

**Mercer County family enjoys being Catholic**

Read about the Morelli family, five of whom became Catholic last year.

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# FaithLife



**POPE TWEET**  
Pope Francis @Pontifex  
"Today people are suffering from poverty, but also from lack of love."

www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

January 18, 2015

**Special Collection**

**Help Spread the Faith Collection**  
Jan. 17-18

This annual collection supports the communications efforts in the Diocese of Erie, including *Faith* magazine, *FaithLife* newspaper, the diocesan website ([www.ErieRCD.org](http://www.ErieRCD.org)) and all social media outreach. Give at your local parish or send a contribution to: Office of Communications, 429 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA 16504.

**Pro-life activists head to D.C.**

Nearly 300 people from the Diocese of Erie are expected to travel to Washington, D.C., this coming week for the annual March for Life, marking the 42nd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in all 50 states.

People for Life in Erie will take three buses to Washington, with student groups represented from Gannon University, Mercyhurst University, Penn State Behrend, Mercyhurst Prep, and St. George School, all in Erie.

Other parishes/schools throughout the diocese also are traveling by bus to the nation's capital.

Seats are still available with the People for Life contingent, according to Tim Broderick, president. The cost is \$54 per seat and can be reserved by calling 814-882-1333.

People for Life buses will leave Erie at 11 p.m. on Jan. 21 and return about 2 a.m. on Jan. 23. To bring more attention to life issues, People for Life is sponsoring two student contests in the coming months.

A Pro-life Oratory Contest for students in grades 9 through 12 will be held April 11 at Blasco Memorial Library in Erie. Also, students in grades 7 through 12 are invited to submit an essay, by March 6, on the topic of abortion, euthanasia or stem cell research.

Go to [www.peopleforlife.org](http://www.peopleforlife.org) for more information on all People for Life activities.



## Pope names new cardinals

### Nominees nudge numbers toward greater representation

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The statistical impact of Pope Francis' choices for the newest members of the College of Cardinals will be small, but significant.

The expanded group of cardinals eligible to elect a pope—all of those under the age of 80—will include a lower percentage of Europeans, a slightly lower percentage of Italians, a lower percentage from the United States and a higher percentage of cardinals who head dioceses rather than offices of the Roman Curia.

After the new cardinals are created Feb. 14, the college will have 125 members under the age of 80 and, therefore, eligible to vote in a future conclave. The total number of cardinals will rise to 228—a record-breaking number.

Much of the reaction to Pope Francis' announcement Jan. 4 of the identities of the new cardinals focused on how they give representation in the college to Catholics in some of the most remote parts of the world, or the "peripheries" that the Holy Father frequently mentions. With the addition of electors from Ethiopia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Uruguay, Panama, Cape Verde and Tonga, the number of countries with electors will rise from 48 to 57.

Among the electors, the percentage of Europeans will drop to 46.4 percent from its current 48 percent. While not a huge change, it is a sign of continuing progress in making the college more representative of the church as a whole: in 1960, there were 79 members of the college and they came from only 27 countries. About 70 percent of

the college at the time was made up of Europeans.

Borrowing a category from the world of politics and economics—the Group of Eight countries with the most advanced economies—even after the conclave the world's most powerful nations still will have a majority among cardinal electors. But instead of representing 61 percent of the electors, the G-8 countries' share will drop to 57.5 percent.

With the Argentina-born pope's latest picks, the percentage of Latin Americans will rise to 16 percent from its current 15.4 percent. Pope Francis named no new members from the United States or Canada, so that part of the world's percentage will fall to 12 percent from its current 13.6 percent.

After the new cardinals receive their red hats, the percentage of Africans will rise to 12 percent from 11.8 percent. The percentage from Asia will rise to 11.2 percent from its current 10 percent. And, the Oceania-South Pacific region, which had only one voting-age cardinal, will have three; that brings the region's percentage up to 2.4 percent from its current 0.9 percent.

Bringing new members into the college rejuvenates the body, although in the past several decades the average age of cardinal electors has decreased only slightly with each new intake. Two of Pope Francis' picks—Cardinals-designate Soane Mañi of Tonga and Daniel Sturla Berhouet of Montevideo, Uruguay—are still in their 50s. However, after the conclave, the average age of the whole block of cardinal electors will decline only by five months, dropping to 71 years, one



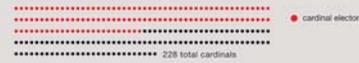
Archbishop Pierre Nguyen Van Nhon of Hanoi, Vietnam, is a cardinal-designate.

CNS photo

**Counting Cardinals**

How the College of Cardinals will look after the Feb. 14 conclave

Cardinals under the age of 80 can be electors



Electors by region



Countries with the most electors



month.

As far as the age of the new cardinals goes, Pope Francis is well within the norm for the past several decades when the average age of incoming electors has been between 65 and 68.

The last time the average age of a batch of new cardinals was less than

60 years old was the 1977 conclave in which Pope Paul VI created four new cardinals. The average age of that group was 57.2 years, according to [www.catholic-hierarchy.org](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org), the leading website for statistical information and brief biographical data of all the world's bishops and cardinals.

**Braving the cold for life**



Photo by Anne-Marie Welsh

Bonnie Pratt, far left, campus minister at Penn State Behrend, joins students from area universities at Erie's March for Life Jan. 10. Marchers braved below-freezing temperatures that morning.

**Pro-life director considers service to church**

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Thirty-seven-year-old Brian Beal has stepped down from his position as executive director of Pro-life of Mercer County to discern how to serve the church in other ways.

"Brian is an impressive young man. He's got a very deep, deep faith and he's a very good person," said Bob Lackey, an attorney and the chairperson of the board for the pro-life organization. Not surprisingly, Beal's unassuming nature wouldn't permit him to comment for this story, but he acknowledged his love of the pro-life movement and the importance of faith in his life.

A member of Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Farrell, Beal was hired as executive director of Pro-life of Mercer County in 2004. In his 10 years in that post, he operated an active pro-life organization and raised about \$300,000 for various projects, including the Missionaries of Purity, an effort to enlist young people out of col-



Contributed photo

Members of the board of Pro-life of Mercer County gathered in the fall to thank Brian Beal for his decade of service to Pro-life of Mercer County. Pictured, left to right, are: Bob Lackey, Jean Balcerzak, Geraldine Abi-Nader, Dr. Walter Beh, Kathy Jack, Brian Beal, Joanne Schell, Joan Walker and Susan Wallace. Seated are Antonietta and Michael May.

lege to work with pregnancy centers and churches and to speak at schools, youth groups and after-school programs to proclaim that "life to the full" involves saving the gift of sex until marriage. Missionaries of Purity now operates independently from Pro-life of Mercer County. Also, Beal raised funds for Pro-life of Mercer County's au-

dio/visual truck, a traveling billboard for the pro-life movement. He also coordinated an effort to place thousands of small pink and blue crosses at locations throughout the county to show the overwhelming number of abortions performed in this country.

Pro-life of Mercer County is planning to hire another executive director.

**Ann Badach named executive director of Catholic Charities**

*Outgoing director devoted 36 years to the Diocese of Erie*

BY ANNE-MARIE WELSH | FAITHLIFE

Ann M. Badach has been named executive director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Erie. The cabinet-level position oversees many programs and agencies designed to respond to the needs of people of all faiths.

"I am delighted with the results of our search process and the work of the committee to identify our top candidate," said Bishop Lawrence T. Persico. "I have every confidence in Ann's good work and in her commitment to Catholic Charities."

