International * NEWS MEDIA



DOCTRINAL DECLARATION OPENS POSSIBILITY TO BLESS COUPLES IN IRREGULAR SITUATIONS

By Vatican News

When two people request a blessing, even if their situation as a couple is "irregular," it will be possible for the ordained minister to consent. However, this gesture of pastoral closeness must avoid any elements that remotely resemble a marriage rite.

This is what is stated the Declaration "Fiducia supplicans" on the pastoral meaning of blessings, published by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and approved by Pope Francis.

The document explores the theme of blessings, distinguishing between ritual and liturgical ones, and spontaneous ones more akin to signs of popular devotion. It is precisely in this second category there is now consideration of the possibility of welcoming even those who do not live according to the norms of Christian moral doctrine but humbly request to be blessed. 23 years have passed since

the former "Holy Office" published a Declaration (the last one was in August 2000 with "Dominus Jesus"), a document of such doctrinal importance.

"Fiducia supplicans" begins with the introduction by the prefect, Cardinal Victor Fernandez, who explains that the Declaration considers the "pastoral meaning of blessings," allowing "a broadening and enrichment of the classical understanding" through a theological reflection "based on the pastoral vision of Pope Francis."

It is a reflection that "implies a real development from what has been said about blessings up until now, reaching an understanding of the possibility "of blessing couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church's perennial teaching on marriage."



POPE FRANCIS

NATIVITY SCENE



What does the Bible say about the Nativity scene?

Mary gave birth to Jesus and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger (see Luke 2:7). An angel appeared to nearby shepherds with "good tidings of great joy." The angel told them the Son of God had been born, and they hurried to find their newborn Savior (see Luke 2:8–16).

N. Korea's 'reckless' missile launches need 'robust' global response: G7

BERLIN — World powers said Tuesday (Dec. 19) that the international community needed a firm and unified response to North Korea's "reckless" nuclear build-up and missile launches. G7 foreign ministers said in a statement after the launch of Pyongyang's most powerful ballistic missile that "North Korea's repeated reckless actions must be met with a swift, united and robust international response, particularly by the United Nations Security Council".

North Korea on December 18 test-fired its most advanced intercontinental ballistic missile with the potential to reach the United States. North Korea said that its leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the launch and warned Washington, which has solidified ties with South Korea, against making any "wrong decision". - *AFP*

1 to 4 million people are expected to travel to the 2024 Total Solar Eclipse

To aid community planners and help eclipse visitors avoid the worst traffic, Great American Eclipse has developed a geographic model to estimate how many people will travel to see the Total Solar Eclipse on April 8, 2024. This model predicts that between 1 and 4 million people will travel to the path of totality. We predict that Texas will receive the majority of visitors, followed by Indiana, Ohio, New York, Arkansas, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Oklahoma, Maine, and New Hampshire.

"It will likely be the most-viewed astronomical event in American history," says Michael Zeiler, expert eclipse cartogra-

pher and co-founder of Great American Eclipse.

Texas will enjoy the majority of eclipse visitors with a high estimate of just over a million visitors. Next are Indiana and Ohio which can expect a high estimate of about half million people each. Heavy traffic will come from nearby metropolises such as San Antonio, Houston, Memphis, St Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Columbus, Detroit, and Pittsburgh.

An example of a remarkable potential influx is the area near Kerrville, Texas, northwest of San Antonio, which could see as many as 488,000 visitors.

YOUNGEST PERSON EVER TO PASS THE CALIFORNIA BAR EXAM



Swearing in as a California state

Peter Park at 17 years old is the youngest person ever to pass the state's rigorous bar exam.

He became a law clerk with the Tulare County District Attorney in August, and was sworn in on December 5 as a practicing California attorney.

News Breakers

Gaza death tolls nears 18,000 as Israeli war grinds on

GAZA CITY, Palestine – The Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip has climbed to 17,997 since Oct. 7, the Health Ministry in the enclave said Sunday. Speaking at a press conference on December 17 ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said 49,229 other people were injured in the Israeli onslaught on the blockaded territory.

The Israeli army launched relentless air and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip following a cross-border attack by Hamas on Oct. 7. The Israeli death toll in the Hamas attack stood at 1,200, according to official figures. (*Anadolu*)

Gov. Noem supports bill to prevent antisemitism

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem voiced her support for legislation declaring that antisemitism is discrimination.

"Jewish people around the world are facing discriminatory acts of hatred. Acts of violence against the Jewish people have even skyrocketed here in America. South Dakota will always stand with the Jewish people – and we will continue to support the State of Israel," Governor Noem said. "Antisemitism is discrimination against the Jewish people. I am proud to support this legislation."

DHS conducts removal flights to S. American countries

WASHINGTON — The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), through the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) working in coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), facilitated removal flights, including single adults and family units to Venezuela, Central America, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, and South Korea. If a noncitizen arrives and has no legal basis to remain in the United States they will be processed and removed quickly, consistent with U.S. law.

