was a first-year graduate student at Franciscan University and stuck in Steubenville for Thanksgiving, 10 hours away from my family in Illinois. Thanks to the finals' schedule that year, which began just days after Thanksgiving, my roommates and friends were equally stuck. So, to cheer ourselves up, we feasted the entire weekend. Turkey, stuffing and garlic mashed potatoes on Thursday; leftovers on Friday; fancy appetizers on Saturday night; and a sausage and hash brown breakfast casserole on Sunday morning. Some studying may have gotten done, too. But not much.

Regardless, of all the tasty treats we cooked that weekend, the sausage and breakfast casserole was probably our favorite. It was warm and hearty, savory and spicy, and, as one of my non-egg-loving roommates pronounced, "Not too eggy!"

Fifteen years later, I'm still making that casserole on Thanksgiving weekend ... and Christmas morning ... and Easter morning ... and for every mini-reunion I host

for my grad-school friends and our families. The casserole is easy on me as the hostess; anything I can prepare the day before and cook the morning of is always welcome. And it's easy on my guests, as well; their otherwise-picky children are known to eat second and third helpings of it (the parents eat their fair share, too). Added bonus: The casserole makes fantastic leftovers — if there are any. Double batches of this breakfast favorite are a must.

If memory serves correctly, the original version of this casserole came from *Southern Living* magazine. Over the years, I've tweaked it here and there so that the final product is reliably perfect. When gluten-free friends have come calling, I've easily substituted gluten-free baking mix for the Bisquick; it turns out just as good. Unfortunately, though, if your house is dairy-free, there are no substitutions that will do this recipe justice. There's too much glorious cheese in it for that.

Emily Stimpson Chapman writes from Pittsburgh. She is the author of *The Catholic Table: Finding Joy Where Food and Faith Meet* (Emmaus Road).



EMILY STIMPSON CHAPMAN



EMILY STIMPSON CHAPMAN



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Sausage and Hash Brown Breakfast Casserole

Serves: 8
Prep Time: 40 minutes (plus 8 hours to chill)
Cook Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Ingredients:

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 pound pork sausage
1 small onion, chopped small
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 1/2 cups cubed frozen hash browns
1/2 red pepper, finely chopped (optional)
5 eggs
2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 3/4 cup whole milk
1 cup Bisquick (or Pamela's Gluten-Free Baking Mix)
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
8 ounces sour cream
8 ounces salsa verde

Instructions:

Thaw hash browns.

In a large frying pan, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the sausage and cook over medium-high heat, until all the pink is just gone and the sausage is crumbly (approximately 7-10 minutes).

Add the onion and garlic and cook until the onion is slightly browned (approximately 3-5 minutes). During the last minute of cooking, add red pepper flakes.

Drain the sausage and onion mixture onto a plate lined with paper towels. Wipe the frying pan clean.

Add the remaining oil to the pan and heat. Cook the hash browns and red pepper over medium-high heat until the potatoes are slightly brown and just beginning to crisp. Remove from heat.

In a large bowl, beat five eggs. Add the milk and cheese. Stir to combine.

To the egg mixture, add the baking mix, salt and pepper. Stir to combine.

To the same bowl, add the sausage, onion, hash browns and red pepper. Stir well.

Pour the mixture into a 9x12 pan. Cover with plastic wrap, and chill in the refrigerator overnight (or at least 8 hours).

In the morning, pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Bake, covered with aluminum foil, for 45 minutes.*

Remove the foil and cook for 15-20 minutes more, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Let stand for 10 minutes.

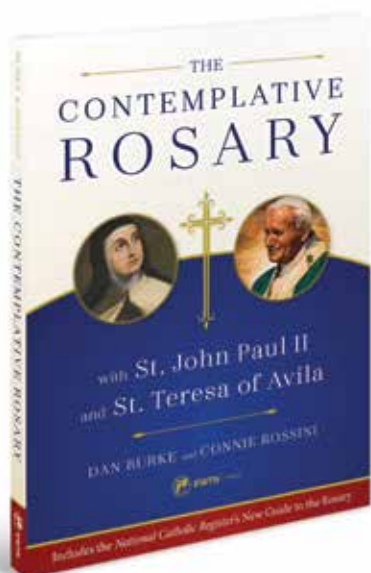
Serve with generous helpings of sour cream and salsa verde.**

*When doubling the recipe, I use an 11x17 baking dish and cook, covered, for 1 hour and 15 minutes, then for an additional 15 minutes.

