

## Passing on the faith

A look at Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie, section B.



[www.ErieRCD.org](http://www.ErieRCD.org)

# FaithLife

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

January 20, 2013

## Pro-life prayer breakfast

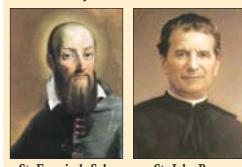
Toronto teen Lia Mills to speak at Pro-Life of Mercer County event, page 4.



## Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

### Feast days



St. Francis de Sales

St. John Bosco

Jan. 21 St. Agnes

Jan. 22 Day of prayer for the legal protection of unborn children

Jan. 23 St. Vincent

Jan. 24 St. Francis de Sales

Jan. 25 Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle

Jan. 26 Ss. Timothy and Titus

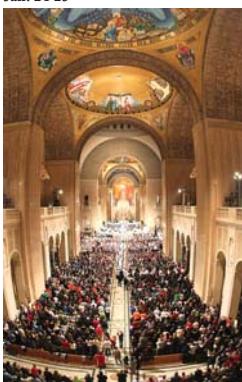
Jan. 28 St. Thomas Aquinas

Jan. 31 St. John Bosco

Feb. 2 Presentation of the Lord

Feb. 3 World Day for Consecrated Life

### National Prayer Vigil for Life – Jan. 24-25



The National Prayer Vigil for Life is an all-night pro-life prayer vigil held on the eve of the March for Life each January. More than 20,000 pilgrims from across the nation pray through the night for an end to abortion and a greater respect for all human life. It is held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

The vigil schedule will include the opening Mass in the Great Upper Church. Prayer will continue throughout the night with the national rosary for life, night prayer and holy hours for life. The prayer vigil will conclude with morning prayer, Benediction and the closing Mass the next morning.

### March for Life – Jan. 25

Thousands of pro-life activists and supporters from around the country will join the annual national March for Life in Washington, D.C. The rally begins at the National Mall and the march continues to the steps of the Supreme Court.

This year's March for Life falls several days after the 40th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

For more information, visit [www.marchforlife.org](http://www.marchforlife.org).

### Blessing of St. Michael Parish, Fryburg – Jan. 27

Bishop Lawrence Persico will celebrate Mass at St. Michael Parish in Fryburg on Sunday, Jan. 27 at 10 a.m. to recognize the recent renovations of the church. A parish social and meet-and-greet event with Bishop Persico will be held following Mass.



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## Restoring the 'Spirit of the Bayfront'

### Church restoration marks 175th anniversary of St. Patrick Parish in Erie

By Jason Koshinski  
*FaithLife editor*

ERIE — When the lights were raised at St. Patrick Parish in Erie during Christmas Eve Mass amid the blaring of trumpets and the sound of kettle drums and the pipe organ, the church's restorations were revealed for the first time and the congregation's reaction was audible.

As the notes of "O Come All Ye Faithful" came from the pipe organ, so did the gasps from parishioners.

"Wow!"

"It's so beautiful!"

"They were just blown away by it," said Msgr. Henry Kriegel, pastor of St. Patrick and St. Hedwig parishes. "It was gorgeous."

The Mass marked the first time in nearly five months parishioners could worship in their church. Since Aug. 3, Masses were moved to the parish's former Cateley Center now owned by Erie Insurance. Soon after, scaffolding was erected and pews were removed to begin a \$1 million restoration of the church.

"It's such a magnificent building to begin with," said Msgr. Kriegel, who has served as pastor since 2009. "I had asked the parish to vote on it. Everybody bought into it. We



needed to raise a million dollars and it was the easiest million dollars anybody's ever raised simply because people love the building so much."

The restoration of the church has been the highlight of the parish's 175th anniversary. In 2011, the parish published a book on its history by Msgr. Kriegel, "St. Patrick's Parish 1837-2012—175 Years Serving Erie's East Bayfront Community."

In October, the parish held an anniversary banquet at the Bayfront Convention Center. Bishop Lawrence Persico will celebrate a rededication

Mass at St. Patrick on June 23.

St. Patrick Parish, known as the "Spirit of the Bayfront," was established in 1837. The cornerstone of the current church was laid in 1903 and the first Mass took place in 1906. In 1997, a fundraising campaign was initiated to clean the exterior of the church, repair the stained glass windows and restore the life-size statuary of the Stations of the Cross, which are a popular pilgrimage spot.

"You should see this place during Lent," Msgr. Kriegel said. "There are 50 to 75 people praying the Sta-

tions at any one time."

The restoration marked the first time major interior work was done to the church since 1978 when there was a fire in the dome, Msgr. Kriegel said.

The parish hired Conrad Schmitt Studios, Inc. in Berlin, Wis., for the project. In 2011, exterior work began which involved repainting the entire

See RESTORATION, page 2

## YOUTH MINISTRY continues to 'build young disciples'

By Jason Koshinski  
*FaithLife editor*

More than 2,000 young people throughout the Diocese of Erie met Christ and experienced their faith at a youth ministry event in 2012.

More than 700 kids attended the middle school youth rally in April at St. Mark Catholic Center in Erie and nearly 500 participated in the high school youth rally in September at Elk County Catholic High School in St. Marys. Another thousand went to various events including Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI), Divine Mercy Encounter, Young Church Encounter, Adoration (YCEA), Catholic Heart Work Camp and discipleship retreats among other experiences.

The goal for 2013 is to continue to offer young peo-



ple ways to experience their faith with each other.

"We're trying to provide opportunities for parishes and schools to build young disciples," said Father Steve Schreiber, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the diocese.

Chaz Burger, a junior at West Middlesex High School, participated in Anointed, a retreat for high school boys at the St. Thomas More House of Prayer in Cranberry. Burger said



More than 700 young people attended last year's middle school youth rally. There are two youth rallies scheduled for 2013 (see youth ministry schedule on page 7).

the retreat has helped him become more courageous about proclaiming the Gospel with a deeper knowledge of how to answer questions about the faith.

"During the retreat, I've never prayed so much in my life on the weekend," he said. "I had never felt closer to Christ and to those who

share my love for him. Everything about the retreat was perfect, especially the food. I'd definitely recommend it to any guy willing to grow closer to Jesus and to eat lots of good food."