\$90 million investment to launch "Virginia's Research Triangle" network among research institutions

RICHMOND, VA – Governor Glenn Youngkin announced that Virginia will make a \$90 million investment to launch a biotechnology, life sciences, and pharmaceutical manufacturing network to foster collaboration among three of the Commonwealth's major existing university research institutions: University of Virginia's Manning Institute for Biotechnology, Virginia Tech's Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, and the Virginia Commonwealth University's Medicines for All Institute. The institutions will partner with the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority to collaborate on commercialization and startup support.

Iceland volcano erupts after weeks of earthquakes

REYKJAVIK, ICELAND — A volcano in Iceland was erupting on Tuesday, December 19, with geysers of molten lava shooting into the pitch-black night sky after weeks of seismic activity had the region southwest of the capital on high alert.

The eruption on the Reykjanes peninsula, just north of the fishing town Grindavik, began Monday at around 10:17 p.m. after an earthquake swarm, the Icelandic Meteorological Office said, referring to a series of small shakes.

Live-streamed footage of the eruption showed glowing orange jets of lava spewing from a gash in the ground, surrounded by billowing clouds of red smoke.

For weeks, the Nordic country had been anticipating an eruption on the peninsula southwest of the capital after intense earthquake activity, which prompted authorities to evacuate thousands of people and close the Blue Lagoon geothermal spa famed for its turquoise waters.- VOA News



Houses in the village of Hafnarfjordur are seen as smoke billows in the distance and lava colors the night sky orange from a volcanic eruption on the Reykjanes peninsula, western Iceland on Dec. 18, 2023.

SAS experts predict the impact of AI and analytics on people's happiness, health and livelihoods in 2024

In what areas will public sector applications of AI and analytics truly flourish in 2024? Where will our lives be impacted the most? Government and health experts from global AI and analytics leader SAS shared their thoughts.

Al and analytics become integral to citizen safety

"As increasingly sophisticated fraudthreats in the public sector emerge, governments will rise to the challenge by embracing analytic and AI strategies that can intelligently detect and prevent fraud throughout critical program networks, while also improving the customer ex-

perience for legitimate users who depend on their services." - Jeremy Ray, Government Fraud Expert and Senior Industry Consultant, SAS

Al and analytics will touch our lives, from early education to the workforce

"Al will play a pivotal role – automating routine administrative tasks, analyzing vast amounts of data



In 2024, expect public sector entities to turn more and more to AI and analytics to deliver better services and programs that improve people's lives.

for better decisions, expanding digital citizen services, enhancing public safety – as governments optimize efficiency with a smaller workforce." - Kay Meyer, Director, Government Industry Consulting, SAS

Al and analytics boost public health services and advance health outcomes

"To advance health and improve patient and member experiences, organizations will further develop generative Al-powered tools in 2024 for personalized medicine, such as the creation of patient-specific avatars for use in clinical trials and the generation of individual-

ized treatment plans." - Steve Kearney, Global Medical Director, SAS

Responsible innovation & trustworthy Al become essential

"The rapid development and application of AI across an increasingly broad range of social and commercial sectors create significant opportunities as well as risks. In 2024, we will see multinational government coalitions emerging and partnering with industry to establish and enforce guardrails around the development and deployment of AI to ensure it's used safely and securely." - Caroline Barnett, Principal Defense and Intelligence Industry Consultant, SAS

2024 Black Nazarene 'traslacion' to traverse route similar to 2020



EARLY PREPARATION. Church officials, the police, volunteers and a few devotees join the walkthrough for the 2024 Black Nazarene traslacion procession starting at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila on Saturday (Dec. 16, 2023). The traslacion will resume after a three-year suspension due to the Covid-19 pandemic. (Photo courtesy of Quiapo Church Facebook) via PNA

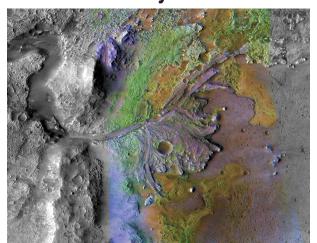
NASA's Perseverance Rover deciphers ancient history of Martian Lake

Marking its 1,000th Martian day on the Red Planet, NA-SA's Perseverance rover recently completed its exploration of the ancient river delta that holds evidence of a lake that filled Jezero Crater billions of years ago. The six-wheeled scientist has to date collected a total of 23 samples, revealing the geologic history of this region of Mars in the process.

One sample called "Lefroy Bay" contains a large quantity of fine-grained silica, a material known to preserve ancient fossils on Earth. Another, "Otis Peak," holds a significant amount of phosphate, which is often associated with life as we know it. Both of these samples are also rich in carbonate, which can preserve a record of the environmental conditions from when the rock was formed.

The discoveries were shared Tuesday, Dec. 12, at the American Geophysical Union fall meeting in San Francisco.

"We picked Jezero Crater as a landing site because orbital imagery showed a delta – clear evidence that a large lake once filled the crater. A lake is a potentially habitable environment, and delta rocks are a great environment for entombing signs of ancient life as fossils in the geologic record," said Perseverance's project scientist, Ken Farley of Caltech. "After thorough exploration, we've pieced together the crater's geologic history, charting its lake and river phase from beginning to end."