** For the adults in the crowd, this casserole pairs exceptionally well with Bloody Marys.

'LOVE IS PATIENT' SCRIPTURE MUG

This large ceramic mug holds 16 ounces and features a quote from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 that reads: "Love is patient; love is kind. ... It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." It has a sturdy handle and features a matte exterior finish and glossy blue interior finish; it is microwave- and dishwasher-safe. Item: 57555, \$12.



THE CONTEMPLATIVE ROSARY WITH ST. JOHN PAUL II AND ST. TERESA OF AVILA

As authors Dan Burke (executive director of the Register and founder of the Avila Institute for Spiritual Formation) and Connie Rossini (a Carmelite spirituality writer and home-schooling mother) tell us, in the Rosary, we enter "the school of Mary." We sit at her feet as she teaches us what she taught the servants at the Wedding of Cana: to do "whatever he tells us." So, how do we avoid distractions? How do we turn repetition of phrases into heavenly Communion with the Blessed Trinity? The contemplative Rosary, this book explains, is not just for those with a high state of prayer — it's for everyone. Paperback, 137 pages. Item: 80442, \$14.95.



L'INNOCENCE STATUE AND HOLY WATER FONT

This beautiful statue modeled after the popular painting of *L'Innocence* by William-Adolphe Bouguereau is hand-painted from the Veronese collection. It is made of resin and measures 11 3/4 inches high. Hand-painted with soft colors and pink roses at the base, the font (shown) is designed to either hang on the wall as a holy water font or sit on a table or dresser as a rosary holder. Made of resin, it measures 7 1/2 inches from base to top. Statue, Item: 75188C, \$80; Holy Water Font, Item: 76831C, \$50.

CONTINUES ON PAGE C4



ST. BENEDICT CROSS GARDEN STONE

This large, cross-shaped garden stone of the St. Benedict Jubilee medal was sculpted with incredibly clear details and is painted to look like weathered stone. It is made of a resin-stone mix and measures 11 inches high x 11 inches wide x 3 inches deep. Item: B2196, \$35.

ST. BENEDICT GARDEN CROSS

This large garden cross features a beautifully detailed St. Benedict medal at the center. It is made of a resin-stone mix designed to look like weathered stone and measures 24 inches high. Once blessed, the medal of St. Benedict is a powerful sacramental with exorcizing properties. Surrounding the entire back of the medal are the initials to the words of exorcism that stand for the rhyme: *Vade retro Satana! Nunquam suade mihi vana! Sunt mala quae libas, Ipse venena bibas!* ("Begone, Satan! Do not suggest to me thy vanities! Evil are the things thou profferest. Drink thou thy own poison!") Item: B2197, \$80.

GARDEN CRUCIFIX

This large garden crucifix is made of a stone-resin mix and measures 23 1/2 inches high. The details on Jesus' face are exquisite and will tremendously enhance moments of quiet meditation on the porch or in the garden. Item: B2198, \$90.



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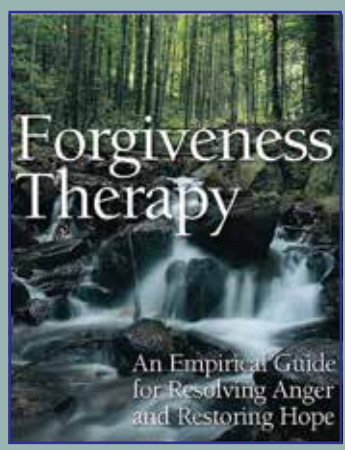
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HOLY FAMILY 'LIFE IS PRECIOUS' ORNAMENT
This beautifully decorated blown-glass ornament features an image of the Holy Family surrounded by red and pink poinsettias. The champagne-colored bulb is a unique creation for Klassics by Kurtis and has a delicate red bead rosary painted on the back encircling the words "Life Is Precious." Measures 4 inches in diameter. Item: 1292, \$33.