Badach replaces Mary Maxwell, who is retiring after 11 years as executive director. Maxwell served a total of 36 years with the Diocese of Erie.

"It will be a privilege to support and promote the work our affiliate directors and agencies do every day," Badach said. "Being invited to sit at the table with all of the people who work tirelessly within the organization energizes me."

As executive director, she will serve as the official liaison between all Catholic Charities agencies and programs and the bishop of Erie, collaborating with program directors on a regular basis. She also will represent the interests of Catholic Charities and build coalitions with external entities including community and government agencies, other churches and non-government organizations. In addition, Badach will serve on the Social Concerns Committee of the Pennsylvania

Catholic Conference, the lobbying arm of the Catholic Church in the state. She will travel to Harrisburg three times a year, following progress and trends in local, state and federal legislation relevant to Catholic Charities and the Catholic Church, serving as an advocate and collaborating with efforts led by the bishops of Pennsylvania.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie served nearly 78,000 children, adolescents, adults and seniors in 2013.

Catholic Charities serves as the umbrella for a wide network of affiliate agencies, including the Good Samaritan Center in Clearfield, St. Martin Center in Erie, Prince of Peace Center in Farrell, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Center in Oil City. The organization also oversees two nursing homes: Christ the King Manor in DuBois and St. John XXIII Home in Hermitage.

Harborcreek Youth Services, Better Homes in Erie, and Catholic Rural Ministry with services in Clarion, Venango, Crawford, Forest, Potter and McKean counties are also affiliated with Catholic Charities.

Its Counseling and Adoption Services has satellite offices in 12 counties. In addition, outreach programs based at St. Mark Catholic Center in Erie include the offices of Family Life, Disability and Deaf Ministries, Parish Social Ministry/Respect Life, and Diocesan and International Missions.

Badach, who holds a bachelor's degree in human ecology/individual and family studies from Mercyhurst University and a master's in public administration and pastoral leadership from Gannon University, has served as director



Ann M. Badach

of the Family Life Office within Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie since 2004. In that position, she was responsible for all marriage preparation and enrichment programs, and assisted with social service coordination. She developed the successful Transitions program, a grief education and support ministry for divorced, separated and widowed persons.

Prior to working with the diocese, she spent six years as a family counselor/caseworker with Family Services of Northwestern PA. She also has served multiple terms as a member of the parish and pastoral councils at St. Mark Parish in Lawrence Park.

Bishop Persico commended Mary Maxwell, outgoing executive director, for her decades of service to the diocese. "In the name of the Diocese of Erie, we are extremely grateful for the many years of dedication, commitment and hard work that Mary Maxwell has rendered in her service to the neediest in our diocese," Bishop Persico said.

Badach will step into the position of executive director on March 2.



**U.S. Congress includes high percentage of Catholics**

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Once again, there are more Catholics in Congress than members of any other religious denomination. And the numbers stay strong term after term.

Although Catholics account for only about 22 percent of the U.S. population—admittedly the largest body of religious belief in the country—they make up 31 percent of the House and the Senate. If you're looking for differences between the two major parties, there are some, but Catholics still are overrepresented in both the Democratic and Republican parties.

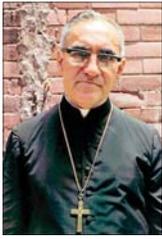
There are 83 Catholics among the 234 Democrats in the House or Senate, good for 35 percent of the Democrats' total, and 81 Catholics among the 301 Republicans in Congress, or 27 percent of the GOP's total, according to figures issued in a Pew Research Center study issued shortly before the 114th Congress was sworn in Jan. 6.

**Theologians recognize slain Archbishop Romero as martyr**

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A panel of theologians advising the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes voted unanimously to recognize the late Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero as a martyr, according to the newspaper of

the Italian bishops' conference. The panel declared Jan. 8 that the archbishop had been killed "in hatred for the faith," *Avenire* reported Jan. 9. The decision is a key step in the archbishop's cause, following an extended debate over whether he was killed for political reasons or for his faith. The next step in the process lies with the cardinals and bishops who sit on the Congregation for Saints' Causes, who will vote on whether to advise the pope to issue a decree of beatification.

A miracle is not needed for beatification of a martyr, though a miracle is ordinarily needed for his or her canonization as a saint. Archbishop Romero, an outspoken advocate for the poor, was shot and killed March 24, 1980, as he celebrated Mass in a hospital in San Salvador during his country's civil war. His sainthood cause was opened at the Vatican in 1993.



Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero is pictured in a 1979 photo in San Salvador. CNS photo

**Catholic media**

*Showing 'full measure' of Christ's love*



Editor's Notes  
Mary SOLBERG

A moment comes in everyone's life when it becomes clear why we do what we do. In my professional career as a journalist, that moment came one summer evening about 20 years ago outside a church on Erie's east-side.

Reporting for the diocesan paper at the time, I was covering a weekend revival of the black Catholic community at Immaculate Conception Church on E. 16th Street. Just a few years earlier, as a cub reporter with the Times Publishing Co., I had been in nearly the same neighborhood searching for details about a particularly gruesome murder of a woman found dead under a bridge.

Sadly, the area has been affected by violence for many years. That particular summer evening outside Immaculate Conception, a couple of little kids on bicycles approached me as I prepared to enter the small church. Interested in my camera and notebook, one little boy looked up at me and asked, "What do they do in there?"

"What do you think?" I responded. "They shoot people," he said. Jaded by all of the murders, fatalities and drownings I had covered as a daily newspaper reporter, I still wasn't prepared for this one child's view of the world. His experience of violence must have prompted him to ask this seemingly natural question.

"No, no!" I exclaimed. "Come here and look inside." I held open the heavy, wooden doors of the church—just a crack—so that the boy could peek inside. At that very moment, by

the grace of God, people were sharing the sign of peace. Everyone was hugging and kissing and shaking hands.

The boy and I talked briefly about how people pray in church and then we both went on our way. To this day, I think about that exchange. It was a moment of clarity when I realized the importance of being a journalist for the Catholic press.

Pope Francis talks about the value of social media in spreading the truth of Jesus Christ, but his predecessor St. John Paul II told journalists during a 1987 visit to the United States: "You must ask yourself if what you communicate is consistent with the full measure of human dignity."

The duty of every Catholic news person is to expose this "full measure" of Christ's love for all of us—whether we live in a wealthy suburb or in a neighborhood overcome by violence. We must open the door of the Catholic faith so that everyone can see what my little friend did that day when he peeked inside the church: joy, love and peace.

Today, parishioners throughout the Diocese of Erie are being asked to donate to the annual Help Spread the Faith collection. Its purpose is to benefit all forms of communication in our diocese, including this newspaper and our bi-monthly magazine, *Faith*. Contributions will help the Office of Communications maintain and improve our social media presence on Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.

Now that the two-year pastoral planning process is fully underway in the diocese, it's vital that we maintain healthy, open conversations with parishes and schools. One way we do that is through the diocesan website, [www.ErieCDO.org/planning.asp](http://www.ErieCDO.org/planning.asp).

These are all forms of communication in which we can keep revealing the face of Christ to our readers.

Mary Solberg is the editor of *FaithLife*.  
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Call 814-824-1171  
Twitter: @ERIECDSolberg



**Vatican views 'Unbroken'**

VATICAN CITY—Pope Francis meets U.S. actress Angelina Jolie during a private audience at the Vatican Jan. 8.

Jolie met with the pope after a screening at the Vatican of her film "Unbroken." The movie depicts the life of Louie Zamperini, a World War II veteran who survived 47 days in a raft and endured years of torture in a POW camp.