This image of Mars' Jezero Crater is overlaid with mineral data detected from orbit. The green color represents carbonates – minerals that form in watery environments with conditions that might be favorable for preserving signs of ancient life. NASA's Perseverance is currently exploring the green area above Jezero's fan (center). -- NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS/JHU-Jet Propulsion Laboratory

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND Thank You Offer From Magic of Lights Coachella Valley!



Magic of Lights would like to thank you for coming to see us at Empire Polo Club. Come visit us again on Customer Appreciation Night, Wednesday, December 20.

Bringing joy to impoverished children at Fred Jordan Missions this Christmas

LOS ANGELES -- Thousands of homeless and underprivileged children in Los Angeles are set to experience the magic of Christmas at one of the biggest Christmas celebrations in the city on December 16th, 2023. Generously donated by compassionate individuals, over 7,000 new toys will bring smiles to the faces of approximately 2,000 children in

need. This heartwarming event, known as Christmas At the Mission, will take place at Fred Jordan Missions located at 445 Towne Avenue, at the corner of East 5th and Towne in downtown Los Angeles.

The atmosphere will be heightened as the children join in singing Christmas carols during the spectacular Christmas

show.

Each child will receive multiple toys, along with warm blankets, hygiene bags, hats, mittens, and socks. Additionally, each family will be given a Christmas Dinner food bag filled with a turkey and nutritious, healthy, and delicious food to ensure their holiday season is filled with warmth and comfort.-PRNewswire

ALL IMMIGRATION ISSUES

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UBE IS THE 2024 'FLAVOR OF THE YEAR,' ACCORDING TO ANNUAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE TRENDS REPORT



CERRITOS, Calif. -- One of the world's top 10 food and beverage flavor manufacturers has identified the official 2024 Flavor of the Year: Ube.

A bright purple tuberous root hailing from the Philippines, Ube has gained international recognition for its exquisite purple hue and distinctive earthy, nutty and sweet flavor profile. Fast becoming a mainstream ingredient in the U.S. thanks to its trademark violet or lavender color, Ube offers a multitude of applications ranging from savory dishes such as purple mashed potatoes, gnocchi and sauces to infusing a twist into desserts, baked goods and even beverages. - PRNewswire

CALLING ALL ALUMNI OF PCC/PUP

Calling All Alumni of Philippine College of Commerce/Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PCC/PUP) to join our association.

We are a group of alumni devoted to giving back to our "Sintang Paara-

We are a group of alumni devoted to giving back to our "Sintang Paaralan". Our mission and vision are geared to helping out our Alma Mater and many well- deserving students who are financially challenged.

Our Alma Mater paved the way for all of us to be successful in our chosen fields, and we want to give the same opportunity to those deserving students through our scholarship fund program. We are also a donor and support PUP's Education on Wheels which culminated at the wake of Covid 19. We wanted the students to have continuous education despite of the circumstances brought by Covid 19.

At the outset, our association humbly donated the construction of a twostorey athletic building inside the sta. Mesa campus, which now houses our pup athletes.

Small as it is our organization now, we are all very proud of our humble accomplishments. Having more members who also have loyal, grateful, and kind hearts, we know that we will be able to do more.

Please come and join us in this endearing, inspiring, and grateful journey to change many people"s lives as our way of giving back to our dear alma mater, our sintang paaralan ... PCC/PUP!

Hope to hear from you all, and looking forward to hopefully one day we meet in person.

Please contact vp-membership, vangie codilla @ (818) 468 3386or email: vangie.Codilla@gmail.Com

Hep hep hooray to PUP - We entered for the first time the QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING IN ASIA. There were 16 universities included and we made it as no. 7!

God bless us all! To God be the glory!

Warmest regards, Rosemarie T. Mejia VP-Goals & Planning

CHRISTMAS EVENTS Around the World

TOKYO CHRISTMAS MARKET

December 9–24
Grand Fountain, 1 Hibiyakoen,
Chiyoda City, Tokyo, Japan
Tokyo Christmas Market is
Tokyo's biggest Christmas market.



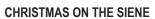
MELBOURNE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

Nov. 24–Dec 25
Melbourne VIC, Australia
From November 24 to Christmas Day, the city will light up with hundreds of decorations and a merry line-up of festive events.



Sun, Dec 24 – Tue, Dec 26 Rio de Janeiro, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

If you're a tropical Christmas lover, Christmas in Rio de Janeiro may become one of your most-loved holiday destinations. Interestingly, since there are no spruce trees in Brazil.



Sun, Dec 17 – Sat, Dec 23
Port de Grenelle, Paris, France
Cruise on the Viking ship
Viking Fjorgyn: Christmas on The
Seine.



Sun, Dec 24, London, UK

Spend Christmas Eve on a tour of the mesmerising Lights of London.

COZY CHRISTMAS CONCERT IN OLD TOWN

Sun, Dec 17, 3–9 PM Galleri Cupido Svartmangatan 27, Stockholm, Sweden

Popular in StockholmJulkonsert & Konstutställning which is specially known for Music.





