



SOUP KITCHEN PREPARES FOR NEW BUILDING PAGE 3

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BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

January 17, 2016

Special Collections



Help Spread the Faith Campaign, Jan. 16-17

The 2016 Help Spread the Faith Campaign for Catholic communication supports all communication efforts of the Diocese of Erie, as well as the U.S. bishops' national evangelization work. In the diocese, Catholics receive Faith magazine and FaithLife newspaper, two award-winning publications that provide news and inspiration for people in northwest Pennsylvania. The diocese also reaches out via its website (www.ErieRCD.org) and social media, specifically Facebook and Twitter. Help support this Catholic voice in a culture that desperately needs its message. Give at your parish Jan. 16-17.

Collection for Domestic Relief, Jan. 23-24

This one-time special appeal will support the efforts of Catholic Charities USA, the official domestic relief agency of the Catholic Church in the U.S., as it responds to immediate emergency needs of those people affected by recent severe weather in the South and Midwest.

DIOCESAN NEWS



Applications accepted for new youth board

The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Erie is accepting applications until Feb. 6 for the newly created Diocesan Youth Board (DYB). The purpose of the DYB is two-fold:

- To impassion young people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, and then go on to disciple their peers
- To help youth use the skills that they've developed during formation weekends to design, organize and facilitate a diocesan-wide youth event in November.

Catholic teens in grades 8 through 11 are encouraged to apply, with the support of their parents, for this one-year commitment to the DYB. The commitment includes participation in four formation weekends.

According to Kathleen Peterson, coordinator of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, the concept of the Diocesan Youth Board is one used by several other dioceses throughout the country.

"Teenagers are sometimes afraid to be Catholic in our secular culture," Peterson says. "This will empower them to deepen their love for Christ and help them disciple others."

Several adult mentors have joined Peterson and Father Stephen Schreiber, director of the office, in organizing the DYB. Their goal is to reach young people throughout the year, rather than only in the school year.

"Youth ministry really has evolved," Peterson says. "Kids have spiritual needs and we need to address them, especially in our world today. We're raising the bar and asking them for a commitment."

To apply or read more information, go to www.OnTheVine.us/DYB, or call 814-824-1218.

St. Martin Center banks on its future

\$1.5 million project promises to invigorate inner-city community

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

St. Martin Center in Erie recently purchased property that will house an expanded Early Learning Center that is expected to reach more children and add jobs to the local community.

"Primarily, we serve inner-city children and families. We could have moved elsewhere, but this is where our heart is," says David González, chief executive officer of the non-profit Catholic Charities agency.

On Dec. 21, St. Martin Center closed on the acquisition of property at 1727 State St., which over the years has been the site of various financial institutions, most recently National City Bank. Tax-exempt bond financing and funds from an endowment helped the agency move along with the initial phases of the \$1.5 million project.

The purchase price of the State Street property, located about a mile from St. Martin's base at 1701 Parade St., was \$250,000. The newly purchased building is in the downtown area and is re-purposed by three major bus routes. It is easily accessible to all traffic, including most of St. Martin's clientele.

"This is really the best location for all the stakeholders we serve," González explains.

Steve Lewis Contracting of Erie has begun gutting the interior of the three-story building. Renovations—while



Photo by Mary Solberg

St. Martin Center Chief Executive Officer David González stands in front of the newly acquired State Street site that will house the agency's expanded Early Learning Center in Erie.

are expected to continue through winter and spring—will include the creation of 12 classrooms, three more than what is currently available at St. Martin's Early Learning Center at Lovell Place in downtown Erie. An elevator will be added to the new building, as well as an outside playground.

The Early Learning Center plans to move out of its rented space at Lovell and into its new home by June. The expanded Early Learning Center is expected to be fully operational by July 1.

At the Lovell location, St. Martin's Early Learning Center serves about 130 children. The move to State Street will bump that number up to about 190. González also expects to hire seven more employees.

"This is a big project; it's a big deal," González says.

He is hoping to fund the rest of the project with grant money and fundraisers. One big boost came last fall when Erie's annual Roar on the Shore motorcycle event named St. Martin Center as its charity for 2016.

Roar money is expected to fund the construction and design of the playground adjacent to the new Early Learning Center, González says.

"It's a testament to the good work we have here," he adds.