LED KNEELING SANTA CANDLE
This real wax candle is hollowed out with a small resin figurine of Santa kneeling down in adoration of the Christ Child. The banner beneath the window reads: "That at the name of JESUS every knee shall bow" (Philippians 2:10-12). The candle is lit by a battery-operated LED bulb that flickers like a real flame and casts a gentle glow upon the little statue. Measures 5 inches high x 3 inches wide. Requires 2 AA batteries (not included). Item: 30299, \$19.

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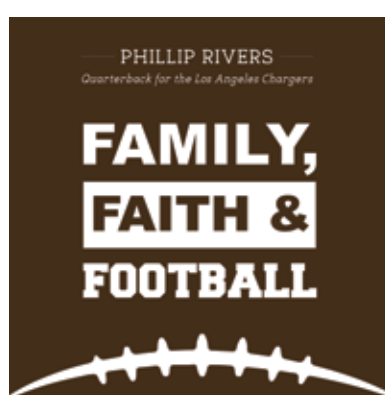
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NFL Quarterback Calls Men to Greatness

BY ELIZABETH PARDI

Philip Rivers' message in *Family, Faith & Football* is, at its core, a call to action for Catholic men. In this empowering recorded talk given to a male audience, the NFL quarterback is essentially rousing his "brothers," as he fondly calls them, to put down any lukewarm, lackadaisical tendencies. He urges them to step up to the thrilling challenge of living the faith with confidence as husbands, fathers and individuals. "Men like to be challenged. ... I kind of like it when we're down with eight minutes to go," he says, drawing on his experience as a professional athlete. "[In that adversity], we can thrive."

As quarterback for the now-Los Angeles Chargers since 2004, Rivers is more than familiar with the allure of worldly pleasures and their tendency to become obstacles in the spiritual life. He expounds on how he has managed to remain firm in his faith, during his days as a college student and now as a devoted spouse, father



and football player.

Although his speech is not loaded with eloquence or animation, Rivers speaks with a remarkable wisdom and confidence that reminds listeners just how attractive authentic Catholic manhood is.

Without belittling the importance of women in the slightest, he calls upon men to embrace their God-given roles as spiritual leaders, declaring, "Men ... we have to be the leaders. We have the ultimate leader in Jesus Christ."

Particularly inspiring is Rivers' urging men to establish a time of daily prayer with their families. "Get in that routine," he encour-

'WE HAVE THE ULTIMATE LEADER IN JESUS CHRIST:'
— PHILIP RIVERS

ages. "It's been a great blessing for our family. We have a Sacred Heart of Jesus picture above our mantle, and we light the candles and ... we'll say the prayers for the day and a decade of the Rosary or the Divine Mercy Chaplet. And then we'll follow that with some intentions. When you hear your little 4-year-old say, 'I want to pray for the Army,' and then your 7-year-old says, 'I want to pray for the priests and the nuns' ... it doesn't get any better than that."

Adhering to his primary message of men serving as spiritual leaders, he adds, "And again, that's got to be the dads gearing it up."

It's clear in listening to Rivers that despite the demands of his occupation, he is an exceptionally dedicated family man. He refers to Tiffany, his wife of 16 years, as his best friend and commends natural family planning for "[keeping] the cycle of courtship and honeymoon

in [their] marriage."

Of his children, Rivers says lovingly, "Being a dad is awesome," before going on to reveal some of the insights he's obtained as a father, such as children's intense desire for their parents' time and attention and the value of teaching them "the importance of going to Mass at an early age."

All in all, Rivers' talk is an inspiring reminder of the God-given spiritual leadership with which men are endowed.

Husbands and fathers will find themselves not only motivated to keep prayer alive in their households, but also entertained by his use of humorous personal anecdotes from both on and off the field.

The recording is also a powerful reminder to Catholic men everywhere that despite differences in status or location, they are all united in the faith.

As Rivers states in closing, "We're all brothers, and I feel bonded with each and every one of you."

To order: DynamicCatholic.com or Amazon.com.

Elizabeth Pardi writes from Columbus, Ohio.

