

Christmas
2024



the Voice

News from The Paulist Fathers Office of Mission Advancement



**"This will be a sign for you:
you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling
clothes and lying in a manger."
(Luke 9: 12)**

Shepherds Working the

My great-grandparents lit candles in the window on Christmas Eve to signal the wandering Christ Child that theirs was a house of welcome, searching for blessing.

My grandfather, fulfilling his dream with the purchase of his own home in Buffalo, was not content with one candle. From roof to lawn, electric lights were gratefully strewn throughout the entire Christmas season. Houses gleaming with Christmas lights decorate my memory. Packed into my dad's unheated car, my family drove through neighborhoods, oohing and ahhhing at their decorated splendor.

Some homes were simply adorned in white lights, others fizzing in multicolor like a new box of crayons. Stately mansion windows ornamented themselves with wreaths and ribbons. Less presupposing houses unabashedly displayed glowing Santa, reindeer, snowmen. Peaceful houses dressed all in blue. Religious dwellings provided ready room on their lawns for Mary, Joseph, and the Babe in the manger. Inexpensive entertainment announcing joy as surely as any angelic host. All of this, provided by people inside the house who seldom catch sight of the happiness they create for the pleasure of strangers.

The last Christmas of my mother's life, multiple strokes stole her mobility and speech. One December night, I bundled her into a car, and we went for a drive to look at Christmas lights. Some simply white, others multicolored, or only blue. Windows wrapped in red bows, lawns peopled by shining snowmen, Santa, elves, even the Christ Child, Mary, Joseph, attended by glowing sheep, shepherds, and Magi.



Night Shift

By Paulist Fr. Mark-David Janus

Since my mother could not speak, I kept up a running commentary about each display. My mother, not a physically affectionate woman, surprised me as she reached across to hold my hand as we drove. Her last and maybe best Christmas present to me.

I am ever grateful to those who decorate their homes. They put me in mind of so many unknown people whose efforts make Christmas sparkle: carol singers, musicians, store clerks, tree farmers, those who put on local Christmas theater, teachers who organize children's Christmas pageants.

Who bakes all those cookies and cakes? Where do these poinsettias come from? Gatherers of toys for children bereft of them, generous carvers of turkeys for those without, are angels in disguise.

It won't take you long to add to your own list of anonymous Christmas benefactors. The cynical say they contribute to Christmas commercialism. I prefer to thank them.

I think we are all shepherds working the night shift, unaware something spectacular is happening. In their own little way, these varied Christmas angels remind us of God's glories born around us. 🙏

—This is an excerpt from Paulist Fr. Mark-David Janus' new Paulist Press book "Comfort and Joy: Christmas for the Soul." It is available at paulistpress.com.

To hear an audio interview with Fr. Mark-David about the book, please visit our podcast at DeaconsPod.com.

Comfort and Joy

Christmas for the Soul



Mark-David Janus, CSP





Come & See Weekend in February

Could God be calling someone you know to discern a vocation to the priesthood, religious life, and missionary life?

Discerners have told us how valuable it is to hear the question **"Have you ever thought of being a priest?"** from people they trust.

You could recommend that discerners attend our **"Come & See Weekend"** being held **February 7 to 9, 2025**, at Hecker House, our seminary in Washington, D.C.

Attending a "Come & See Weekend" is a great way to learn about discernment and to meet our current seminarians, novices and formation team.

Discerners should contact our vocation director, **Paulist Fr. Ed Nowak**, at **(917) 763-7899** or **vocations@paulist.org**, or visit **beapaulist.org**, to learn more.

Thank you for being an advocate for our vocations program! ➔



Paulist Productions' "Fighting Spirit" in Movie Theaters



Congratulations to Paulist Productions on the successful release of its powerful documentary **"Fighting Spirit: A Combat Chaplain's Journey"** in **more than 100 movie theaters** around the United States over Veterans Day weekend in November.

The film shares the stories of multiple U.S. military combat chaplains who died while serving.