CNS photo

**Dignity defined**  
*Number of abortions declines in PA*



Guest Commentary  
A.B. Hill

As we ring in the New Year, there is a reason for hope in Pennsylvania: the number of abortions in the state decreased 7 percent. The year-end report shows that nearly 2,500 fewer abortions occurred in 2013 than in 2012. The total of 32,108 is the lowest number on record to date.

There were also fewer live births in Pennsylvania in 2013, but the decrease was less than 2 percent. I wish statistics could prove that respect is growing for the dignity of human life in the womb, but numbers alone cannot explain the downward trend in abortions. We can see that more mothers are choosing life for their babies, but the statistics did not ask them why. Even if they did, would the average person understand what human dignity means?

The dictionary defines dignity as a quality of being worthy of honor or respect. Being worthy means something is good and

deserving respect, praise or attention; having enough good qualities to be considered important or useful. If you have ever watched proud grandparents meet their first grandchild, you have seen the kind of praise and attention and, indeed, the dignity and respect that all human life deserves.

Respecting human dignity is an important precept of our Catholic faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says our dignity as human beings is rooted in our creation in the image and likeness of God. (CCC No. 1700)

"The Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel," wrote St. John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae*. "In the life of man, God's image shines forth anew and is again revealed in all its fullness at the coming of the Son of God in human flesh. Christ is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), he reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Hebrews 1:3). He is the perfect image of the Father."

The presence of human life makes visible the invisible reality of God's holy presence. Every child conceived reflects God's infinite love, his perfect justice and his boundless mercy. This is the foundation of our zeal for protecting human life from conception to natural death.

Catholic teaching affirms that human beings have inherent worth simply because they are human, regardless of their characteristics. The church also affirms that human life begins at conception. The embryo is a new and unique life that must be recognized as a human being who possesses the rights and inherent dignity of a person. Most importantly, this developing human possesses the right to life. If God is worthy of our honor and respect and every human person is made in his image and likeness, then we all have his dignity, no exceptions.

Downward trends in abortion are a good sign. Maybe our culture is beginning to understand human dignity a bit more. Despite this encouraging decrease, the fact that the lives of more than 32,000 babies were destroyed through abortion in 2013 reminds us that much pro-life advocacy needs to be done. By the mercy of God and determination, perhaps one day we will ring in a New Year with a 100 percent decrease in abortions.

A.B. Hill is communications director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, the public affairs agency of Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania. Stay up-to-date with Catholic news and issues at [www.pacatholic.org](http://www.pacatholic.org), [www.facebook.com/pacatholic](http://www.facebook.com/pacatholic) and [www.twitter.com/pacatholic](http://www.twitter.com/pacatholic).

**Pope visits Philippines**

**POPE FRANCIS**  
Visit to Philippines, Jan. 15-19

- 97.5 million population
- 80 million Catholics
- 89 dioceses
- 3,214 parishes
- 1,496 other pastoral centers
- 8,097 Seminarians
- 3,255 Schools
- 83 Hospitals
- 124 orphanages
- 98 Residences for elderly/disabled
- 134 Bishops
- 8,213 Priests
- 14 Permanent Deacons
- 1,933 Holy Religious
- 12,813 Women Religious
- 294 Lay members of secular institutes
- 9,189 Lay missionaries
- 99,028 Catechists

The church in the Philippines

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## News Briefs

### SSJs offer info on becoming an Agrégée

ERIE—The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania invite contemporary Catholic women seeking to deepen their spiritual lives to learn more about becoming an Agrégée (ah-greh-ZHEY), the newest form of connection to the religious community.

The sisters will host an information night on Jan. 26 at 7 p.m. at their Community Living Center, 5031 West Ridge Road in Millcreek.

### Eastside parish taking Lenten orders

ERIE—Holy Trinity Parish in Erie is taking pre-orders through Feb. 2 for Lenten pierogi and potato pancake batter. Pierogi are \$14 per dozen or \$8 for six. Pancake batter is \$6 for a small tub and \$10 for a large.

Fax orders to 814-461-1150 or call 814-456-0671. Mail orders to: Holy Trinity Parish, 2220 Reed St., Erie, PA 16503. Order pick-up dates are Feb. 14 and Feb. 15 at the Holy Trinity Social Center, E. 23rd and Reed streets, Erie.

### Gannon University hires alumni director

ERIE—Nancy Bird, a 1984 graduate of Villa Maria Academy in Erie, has been hired as Gannon University's new director of alumni services.

Bird is no stranger to development and alumni work. She is the former director of constituent relations for Cathedral Preparatory School and Villa Maria Academy, both in Erie. After graduating from Villa Maria, she went on to earn her bachelor's degree from Penn State University in 1988.

"Gannon's current leadership is focused on innovation, community service and globalization, offering our students the very best tools to become successful leaders," Bird says. "The dynamic nature of Gannon's campus makes this a terrific time to share the excitement with our alumni."



Nancy Bird

### Totus Tuus Academy meets in February

WEST MIDDLESEX—The next Totus Tuus Academy in the Shenango Valley will be held Feb. 2 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Church of the Good Shepherd, 3613 Sharon Road, West Middlesex.

Totus Tuus (Totally Yours) is a Catholic youth movement for teens in grades 7 to 12. The gatherings are held the first Monday of every month.

Totus Tuus is sponsored by the Diocese of Erie, but is not affiliated with any particular parish. Teenagers are invited regardless of the church or school they attend. For more information, call Mark Jaskowak at 724-748-6700, ext. 113.

### Pro-life of Mercer County to host breakfast

HERMITAGE—Pro-life of Mercer County will host its 13th annual prayer breakfast Feb. 7 from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at the Hickory VFW in Hermitage.

Keynote speaker is Gordon Thomas. He and his wife, Dawn, were named Parents of the Year in Pennsylvania in 2009.

The event will be held at the Hickory VFW, 5550 East State St., Hermitage. The deadline to purchase tickets is Feb. 4, by calling Joanne Schell at 330-448-4577, Susan Wallace at 724-588-0775, or Bob Lackey at 724-342-6835. The cost is \$13 for adults; \$6 for children through teens.

### Cursillo charity event scheduled in Erie

ERIE—The Cursillo past presidents' annual charity K.I.S.S. Dance will be held Feb. 7 from 7 to 11 p.m. in Hastings Hall at Holy Rosary Church, located at the corner of E. 28th Street and East Avenue, Erie.

Advance ticket sales are \$7 per person and are available at Cursillo events or by contacting Tim at [TimWWWJD@aol.com](mailto:TimWWWJD@aol.com) or 814-825-9183. Tickets purchased at the door are \$10 per person.

One does not need to have made a Cursillo weekend to attend the dance. There will be a DJ and a 50-50 cash drawing. This is a BYOB event, with munchies, pop and draft beer provided. All proceeds will go to the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network East.

### Spaghetti dinner scheduled at Erie church

ERIE—Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish invites the public to attend its 20th annual spaghetti dinner, sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council #4071, at Scheffner Hall, 1553 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie.

The dinner will be held Feb. 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Adult tickets at the door are \$8. Adult tickets purchased in advance are \$7.50. Senior citizens (60 and older) can buy a ticket for \$6.50 per person. Call 814-825-6706 for tickets or more information.