Early childhood education is a primary focus of St. Martin Center. Children are accepted into the Early Learning Center program from age 6 weeks to age 13, but the heavy emphasis is on the pre-kindergarten age group.

"When kids get ready for school early, everyone benefits," González says.

St. Martin Center is one of many social service agencies of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie. Its new endeavor, González says, will require even more funds to prepare for the always unexpected costs of renovation and construction.

The re-purposing of the old bank building—still with its security vaults in place—symbolizes for González an investment in Erie's future.

Donations to the Early Learning Center can be sent to St. Martin Center, 1701 Parade St., Erie, PA 16503, or by calling González directly at 814-452-6113.

"We could have moved elsewhere, but this is where our heart is,"

- David González

PARISHIONER SPOTLIGHT

Phil Scrimenti pursues acting career

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Phil Scrimenti enjoys asking people, "Who do you think I look like?"

If they say he resembles a doctor or lawyer, he nods knowingly. That's what most people think. But when someone recently mentioned he could be a look-a-like for James Gandolfini from "The Sopranos," he quickly jotted it down in a notebook for future reference. Hmm? A gangster who looks like a regular guy? It could be yet another possible role in Scrimenti's budding acting career.

"I get anywhere from professor, doctor or lawyer. Some people also say I look like George Costanza from 'Seinfeld.' Darn it, I never get the leading man," Scrimenti laughs. A parishioner of St. Mary of Grace Parish in Meadville, Scrimenti, at age 67, recently started an acting career. His motivation began with a near-death experience three years ago, followed by a deep desire to do God's will.

He explains: "I wake up in the morning and I ask myself the question, 'How can I do the best in life and do it in and through God, and do it joyfully?'"

For Scrimenti, acting is one answer.

In 2014, he left his position as a

major gifts officer at Meadville's Allegheny College, where he continues to minister to students in the Newman and Hillel groups. He does organizational and personal development consulting, and also serves on the board of Seton Catholic School, also in the Crawford County community.

But why acting? At his age? The inspiration came after a serious bout with Hepatitis A during Lent 2013. After returning from an Allegheny College study trip to Israel, Scrimenti became so ill that doctors told him his liver was shutting down.

"I was ready to go. I have no problem dying," Scrimenti says. "I was off work for six months so I had this tremendous opportunity to get in touch with the external and internal noise in my life. It was a very powerful experience."

After a long recovery, he took a personal trip one day to a community festival in Berea, Ohio. At a vendor booth, he talked to a representative of Pre Model and Talent Management of Akron, Ohio, jokingly asking if there were any jobs for middle aged men who had no experience acting.

Indeed, there were plenty of opportunities. In no time at all, Scrimenti signed up for male modeling classes, improving his poise, runway abilities, effective speech and



Contributed photo

Phil Scrimenti, a member of St. Mary of Grace Parish, Meadville, decided to pursue acting after a near-death experience.

on-camera presence. He contracted with an agent and has since participated as a male model in bridal shows, as the lead actor in a regional television documentary, as a performer at a Cleveland supper club, and as an actor in commercials for the Ohio lottery. He's also offered his expertise to the patient simulation program at the Cleveland Clinic.

A year ago, he participated in the International Model and Talent Association Competition in

Los Angeles, competing against 50 other men, ages 18 and older. Scrimenti—at 5 feet 9 inches tall and 230 pounds—placed either first or second in nine different categories. He also was named male actor of the year at the event.

"My three-year plan is to be in Los Angeles, to audition successfully, to get on national commercials or maybe a sitcom, or to be a spokesperson," Scrimenti says. "But my goal, really, is to follow the Spirit wherever I am led."

The Black Nazarene

MANILA, Philippines (CNS)—Pilgrims carry a replica of the Black Nazarene during a Jan. 7 procession in Manila, Philippines. Many Filipinos believe the sacred statue of Christ has miraculous powers.

The Black Nazarene is a life-sized iconic statue of Jesus Christ enshrined in the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene located at the Quiapo district in the City of Manila. The image was carved by an anonymous Mexican artist sometime in the 17th century.



CNS photo

Newsmakers



Snippets of Catholic headlines and stories from around the world

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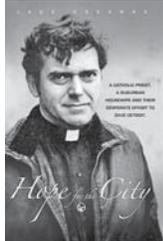
■ New book chronicles priest's efforts to 'save Detroit'

DETROIT—Author Jack Kresnak, a former Detroit Free Press reporter, has written a new book that chronicles the life of a once long-haired, motorcycle-riding Detroit priest who was on a mission to save the city.