Bob McAvoy, a sophomore at Warren Area High School, attended CLI in 2012 and said it helped mold

him into a better Catholic and a better person.

"Going to CLI was one of the greatest decisions I have made in my life because it helped me realize and focus on what is really important in my life," McAvoy said. "I came to know God and myself much more by the end of the week."

Emily Solic participated in a CLI seven years ago. Solic said the retreat is still bearing fruits in her life. Currently a theology teacher at Villa Maria Academy in Erie, she now assists at CLI.

"I am continually reminded of the lessons of leadership, friendship and faith that the week provides," Solic said. "Experiencing CLI in high school undoubtedly assisted in setting a clearer path and view of the world."

See YOUTH MINISTRY, page 3

## Newtown community lifted by prayers, generosity

By Jason Koshinski  
*FaithLife editor*

An outpouring of help for Newtown, Conn., where a horrific school shooting took place Dec. 14, from the Catholic community has lifted the town.

Rodd Blessey, a youth minister at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Newtown, said the outreach has been inspiring.

"Certainly we've been lifted up in prayer, but the generosity is amazing," Blessey said.

People from the parish, the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn., the state and beyond are responding to the aftermath of the tragic deaths at Sandy Hook Elementary School, he said.

"We've had a tremendous amount of calls from people all over the world, an email from the pope and letters and gifts sent through the parish for the affected families and children in general," he said. Rosaries and stuffed



Kindergarten (pictured) and 1st grade students at St. Michael School in Greenville made prayer pillows for the families that lost a loved one in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

Prior to sending them, students said a prayer for the families and victims. The 3rd grade class made rosary beads for parents who lost a child in the attack.

animals are among the items received at the parish.

During the Christmas season, St. Ann Church in Erie set up a pictorial memorial next to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary statues. Parishioners committed to lighting 26 candles and kept them burning in memory of the 26 victims.

"The Christmas season is an extended season in the

Catholic Church," said Father Jerry Priscaro, a priest in residence at St. Ann.

"The season celebrates the birth of the Christ child, the feast of the Holy Family and the feast of the Holy innocents."

We felt that with the tying of those themes and given what happened to these families and these children, they

See NEWTOWN, page 3

## Faith magazine offering Year of Faith pilgrimage to Italy

If travel to Italy has been on your bucket list, it's time to save the dates and start saving your money. *Faith* magazine is going to lead a 10-day pilgrimage to Florence, Siena, Assisi and Rome Sept. 12-21.

"Many tour companies have approached us about doing a pilgrimage over the years," said Anne-Marie Welsh, editor of *Faith* magazine, who has engaged the services of Unitours, Inc., to design a custom-made, unforgettable tour.

"After we published our issue covering the 'ad limina' visit in Rome last year, people asked if we were ever going to offer a tour. So when Pope Benedict declared the Year of Faith, the timing seemed ideal."

The Most Rev. Lawrence Persico, bishop of Erie, hopes to be able to meet the group while pilgrims are in Rome. "The bishop's schedule is intense," Welsh said, "but we are making the trip with his blessing. And while we can't confirm, we hope our pilgrimage will coincide with a seminar he expects to attend in Rome next fall. It would be the icing on

the cake if we are able to have Mass with Bishop Persico while in Rome, and we're going to do everything we can to make that happen." Father Edward Lohse, former chancellor of the Diocese of Erie who is now working with the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome, also

See PILGRIMAGE, page 3

**IN THE U.S.**

**■ 40 years after Roe v. Wade, pro-life movement strengthens its resolve**

Forty years after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortions, the pro-life movement hasn't stepped back in its resolve to see the decision reversed. Each year near Jan. 22, the day of the Roe vs. Wade and Doe vs. Bolton decisions on abortion, tens of thousands of protesters march in Washington and San Francisco and also take part in local events across the country hoping to change abortion laws. This year will be no exception. The annual March for Life in Washington will take place Friday, Jan. 25 — instead of Jan. 22 — to accommodate participants because the anniversary date is the day after public ceremonies for the presidential inauguration, which would have made it difficult to secure enough hotel rooms for the thousands expected to descend on the nation's capital.

Jeanne Monihan, the new president of the March for Life Education & Defense Fund, which organizes and runs the rally and march each year in Washington, said hotels reserved for march participants filled a month earlier than usual, serving as just one indication that this year's event will draw record crowds.

**■ Pennsylvania to join federal exchange; impact on abortion issue unclear**

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett announced Dec. 12 that the state would not set up its own health insurance exchange and instead join the federal exchange, which will cover elective abortions. Just how the decision will impact such issues as abortion was not totally clear. At the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation, legislative director Maria Vital Gallagher said she thinks states can opt out of abortion coverage in the federal exchange. Douglas Johnson, legislative director for National Right to Life in Washington, said that although the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will cover abortions, individual states can pass a law to opt out of abortion coverage if the state has decided not to set up its own insurance exchange program.

Under the wording of the law it doesn't matter whether the state or the federal government runs the exchange program. At least 15 states have already done this, he said, adding that "it has to be a well-drafted opt-out law." Unless the state legislatures do this, abortion will be covered under the law. In Pennsylvania, the state Catholic conference, after consultation with its attorneys, believes the opt-out is possible. The conference, which is the public policy arm of the state's bishops, is urging the Legislature to draft legislation for it, but nothing can happen until lawmakers reconvene in January.



Young people walk with a banner at the start last year's March for Life in Washington.

**AROUND THE WORLD**

**■ Irish government announces plans to legalize abortion, with limits**

The Irish government has announced plans to legalize abortion in limited circumstances, but Minister for Health James Reilly insisted his bill "will take full account of the equal right to life of the unborn child." The announcement contradicts a 2011 campaign promise by Prime Minister Enda Kenny that his government would not introduce abortion in the predominantly Catholic country. In a statement, Ireland's four top Catholic churchmen said everyone should be concerned by the announcement.