PACQUIAO'S BIRTHDAY SALUBONG

"HAPPY 45TH, CHAMP!"

Former Senator Manny Pacquiao gets a "salubong" birthday treat from his wife Jinkee, relatives, and close friends at the stroke of midnight on December 17 in his General Santos City residence.

Members of the Philippine National Police also serenaded the 8-division world boxing champion by performing one of his songs.

Photos: Wendell Alinea







Christmas Traditions







FRANCE

AMERICA

AMERICA

What is a Christmas tradition in America?

People in America like to decorate the outsides of their houses with lights and sometimes even statues of Santa Claus, Snowmen and Reindeer. Some cookies and glass of milk are often left out as a snack for Santa on Christmas Eve! Towns and cities often decorate the streets with lights to celebrate Christmas.

Traditional British Christmas

Brits typically tuck into roast turkey or a nut roast with vegetables, stuffing, and pigs in blankets, followed by a portion of Christmas pudding with custard. Families who enjoy a bit of flamboyance will douse the pudding with brandy then set it alight before serving.

What do French kids leave out for Santa?

In France, children leave out carrots and cookies in their shoes. The French make sure Santa Claus isn't hungry by leaving him treats — like biscuits — as well as carrots for the reindeer. They typically leave the goodies in their shoes and awake to find the food gone and presents in their place.

SPAIN: Christmas trees and gifts

Christmas trees are usually fir trees in the north of Spain and pine trees in the south. Families take pleasure in decorating them together around mid-December. It is one of the places to be filled with presents of the Wise Men on Epiphany (Los Tres Reyes Magos

ITALY: Gift Giving

Many people choose to exchange gifts on Christmas Day, but in some cities in Italy's northern regions, children open gifts on the 13th of December, Saint Lucia Day. Some people wait

until the 6th of January, the Epiphany, to open gifts left by the witch, La Befana.

What does Germany call Santa Claus?

Weihnachtsmann. German children call Santa Claus 'Weihnachtsmann' which translates to Christmas man. The Weihnachtsmann is a recent Christmas tradition which has little if any religious or folkloric background.

PHILIPPINES: Simbang Gabi

Simbang Gabi means "evening or night Mass". The majority of Filipinos are Roman Catholics who practice the Christmas tradition of Simbang Gabi. Filipinos get up as early as 4:00 AM to attend mass. Simbang Gabi begins on the dawn of December 16 and continues for nine consecutive days and the final Mass is held on Christmas Eve. The mass also features some beautiful Filipino Christmas songs.

What's the most popular Christmas tradition in the world?

Gift giving is one of the most beloved traditions of Christmas (especially for children) and it goes back to when the Three Wise Men offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to baby Jesus in the manger. Gifts are usually placed under the Christmas tree or within stockings in festive patterns.

How do Japanese celebrate Christmas?

Unlike in the U.S., in Japan the main event is Christmas Eve instead of Christmas Day. Many Japanese celebrate Christmas by going on dates or holding informal Christmas parties. Chicken is the go to meat for most people, including some popular fried chicken offerings.

Source : Google

Oviedo named the Spanish Capital of Gastronomy 2024

Oviedo, the capital city of the Spanish region of Asturias, has been awarded the prestigious title of Spanish Capital of Gastronomy for 2024, with the runners-up being Alicante (Region of Valencia), Antequera (Andalucía) and Castellón (Region of Valencia).

Situated in the mountainous north of Spain, Asturian cuisine is famed for its rich meat dishes (such as carne gobernada – beef braised in white wine), fresh seafood, creamy cheeses, savoury stuffed breads (bollos preñaos) and hearty, rich bean stews, the most famous



of which is fabada. The region is also well known for its apples, the core ingredient in traditional Asturian cider (sidra), a local delicacy which is customarily poured from a great height.

SYMBOL OF THE POINSETTIA PLANT

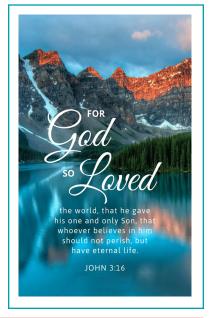


We consider them a Christmas flower, and many people give them around Christmas time to symbolise good will and community spirit. In religious communities, the shape of the poinsettia flower is thought to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem, with the red leaves of the poinsettia symbolizing the blood of Christ.

Holiday Spirit



SOLVANG (CENTRAL COAST). The annual Solvang Julefest brings Old World traditions to today's Santa Barbara wine country. With authentic Danish-style buildings and windmills for a backdrop, costumed carollers, bands, and equestrians take to the streets for the Julefest Parade. You can sample local varietals (as well as craft beers) during the two-day Julefest Wine & Beer Walk, and finish your gift shopping—and get great deals—during the Shop, Mingle & Jingle event. There's also a living nativity re-enactment. It all comes to a dramatic end with the annual Christmas Tree Burn, a bonfire outside Old Mission Santa Inés in early January.



GLOBAL ISSUES • PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

U.S. SPONSORS CONFERENCE TO STRENGTHEN PHILIPPINE DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION EFFORTS



Representatives from the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines' Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America join Biñan City government officials at the 6th National Conference of Drug Abuse Coalitions.