It is framed by the story of Justin Roberts, a former U.S. Army chaplain, as he attends the long-delayed funeral in 2021 of Servant of God Emil Kapaun. Fr. Kapaun was a priest and U.S. Army chaplain from Kansas who died in 1953 as prisoner of war in North Korea.

"Fighting Spirit" was co-produced by the U.S. Army Chaplains Corps. Actor Chris Pratt also is an executive producer on the project.

To learn more, please visit: **fightingspiritfilm.com**. ➔



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year 2025!

THE PAULIST FATHERS OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT

Father Dave Father Rexé, Jr. John
William Kami Paul Juliet
Brett Kate Ellie

FROM THE DESK OF FR. RENÉ

Dear Friends,

Whether you are reading this in the final days of Advent or during the 12 Days of Christmas, I pray that you and your loved ones are blessed during this special time of year.

We know that 2024 has been a challenging year in many ways — for our world, our nation, local communities, and many families. We continue to pray for peace in the Holy Land and in all those countries now plagued by war and violence.

This jubilee Year of Hope that begins on Christmas Eve is a good reminder to remain anchored on the gift of hope that Christ brings to us. It is a gift to be cultivated in prayer and nourished by daily acts of charity and intentional works of justice so that, as pilgrims of hope, we may sojourn through the new year with an open spirit, a trusting heart and a clearer vision of what is possible in Christ!

For the Paulist Fathers, this hope-filled season is also one of gratitude. We continue to be blessed by the presence and unwavering support of our parishioners, benefactors, and friends.

We have been overwhelmed by your generosity in 2024 – through your increased participation in the Annual Paulist Appeal, by the faithful completion of pledges to our “Hope for the Future” campaign, and through legacy bequests.

Your robust generosity energizes our vocations outreach, formation of seminarians, care for senior Paulist Fathers, and initiatives related to our mission priorities and ministries.

We know that some of our parishioners and benefactors prefer to make financial contributions in the final days of the calendar year for tax purposes. To support us with a year-end gift, please visit paulist.org/apa.

Together with the movement of the Holy Spirit, you make possible all that we do! You are our partners in the mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all people.

On behalf of the greater Paulist charismatic family, I want to wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a hope-filled new year 2025! You remain in my constant prayers! (Please pray for us, too.)

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Very Rev. René Constanza, C.S.P.
President, The Paulist Fathers

P.S. **The Paulist Fathers Jubilee of Hope Pilgrimage to Italy** will take place November 13 to 20, 2025. To learn all about it, and to register, please visit: paulist.org/Italy2025.



Esta carta se puede leer en español en: paulist.org/espanol

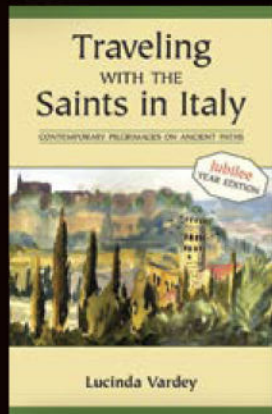


To make a contribution, please use the enclosed envelope or visit: paulist.org/apa



**PAULIST
FATHERS**

415 West 59th St.
New York, NY 10019



**A BOOK FROM PAULIST PRESS:
Traveling with the Saints in Italy:
Contemporary Pilgrimages
on Ancient Paths
By Lucinda Vardey**

Pilgrims and tourists are a vital part of life in Italy. Yet visiting the country's sacred sites may be overwhelming: What to see? Where to go? How much time to spend in each place?

In this updated edition of "Traveling with the Saints in Italy," author Lucinda Vardey provides guidance for the traveler.

To learn more about this and other Paulist Press titles, please visit: paulistpress.com.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR THE OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT?

Paul Snatchko, Director of Communications: media@paulist.org

Development Team: development@paulist.org

(212) 586-2074 • paulist.org • [@PaulistFathers](https://www.instagram.com/PaulistFathers)



Pictured: A depiction of The Magi at Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Community in Los Angeles. On the cover: Members of the Paulist community at Hecker House, our seminary in Washington, D.C. Please look inside this issue of "The Voice" for more!

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit No. 425