Hope for the City: A Catholic Priest, a Suburban Housewife and their Desperate Effort to Save Detroit

Hope for the City: A Catholic Priest, a Suburban Housewife and their Desperate Effort to Save Detroit is about Father William Cunningham, co-founder of Focus: HOPE, a ministry to Detroit's poor and jobless. Father Cunningham was a former teacher of Kresnak, who credits the priest for kick-starting his journalism career. When Father Cunningham died in 1997, he gave Kresnak one last assignment: write a book about Focus: HOPE, an organization Father Cunningham founded to improve the day-to-day lives of Detroiters caught up in the midst of race riots, crime and economic depression.

Kresnak hopes the book will enlighten people to the causes of the Detroit riot of 1968 and the riot of a year earlier in neighboring Warren, Mich., and how Father Cunningham pushed for the cultural, spiritual revolution necessary to save the city.



The cover of *Hope for the City: A Catholic Priest, a Suburban Housewife and their Desperate Effort to Save Detroit*.

■ Pope establishes Syriac Catholic exarchate in Canada

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis erected an apostolic exarchate for Syriac Catholics living in Canada. The exarchate, a church jurisdiction similar to a diocese established for Eastern or Orthodox Christians living outside their native land, will have its seat in Montreal, the Vatican announced Jan. 7.

The Vatican said the exarchate will be made up of territory in Canada that was once part of the Newark, New Jersey-based Eparchy of Our Lady of Deliverance for Syriac Catholics. It will include cities such as Ottawa and Mississauga, Ontario; and Laval, Quebec.

Pope Francis also named Father Antoine Nassif as the first apostolic exarch of the new jurisdiction. Born in Beirut in 1969, Father Nassif worked in two parishes in Lebanon before serving as rector of the patriarchal seminary in Charfet, Lebanon.

■ Mobile apps help Catholics in freezing regions of China



CNS photo

A swimmer competes in a pool carved from thick ice covering China's Songhua River during the Harbin Ice Swimming Competition in the northern city of Harbin, Heilongjiang province.

HONG KONG (CNS)—Catholic communities in China's northeastern provinces are using social media to evangelize in the freezing and smoggy winter while still offering pastoral care directly to the elderly, reported ucnews.com.

In Jilin, Heilongjiang and Liaoning provinces, the average temperature drops below freezing for four to six months a year. About 100,000 Catholics live in each of the three northeastern provinces.

In Jilin province, a Catholic webmaster who identified himself as Paul, told ucnews.com that Sunday Mass numbers drop dramatically during the winter months.

Many use Wechat and QQ friends groups to connect fellow Catholics. These are Chinese social media platforms similar to Twitter and Facebook. Some college students from other Chinese provinces said online groups help them find church locations.

Introduced in 2011, the Wechat app is getting more popular, with the number of users surpassing 600 million in China and 1.2 billion around the world last May.



Editor's Notes

Mary SOLBERG

More than \$1,500 was collected in a free-will offering at last month's "Answer the Call—Lessons & Carols" concert at Cathedral Prep's H. David Bowes Auditorium in Erie. The funds will be used to support retreats for men and women discerning vocations to the clergy and religious life.

Father Michael Polinec, vocations director for the diocese, called the donations "very humbling."

Belated best wishes to Msgr. Salvatore Mitchell, who turned 99 in December. Word has it that he's still driving.

Catholic school teachers in the diocese all work hard, with a strong commitment to encouraging students to be creative thinkers.

Congratulations to Kelly Strotman and Denise O'Neil, teachers at St. Bernard School in Bradford, who prepared and received a First Energy STEM grant for this academic year. The teachers proposed that the \$1,000 grant be used for monthly science, technology, engineering and math projects for pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade classrooms. Students planned and carried out trials to solve a problem, making boats, traps and even catapults.

Results should be coming in soon on the regional theater competition that featured Gannon University's student production of "Stage Fright: Play Fears."

The group was selected for a Kennedy Center/American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) Certificate of Merit and advanced to the regional competition at West Chester University.