MANILA —From December 4 to 6, the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines' Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and its Philippine partners convened the 6thNational Conference of Drug Abuse Coalitions in Biñan City, Laguna as part of a Php22-million (\$400,000) grant to strengthen local efforts to prevent illegal drug use and advocate evidence-based policy.

During this three-day event organized in collaboration with the Association of Anti-Drug Abuse Coalitions of the Philippines, Inc. (AADAC) and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

(CADCA), more than 130 delegates received training on coalition building, fostering community engagements, constructing logic models to address health disparities, and marketing and media advocacy.

Participants also exchanged best practices on creating and implementing community-wide drug prevention strategies.

Dangerous Drugs Board Secretary Catalino Cuy recognized the important role of AADAC in the Philippine government's campaign to reduce demand for illegal drugs.

"This national conference supports drug demand reduction programs and initiatives which align with the Philippine Anti- Illegal Drugs Strategy," he said at the opening ceremony of the conference.

Education Cannot Wait announces US\$2 million first emergency response grant in Egypt to provide life-saving access to education for children fleeing conflict in Sudan

NEW YORK -- As part of its regional response to the Sudanrefugee crisis, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) announced today US\$2 million in new grant funding in Egypt. The 12-month grant will be delivered by UNHCR, providing life-saving access to education for children fleeing the war in Sudan.

The war in Sudan has generated a vast humanitarian crisis. In all over 6.5 million people are estimated to be dis-

placed both within Sudan and across the region, according to UNHCR.

The UN considers this the largest child displacement crisis in the world today, with over 3 million children fleeing widespread violence.

There are concerning reports of women and girls being abducted, forced marriage, recruitment of child soldiers, and other grave violations of human rights. - *PRNewswire*



Since April 2023, over 300,000 people have fled to Egypt from Sudan, including 16,000 school-aged children.

U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE PHILIPPINES IN

THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Statement by:

Matthew Miller

Department Spokesperson

Outside Scarborough Reef on December 9 and again near Second Thomas Shoal on December 10, People's Republic of China (PRC) ships employed water cannons and reckless maneuvers, including forcing a collision, causing damage to Philippine vessels undertaking official supply missions to those locations, and jeopardizing the safety of the Filipino crew. The PRC ships at Scarborough Reef also used acoustic devices, incapacitating the Filipino crew members, and drove away Philippine fishing vessels. By impeding the safe operations of Philippine vessels carrying provisions to Filipino service members stationed at Second Thomas Shoal, the PRC interfered in lawful Philippine maritime operations and in Philippine vessels' exercise of high seas freedom of navigation. Obstructing supply lines to this longstanding outpost and interfering with lawful Philippines maritime operations undermines regional stability.

These actions reflect not only reckless disregard for the safety and livelihoods of Filipinos, but also for international law. As reflected in an international tribunal's legally binding decision issued in July 2016, the PRC has no lawful maritime claims to the waters around Second Thomas Shoal, and Filipinos are entitled to traditional fishing rights around Scarborough Reef. As provided under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, the 2016 arbitral decision is final and legally binding on the PRC and the Philippines, and the United States calls upon the PRC to abide by the ruling and desist from its dangerous and destabilizing conduct.

The United States stands with our Philippine allies in the face of these dangerous and unlawful actions. We reaffirm that Article IV of the 1951 U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty extends to armed attacks on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft – including those of its Coast Guard – anywhere in the South China Sea.

PERTH HIGH SCHOOL WELCOMES US NAVY SUBMARINER



SS North Carolina Submariners and Comet Bay College Australian Football Specialist Program. Credit: Comet Bay College A Perth high school has welcomed United States Navy submariners for a morning of sport, STEM and leadership activities.



UNWTO workshop puts focus on modern, dynamic tourism communications for Africa

dom of Thought to Jina Mahsa Amini and the Woman, Life, Freedom movement

in Iran. It serves as a tribute to all the brave and defiant women, men and young

people in Iran who are fighting for their rights and pushing for change.

The European Parliament has awarded the 2023 Sakharov Prize for Free-

2023 Sakharov Prize awarded to Jina Mahsa Amini and Iranian protesters



UNWTO brought together top tourism and travel practitioners of 20 countries from across Africa to explore ways to deliver more effective tourism communications and showcase the sector's role as a pillar of development.

The first Communications, Media and Tourism Training Workshop in Africa (Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 13-15 November) recognized the heightened relevance of tourism and the current opportunity to gain greater visibility outside of the sector itself. Based on this premise, the three-day event focused on the opportunities for placing tourism in the mainstream conversation as well as the ongoing challenges facing communities, destinations and Africa as a region.

Sweden and the US sign first ever Defense Cooperation Agreement

On December 5, Swedish Minister for Defence Pål Jonson and United States Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, signed the first ever Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) between Sweden and the United States.

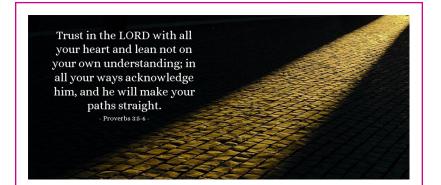
The DCA regulates issues such as the legal status of US forces, access to deployment areas and pre-positioning of military materiel in Sweden.