"If what is being proposed were to become law, the careful balance between the equal right to life of a mother and her unborn child in current law and medical practice in Ireland would be fundamentally changed. It would pave the way for the direct and intentional killing of unborn children. This can never be morally justified in any circumstances," said their statement. They said human dignity depended on "our respect for the right to life of every person from the moment of conception to natural death. The right to life is the most fundamental of all rights. It is the very basis for every other right we enjoy as persons." They also urged that, when the legislation is introduced, lawmakers be allowed to vote according to their consciences.

**PEOPLE**

**■ Pope advances sainthood causes of Pope Paul VI, more than 850 others**

Pope Benedict XVI advanced the sainthood cause of Pope Paul VI by recognizing the Italian pope as having lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way. He also recognized a miracle attributed to the intercession of an Italian martyr who, with an estimated 800 other people, died at the hands of Ottoman invaders in 1571, and he recognized a miracle attributed to the first blessed to be born, live and die in Colombia, Blessed Mother Laura Montoya. They now can be declared saints. The pope also formally recognized the martyrdom of 33 victims of the Spanish Civil War and advanced the causes of 18 other men and women.

During a meeting Dec. 20 with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, the pope signed the decree approving the heroic virtues of Pope Paul VI, making him "venerable." Before Pope Paul can be beatified, the Vatican must recognize that a miracle has occurred through his intercession. Born Giovanni Battista Montini 1897 in the northern Italian province of Brescia, Pope Paul VI is probably best remembered for seeing the Second Vatican Council through to its end and helping implement its far-reaching reforms. He is also well remembered as the author of "Humanum Vitae," his 1968 encyclical reaffirming church teaching that artificial birth control is intrinsically wrong, which became a focus of controversy and control.



Pope Paul VI

## By the Way...

Two Catholic elementary schools in Erie have plans to recognize the Sisters of St. Joseph for their years of ministry in Catholic education.



Jason Koshinski

Villa Maria Elementary School will host "Legacy of Love—A Night Honoring Sister Margaret Frank, SSJ" on April 20 at the Ambassador in Erie. Sister Margaret served as VME's principal for nearly 35 years. For more information on the event, contact Jessica Nelson, VME's director of development, at 814.838.5451 Ext. 223 or e-mail jessica.nelson@eriemlementary.com.

Our Lady's Christian School will celebrate the ministry of its SSJ teachers at the school's Legacy Celebration on May 11. To show the sisters how many lives they've touched through their love, dedication, counsel and teaching, OLC is asking its alumni to send in their stories—poignant or funny. Anecdotes should be sent to Judy Vorisek, OLC development director, at vorisek@olc-erie.com or Advancement Office, Our Lady's Christian School, 606 Lowell Ave., Erie, PA 16505.

Helen Trocki, 97, died Dec. 18, but the work of her hands will live on in the prayers of young people throughout the Diocese of Erie. Over the years, Trocki made more than 46,000 rosaries for the Rosaries for Kids program. According to Trocki's family, her final tally was 46,586. A member of St. George Parish in Erie, she was a recipient of the Bishop's Commendation for Service award in 2011.

We last saw her Dec. 7 when she visited the diocese's administrative offices at St. Mark Catholic Center along with Steve Cash of the Knights of Columbus and Margie Walsh of the World Apostolate of Fatima, organizations which co-sponsor Rosaries for Kids. They asked Bishop Lawrence Persico to bless the latest batch of rosaries that will be given to students at our Catholic schools and religious education programs.

We offer our condolences to several clergy and religious who lost siblings. Eleanor Tarasovich, sister of Father Donald Berdis, Sister Audrey Berdis, OSB, and Sister Kevin Berdis, OSF, died Dec. 28. Mary Miklos, sister of Msgr. Charles Murcko, died Jan. 10.

In our conversation with Bishop Persico on the mission of Catholic schools (see Catholic Schools insert), he spoke about his Catholic education experiences growing up. His home parish of St. Cajetan in Monessen built an elementary school when he was entering second grade. From then on, he went to Catholic schools.

St. Cajetan was staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph from Baden, and he had the sisters in all of the grades except one. He attended St. Joseph Hall, the diocesan high school seminary in Greensburg, which included a combination of priest, lay people and women religious teachers. Then it was off to seminary.

"I'm a product of Catholic schools," he says.

*Jason Koshinski is editor of FaithLife. Contact him at [jkoshinski@eriercd.org](mailto:jkoshinski@eriercd.org) or 814.824.1171.*

## Church restoration marks 175th anniversary of St. Patrick Parish in Erie

RESTORATION, from page 1

ish.

building, structural work and the cleaning and painting of the windowsills.

In August, interior work began. Areas with peeled and cracked paint were repainted and cracks in the plaster were repaired. The top portions of a number of columns were cut and replaced. LED bulbs now light the sanctuary dome and other parts of the ceiling. Gold leafing was done on column tops and arches. The church's green carpeting has been replaced with new white marble. Worn out pew cushions have been replaced by new ones covered in stain-resistant fabric. The parish also added a new air conditioning system.

Parishioner Chip Wachter volunteered to be on the church building and grounds committee. Wachter is also an architect with Kidder Wachter Architecture & Design. The history of the church is important to him. His father's family was baptized there and his wife's family is also from the parish.

Mary McCarthy said her favorite part of the restoration was the painting of the words "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus" separated by shamrocks over the main altar.

A lifelong parishioner, McCarthy served on the Stations of the Cross and windows committee.

"I was so awed by it," she said of her reaction to seeing the final product. "I was very relieved that



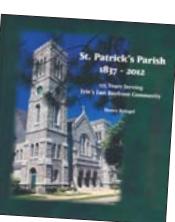
The first Mass at the newly restored St. Patrick Parish was celebrated on Christmas Eve, five months after interior work began in the church.

the important parts were still kept. Some of the features really stand out. There's enough contrast so it's not distract but brings forth the intricate and exquisite work that was done years ago. The lighting is really amazing, especially on the Stations of the Cross. When you look at the life-size statues, they really come to life."

In his Christmas Eve homily, Msgr. Kriegel called the church "a gift to the City of Erie" and spoke about it revitalizing the neighborhood. The parish has nearly 600 registered families, with many younger families and young professionals finding a spiritual home in the faith community. Many of them volunteer at the parish food pantry, which feeds 800 families a week, he said.