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### Seeking Music Director Our Lady of Mercy Church

Suburban parish of 600 families with a tradition of diverse musical styles seeks a part-time (24 hrs/wk) music ministry director. Responsibilities include: planning and leading music for three weekend Masses and special liturgies; training, scheduling and recruiting music ministers; working collaboratively with the staff. The ideal candidate has a B.A. in Music or commensurate training, strong keyboard and vocal skills, knowledge of Catholic Liturgy and ability to plan integrated liturgies; good communication and organizational skills, adaptable. Technics: SVP#602 Keyboard. Salary \$15,000-\$20,000. Submit cover letter, and résumé with references by January 31st. Job description available on website.

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Phone: (814) 899-5342  
Email: [dclark@ourladyofmercychurch.org](mailto:dclark@ourladyofmercychurch.org)  
Website: [www.ourladyofmercychurch.org](http://www.ourladyofmercychurch.org)

## Family 'signs on all the way' to Catholic faith

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITH/LIFE

It's always comforting to hear your children say they love religious education classes.

For Tonya Morelli, it was enough reason to decide to join the Church of the Good Shepherd in West Middlesex. Baptized a Baptist, Morelli began to feel so at home at the Mercer County parish that she decided to become a Roman Catholic along with her four children.

They were welcomed into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil last year. Tonya's husband, Dave, already a baptized Catholic, returned to active participation in the church.

Today—almost a year later—Tonya is a lector and Dave is a Eucharistic minister. Two of their boys are altar servers, while their daughter and another son sing in the church choir.

"When we signed on, we signed on all the way," Tonya says.

In 2012, the Morellis moved from South Carolina to Mercer County after Dave was transferred for his position as senior

vice president of operations and sales for PM Recovery of Greenville.

Always active in their Christian faith, the family had been members of a Lutheran church and had all of their children—which included triplets—baptized as Lutherans. It wasn't until moving to Hermitage that the wheels really started turning about becoming active in the Catholic Church.

Her son Paul, then a fourth-grader, didn't quite feel comfortable in the public school setting, so they started to consider other educational opportunities in the area. The day before Halloween, he visited St. Michael School in Greenville.

"Paul came out of St. Michael's that day and said, 'Mom, this is where I'm supposed to go to school,'" Tonya recalls.

The triplets—Michael, Thomas and Kate, 13—all have remained in the public school sys-



Contributed photo

Msgr. Robert Malene, pastor of Church of the Good Shepherd, West Middlesex, stands with the Morelli family at the Easter Vigil last year. Pictured, left to right, are: Thomas, Michael and Kate; Msgr. Malene; and Tonya, Paul and Dave Morelli.

tem but are active members of Church of the Good Shepherd.

"They fit right in—hook, line and sinker," says Msgr. Malene, pastor.

After Tonya and Dave got married in 1993, they knew that neither one of them would prob-

ably convert to the other's religion. But they were committed to their Christian faith. Dave says he never pressured Tonya to become Catholic.

"I've been married long enough to know that pressure doesn't work," Dave says. "It was more important to me to have a happy marriage and my kids going to church."

Now that the whole family is Catholic, Dave says it has spawned some interesting conversations about why Catholics do what they do.

"There have been some opportunities to discuss spiritual things," Dave says.

For Paul, now 12 and in sixth grade at St. Michael School, the best thing about being Catholic is simply saying that he's Catholic.

"It's pretty cool," Paul says. "When we weren't Catholic, I was one of the only kids who didn't get Communion, so now I can."

The fact that Paul has thrived spiritually and academically is a testament to the quality education and care that is offered at St. Michael School.

"I like that it is a throwback. It is very loving, but is still very structured," Tonya says.

And besides, Paul keeps the family centered in their Catholic faith around the dinner table, often reminding everyone to say grace before meals.

Says Tonya, "He knows his Catholic prayers better than everyone."

## Bishop visits Holy Family School



Contributed photo

Bishop Lawrence Persico recently met with students and staff at Holy Family School in Erie. During his visit, he talked to each classroom. The bishop is pictured here with Father Robert O'Hara, pastor, and members of the fourth-grade.

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## Parishioners honored at St. Joseph



OIL CITY—Four parishioners were honored in November with a Medal for Service at the 150th anniversary Mass at St. Joseph Parish, Oil City. Bishop Lawrence Persico and Greensburg Bishop Lawrence Brandt were on-hand for the parish festivities. Pictured, left to right, are: Bishop Persico, parishioners Patricia Welsh, Kimberlee Forno and David Zlotnicki; Bishop Brandt; and Father Justin Pino, pastor. Not present for the photo was award recipient Joseph Emanuele.

## Pork and kraut fest held at St. Boniface



ERIE—St. Boniface Parish in Erie hosted another successful Pork and Kraut Festival in November. Some of the festival proceeds were donated to two area programs serving the community. Checks for \$510 were given to both the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity and to the Greene Township Lions Club. Festival volunteer Penny Warmbrod is shown presenting a check to Tom Feeney of the Lions Club.

## Scarves to spread warmth during rally



CLARION—Members of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court 2454, knitted scarves for Clarion University students who plan to attend the March for Life Rally in Washington, D.C., this week. The scarves were knitted in the university's colors: blue and gold. Pictured are: Father Monty Sayers, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, Clarion; Barb Speer, a knitter and CD of A officer; Dr. Thomas Rourke, adviser to the Students for Life at Clarion University; Colleen O'Neil, president of Students for Life; and Ann Enderle Liska, director of Campus Ministry at Clarion. The scarves were presented during the Blessing of the Brains Brunch, an event hosted by Immaculate Conception parishioners for Clarion University students preparing for finals.

## Potluck luncheon held at Holy Trinity



RAMEY—Father Zab Amar, pastor of Holy Trinity Parish, Ramey, celebrated Christmas with parishioners at their annual potluck luncheon. Pictured with Father Amar is Melinda Stodari, one of the newest members of Holy Trinity and a convert to Catholicism, and her husband, Craig Stodari. They are expecting their first child in March.

## Confirmation students host event



DuBOIS—Confirmation candidates of St. Bernard, St. Joseph and St. Michael the Archangel parishes hosted an intergenerational event for Advent last month. Pictured are Larina and Katrina Good, Nicole McDowell, Kayla Boykin and Michelle Wenerd as they prepare to serve "grasshoppers and honey" to participants.

## St. Luke youth named Miss Polonaise

ERIE—The East Side Federation of Polish American Societies sponsored the 50th Polonaise Ball last Nov. 1 at the Polish Falcons Club in Erie, naming Marianna Gunshore "Miss Polonaise" for this year. The daughter of Paul and Angela Gunshore and the late Gregory Planka, she is a member of St. Luke Parish, Erie, having volunteered as a religious education assistant.



## Antorcha Guadalupeana 5K brings out the fire



CONNEAUT LAKE—The Antorcha Guadalupeana 5K Run/Walk held Dec. 13 in Conneaut Lake attracted many participants to celebrate the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas. Shown carrying a torch during the event is Jordan Kullen, followed by Ben Kullen and Father Jeff Lucas, pastor of Our Lady Queen of the Americas.

## DCC supports Grady's Decision



DuBOIS—The families of DuBois Central Catholic Elementary School recently collected \$730 for Grady's Decision, a charitable organization that helps families coping with premature births and children with special needs. Presenting the check, left to right in the front row, are: students Macki Eldridge, Lilah Casagrande and Jack Stringer. In the back row, left to right, are: Gretchen Caruso, principal, Amy Smith, DuBois coordinator of Grady's Decision; and Michael Armani, headmaster. The funds collected will be used to help families at the local Penn Highlands NICU.