Mary Solberg is the editor of FaithLife. Email: msolberg@ERIECD.org Call 814-824-1171 Twitter: @ERIERCDsolberg

'Life is so beautiful'



Photo by Mary Solberg

About 160 people walked through downtown Erie Jan. 9 as part of the March for Life sponsored by People for Life. Pictured, from left, are Jane Cap of St. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Edinboro, and Stanley and Shirley Widomski of St. Stanislaus Parish, Erie, walking past St. Peter Cathedral.

The Widomskis, who have seven children, 17 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, have participated in every march since its inception a couple of decades ago. Says Shirley, "Life is so beautiful."

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EVENTS

Interfaith prayer service planned in Erie

ERIE—Street violence and the City of Erie's growing murder rate have prompted various religious leaders to plan an interfaith prayer service, open to the public, Jan. 17 at 4 p.m. at St. Peter Cathedral in downtown Erie. Bishop Lawrence Persico will join leaders of other faiths at the event, titled "Unity in Faith—A Time for Hope, a Demonstration of Love."



43rd March for Life bus trip planned

WASHINGTON, D.C.—People for Life of Erie is sponsoring its 43rd annual March for Life bus trip to Washington, D.C., Jan. 22-23. The cost per person is \$55. The March for Life Rally this year will be held on the grounds of the Washington Monument. The march begins at 15th Street, a short walk from the U.S. Supreme Court. To make a reservation or to get more details, go to www.peopleforlife.com. Checks also can be mailed to: People for Life, P.O. Box 1126, Erie, PA 16512, or dropped off at the People for Life office, 1625 W. 26th St., Erie.

Bible study offered through March

ERIE—Father Michael DeMartinis will offer a Bible study at the Cathedral Preparatory School auditorium, located at W. 10th and Myrtle streets, Wednesdays, beginning Jan. 20 and continuing through March 9. The focus is on the Acts of the Apostles. The Bible study is open to anyone and will begin each Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Cathedral Prep and Villa Maria Academy to present 'The Adventures of Pericles'

ERIE—Cathedral Preparatory School and Villa Maria Academy are presenting "The Adventures of Pericles," an action-adventure comedy based on Shakespeare's play, at the Villa Maria Academy auditorium, 2403 W. 8th St., Jan. 28-30 at 7 p.m., and Jan. 31 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors.

Mercy Center of the Arts Preschool to hold open house this month

ERIE—The Mercy Center of the Arts Preschool, 444 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, has scheduled its open house Jan. 31 from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Private tours also are available. Call 814-824-2519 for more information.

Sharon parish hosts seven-week 'Epic' series

SHARON—Attend the "Epic" series on Catholic Church history Tuesdays at St. Stanislaus-Holy Trinity Church, 370 Spruce Ave., Sharon, from Feb. 2 to March 15. The seven-week session focusing on the Crusades and Inquisition will begin Feb. 2 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. To register, call the parish office at 724-342-7391, or email themustardseed@yahoo.com.

Mercer County Women's Retreat League to host special event in February

SHARON—The Mercer County Women's Retreat League is hosting a Day of Reflection on Feb. 21 at St. Joseph Parish, 79 Case Ave., Sharon. Doors will open at 12:30 p.m. and dinner will begin at 4 p.m. The day will end with Mass at 4 p.m. Bishop Emeritus Donald Trautman will serve as retreat master. Tickets are available until Feb. 12 for \$10 per person. To purchase tickets, contact Pat Demas at 724-646-2662. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

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Soup Kitchen feeds bodies, souls

Construction of new site expected to begin soon

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Benedictine Sister Mary Miller wants artwork on the walls, curtains for the windows and flowers on the tables at the Emmaus Soup Kitchen when it opens at its new location later this year. But such aesthetics are nothing new for what is arguably Erie's most recognized inner-city outreach that feeds the hungry. Long before fire damaged its existing building last September, Emmaus offered a family like atmosphere to the city's homeless and working poor.

"We want our new home to be a low-profile, modest place where people can have some dignity and beauty. They hunger to feed their souls as much as their bodies," says Sister Mary, director of Emmaus Ministries. Depending on weather conditions, construction of the new building is expected to begin this February and be completed by May. The facility will be built in what is now a vacant, grassy lot north of the present structure at 218 E. 11th St.

Emmaus Soup Kitchen has operated in Erie since 1974. After the September fire, it temporarily closed but then resumed serving meals Oct. 5. It will continue to

operate throughout the construction of the new one-story structure, Sister Mary says, and then the old building will be razed.