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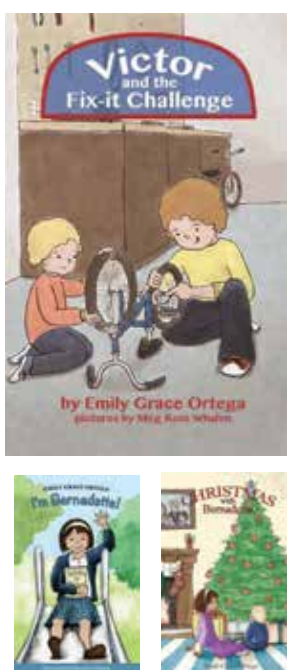
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'Box of Joy' Gives Christmas to Needy Children Worldwide

BY PATRICK NOVECOSKY

Alcide Wilson held the little multicolored plastic blocks in his fingers, a puzzled look on his face. The Lego blocks were the only thing the 14-year-old student had trouble understanding after he opened a gift box recently delivered from the United States to his school in southwest Haiti.

As he thumbed through the rest of the "Box of Joy," he found socks, a comb, basic toiletries, pencils, shampoo and a few toys.

"I've never had a present before — ever," he said in Haitian French through a translator. "I felt very excited when I opened the box because I found things that I don't have, things I have no money to buy, like socks."

Wilson was one of more than 100 children and young adults at Ecole Espoir (School of Hope) to receive a Box of Joy last spring.

The program is a project of Cross Catholic Outreach, a Florida-based development organization.

Since it was founded in 2001, Cross Catholic has given more than \$1 billion in aid to help the poorest of the poor in more than three dozen developing countries around the world.

The Box of Joy program, piloted in two dioceses in 2014, has grown from 2,000 gift boxes for children in Guatemala three years ago to more than 60,000 gifts in four countries this fall, according to Steve Bostian, director of the program for Cross Catholic.

"Now the program is nationwide, with participation from 47 states," he explained, "and we think it's going to continue to grow. Catholics in the U.S. are super excited about this program."

The volunteer-led program, administered by Cross Catholic, has attracted the participation of 476 clubs, parishes and schools to pack nonperishable items into a shoe box-sized Box of Joy for a poor child. Bostian says partici-



GIFT-GIVERS. Students at St. Agnes School in Dalton, Massachusetts, pack up gifts for needy children around the world. James Stankiewicz photo

pants and volunteers also come from families, Scout troops, civic clubs, Coast Guard reservists and high-school students working for their service hours.

Alexis Lieu, 10, says she and the rest of her 15 fifth-grade classmates at St. Agnes Academy in Dalton, Massachusetts, enjoyed participating in the program.

"It feels pretty good because we're giving this to kids who don't have anything, and it feels good in our hearts," she said.

Her classmate, Ava Gianacopoulos, also 10, said that the packing party in the school's library brought the entire school and parish community together for a good cause.

"We had big boxes of combs and toys and pencils, stuff they needed," she said. "Then we packed it up into the boxes so we could send them off."

The St. Agnes community put together 362 boxes, which were shipped to Cross Catholic Outreach's screening center in southeast Florida.

"We've developed a network of regional drop-off locations so that, during Box of Joy week, which is always the second week

'I'VE NEVER HAD A PRESENT BEFORE — EVER. I FELT VERY EXCITED WHEN I OPENED THE BOX BECAUSE I FOUND THINGS THAT I DON'T HAVE.'

—ALCID WILSON

of November, there is a drop-off center nearby most people," Bostian said. "At the screening center, our volunteers go through each box to make sure everything in there is safe and appropriate for a child and then prepare the boxes to ship overseas to our partners."

The rationale for the program, Bostian says, is simple.

"The one thing you find in chronic poverty, natural disasters or man-made disasters is that children are always the ones who suffer. So, through a simple project and a demonstration of Christ's love through giving a Box of Joy, we can help a child to enjoy some toys, some school supplies and practical items, to just enjoy being a kid and enjoy Christmas — something we



SPECIAL GIFTS. Children in Haiti look through their treasures. Courtesy of Cross Catholic

all take for granted.

"It means the world because most of these children have never received a single gift."