## Cookie Walk is a sweet event



YOUNGSRVILLE—The 11th annual Cookie Walk at St. Luke Church in Youngsville took place on the third Sunday of Advent. Parishioners baked an assortment of more than 40 dozen cookies. For a small donation people walked around a display table, filling their buckets provided by Whirley Drink Works. Ten percent of what was raised benefits a local charity.

## Blessed Sacrament School

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# Catholic schools make a difference

## Catholic schools inspire:

The impact of a Catholic school education continues long after students graduate. Just ask these people who attended Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie and went on to pursue college and careers.

<p><b>a donor</b></p>  <p><b>Dr. Richard Neuer</b> 1949 graduate of Cathedral Prep, Erie 1945 graduate of Sacred Heart School, Erie</p> <p>Dr. Richard Neuer, an optometrist in North East for 30 years, retired in 1994, along with his brother Jack, also an optometrist who practiced in Erie.</p> <p>The brothers looked back on their lives and saw how much they benefited from their Catholic school upbringing.</p> <p>In the 1930s and '40s, the Neuers didn't have to pay anything to attend Sacred Heart School. And they only paid \$50 per student per year at Prep.</p> <p>While attending the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Richard Neuer realized how well Catholic schools prepared him for higher education.</p> <p>In 1996, both Richard and Jack decided to remember Catholic schools in their wills. A portion of their estates will go to elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Erie.</p> <p>Jack is now a resident of Saint Mary's Home, Erie. Richard lives in Millcreek.</p> <p>"We just felt it was payback time," says Dr. Neuer, 83.</p> <p>Catholic schools, he explains, provide a strong first level of education for children and promote vocations to the religious life and the priesthood.</p> <p>"Basically," Dr. Neuer adds, "I hope the kids of the future have the same opportunities that we had."</p>	<p><b>a college student</b></p>  <p><b>Colleen O'Neil</b> 2011 graduate of Kennedy Catholic High School, Hermitage 2007 graduate of St. Joseph Elementary, Sharon</p> <p>A senior at Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Colleen O'Neil keeps her Catholic faith No. 1 in her life. Her upbringing in Catholic schools, she says, forged a strong belief in serving God and others.</p> <p>O'Neil graduated in 2007 from the former St. Joseph Elementary School in Sharon. She then went on to graduate from Kennedy Catholic High School.</p> <p>At Clarion University, she is an active member of Students for Life and serves as president of the Newman Association. She's also a member of YCA (Young Conservatives) and is on the executive board of YAL (Young Americans for Liberty).</p> <p>"Catholic schools taught me to be determined and not be afraid to share my faith," says the 21-year-old O'Neil. "Serving Christ is the most important part of my life."</p> <p>In high school, O'Neil participated in Adoration twice a month. The school motto, <i>Christo Servire</i> (To Serve Christ), was a guiding force in food drives and other charitable works.</p> <p>A member of St. Joseph Church, Sharon, O'Neil is majoring in rehabilitative sciences with a concentration in gerontology. She is minoring in political science.</p>	<p><b>a teacher</b></p>  <p><b>Brian Markley</b> 1989 graduate of Cathedral Prep, Erie 1985 graduate of Holy Rosary School, Erie</p> <p>Brian Markley, 43, graduated in 1994 from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania with a degree in medical technologies. He started working right away at the Soldiers &amp; Sailors Hospital in Wellsboro, Pa., and then returned to Erie to work at Ascension Clinical Labs.</p> <p>"Both places were teaching institutions and I found out that I really enjoyed working with the students who were assigned there," Markley says.</p> <p>It wasn't long before he returned to school for his teaching certificate in secondary science education. With the support of his wife, Melissa, he graduated and was hired immediately at Prep. Now in his 15th year at the school, he teaches three levels of chemistry.</p> <p>He looked to his late aunt, Shirley Markley, as a role model. She taught for 40 years in Erie's Catholic schools.</p> <p>"I always saw how happy she was," Markley says. "She was a big influence."</p> <p>For Markley, the best thing about teaching in a Catholic school is that teachers and students can talk about faith. He starts each day with a time to pray for intentions. During Lent, he shares spiritual reflections with the boys in his classes.</p> <p>"It's all about building lifelong relationships. We're like a family," Markley adds.</p>	<p><b>a social worker</b></p>  <p><b>Grace Marshall</b> 1973 graduate of DuBois Central Catholic 1969 graduate of St. Joseph Elementary, DuBois</p> <p>At 59, Grace Marshall works as the program director of Personal Habilitation Services in DuBois. Her Catholic education, she says, was the foundation for her career in social services. Currently, she works with intellectually and developmentally disabled people.</p> <p>"I have a hands-on approach professionally. I like to know the families and individuals," Marshall says. "I was taught at a very young age that religion is not just a subject or topic; it's something you put into action."</p> <p>The daughter of the late James D. Fuller, a longtime Catholic school supporter, Marshall and most of her siblings attended Catholic schools. She married Michael Marshall, a local attorney and a member of the Byzantine Rite, who agreed to enroll their four children in DuBois Catholic schools.</p> <p>"For me, I knew the benefits of the education that I got. I was well-rounded and wanted the same for my children. Religion is the thing that helps you survive," Marshall says. "Catholic schools offer a close-knit community. My husband saw that the church, home and schools were all together when our children attended Catholic schools. That makes a huge difference."</p> <p>The tradition continues. All of the Marshall children are now adults and some are even sending their children to Catholic schools.</p>
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<p><b>Snapshot of schools</b></p> <p><b>ENROLLMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Catholic school enrollment in the Diocese of Erie (all schools): 7,943</li> <li>Total enrollment K-12: 6,878</li> <li>K-8 elementary school enrollment: 4,790</li> <li>9-12 secondary school enrollment: 2,088</li> <li>Total enrollment Pre-K: 1,065 (28 elementary schools have Pre-K programs)</li> <li>Total parochial students (K-12) in the City of Erie: 2,319</li> <li>Total parochial students (K-12) in Erie County 4,211: (includes city total)</li> <li>Total parochial students (K-12) in remaining 12 counties: 2,667</li> </ul>	<p><b>DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catholic, non-Catholic and low-income student enrollment (in percent)</li> <li>Elementary level: Low income: 26.3% Catholic: 79% Non-Catholic: 21%</li> <li>Secondary level: Low income: 17.8% Catholic: 79.2% Non-Catholic: 20.8%</li> </ul> <p><b>SCHOOLS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie</li> <li>Elementary schools: 28</li> <li>Middle schools: 3</li> <li>Secondary schools: 7</li> </ul>	<p><b>PROFESSIONAL STAFF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional employees in our Catholic schools: 692</li> <li>Teachers (full- and part-time): 638</li> <li>Elementary/middle school teachers: 420</li> <li>Secondary school teachers: 218</li> <li>Lay: 95%</li> <li>Religious/clergy: 5%</li> <li>Student/teacher ratio is 12:1</li> </ul> <p><b>ACHIEVEMENT TEST RESULTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8th-grade students scored above the 70th percentile when compared to the national norms in math, reading, language and science.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students in grades 4-7 scored above the 60th percentile in all tests when compared to national norms.</li> </ul> <p><b>SCHOLARSHIPS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More than 1/3 of students attending Catholic schools receive scholarship assistance through diocesan funding.</li> <li>For the 2015-16 school year, more than \$3 million will be available through various scholarship programs offered through the diocese.</li> </ul> <p><small>Statistics compiled by Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Erie</small></p>
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# Catholic schools *plan:*

## Education Task Force reviews data for long-term viability

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Thirty-eight Catholic schools in northwestern Pennsylvania are a "significant piece" of the two-year pastoral planning process currently underway in the Diocese of Erie, according to officials examining data for the strategic plan.