The soup kitchen currently accommodates about 110 guests; the new facility will seat about 180. The larger space ought to relieve tensions from overcrowding, especially among guests who may have addictions or mental illness.

"There will be more room for seating and more table space," Sister Mary says. "And there will be no inhumane lines outside."

The fire, however difficult, allowed Sister Mary to see that the Erie community shares the Benedictines' commitment to eradicate hunger and its ill-effects.

Emmaus Ministries received more than \$150,000 in unsolicited donations after the blaze. Friends, volunteers, city officials and others came to see Sister Mary the morning of the fire.

"I'm confident this community has an amazingly good heart," she adds. "We saw it first-hand. Everybody from the mayor [Joe Sinnot] to the bishop [Lawrence Persico] called. It was touching."

A particularly difficult aspect of the fire and its aftermath has been dealing with the alleged criminal involvement of a regular soup kitchen guest. Erie Police



Photo by Mary Solberg

Benedictine Sister Mary Miller, director of Emmaus Ministries, looks forward to a new building to house Emmaus Soup Kitchen.

charged Thomas W. Munch with intentionally setting the fire. "He's very dear to us. He is part of our family," Sister Mary says.

The contributions made to date, along with the nearly \$170,000 that Emmaus Ministries received from insurance after the fire, will help secure the soup kitchen's future.

Make donations to:

Emmaus Ministries
345 E. 9th St.
Erie, PA 16503



Checks may be made payable to Emmaus Ministries.

OBITUARY

Sister M. Judith Uzzo, RSM

She spent her life loving, teaching children

Sister M. Judith Uzzo, RSM, 91, died Dec. 21, 2015, at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse in Erie. She was in her 72nd year of religious life.

Born Sept. 9, 1924, in DeLancey, Pa., she was baptized Anne Grace, a daughter of the late John and Angeline (Tucci) Uzzo. On July 2, 1943, she entered the Sisters of Mercy at St. Joseph Convent in Titusville, from St. Adrian Parish, DeLancey. She professed her perpetual vows on Aug. 17, 1949.

She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Mercyhurst University, Erie, and

a master's degree from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. She also studied at Edinboro University and the University of Vermont.

Sister Judith loved children and spent her entire life in ministry in elementary education. She taught in several Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Erie: St.

Walburga, Titusville; St. Luke, Erie; St. Patrick, Franklin; St. Cosmas and Damian, Punxsutawney; St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois; Immaculate Conception, Brookville; and Our Lady of Fatima-Geno Monti School, Farrell.

After the closing of Immaculate Conception School, Sister Judith remained as the director and teacher in the parish religious education program. In 2007 Our Lady of Fatima-Geno Monti School dedicated its yearbook to her. She once said, "I loved working with children; they kept me young."

In addition to her religious community, Sister Judith is survived by her sister, Amelia Terrior; and several nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. She was preceded in death by her sisters Eleanor DeFeo and Rose Uzzo; and her brothers Matthew and Joseph Uzzo.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Dec. 23 at the Sisters of Mercy Chapel in Erie. Burial was at Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Erie.

Memorials may be made to the Sisters of Mercy Ministry Fund, 444 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA 16504.



Sister M. Judith Uzzo, RSM

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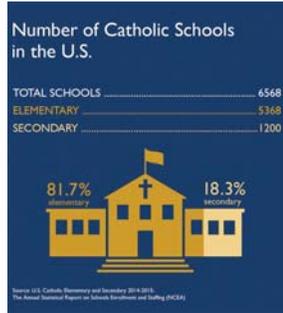
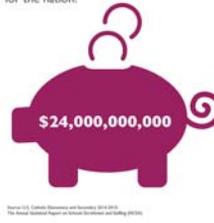
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Take it to the bank

Catholic school grads reap benefits

The University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) summarizes its research on the positive impact of Catholic schools on students:

- Overall academic achievement is higher.
- Graduates of Catholic high schools are more likely to vote.
- Graduates of Catholic high schools are more likely to earn higher wages.
- Catholic schools tend to produce graduates who are more civically engaged, more tolerant of diverse views and more committed to service as adults.

Catholic schools teach 'practice of virtue'

CUA president visits diocese

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

John Garvey, president of The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., says healthy Catholic elementary and middle schools ensure the continuance of Catholic higher education.

As the historic "feeders" of Catholic universities, these younger grades teach what Garvey calls "the practice of virtue," a key element to personal and professional growth and success.