The DCA is an important step in deepened military cooperation with the US. It strengthens both Sweden's and its neighbouring countries' regional security by conveying the engagement and ac-



tual presence of the US.

The US has previously concluded DCAs with several European countries, including Norway. DCA negotiations are ongoing with Denmark and have recently been concluded with Finland.



4 International News Media DECEMBER 2023

INM Book Choice

THE GREAT DISAPPEARANCE 31 Ways to be Rapture Ready

By David Jeremiah

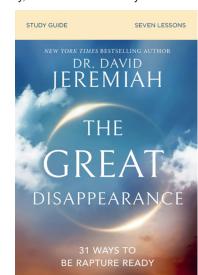
An Instant Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and Publishers Weekly Bestseller

The rapture is the central event in biblical prophecy. But what does it mean for us today? How can this crucial end times event draw us nearer to God in a world that is seemingly on the brink of chaos? Political turmoil, economic uncertainty, an ideological divide that feels increasingly impassable—the signs of the times point us toward the end, and that can be disconcerting.

But the greatest truth about the rapture is not its timing, but its reality-for blessed are all who long for His appearing.

The Great Disappearance is a culmination of decades of Dr. Jeremiah studying end times throughout the Bible. In this definitive volume he will explain the meaning of the word rapture, the difference between the rapture and the second coming, and the joy of expecting our Savior to come at any given moment. Dr. Jeremiah will also explore key questions such as:

- Who will be raptured?
- When will it happen?
- What will happen to those left behind?
- What will believers experience when they are taken away to heaven?



Will non-believers still have time to repent and be saved?

Dr. Jeremiah seeks to answer all of those questions and many more. not with sensationalism or stories ripped from the headlines but with solid, biblical truth. Because God has laid out His plan for us in His Word so that we might not be caught unaware. We may not know the exact date that the rapture will happen, but we do know it will happen. Are you ready for it?

TECH TALK

Take an Al-powered tour of Santa's \$1.18M North Pole cabin on Zillow



SEATTLE, -- There's an all-new, interactive way to tour Santa's House on Zillow®. Starting today, families can take a virtual 3D tour of the Clauses' North Pole cabin and explore every charming corner using a floor plan generated by artificial intelligence (AI). They'll also find bigger, high-resolution photos of never-before-seen spaces, such as Santa's mailroom and gift-wrapping suite, organized room by room.

Santa's House on Zillow

Santa added more fun this year with a virtual treasure hunt, hiding more than a dozen holiday items throughout his cozy cabin. Mistletoe, fruitcake and 15 other traditional trimmings are now hidden within the 3D Home tour. The Clauses are also unveiling a few festive upgrades to their cabin, including a custom elf door, a naughtyor-nice detector and a hot cocoa bar.

"Rest assured, Santa is not selling his beloved home," said Amanda Pendleton, Zillow's home trends expert. "The Clauses wanted to spread joy this holiday season by adding new photos and virtual experiences to their home details page on Zillow. This immersive technology makes it easy to imagine the spicy, sugary scent of gingerbread fresh out of Santa's cookie-baking oven, the nostalgic sounds of classic Christmas carols crackling on the record player and the comfort of sliding into a pair of well-worn slippers warmed by the fire.'

The Clauses first claimed their home on Zillow in 2016. Santa's House has since become a high-tech holiday tradition, with more than 3 million views and counting. It is one of Zillow's most visited off-market homes.

Santa's House is now worth \$1.18M, up more than 2% since last Christmas. Zillow first calculated a special Zestimate® for Santa's one-of-a-kind property by using comparable homes in remote locations and adding a Santa premium. - PRNewswire

HEALTHY RECIPES FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

EASY STROGANOFF

This healthy take on traditional beef stroganoff uses lean meat, plain yogurt, and whole grain egg noodles.

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 8 ounces whole grain egg noodles
- 1 pound ground beef (lean; or ground turkey)
 - 1 onion (chopped)
 - 1 bell pepper (chopped)
- 8 ounces canned mushroom pieces of cooking time.
 - 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1 teaspoon black pepper (ground)
 - 1/2 teaspoon beef bouillon granules
 - 1 cup plain yogurt (low fat) Directions:
- 1. In a saucepan, prepare noodles according to package directions. Drain when cooked.
- 2. Meanwhile, brown ground beef or turkey and onions in a skillet until meat is no longer pink and onions are
- 3. Add pepper, mushroom pieces, garlic powder, black pepper, and beef bouillon.
- 4. Cover and let simmer for 15 minutes. Add yogurt during last 5 minutes

BEETHOVEN: THE GREATEST COMPOSER WHO EVER LIVED



Ludwig van Beethoven (baptized December 17, 1770, Bonn, archbishopric of Cologne [Germany]-died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria) German composer, the predominant musical figure in the transitional period between the Classical and Romantic eras.

Source: Encyclopedia Britan-

DID YOU KNOW?