This year, the program will deliver boxes to poverty-stricken children in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Kristin Lloyd coordinated the Box of Joy program at Our Lady of Light parish in Fort Myers, Florida, this year. The parish got involved last year after Lloyd heard about the program on Catholic radio.

"Box of Joy opens our eyes to the fact that not everyone is as materially blessed as we are in this country, and it provides a way to experience the giving of Christmas, rather than the receiving of Christmas — and the fact that there's a real child on the other end of this box who's receiving joy, the joy of Christ," she said.

The parish packed more than 340 boxes this year — nearly dou-

ble last year's count.

"We made a point of praying for the child who is receiving the box and for everybody whose hands touch the box along the way," she said.

That spirit is in complete accord with Cross Catholic Outreach's mission, said Jim Cavnar, who founded the ministry in 2001.

"People in the U.S. are very wealthy by world standards, but overseas we do see incredible faith and a witness of faith and love of God among the poor and those who serve them," he told the Register.

Box of Joy is Cross Catholic's only program, but the distribution is entirely done by overseas partners.

"Our focus is empowering the Catholic Church and Church-based ministries to help the poor," Cavnar said. Cross Catholic mobilizes overseas "by providing resources to empower the local Church and Church-based ministries that are effectively helping

the poorest of the poor — and who are ministering to them spiritually, as well as having effective education programs, housing and micro-financing, water and community development. Those things are critical, but we look to mobilize and empower especially those who are also committed to sharing the Lord with people."

Cross Catholic's mission statement is "to rally and mobilize the Church of the poor," he said, "and to help them recognize the poverty overseas, which is far more severe than most people in the U.S. understand. It's almost hard to communicate unless you bring them here."

Amy Galvez, a paraprofessional and kindergarten teacher at St. Agnes Academy, has seen the impact of programs like Box of Joy firsthand. Her husband is Guatemalan. "We lived in Guatemala for two and a half years," she said, "and we got a chance to see how people live there. We got to see the villages, and the people always have smiles on their faces, so I can only imagine what it's like to see their faces when they get one of these boxes!"

Patrick Novocosky is a veteran journalist and a former Register correspondent. He recently returned from a trip to Haiti, accompanying Cross Catholic Outreach on its 'Box of Joy' distributions. Novocosky is vice president of coalition relations for the Cardinal Newman Society.

INFORMATION

If there isn't a drop-off center in your diocese, you can ship your 'Box of Joy' directly to the national screening center (address below). Please also include \$9 per box because of the cost involved in shipping your gift from the U.S. to a child overseas. Boxes must be postmarked by Christmas Eve. Cross Catholic Outreach-Box of Joy c/o MIQ Logistics 11210 NW 91st St, Suite 1 Miami, FL 33178

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— Fr. Eric Gilbaugh, Diocese of Helena, MT