"If you want your kids to go to church when they grow up, then send them to Catholic schools," Garvey told *FaithLife* newspaper.

Born in Sharon, Garvey, 67, is the product of Catholic education. He attended the former St. Joseph School in Sharon and spent one year, from 1963-64, attending St. Mark Seminary in Erie. In 1966, he graduated from Sharon High School, and then went on to the University of Notre Dame for his undergraduate degree.

For one year, he pursued a master's in theological studies at the Harvard Divinity School, but then decided to study law instead. He earned his law degree from Harvard Law School in 1974, and eventually taught at the University of Kentucky College of Law, the University of Michigan Law School, and the Notre Dame Law School.

Before being named president

at Catholic University in 2010, he was dean of the Boston College Law School.

"I truly believe in Catholic higher education. It was worth giving up a job I loved to be the president of a Catholic university," Garvey says. "I wouldn't be doing this job if it weren't at a Catholic university."



John Garvey

"Catholic intellectual tradition informs art, architecture, music, literature, news."

His passion for Catholic education brought him back home for a brief visit last fall. Garvey participated in the annual College and University Presidents' Week at Kennedy Catholic High School in Hermitage.

Students in grades eight through 12 listened to Garvey and several other presidents from Catholic universities who discussed such topics as leadership, academic and career success, personal growth and the importance of service.

Catholic thought and action is invaluable in a culture that is becoming increasingly secular, Garvey says.

"Catholic intellectual tradition informs art, architecture, music,



Contributed photos

Kennedy Catholic seniors Austin Higgins and Carol Michalek met with John Garvey, president of The Catholic University of America, during Garvey's visit to the Mercer County school last fall.

literature, news. It's really important for those sectors of the culture to be connected to what we believe in through our own Catholic faith," he says. "We need to incorporate these in our university studies."

Catholic schools, he adds, offer an alternative to secularization. He and his wife, Jeanne, have five children who, collectively, have 96 years of Catholic education. They, like all Catholic school students, took away more than book smarts.

"This isn't just an intellectual game," Garvey says. "It's not just how you think, but how you live your lives. It's teaching wisdom and virtue."

Garvey is committed to bringing a Catholic perspective to legal issues, too. He wrote *Religion and the Constitution* (2011), which won the Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit book award; and *Secularity and the U.S. Catholic Church* (2007), which won a Catholic Press Association award.

He is a strong proponent of the lawsuits—brought by The Catholic University of America, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Erie, among many other Catholic non-profit organizations—that challenge the contraceptive mandate in the federal government's health care plan. The U.S. Supreme Court will hear those cases this spring.



Bishop expected to announce final plan for Catholic schools

FaithLife staff report

Erie Bishop Lawrence Persico—with the assistance of the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie and the Education Task Force—has been analyzing significant feedback received on the recently proposed preliminary plan for Catholic schools.

More than 1,200 people in the diocese offered their thoughts and opinions of the proposal during a five-week period ending in December. Responses came from parents, alumni, employees, volunteers, parishioners and students.

"People demonstrated great loyalty to their schools, in some cases organizing efforts to ensure their views were heard," said Father Nicholas Rouch, vicar for Education. "We received a great amount of support for the parts of the plan which called for academic improvements, a new governance model for schools in the Erie area, greater support for our teachers in the form of professional development and compensation, and greater consistency from school to school."

But many parents, Father Rouch said, also expressed concern about the establishment of stand-alone middle schools in the Erie area, and the need for increased tuition revenue.

The preliminary plan called for two middle schools to be established in the Erie area by shifting students in grades six through eight from five elementary schools. Under the initial proposal, those elementary schools, then, would have a pre-K through grade 5 format.

The plan also envisioned the closure of several schools to achieve the needed financial and enrollment stability for the new school system. Whether or not Oil City's Venango Catholic High School will remain open is another significant decision yet to be finalized.

At the end of February, the bishop plans to announce his final decision on the future of schools, particularly those in the greater Erie area that may be most affected by possible changes.

"This is an exciting time of transition for Catholic schools in the diocese," Father Rouch said. "We are working hard to glean from all the feedback the best thinking of the diocesan family."

CATHOLIC SCHOOL OPEN HOUSES

BRADFORD

St. Bernard Elementary and Middle School
450 W. Washington St.
814-368-5302
■ Feb. 1-5, 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

CLARION

Immaculate Conception School
728 E. Main St.
814-226-8433
■ Jan. 31, 9:30-11 a.m.