Where is the tallest indoor Christmas tree in the United States?

Dallas, Texas -- Galleria Dallas has created what has become the most iconic holiday visual in the state of Texas: the construction of its 95-foot-tall Christmas tree, the tallest indoor holiday tree in the





EASY STROGANOFF

5. To serve, place 1 cup of egg noodles on plate. Top with ½ cup of beef or turkey mixture.

Meal Type: Dinner Category: Kid-Friendly Food group: Protein, Grains Season: Winter, Fall

Source: University of Florida IFAS Extension EFNEP

ASPARAGUS PARMESAN

Enjoy this cheesy Asparagus Parmesan fresh out of the oven.

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients:

spears asparagus (fresh, washed, trimmed)

4 ounces button mushrooms (canned)

1/4 cup onions (green, sliced)

2 tablespoons butter (or margarine) 2 tablespoons flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup milk

1/2 cup cheese (grated, Parmesan or Cheddar)

Directions:



ASPARAGUS PARMESAN

- 1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- 2. Arrange asparagus in a shallow baking dish.
- 3. Drain mushrooms, reserving liquid. Chop half of mushrooms.
 - Cook onions in fat until tender.
 - 5. Add flour and salt and blend well.
 - 6. Stir in milk and mushroom liquid.
- 7. Cook until thickened, stirring constantly.
 - Add chopped mushrooms. 8.
- Pour sauce over asparagus and sprinkle with cheese. Arrange remaining mushrooms on top and sprinkle with cheese. Arrange remaining mushrooms on top.
- 10. Bake 30 to 40 minutes, or until asparagus is tender.

Notes

Two 10-ounce packages of frozen asparagus may be used in place of fresh. Thaw asparagus before baking; reduce baking time to 25 minutes.

Meal Type: Dinner Food group: Vegetables, Dairy Season: Winter, Spring Source: Nutrition.gov

Education does not resolve gender wage gap

Even among bachelor's degree holders in the same field of study, women generally earned significantly less than men in 2022, according to new data released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

A recently released table package shows that men with a bachelor's degree or higher earned more than women with the same education in all fields but that the difference in median earnings varied by field of degree.

Source: Cesus Bureau



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 15:13**



Rosemarie Mejia



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FBI warns of not so merry holiday scams

LOS ANGELES—This holiday season, FBI warns shoppers to look out for scams designed to steal your money and personal information.

Scammers often offer enticing deals via phishing emails or advertisements. Such schemes may offer brand-name merchandise at extremely low prices or offer gift cards as an incentive. Other sites may offer products at a great price, but the products being sold are not the same as the products advertised. The victims end up paying for an item, give away personal information and credit card details, then receive nothing in return except a compromised or stolen identity.

Sellers are urged to beware of buyers who want items shipped before they send payment, especially if those buyers



use one name when communicating and another name or business for payment purposes.

Common Online Shopping Scams

- Scammers often offer too-good-tobe-true deals via phishing emails, texts, or advertisements.
- Consumers should steer clear of untrustworthy sites or ads offering items at unrealistic discounts or with special coupons.
- Secondary markets for airline miles, gift cards, rewards credits, and other similar products have inadvertently increased the demand for stolen information and boosted its value.

Driving Tips

COLD WEATHER DRIVING TIPS

- Keep a bundle of cold-weather gear in your car, such as extra food and water, warm clothing, a flashlight, a glass scraper, blankets, medications, and more.
 - Make certain your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.
 - Keep at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle at all times.
 - Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface, such as on ice and snow.

"Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong." (1 Corinthians 16:13)

IMMIGRATION UPDATE



HOSTED BY AWEE ABAYARI



50 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW

Send your questions to: radiotvanchor1@gmail.com www.youtube.com/Awee Abayari



INTERNATIONAL NEWS MEDIA

12 Ways to Have a Healthy Holiday Season

Brighten the holidays by making your health and safety a priority. Take steps to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy—and ready to enjoy the holidays.

- Wash hands often to help prevent the spread of germs, especially during flu season.
- 2. Bundle up to stay dry and warm. Wear appropriate outdoor clothing: light, warm layers, gloves, hats, scarves, and waterproof boots.
- Manage stress. Give yourself a break. Find support, connect socially, and get plenty of sleep.
 - 4. Don't drink and drive or let others drink and drive.
- 5. Be smoke-free. Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke.
- 6. Fasten seat belts while driving or riding in a motor vehicle, no matter how short the trip and encourage passengers to do the same.
- 7. Get exams and screenings. Ask your health care provider what exams you need and when to get them.

- 8. Get your vaccinations. to help prevent diseases and save lives. Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine each year.
- 9. Monitor children. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, and other objects out of children's reach.
- 10. Practice fire safety. Don't leave fireplaces, space heaters, food cooking on stoves, or candles unattended. Have an emergency plan and practice it regularly.
- 11. Prepare food safely. Remember these simple steps: Wash hands and surfaces often, avoid cross-contamination, cook foods to proper temperatures and refrigerate foods promptly.
- 12. Eat healthy, stay active. Eat fruits and vegetables which pack nutrients and help lower the risk for certain diseases. Limit your portion sizes and foods high in fat, salt, and sugar. Also, be active for at least 2½ hours a week and help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day. CDC

TSA accepting California mobile IDs for identity verification at LAX

LOS ANGELES - The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is now accepting California-issued mobile driver licenses (mDLs) and identification cards from travelers screened through certain lanes in Terminals 3 and 7.