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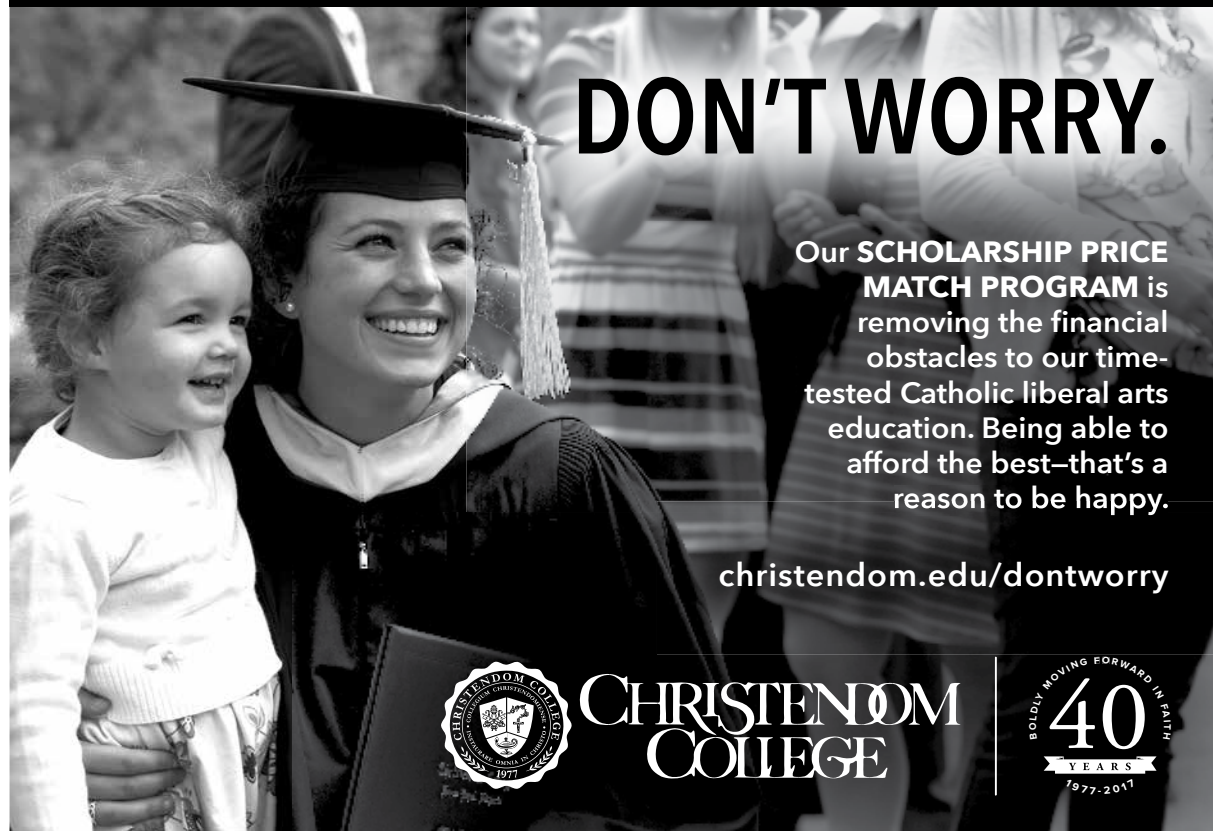
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The Adventures of St. John Paul the Great

Puzzle, Talking Doll and Video Game Help Young People To Remember Our Beloved Pope

BY KATHY SCHIFFER

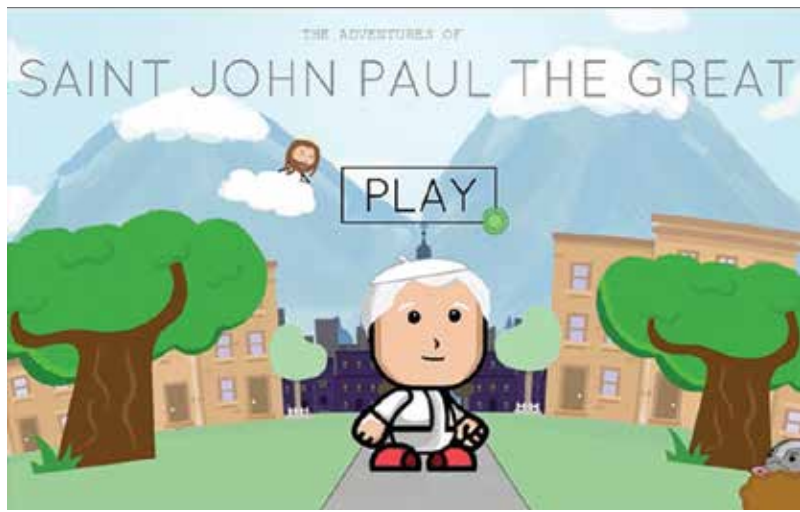
“Where there are young people, adolescents, children, there is the guarantee of joy, since it is life in its most spontaneous and most exuberant bloom.” Pope John Paul II spoke those words about the joyfulness of youth at a Vatican address Nov. 20, 1978, during the first month of his pontificate. “You possess this *joie de vivre* abundantly,” he continued, “and bestow it generously on a world that is sometimes tired, discouraged, disheartened, disappointed.”

That St. John Paul had a special love for young people was evident throughout his papacy: in his initiation of and support for World Youth Day, in his “Letter to Families” and in his daily interactions with youth. So it’s fitting that the young people of today remember him with fondness — and, perhaps, with humor.