"I think I've had more fun than I've ever had in my priesthood," Msgr. Kriegel said of his pastoral assignment. "It's a neat group of people with no egos. They have just a great sense of Irish humor to themselves and they're very faith filled."

He said the restoration has made the parish an even more vi-



"St. Patrick's Parish 1837-2012—175 Years Serving Erie's East Bayfront Community," a history of the parish written by Msgr. Henry Kriegel, is available at the parish by calling 814.454.8085.

brant place.

"I think it has not only been a shot in the arm for me to see it restored, but certainly for the parish as a whole," he said.

**FaithLife**  
The official news bulletin of the Catholic Diocese of Erie  
Volume 9, Issue 1  
General Information: (814) 824-1161  
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Advertising: (814) 824-1168

Member of the Catholic Press Association.  
Published bi-monthly. Owned and operated by the Bishop of Erie.  
Subscription \$10/year.  
For more information, call (814) 824-1161.

The Office of Communications has been established in the Diocese of Erie since 1992. Office located at St. Mark Catholic Center, 429 East Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA. Periodical postage paid at Erie, PA.  
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**Holy Land:** Apr. 11-19, Apr. 18-26, Apr. 25-May 2...  
**Spain/Andalucia:** Apr. 1-14, Apr. 8-21, Apr. 15-28, Apr. 22-May 9, Apr. 29-May 12, May 6-19, May 13-26...  
**Italy South:** Apr. 27-May 6, May 4-16, May 11-23...  
**Austria/Germany/Switzerland:** May 4-16, Jul. 6-18...  
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2 p.m. Selah Praise Band Renegade Roosters  
3 p.m. Leaving September 5 p.m. Burnett, Firth & Moore  
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Scripture shirts available.  
Admission: \$2 adults, free for children and students  
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# Catholic schools

A FAITHLIFE SPECIAL SECTION

JANUARY 20, 2013

SECTION  
B

## Catholic school Open Houses

### BRADFORD

**St. Bernard School**  
450 W. Washington St.  
814.368.5302  
Tours offered Jan. 28-Feb. 1  
Registration Feb. 25-March 1

### CLARION

**Immaculate Conception School**  
729 E. Main St.  
814.226.8433  
To visit, contact school

### CLEARFIELD

**St. Francis School**  
230 S. Second St.  
814.765.2618  
Jan. 29 from 9-11 a.m.

### CORRY

**St. Thomas School**  
229 W. Washington St.  
814.665.7375  
Jan. 27 from 12-2 p.m.

### DUBOIS

**DuBois Area Catholic Elementary School**  
200 Central Christian Road  
814.371.2570  
Jan. 27 from 1-3 p.m.

**DuBois Area Catholic Middle School**  
200 Central Christian Road  
814.371.3060  
March 6 at 7 p.m.

**DuBois Acrean Catholic High School**  
200 Central Christian Road  
814.371.3060  
March 6 at 7 p.m.

### ERIE

**Blessed Sacrament School**  
2510 Greengarden Blvd.  
814.455.1387  
Jan. 27 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Cathedral Preparatory School**  
225 W. Ninth St.  
814.453.7737  
Alternate entrance exam date Jan. 26

**Holy Family School**  
1153 E. Ninth St.  
814.452.4720  
Jan. 27 from 1-3 p.m.

**Mercyhurst Preparatory School**  
538 E. Grandview Blvd.  
814.824.2210  
Shadow a student in January  
Call 814.824.2323 to schedule

**Our Lady of Mount Carmel School**  
1531 E. Grandview Blvd.  
814.825.2822  
Jan. 31 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

**Our Lady of Peace School**  
2401 W. 38th St.  
814.838.3548  
Jan. 27 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Our Lady's Christian School**  
606 Lowell Ave.  
814.838.7676  
Jan. 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**St. Boniface School**  
9363 Wattsburg Road  
814.825.4238  
Jan. 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**St. George School**  
1612 Bryant St.  
814.864.4821  
Jan. 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**St. James School**  
2602 Buffalo Road  
814.899.3429  
Feb. 3 from 1-3 p.m.

**St. Luke School**  
425 E. 38th St.  
814.825.7105  
Jan. 27 from 12-2 p.m.

**St. Peter Cathedral School**  
160 W. 11th St.  
814.452.4276  
Jan. 27 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

See OPEN HOUSES, page 4B

## Passing on the faith—the mission of Catholic schools

By Jason Koshinski  
*FaithLife editor*

Any school will give its graduates a diploma. But it's only at a Catholic school were a young person is given the gift of faith.

The Declaration on Christian Education of the Second Vatican Council reminds us that the aim of Catholic schools is to create an atmosphere enveloped by the Gospel:

"If our schools are not Christ-centered, they don't deserve our support," said Father Nicholas Rouch, the Diocese of Erie's vicar for Education. "If they are, they deserve our best effort and plenty of sacrifice."

Catholic Schools Week will be celebrated Jan. 27-Feb. 2. Schools typically celebrate the week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and the community at large.

Catholic schools, along with religious education, are both important aspects of Catholic education, said Bishop Lawrence Persico.



Bishop Lawrence Persico greets students at DuBois Area Catholic School.

Bishop Lawrence Persico

"However, with Catholic schools, they have some dimensions that religious education will never have," Bishop Persico said. "Catholic

schools, you have the student all day. They can really be formed. Catholic schools should form the person in their faith, in academics and just all around improvement of the person."

It's the formation of the total person in mind, body and soul."

That's why it's important, he added, that those who teach about the faith in Catholic schools be dedicated to the faith.

"They set an example for the students to be committed to their faith," he said.

The Diocese of Erie is very fortunate in having a long tradition of Catholic education, Bishop Persico said, attributing that to Archbishop John Gannon.

"He saw the need and the importance because it's within the Catholic school that you form a person from kindergarten and earlier into the responsible, Catholic adult that you can be."

Times have changed certainly. The notion of every parish having its own school is not financially possible.

"We have to adapt to the times so that we can maintain the ministry

See MISSION, page 4B

## Priests, religious provide faith-filled presence at Catholic schools

On any given day, Father Matthew Ruyechan can be found eating lunch with the students at St. Stephen School in Oil City.