Travelers who have downloaded the CA DMV Wallet app to their smart phone can use that for identity verification during the screening process in lieu of handing over a physical photo ID to the TSA security officer at the entry to the checkpoint.

Travelers who have downloaded the CA DMV Wallet app to their smart phone can use that for identity verification during the screening process in lieu of handing over a physical photo ID to the TSA security officer at the entry to the checkpoint.

California Department of Motor Vehicles has made the mDL available to state residents at no cost. Just download the CA DMV Wallet app from the Apple App Store or Google Play and follow the steps to add it to your smartphone.



FINANCE TIP

Why should I save money?

It can be hard to save money when your expenses go up and your income does not. Here are some reasons to try to save money even when it is not easy.

- Emergencies Saving small amounts of money now might help you later.
- Expensive things Sometimes, we have to pay for expensive things like a car, a trip, or a security deposit on an apartment.
- Your goals You might want to pay for college classes or maybe you need to visit family in another country.

How else can I save money?

You can try these ways to help save money:

- For one month, write down everything you spend.
- Pay with your credit card only if you can pay the full amount when the bill comes.
- Pay your bills when they are due.
- Keep the money you are saving separate from the money you spend.
 Consider opening a savings
- account in a bank or credit union.

 If you keep cash at home, keep the money you are saving separate from your spending money. consumer. gov

FTC announces CARS rule to fight scams in vehicle shopping

Combating Auto Retail Scams (CARS) Rule targets bait-and-switch tactics, junk fees; includes clear protections for military members, who are frequent targets for vehicle scams

The Federal Trade Commission has finalized a new rule to fight two common types of illegal tactics consumers face when buying a car: bait-and-switch tactics and hidden junk fees.

What the CARS Rule Requires:

• No Misrepresentations: The rule prohibits misrepresentations about key information, like price and cost.

- Offering Price, Total Payment, and Add-Ons Optional: Dealers have to provide the offering price—the actual price any consumer can pay for the vehicle.
- No Bogus Add-Ons: The rule prohibits dealers from charging for any add-on that does not provide a benefit to consumers.
- Get Consumers' Consent: The rule requires dealers to get consumers' express, informed consent for any charges that they pay as part of a vehicle purchase.

RECYCLING

Can I recycle newspapers? Yes, newspapers can be recycled.

Can I recycle magazines? Yes, magazines can be recycled.

Can I recycle pizza boxes? Yes! Pizza boxes can be recycled, even if they have grease in them. Make sure to remove any food scraps from the box and flatten it before placing it in the bin.

Can I recycle mail? Yes! Even envelopes with plastic windows can be recycled.

Are paper and cardboard takeout containers recyclable? It depends on

how much food is left on them. Containers contaminated with food cannot be recycled.

Can cardboard containers and boxes be recycled? Yes, make sure to flatten any boxes before placing them in the bin.

Can books be recycled? If the book is still in good condition, try donating it. If the book is not in usable condition, it can be recycled.

Can gift wrap be recycled? Paper gift wrap often is not recyclable when it has a shiny or laminated coating. - EPA



Rod B. Tuazon, MBA • 805•890•5845



THE YEAR IN REVIEW A LOOK AT OUR HEADLINES IN 2023



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MAYON DISPLACES 20.000 PEOPLE, INJURES 628



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ACTORS STRIKE HALTS FILMS/TV PRODUCTIONS



Key US official calls for tech companies to 'do someth

International **NEWS MEDÍA**

SURGEONS SUCCESSFULLY PERFORM UK'S 1ST WOMB TRANSPLANT



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ISRAEL, HAMAS RELEASES HOSTAGES, PRISONERS







NEWS MEDÎA O, Come, Let Us Adore Him DOCTRINAL DECLARATION OPENS POSSIBILITY TO BLESS COUPLES IN IRREGULAR SITUATIONS

International



DECEMBER 2023 International News Media

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- Joyeux Noël Et Un Prospère Nouvel An
- Frohe Weihnachten **Und Ein Gutes Neues Jahr**
- Maligayang Pasko at Masaganang Bagong Taon
- Merikurisumasu, soshite, akemashite omedető
- God jul och gott nytt år
- God jul og godt nytt å
- Hyvää joulua ja onnellista uutta vuotta
- Frohe Weihnachten und ein gutes neues Jahr!
- Prettige Kerstdagen en een Gelukkig Nieuwjaar
- Joyeux Noël et bonne année
- Feliz Natal e um Próspero Ano Novo!
- Καλά Χριστούγεννα και Ευτυχισμένο το Νέο Έτος



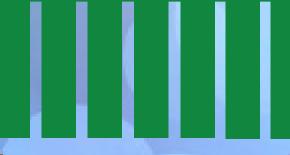
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