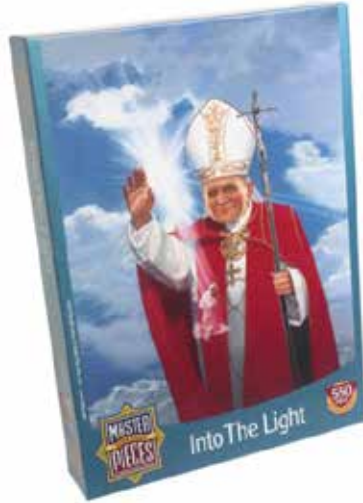
Papal Adventure

One way that young men and women can remember St. John Paul II is by playing a new video game, *The Adventures of St. John Paul the Great*, slated to be released at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Sydney. According to a report in *The Tablet*, the game will “... give gamers the chance to play as Karol Wojtyla, collecting saints’ medals, Bibles, cakes and rosaries, while evading the dangers of falling boulders, bullets and Nazis.”

The new game is the creation of 21-year-old Regine Caramancion, an intern with Sydney’s interactive social-media platform Xt3.com (“Christ in the Third Millennium”). With more than 18,000 Catholic youth expected to attend the Youth



YOUTUBE



Festival Dec. 7-9, there were plenty of opportunities for gamers to share the faith while testing Caramancion’s game. Laura Bradley, digital media manager for the Archdiocese of Sydney, praised the game, calling it “a fun and novel way of teaching young people about the life of one of the greatest saints of the 20th century.”

Action Figure

And just in case video games aren’t your thing: Here is a teach-

ing toy that offers 22 inspirational quotes from St. John Paul II in his own voice. Priced at \$200, the “Pope John Paul II Talking Action Figure” (available at Amazon.com) — with its hand-tailored vestments, red shoes and papal ferula, topped with the Pope’s familiar crucifix — is likely to appeal to collectors more than to parents of small children. And the papal quotes are printed on the box, so faithful collectors can read along as the Pope’s voice repeats his message to “Be not afraid.”

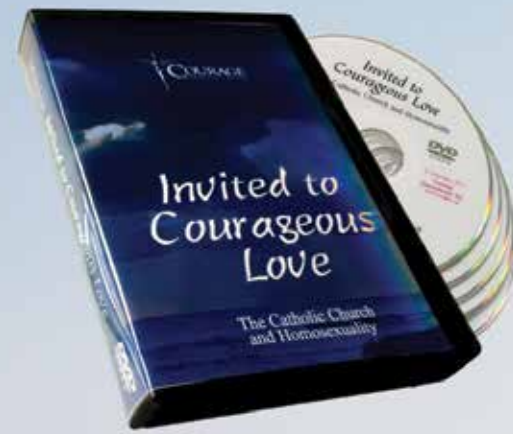
Papal Blessing

Or if puzzles are your forte, you can remember the sainted Pope while piecing together the 550-piece “The Blessing Pope John Paul II Jigsaw Puzzle” (also available at Amazon.com). Titled “Into the Light,” the puzzle features the beloved Pope in a familiar pose against the blue sky, arm raised in a blessing. Working a puzzle together can be a great family experience, shared by adults and children alike.

Kathy Schiffer blogs at NCRRegister.com.

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Let’s face it: No one really hates, say, the Methodist or Presbyterian churches. But the Catholic Church is hated. As Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger Sr. noted, prejudice against the Catholic Church is “the deepest bias in the history of the American people.” Sometimes the hate is subtle (Hollywood has that market cornered); sometimes it’s overt (just ask the Little Sisters of the Poor).

But this is what we signed up for. After all, Jesus did tell us, “Blessed are you when men hate you...on account of the Son of Man” (Lk. 6:22).

What’s worse is the way some Catholics have succumbed to self-hatred, especially those who loathe their Church’s teachings on sexual morality and family life. One writer at the *National Catholic Reporter*, for example, actually said recently that the brutal death of a young Afghan woman (she was beaten, stomped, run over with a car, and set on fire) is “a metaphor for what the Church does to women.” Really? Incredible!

Truly, as the Ven. Fulton J. Sheen said, most people don’t hate the Church so much as they hate “what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church.”

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