"The kindergarten kids are a hoot-and-a-half," said Father Ruyechan, pastor of St. Stephen Parish in Oil City and parochial administrator of St. Venantius in Rouserville.

Like many pastors, he is a priestly presence at the local school. He makes the short trek across the sidewalk daily, sometimes more than once, and checks in with Principal Marge Hajduk. He walks the halls and peeks in the classrooms to say hello. He also teaches when he is invited to do so.

"It's a different world over there," Father Ruyechan said of his school visits. "If you're having a bad day at the rectory, you can always find something good happening at the school. It's a real sense of family."

St. Stephen has students from a broad area, he said, not just Oil City. "Nobody's left out and nobody's a stranger," he added.

Father Ruyechan said it's important for the students to have an impression of a priest not just praying or sitting in the rectory but someone who is also their friend and enjoys their company. "You just try to be as human and sweet to them as possible," he said.

Whether his presence will yield any vocations to the priesthood, he said "only time will tell about that."

Sister Linda Ann Fusco, SSJ, said the students in her fourth grade class at Blessed Sacrament School in Erie always have good questions for her.

"They're surprised to find out that sisters have Super Bowl parties or that I know a Taylor Swift song," Sister Linda said. "I find it fun actually to talk about who I am and why I'm a sister. They like hearing about the sisters' jobs. They're learning about who I am."

Sister Linda has taught math, social studies and religion at Blessed Sacrament School for 17 years. In a recent class about the sacraments, she talked about anointing of the sick and how at the Sisters of St. Joseph Community Living Center when a sister is dying, the sisters gather and pray for her.

"I tell them how important prayer is," she said. "I tell them I pray before school and in the evening and how I take more time on Sunday morning for quiet time."

She guides her students through a reflection and then has them journal about the theme. For the school's vocation cross program, two representatives from different classrooms each receive a cross on the first Friday of the month



Father Michael Ferrick, president of the Elk County Catholic School System and pastor of Queen of the World Parish in St. Marys, greets students daily upon their arrival.

at the school Mass as a reminder to pray for vocations.

"We talk about different vocations—marriage, priest, religious—

how each one serves the people of God in a different way," Sister Linda said. "I serve God as a teacher in the classroom."

### Tuition assistance

The Diocese of Erie annually provides nearly \$2 million in tuition assistance for elementary and secondary schools. Individual schools also sponsor tuition assistance programs. For information on school-based tuition assistance, contact the school directly.

Students may be eligible for two separate scholarship programs offered by the diocese: The Bishop's Tuition Assistance Program and the STAR Foundation. Applicants only need to apply once to be eligible for both programs.

**Bishop's Tuition Assistance Program**  
This program provides financial aid for students in need who wish to attend one of the diocese's seven secondary schools. Awards are based solely on financial need.

**STAR Foundation**  
Businesses can receive credits for certain types of taxes paid to the state by making a contribution to the STAR Foundation of the Diocese of Erie. Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program allows businesses to receive up to 90 percent of their contribution in tax credits. Businesses may also benefit by participating in the Pledge in the Preschools program. The STAR Foundation allocates the contributed funds to children of qualified families whose children are enrolled in a Catholic school within the diocese.

Tuition aid application forms for 2013-14 are available by calling the Catholic Schools Office at 814.824.1220 or online at [www.enrcd.org/schools.asp](http://www.enrcd.org/schools.asp). Application due dates are March 1 and March 31.

### By the numbers

For the 2012-13 school year

#### ENROLLMENT

- Total Catholic school enrollment in the Diocese of Erie (all schools): 8,429
- Total enrollment K-12: 7,282
- Elementary school enrollment: 4,663
- Middle school enrollment: 338
- Secondary school enrollment: 2,281
- Total enrollment Pre-K, 1,147 (28 elementary schools have a Pre-K program)
- Total parochial students (K-12) in the City of Erie = 2,462
- Total parochial students (K-12) in Erie County = 4,394 (includes city total)
- Total parochial students (K-12) in remaining 12 counties = 2,888

#### DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

- Catholic, non-Catholic and minority student enrollment
- Elementary level: 87.4% majority, 12.6% minority; 81% Catholic, 19% non-Catholic
- Secondary level: 84.8% majority, 15.2% minority; 79.4% Catholic, 20.6% non-Catholic

#### SCHOOLS

- 38 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie
- 28 elementary schools
- 3 middle schools
- 7 secondary schools

#### PROFESSIONAL STAFF

- 710 professional employees (approximate) in our Catholic schools
- 660 teachers (full and part time)
- 426 elementary school teachers
- 31 middle school teachers
- 203 secondary school teachers
- 98 percent are laity
- 2 percent are religious/clergy
- Student/teacher ratio is 13:1

## Lessons in service

A commitment to service is at the heart of the Gospel message and Catholic schools strengthen that commitment.

Many of our Catholic elementary schools have grade-level service requirements for their students which can range from five hours per student for the primary grades (1-4) and up to 20 hours per student in the upper grades (5-8).

All Catholic high schools have a service requirement for their students, which varies from school to school. For example, Catholic high schools in the City of Erie require 25 hours per student per year of service work. Most students compile more than the 100-hour minimum requirement during their high school years.



The 1st grade class at St. Joseph School in Lucinda recently completed a service project for a school family with a preschooler who has been diagnosed with leukemia. The family travels for chemotherapy treatments, so students donated a gas card. For the student, they collected games, coloring books, crayons and puzzles. They also prayed for the family concerning their travels and hospital visits.



The Elk County Catholic High School senior class spent a fall day at Parker Dam State Park removing brush, planting trees, cleaning up litter and performing a variety of other tasks as its annual service-oriented retreat. The day's theme was "Faith" and class members wore T-shirts printed with the words "Live Like That," a song by the Sidewalk Prophets that talks about devoting oneself to God and others. The seniors also had the opportunity to participate in a Mass together.

## PACE program helps teachers, strengthens classrooms

Lindsey Lynch is in her second year of teaching at St. Peter Cathedral School in Erie. While gaining valuable experience in the classroom, she is simultaneously working toward her master's degree.