CLEARFIELD

St. Francis School
230 S. Second St.
814-765-2618
■ To be announced.
■ Call for private tours.

DuBOIS

DuBois Central Catholic Elementary School
210 Central Christian Road
814-371-2570
■ Jan. 31, noon-2 p.m.

DuBois Central Catholic Middle School
200 Central Christian Road
814-371-3060
■ March 9, 7 p.m.

DuBois Central Catholic High School
200 Central Christian Road
814-371-3060
■ March 9, 7 p.m.

ERIE

Blessed Sacrament School
2510 Greengarden Road
814-455-1387
■ Jan. 31, 10:30 a.m.-noon

Cathedral Preparatory School
225 W. 9th St.
814-453-7137
■ Entrance exam Jan. 23
For information, call 814-453-7737, ext. 2242.

Holy Family School
1153 E. 9th St.
814-452-4720
■ Jan. 31, 1-2:30 p.m.

Mercyhurst Preparatory School
538 E. Grandview Blvd.
814-824-2223 (Admissions)
■ Call for private tours.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School
1531 E. Grandview Blvd.
814-825-2822
■ Jan. 17, noon-2 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace School
2401 W. 38th St.
814-838-3548
■ Jan. 31, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Our Lady's Christian School
606 Lowell Ave.
814-838-7676
■ Call for private tours.

St. Boniface School
9363 Wattsburg Road
814-825-4238
■ Jan. 24, 11:15 a.m.-2 p.m.

St. George School
1612 Bryant St.
814-864-4821
■ Jan. 31, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

St. James School
2602 Buffalo Road
814-899-3429
■ Jan. 31, 1-3 p.m.

St. Luke School
425 E. 38th St.
814-825-7105
■ Jan. 24, 1-3 p.m.

Villa Maria Academy
2403 W. Eighth St.
814-838-2061
■ Entrance exam Jan. 23
For information, call 814-453-7737, ext. 2242.

Villa Maria Elementary School
2551 W. Eighth St.
814-838-5451
■ Jan. 31, 1-3 p.m.
May 5, 5-7 p.m.

FRANKLIN

St. Patrick School
952 Buffalo St.
814-432-8689
■ Jan. 31, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

GREENVILLE

St. Michael School
80 N. High St.
724-688-7050
■ Jan. 31, noon-2 p.m.

HERMITAGE

St. John Paul II Elementary School
2335 Highland Road
724-342-2205
■ Jan. 31, 1-3 p.m.

Kennedy Catholic Middle School
2120 Shenango Valley Freeway
724-346-5531
■ Jan. 31, 1-3 p.m.

Kennedy Catholic High School
2120 Shenango Valley Freeway
724-346-5531
■ Jan. 31, 1-3 p.m.

KERSEY

St. Boniface School
359 Main St.
814-885-8093
■ Jan. 31, after 10:30 a.m. Mass

LUCINDA

St. Joseph School
72 Rectory Lane
814-226-8018
■ Feb. 1, 3-5, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

MEADVILLE

Seton Catholic School
385 Pine St.
814-336-2320
■ Call for private tours.

NORTH EAST

St. Gregory School
140 W. Main St.
814-725-4571
■ Jan. 31, 1-2:30 p.m.

OIL CITY

St. Stephen School
214 Reed St.
814-677-3035
■ Call for private tours.

Venango Catholic High School
1505 W. First St.
814-677-3039
■ Call for private tours.

PUNXSUTAWNEY

Ss. Cosmas & Damian School
205 N. Chestnut St.
814-938-4224
■ Jan. 31, 1-3 p.m.

RIDGWAY

St. Leo School
125 Depot St.
814-772-9775
■ Call for private tours.

ST. MARYS

St. Marys Catholic Elementary School
114 Queens Road
814-834-4169
■ Feb. 3, 6-7:30 p.m.

St. Marys Catholic Middle School
600 Maurus St.
814-834-2665
■ Feb. 3, 7-8:30 p.m.

Elk County Catholic High School
600 Maurus St.
814-834-7800
■ Feb. 3, 7-8:30 p.m.

WARREN

St. Joseph School
608 Pennsylvania Ave., West
814-723-2030
■ Jan. 31, 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m.