"Education is at the core of the future of the parishes and the whole process," says John Davidson, chairperson of the Catholic Education Task Force of the Pastoral Planning Committee. "What's really exciting to me is that everything is interrelated: parishes, schools, vocations, faith formation and diocesan ministries."

Davidson, a member of St. Joseph Parish, Sharon, took over as chair of the Education Task Force last fall. He knew it would be a big job, considering the number of schools and the nearly 8,000 students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade. A product of Catholic schools, Davidson sent his own children to parochial schools and strongly believes in keeping Catholic education vital for the future.

"When we first met as a Pastoral Planning Committee, we talked about gathering data from parishes and schools. That's certainly going to be a key component of what we're going to do and how we will make recommendations. The goal is to provide the best Catholic education we can," Davidson says. "To me, it's how to most efficiently and appropriately provide Catholic education in this diocese."

On Jan. 7, the Catholic Education Task Force, which consists of 12 members, met with representatives of Meitler,

a planning firm based in Milwaukee, Wis. They discussed data that has been collected in visits to all elementary, middle and high schools in the 13 counties of the diocese this past fall and early winter.

Alan Meitler and Rick Pendergast, both senior consultants at Meitler, visited the schools with Sam Signorino, director of Catholic Schools and School Personnel. They met with principals, pastors asso-



John Davidson is chairperson of the Catholic Education Task Force for the diocese.

ciated with schools, school presidents, headmasters, and representatives of regional advisory boards. Visits also included tours of the facilities.

"We're not at the point where we have conclusions from the data," Alan Meitler says. "The information will give us an honest picture of where schools stand and suggest possibilities for the future."

The Education Task Force is one of five task forces of the Pastoral Planning Committee to have an opportunity to discuss information gathered so far.

According to Signorino, several topics were covered at each school, including, but not limited to:

- Catholic identity
- Support the schools provide to parishes
- Support the parishes provide to schools
- Demographics

**"The goal is to provide the best Catholic education we can."**

— John Davidson



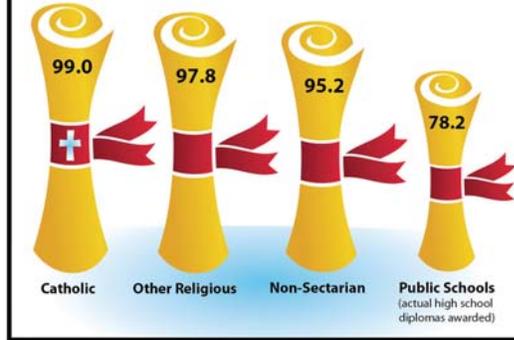
Members of the Catholic Education Task Force of the Pastoral Planning Committee have been gathering since the fall to get a comprehensive view of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie.

## CATHOLIC SCHOOL STATS

A quick take on issues and statistics

### U.S. Graduation Rates

A look at national high school graduation rates



Source: Broughman, S.P., Swain, N.L. (2013); Stillwell, R., and Sable, J. (2014).

- School funding
  - Financial data
  - Tuition rates
  - Scholarship sources
  - Foundation/school endowments
  - Current educational programming and desired programming
  - Current and needed support from the Catholic Schools Office.
- "Our visits to the schools were very pleasing, interesting and informative," Signorino says. "The Education Task Force will review the information collected so far and there will be time for the other task forces (Parish Listening, Vocation, Ministries and Faith Formation) to discuss

the early findings. Parish listening sessions are expected to begin in the spring.

Davidson says the Education Task Force will use any and all data to create a document that will inform Bishop Lawrence Persico about the state of schools in the diocese. The document will be based on a planning tool, titled "Key Indicators for Healthy Schools," which includes three components:

- What is a distinctly Catholic school?
- Academic excellence.
- Indicators for fiscally healthy schools.

"This provides a template, a measurement of how healthy a school is and a roadmap on how to improve health," Davidson explains.

## Task force members 'live and breathe' Catholic education in Diocese of Erie

The Catholic Education Task Force of the Pastoral Planning Committee includes 12 people who have strong links to sustaining parochial schools in the Diocese of Erie.

"They've all lived and breathed Catholic schools for years," says John Davidson, chair of the task force. "I was very impressed that they all wanted to be involved."

The task force members share some common denominators:

- A genuine interest in Catholic education.
- A desire to see helpful, effective change to bolster Catholic schools.

Here are the Education Task Force members:

- **John P. Davidson**, chairperson, graduate of Catholics schools and vice president of Human Resources for Sharon Regional Health Systems
- **Dr. Mark A. Jubilis**, Professor at Gannon University, Erie



- **Mary Agnes Marshall**, 40 years of experience in Catholic schools in Elk County; involved in regionalization of Catholic schools in Elk County
- **Father T. Shane Mathew**, Headmaster of Venango Catholic High School, Oil City
- **Dr. Samuel Signorino**, Director, Catholic Schools and School Personnel Diocese of Erie
- **Aaron Straub**, Teacher, director of athletics at Elk County Catholic, St. Marys

- **Jerome C. Wegley, Esq.**, Attorney with Knox, McLaughlin, Gonnall & Sennett, Erie; involved with merger of Cathedral Prep and Villa Maria Academy, Erie
- **Molly Bean**, Director of school improvement services, Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5, Edinboro
- **Tom Feeney**, Chair of parish finance council, St. Boniface Parish, Erie
- **Dr. Phil Belfiore**, Vice president of academic affairs, professor, Mercyhurst University, Erie
- **Father Phillip A. Pinczewski**, Pastor, St. Callistus Parish, Kane
- **Msr. Joseph Riccardo**, Pastor, St. Cosmas and Damian Parish/School, Punxsutawney.

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# Catholic schools *on cutting edge:*

## Robotics team wins Penn State competition, competes on national level

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

DuBOIS—A robot named Ferdinand, named after St. Ferdinand, the patron saint of engineers, catapulted students of DuBois Central Catholic schools to a national competition last month.

Fifth- through 12th-graders on DuBois Central's robotics team attended a national robotics competition Dec. 5-8 in Fargo, N.D. Of 36 teams, the group placed second in the t-shirt competition.

"It was a pretty comprehensive effort," said Carol Korthaus, a teacher at DuBois Central Catholic and a member of the robotics team, called Central Catholic Cardinals, or C3 Robotics. The 15-member team earned the right to participate in the national competition after it tied for first place overall at a local robotics competition last September at Penn State DuBois. Regional schools were given material to build a robot and perform such tasks as keeping an engineering notebook, writing a research paper, planning an exhibit booth, designing a t-shirt, and preparing a marketing presentation to sell the robot.

Besides winning the overall contest at Penn State, DuBois Central Catholic also took first place in the t-shirt contest and captured the Spirit Award and Most Robust Robot honors.

After that win, the DuBois community got behind C3 Robotics to help fund their trip to Fargo. According to Korthaus, several fundraisers were held, including participation in the school's gala celebration and later hosting a spaghetti dinner.

"Many people and businesses stepped up to show their support by being a sponsor, and we exceeded the goal and actually are able to put some money aside for next year's program," Korthaus said.

The entire project, from the start, was a community effort. Ruth and Brad Pifer, parents of a fifth-grader and a 10th-grader, volunteered to head up the robotics program at the school. They sought the help of other DCC parents, Dr. Craig Stringer of Atlas Pressed Metals, and John Swalligan, a Pennsylvania Department of Transportation engineer, along with Central teachers and more parents.