Lynch is one of six teachers in the Diocese of Erie who are part of the Partnership for Advancement of Catholic Education (PACE). The program is a partnership with the diocese, one of its Catholic elementary schools and Gannon University.

The purpose of PACE is to attract and retain talented teachers who want to teach in a Catholic school.

In two years, PACE participants not only acquire teaching experience but also complete a state-recognized induction program toward a Level II teaching certificate and receive a master's in education from Gannon.

"I knew I wanted to teach as soon as I completed my undergrad," said Lynch, 23. "But I also wanted to get my master's."

In May, she will receive her master's in curriculum and instruc-



tion. In addition, she plans on pursuing an additional degree as a reading specialist.

PACE participants receive a stipend for teaching and expenses for their coursework at Gannon and are paid by the school and diocese.

"I love everything about my school," Lynch said. "As a younger teacher, I think I can relate to the students so much more."

After teaching third grade last year, she switched to second grade for 2012-13.

In addition to her teaching duties, she is also the cheerleading coach at St. Peter Cathedral School.

She said she plans on continuing to be an elementary school teacher once she finishes the program.

## Academic excellence

Diocesan students in grades 2-8 participated in standardized testing annually, taking the Stanford 10 test each October. The Stanford 10 is an up-to-date, rigorous test that challenges students while providing parents and teachers with important information about each student's academic strengths and areas of concern.

Students made considerable gains in this year's Stanford scores. Diocesan 7th and 8th graders made an overall increase of 11 percent over last year's scores. The 7th and 8th graders scored at the 80th percentile in the complete battery of Stanford 10 assessments. This means that 80 percent of the students nationally scored at or below the scores Catholic school students in the



Diocese of Erie received. This year's diocesan scores were all above the 50th percentile.

For questions about standardized testing in diocesan Catholic schools, contact Kim Lyle, director of curriculum at the Catholic Schools Office at 814.824.1248.





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**#1**  
**ERIE'S EASTSIDE  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Holy Family School**  
814-452-4720, 1153 East 9th Street  
**Sunday, January 27, 2013**  
Opening Liturgy at noon  
followed by Open House until 3:00 p.m.  
Group tours available. Children can shadow at any time.  
*"We are ALL pencils in the hand of GOD." -Mother Teresa*

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**Open House**  
**January 27, 2013**  
**11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

9363 Wattsburg Road  
Erie, PA 16509  
(814) 825-4238  
[www.stbonifaceschool.com](http://www.stbonifaceschool.com)

**Our Lady of Peace  
SCHOOL**

**Open House**  
Preschool-8th Grade  
Sunday, January 27, 2013  
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.



Ability to register for 2013-2014 school year at Open House

- Must have:
- Completed application
- Birth certificate
- Baptismal certificate (if applicable)
- Immunization records
- \$50 Registration fee

Over \$120,000 in Tuition Assistance available for the 2013-2014 school year

2401 W. 38th Street, Erie, PA 16506  
[www.olpcrusaders.org](http://www.olpcrusaders.org) • 814-838-3548

Join us at Mass January 26th at 5:00 p.m. or January 27th at 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., or 11:00 a.m. to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week

**Our Lady of Mount Carmel School**  
Celebrating 50 years of Catholic Education

Visit our Open House  
**Thursday, January 31**  
5:30-7:30 P.M.

1531 East Grandview Blvd.  
Erie, Pa. 16510

For more information,  
contact OLMC school office 814-825-2822

**Blessed Sacrament School**  
2510 Greengarden Rd., Erie, PA 16502  
814-455-1387 / [sherik@bserie.org](mailto:sherik@bserie.org)



**Open House: Sunday, January 27**  
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Preschool through 8th grade. Meet teachers, students and faculty.  
[www.bserie.org](http://www.bserie.org)

**OPEN HOUSE**  
**Sunday, January 27, 2013**  
**12:00-2:00pm**

• Register during Open House  
and receive \$500 off tuition! •

**Saint Luke School**  
the core of Catholic education

425 East 38th Street • Erie, Pennsylvania 16504 • (814) 825-7105 • [www.slserie.org](http://www.slserie.org)  
\*New Families only registering for Kindergarten through 8th grade

# Pilot program gives students quality ART EXPERIENCE

On Monday through Thursday, Nikol Lybrook teaches to her classroom students at St. Luke School in Erie. On Friday, her art room is empty. But she still teaches art. On this day, her students are at schools throughout the diocese.

"Does anyone have any questions?" Lybrook asks from her easel while scanning the large TV monitor where she can see students in classrooms from St. Boniface School in Erie and St. Gregory School in North East that are watching her instructions.

On the Friday two weeks before Christmas, she was instructing students on how to draw Santa Claus in his sleigh.

The broadcast art class, which began in October, is a way for schools to share resources, said Kim Lytle, director of Curriculum and Teacher Personnel for the Diocese of Erie's Catholic schools.

"Nikol is a talented teacher. For schools that might not have a budget for a full-time art teacher, this is a great way for students to experience a quality art class," Lytle said.

Lybrook sends lesson plans and supplies to participating schools. Aside from asking questions of Lybrook, students also have access to their own teachers during class time.

"The 7th and 8th grade students are really into drawing," Lybrook said. "We also do a lot of three-dimensional art."

Students work in a number of mediums including oil and chalk pastels. They also learn blending techniques. Lybrook will also enter some of her students' work in local shows.

"Students who normally wouldn't be involved with an art show will get that experience," she said.



"For schools that might not have a budget for a full-time art teacher, this is a great way for students to experience a quality art class,"

— Kimberly Lytle,  
Director of Curriculum  
and Teacher Personnel

## ATHLETICS

Catholic schools offer the opportunity to form the entire person—spirit, mind and body.

The diocesan Office of Athletic Programs provides for the Christian education and formation of diocesan students through athletics. The programs strive to teach Christian values in competition.

A number of Catholic schools participate in the Play Like a Champion Today (PLC) series from the University of Notre Dame. The program embodies Christian values within the context of organized sports. As the



Cathedral Prep captured the 2012 PIAA Class AAA football championship Dec. 14 with a 24-14 victory over Archbishop Wood. The win capped a perfect season for Prep, which set a school record for victories in a season (15-0).



The Our Lady of Peace School girls' basketball team represented the Diocese of Erie in the 2012 parochial state championships. After winning the diocesan championship, OLP made it all the way to the state final.

**The Central Difference:**  
Learn Well. Live Well.  
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*Home of the Cardinals*

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Pre-K thru 5th Middle/High School  
814.371.2570 814.371.3060

[www.duboiscentralcatholic.com](http://www.duboiscentralcatholic.com)  
DuBois Area Catholic School, Inc.

**Elk County Catholic School System**  
Information Night  
Tuesday, January 29, 2013

St. Marys Catholic Elementary | 6 - 7:30 p.m.  
St. Marys Catholic Middle | 7 - 8:30 p.m.  
Elk County Catholic High | 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Directors of Admissions  
Mrs. Bridget Roberts, Elem/Middle | (814)-834-4169  
Mr. Wee J. Fernan, High | (814)-834-7800

Please visit [www.eccss.org](http://www.eccss.org) for more information!

**The Heart of the Erie Diocese**  
**St. Peter Cathedral School**  
Established in 1896

You'll find your home at our  
**Open House**  
Sunday, Jan. 27, 2013  
9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Catch the Spirit

Where we begin and end each day in prayer!  
160 West 11th St., Erie, Pennsylvania (814) 452-4276  
[www.StPeterCathedral.com](http://www.StPeterCathedral.com)

*"We measure our success by the success of our graduates."*

**The Villa Difference**  
Co-Ed Preschool through 8th Grade!  
**Villa Maria Elementary School**  
Founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1902

Open House  
Sunday, Jan. 27  
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
[www.vmlelementary.com](http://www.vmlelementary.com)

Come be part of our family!

**St. Boniface School**  
Kessey

Registration will be held during CSW. Call  
814-885-8093

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ONE FAMILY...  
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1892

**CATHEDRAL PREPARATORY SCHOOL**  
1921

Safe

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YOU!

Open House - March 12, 6 to 9 p.m. • Tour anytime  
Financial aid available (applications due 3/31)

**VENANGO CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

[venangocatholic.org](http://venangocatholic.org) • [venangocatholic.com](http://venangocatholic.com)

**Saint Leo School: The Journey Begins Here.**

Registration February 3rd and 4th, 2013  
125 Depot Street, Ridgway PA 15853  
(814) 772-9775  
[steoschoolridgway.com](http://steoschoolridgway.com)

## Open Houses

OPEN HOUSES, from page 1B

ERIE (continued)

**Villa Maria Academy**  
2403 W. Eighth St.  
814.838.2061  
Alternate entrance exam date Jan. 26

**Villa Maria Elementary School**  
2551 W. Eighth St.  
814.838.5451  
Jan. 27 from 1-3 p.m.

FRANKLIN

**St. Patrick School**  
952 Buffalo St.  
814.432.8689  
To visit, call school

GREENVILLE

**St. Michael School**  
80 N. High St.  
724.588.7050  
Jan. 31 from 6-8 p.m.

HERMITAGE

**Blessed John Paul II Elementary School**  
2335 Highland Road  
724.342.2205  
Offering visits Jan. 31 from 9-11 a.m.

**Kennedy Catholic Middle School**  
2120 Shenango Valley Freeway  
724.346.5531  
Offering visits Jan. 31 from 9-11 a.m.

**Kennedy Catholic High School**  
2120 Shenango Valley Freeway  
724.346.5531  
Offering visits Jan. 31 from 9-11 a.m.

KERSEY

**St. Boniface School**  
359 Main St.  
814.885.8093  
Jan. 28 from 10-11 a.m.  
Jan. 30 from 11-11:45 a.m.  
Jan. 31 from 10-11 a.m.

LUCINDA

**St. Joseph School**  
72 Rectory Lane  
814.226.8018  
Offering visits Jan. 28-Feb. 1  
from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

MEADVILLE

**Seton Catholic School**  
385 Pine St.  
814.336.2320  
March 6 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

NORTH EAST

**St. Gregory School**  
140 W. Main St.  
814.725.4571  
Jan. 27 from 1-3 p.m.

OIL CITY

**St. Stephen School**  
214 Reed St.  
814.677.3035  
To visit, call school

**Venango Catholic High School**  
1505 W. First St.  
814.677.3098  
March 12 from 6-9 p.m.

PUNXSUTAWNEY

**Ss. Cosmas and Damian School**  
205 N. Chestnut St.  
814.938.4224  
Jan. 27 from 12-2 p.m.

RIDGWAY

**St. Leo School**  
125 Depot St.  
814.772.9775  
Registration Feb. 3-4

ST. MARYS

**Erie County Catholic High School**  
600 Mauris St.  
814.834.7800  
Jan. 29 from 7-8:30 p.m.

**St. Marys Catholic Elementary School**  
114 Queens Road  
814.834.4169  
Jan. 29 from 6-7:30 p.m.

**St. Marys Catholic Middle School**  
325 Church St.  
814.834.2665  
Jan. 29 from 7-8:30 p.m.

WARREN

**St. Joseph School**  
608 Pennsylvania Ave., West  
814.723.2030  
Jan. 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

## Passing on the faith—the mission of Catholic schools

MISSION, from page 1B

of Catholic schools," Bishop Persico said. "The mission has not changed—to form young people, their minds and their souls. What's changed is how we're going to accomplish it."

Challenges regarding enrollment and finances need to be addressed head on, Father Rouch said, and some difficult decisions will need to be made.

"Yet the goal remains the same—providing a quality education, in a faith-filled Catholic atmosphere, for as many children as possible," he said.

Catholic schools are noted for strong academics and implementing technology into the classroom. But what Catholic schools have that no other schools have is a Catholic identity.

"Any school can do the academic

piece and the technology piece, but not any school can do the Catholic faith piece," Bishop Persico said. "And that's primary. That's why Catholic schools exist—to pass on the faith."

After the family home and Sunday Mass at the parish, the Catholic school is the best environment to form young minds and souls in Christian virtue. Father Rouch said.