It helps that the powdered metal business is a large part of the DuBois economy. Engineers from various local companies gave their advice about the robotics project, helping the team get real-world experience.

"We could not have done this without them," Korthaus said. "This brought our parents into it, our community into it, and the students, of course. This wasn't just a robotics project."



Members and advisers of the DuBois Central Catholic's robotics team pose for a photo following their first-place tie at a robotics competition at Penn State DuBois last September. The team traveled in December to Fargo, N.D., for another contest among 36 other schools from throughout the country. Pictured in the front row are: John S. Swalligan, Brad Pifer, Isaac Gray, Alex Graeca, Christopher Rhoades, Isaac Pifer and Mackenzie Park. In the middle row are: Sabrenna Starr, Sadie Peck, Trisha Gupta, Rebecca Pifer, Elizabeth Slikko, Emily Rhoades, Ruth Pifer, Carol Korthaus and Dr. Craig Stringer. In the back row are: DCC's Cardinal mascot, Zane Gaiher, Zach Vandervort, Zach Logan, Pedar Garred and John M. Swalligan Jr.

## Erie Catholic school celebrates 75th

FAITHLIFE staff

It's a family affair at Blessed Sacrament School in Erie.

Back in the 1930s, when Msgr. Daniel Magraw was just a boy, he visited and attended Mass with his sister, Joan, and her husband, Jim Jerge, who were members of the W. 26th Street parish.

"I was always impressed with the largeness of the parish and the busyness that I saw here as a child," says Msgr. Magraw, who is now pastor of Blessed Sacrament.

Msgr. Magraw's nephews graduated from Blessed Sacrament School, which was established 75 years ago this year. Even the school's current principal, Melissa Novatnack, is a graduate, Class of 1989.

"As a 'Bulldog'... I still see the dedication of our staff. I see the family aspect. We know our students. It's awesome to see past classmates who are parents of our current students," Novatnack said.

Her Bulldog heritage runs deep. Family members have attended the school back to 1959; the last of her aunts and uncles graduated in 1980.

Principal the past two years, Novatnack oversees a faculty of 28 and a pre-K to 8th grade student enrollment of 453.

Msgr. Magraw says students over the years have benefited from a strong presence of priests and sisters. Many clergy who were on the faculty of Gannon University served as pastors or on team ministries at the parish. School principals included highly educated,



Braden Nunes, a second-grader, enjoys the computer lab at Blessed Sacrament School, Erie.

**Blessed Sacrament School**  
**75th Anniversary Gala**  
 Geiger Hall  
 Blessed Sacrament Parish  
 2510 Greengarden Road, Erie  
 Jan. 31 from 7 to 10 p.m.  
 Doors open at 6:30 p.m.  
 Tickets are \$30 per person  
 For info, call 814-455-1387

excellent leaders. Msgr. Robert Barcio, who assisted at the parish and was the athletic director for many years, is in his 90s and still resides at the parish.

Blessed Sacrament was one of

the first schools in the diocese to offer a pre-school class. For many years, its Bixby Bowl, a field located just north of the church and gymnasium grounds, served as the hub of diocesan football games. Currently, the field is being used for gym classes, soccer games, recess and practice.

"It's a whole campus here," Msgr. Magraw said. He credited the parish Usher Society for its longtime support. An active advancement committee also has kept the school strong.

On Jan. 31, Blessed Sacrament is hosting its 75th Anniversary Gala at the parish.

Several people affiliated with the church and school will be

- honored that night, including:
- **Jennifer Bekko-Jauffret**, Class of 1986—Outstanding Alumni Award
  - **Marianne Fronzaglia Zimmerman**, Class of 1959—Outstanding Devotion and Dedication Award
  - **Sister Mary Alice Reed, SSJ**, former principal—Outstanding Legacy Award
  - **The Mihlisler family**—Outstanding Excellence in Teamwork Award
  - **The late Gary "Fergie" Kaiser**—Blessed Sacrament Hall of Fame
  - **The late Gerry Fagan**—Blessed Sacrament Hall of Fame.

### CATHOLIC SCHOOL STATS

A quick take on issues and statistics



Source: U.S. Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2013-2014: The Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment and Staffing (NCEA).

**Next steps toward your Laker Life**

- 2/20/15 acceptance letters mailed
- 3/1/15 tuition aid & scholarship applications due
- 3/11/15 creative arts auditions
- 3/31/15 notification of scholarships & aid
- 8/26/15 Laker Life begins

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**Sunday, January 25**  
 Noon to 2 p.m.

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# Faith 'turbo-charges' athletics



**COMMENTARY**  
**Aaron Straub**

Did you ever get behind the wheel of a sports car? Sports cars are fun and exhilarating to drive. Now turbo-charge the engine and you're driving an entirely new machine—an exciting combination of power and speed that can take your breath away.

Obviously, with that energy comes a greater responsibility to drive safely and respect the extra horsepower.

In a similar fashion, Catholic schools can turbo-charge their athletic programs...and, ultimately, the faith of participants.

Sure, all schools can compete with us on the scoreboard, but they cannot match us when it comes to the message that our coaches can deliver to student-athletes on a daily basis. The message is really a way of life that is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the values associated with our Catholic faith.

The totally healthy athlete is one who is well-adjusted in mind, body and soul. Some non-Catholic high school athletic programs may only touch on the physical and mental lessons taught through athletic competition. In Catholic schools, our coaches bring in the spiritual dimension that adds true balance for developing the complete athlete.

Building an athletic program on these three pillars allows for a strong foundation that will remain viable through victory and defeat, good times and bad, and through moments of exhilaration and times of distress.

Spirituality, or perhaps more accurately, faith-based interaction, is what turbo-charges athletic programs in Catholic schools.

By adding the spiritual component to physical training and mental conditioning, we prepare athletes to be at their best. Just as our teachers bring a vibrant spiritual message into the classroom, our coaches are able—and expected—to bring Catholic character education into the team room, weight room and locker room, as well as to the athletic field and gymnasium. Catholic schools prepare the next generation of leaders and

scholars through a curriculum based on the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

The remarkable thing is that our coaches have a secular venue to impart life-long lessons that are rooted in values of the Christian faith. We cannot miss any of these opportunities and our coaches and athletes must always be willing to step up and accept that responsibility.

*Aaron Straub is a teacher and the director of athletics at Elk County Catholic High School, St. Marys. He has overseen a successful athletic program over the past 30 years.*

## High school athletes soar at state level



- Cathedral Preparatory**
- 2013-14 state showings—football (3rd), cross-country, golf, water polo, wrestling, swimming, lacrosse, baseball (3rd), hockey (3rd), and tennis
  - 2014-15 soccer—state playoffs
  - 2014-15 cross-country, four participate at state meet

- DuBois Central Catholic High School**
- 2013-14 air rifle team—2nd place in state
  - 2013-14 state showing—track

- Elk County Catholic High School**
- 2013-14 track/field—state champion in both 800- and 1,600-meter runs; showings in the 1,600-meter run and in high jump
  - 2013-14 state showings—baseball, volleyball, golf, and girls' cross-country
  - 2013-14 boys' basketball, boys' tennis, and competition cheerleading participate at state level

- Mercyhurst Preparatory School**
- 2013-14 girls' tennis—state champions
  - 2014-15 girls' tennis—state champions
  - 2014-15 girls' tennis doubles—state champions

- Villa Maria Academy**
- 2013-14 state showings—cross-country, golf, baseball, and track/field
  - 2014-15 golf—state champions
  - 2014-15 cross-country—state champions
  - 2014-15 soccer—2nd place

## YOUNG STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

### What do Catholic schools mean to you?

"My Catholic education is important because we get to go to Mass every week and receive Holy Communion. Once in a while, we have 'Quiet Time with Jesus' in our classroom. During that time, we turn down the lights and play soft music. We can sit anywhere in the room and talk to Jesus. We also have religion class every day."

*Francesca Messina, 5th grade  
St. Peter Cathedral School, Erie*

*Caitlyn Vollmer, 4th grade  
St. Marys Catholic Elementary School,  
St. Marys*

"I very much value my Catholic education because it lets me follow the footsteps of Christ. All of our lives we learn more about Christ to better serve him and I think that Catholic schools are a great place to do that. We get to learn about Christ's childhood and do fun activities like praying the novena and having the opportunity to altar-serve. Catholic schools help our friendship with God."

*Luca Franz, 4th grade  
St. John Paul II Elementary School,  
Hermitage*

"I value my Catholic education because I learn about our creator God and how he created everyone. I also value my Catholic education because I learned how Jesus saved all of us from sin and how I can be forgiven for my sins. I like my Catholic education because we go to church with my friends and receive Communion together. I can pray together with my friends before we eat lunch."

*Ryan Work, 5th grade  
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Erie*

"I value Catholic education for many reasons. The first reason is because I love to learn about Jesus in religion

class. The second reason is when we learn about Jesus in religion class. I can learn life lessons about being nice and kind. The last reason is for praying. I can use praying for my child and adult life. Every day we learn more and more prayers."

*Francesca Messina, 5th grade  
St. Peter Cathedral School, Erie*

"I am a non-Catholic and going to St. Cosmas and Damian School has strengthened my faith! I had always wondered what 'being a Catholic' was like. Since my parents wanted me to have both a good academic and religious education, they chose this school. I love to say the rosary in religion class, and I enjoy talking with my classmates and teachers about God."

*Ty Caylor, 4th grade  
St. Cosmas and Damian School,  
Punxsutawney*

"I love going to St. Joseph's Catholic School because we get a wonderful education. We get to attend Mass and learn more about God and Jesus. We get to talk to Father Rich [Toohey] about questions we have about God and the church. The thing I like the most about St. Joseph's is that they care so much about you. If you need help with something, they go out of their way to help you."

*Lauren Walker, 5th grade  
St. Joseph School, Warren*

"There are many reasons I value my Catholic education. We get to talk about God freely. We get to pray to God every day. Everyone gets to learn about God. We are all connected to God. We have a great learning environment."

*Alec Stock, 5th grade  
DuBois Area Catholic Elementary School,  
DuBois*

## CATHOLIC SCHOOL OPEN HOUSES

- BRADFORD**
- St. Bernard Elementary/Middle School**  
450 W. Washington St.  
814-368-5302  
■ Call for private tours
- CLARION**
- Immaculate Conception School**  
728 E. Main St.  
814-226-8433  
■ Jan. 25, 9:30-11 a.m.
- CLEARFIELD**
- St. Francis School**  
230 S. Second St.  
814-765-2618  
■ Spring, to be announced
- CORRY**
- St. Thomas School**  
229 W. Washington St.  
814-869-7375  
■ Undetermined
- DuBOIS**
- DuBois Central Catholic Elementary School**  
210 Central Christian Road  
814-371-2570  
■ Jan. 25, noon-2 p.m.
- DuBois Central Catholic Middle School**  
200 Central Christian Road  
814-371-3060  
■ March 11, 7 p.m.
- DuBois Central Catholic High School**  
200 Central Christian Road  
814-371-3060  
■ March 11, 7 p.m.
- ERIE**
- Blessed Sacrament School**  
2510 Greengarden Road  
814-455-1387  
■ Jan. 25, 10 a.m.-noon
- Cathedral Preparatory School**  
225 W. 9th St.  
814-452-7137  
■ Oct. 18, noon-3 p.m.
- Holy Family School**  
1153 E. 9th St.  
814-452-4720  
■ Jan. 25, 1-2:30 p.m.
- Mercyhurst Preparatory School**  
538 E. Grandview Blvd.  
814-824-2323 (Admissions)  
■ Nov. 1, noon-3 p.m.  
(Call for information)
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel School**  
1531 E. Grandview Blvd.  
814-825-2822  
■ Jan. 29, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

- Our Lady of Peace School**  
2401 W. 38th St.  
814-838-3548  
■ Jan. 25, 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 Watsburg Road  
814-825-4238  
■ Jan. 25, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- St. George School**  
1612 Bryant St.  
814-864-4821  
■ Jan. 25, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- St. James School**  
2902 Buffalo Road  
814-899-3429  
■ Feb. 8, 1-2:30 p.m.
- St. Luke School**  
425 E. 38th St.  
814-825-7105  
■ Jan. 25, noon-2 p.m.
- St. Peter Cathedral School**  
160 W. 11th St.  
814-452-4276  
■ Jan. 25, noon-3 p.m.
- Villa Maria Academy**  
2403 W. Eighth St.  
814-838-2061  
■ Oct. 25, noon-3 p.m.
- Villa Maria Elementary School**  
2551 W. Eighth St.  
814-838-5451  
■ Jan. 25, 1-3 p.m.
- FRANKLIN**
- St. Patrick School**  
962 Buffalo St.  
814-432-8689  
■ Call for private tours
- GREENVILLE**
- St. Michael School**  
80 N. High St.  
724-588-7050  
■ Jan. 25, 12:30-2 p.m.
- HERMITAGE**
- St. John Paul II Elementary School**  
2335 Highland Road  
724-342-2205  
■ Jan. 25, noon-2 p.m.
- Kennedy Catholic Middle School**  
2120 Shenango Valley Freeway  
724-346-5531  
■ Jan. 25, 1-3:30 p.m.
- Kennedy Catholic High School**  
2120 Shenango Valley Freeway  
724-346-5531  
■ Jan. 25, 1-3:30 p.m.

- KERSEY**
- St. Boniface School**  
359 Main St.  
814-885-8093  
■ Call for private tours
- LUCINDA**
- St. Joseph School**  
72 Rectory Lane  
814-226-8018  
■ Jan. 26-28, 9 a.m.-2:30 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. 25, 1-2:30 p.m.
- OIL CITY**
- St. Stephen School**  
214 Reed St.  
814-677-3058  
■ Call for private tours
- Venango Catholic High School**  
1505 W. First St.  
814-677-3058  
■ Call for private tours
- PUNXSUTAWNEY**
- St. Cosmas & Damian School**  
205 N. Chestnut St.  
814-938-4224  
■ Jan. 25, noon-3 p.m.
- RIDGWAY**
- St. Leo School**  
125 Depot St.  
814-772-9775  
■ Call for information
- ST. MARYS**
- St. Marys Catholic Elementary School**  
114 Queens Road  
814-834-4169  
■ Jan. 28, 5:7-30 p.m.
- St. Marys Catholic Middle School**  
600 Maurus St.  
814-834-2665  
■ Jan. 28, 6-8 p.m.
- Elk County Catholic High School**  
600 Maurus St.  
814-834-7800  
■ Jan. 28, 6-8 p.m.
- WARREN**
- St. Joseph School**  
608 Pennsylvania Ave., West  
814-723-2030  
■ Feb. 1, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

**Cathedral Preparatory School**  
&  
**Villa Maria Academy**

Alternate Entrance Exam Date:  
January 24, 2015

For more information call:  
Tim Dougherty (Prep) 814-453-7737 Ext. 3  
Alicia Nelson (Villa) 814-838-2061 Ext. 3239

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