"Where else can we expose our children to so much faith, truth, prayer,

discipline and respect for one another?" he added. "Catholic schools also present us with the powerful grace of regular Mass and confession."

Catholic schools would not be possible without the investment of parents, the commitment of parishes and the sacrifice and dedication of teachers and staff.

"We have to thank these people for their support of Catholic schools," Bishop Persico said.

The word on Catholic schools from the hallway

### Q: What do you like about attending a Catholic school?



"I like my school because I have more one-on-one time with my teachers. Not only do we learn basic subjects, we also learn valuable morals and lessons from having religion class and going to Mass every week."



"The compassionate presence that is shown everyday in the Mercyhurst community is something special. God and the church are part of our everyday teenage lives and not just something we only think about on Sundays."

Katie Conti  
11th grade  
Mercyhurst Preparatory School, Erie



"I chose Venango Catholic for a better education and to practice my faith better. I hope more people come here and choose a Catholic education."

Nathan Dudzic  
10th grade  
Venango Catholic High School, Oil City



"I love going to a Catholic school because I think it has more to offer. I really enjoy coming here because it's fun. I also feel safe when I come to school, and I'm getting a great education. ECC is preparing me well for college."

Madeline Aiello  
9th grade  
Elk County Catholic High School, St. Marys



"I like attending Central because of the friendly atmosphere and safe environment where I can both express my faith and enjoy learning."

Alex Marshall  
10th grade  
Dubois Central Catholic High School



"I like many things about my Catholic education at St. Francis School. The main things are that it builds a strong background in the Catholic faith and that it teaches important life values."

Jaclyn Freeman  
7th grade  
St. Francis School, Clearfield



"I like all the teachers. They are nice and help me understand things I'm confused with. Also, my classmates are nice and funny. Above all, I like learning about God. I like the morning prayers, Masses, praise and worship and religion class."

Emmie Parkin  
6th grade  
Villa Maria Elementary School, Erie



"St. Mike's gives me a chance to pray every day and learn about God all the time. I love our priests at St. Mike's also."

Thomas Rainey  
4th grade  
St. Michael School, Greenville

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK JAN. 27-FEB. 2

**St. Joseph School... Building Futures at 72 Rectory Lane, Lucinda, PA 16235**

Phone: 814-226-8018  
Come visit our school anytime during this week from 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
We offer Preschool thru 6th grade.

**Our Lady's Christian School**  
606 Lowell Ave., Erie  
814.838.7576  
[www.OurLady'sChristian.com](http://www.OurLady'sChristian.com)

**OPEN HOUSE**  
Sunday, 10-2  
January 27, 2013

A learning community of faith, family and friends.  
Our Lady's Christian School offers preschool through eighth grade, including extended preschool, technology, arts and athletics programs. Get info on tuition aid and register to win two \$500 scholarships. Preschool through Grade 8 welcome!

**Annual Open House**  
Academic Excellence † Leadership † Faith Development  
**January 27, 2013 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.**  
Preschool † K - Grade 8  
Before & After School † Summer Program  
37 Athletic and Extracurricular Activities  
51st and Peach Street, Erie  
814-864-4821 † [www.sgs-online.org](http://www.sgs-online.org)

### Shenango Valley Catholic School System

#### BLESSED JOHN PAUL II ELEMENTARY

Pre School through Grade 5

#### KENNEDY CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grade 6 through 8

#### KENNEDY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Grade 9 through 12



#### OPEN HOUSES

9:00-11:00AM

Thursday, January 31st  
for Catholic Schools Week

For more information or to schedule a personal tour call (724) 346-5531 x20  
for Jim Piccirilli, Admissions Director

[svcss.k12.pa.us](http://svcss.k12.pa.us)

## Briefly

### 'The Mousetrap' and media sale at Mercyhurst Prep, Erie

ERIE — The Mercyhurst Prep Performing Arts Department will present "The Mousetrap," a murder mystery play by Agatha Christie, Jan. 24-27.

Performances are at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 24 through Saturday, Jan. 26 and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 27.

Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors and \$5 for students and are available at the door.

A media sale (books, audio recordings, video, etc.) will be held Friday, Jan. 25 from 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 26 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the school dining hall.

MPS is located at 538 E. Grandview Blvd. in Erie.

*Agatha Christie  
The Mousetrap*



### Night of traditional Irish music at St. Joseph, Sharon

SHARON — The Sharon Ancient Order of Hibernians and Knights of Columbus will present their annual night of Irish music on Saturday, Jan. 26 at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph's Guild Hall, 79 Case Ave. in Sharon.

Dancers from the award-winning Burke School of Irish Dance will be featured as well as the Veterans Memorial Pipe Band and regional Irish musicians and singers.

Admission is free. A concession area will have Irish foods, coffee and tea available.

For information call 724.528.3134 or e-mail [Irishsongs@roadrunner.com](mailto:Irishsongs@roadrunner.com).

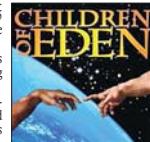
### Prep, Villa present 'Children of Eden'

ERIE — Cathedral Prep and Villa Maria Academy will present Stephen Schwartz's "Children of Eden" Jan. 31 through Feb. 3 at Cathedral Prep's H. David Bowes Auditorium, 225 W. Ninth St. in Erie.

Show times are 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31 through Saturday, Feb. 2 and 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 3. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors and will be available at the door.

An ensemble of storytellers (more than 60 students) help bring this show to life.

This all-ages family show, co-directed by Almitra Clerkin and Father Mike DeMartino, tells the story of the Book of Genesis (Chapters 1-9). It is part of the schools' Catholic Schools Week celebration. The cast also includes several alumnae and younger siblings of current students. The sets were designed by Prep alumnus Nathan Dahlkemper.



### Pro-Life of Mercer County presents 11th annual prayer breakfast

HERMITAGE — Pro-Life of Mercer County will sponsor its 11th annual prayer breakfast on Saturday, Feb. 9 from 9-11:30 a.m. at the Hickory VFW, 5550 E. State St. in Hermitage.

The keynote speaker will be Lia Mills, a 10th grade student from Toronto, Ontario. Mills is a recipient of the Susan B. Anthony Young Leaders Award and the Toronto Right to Life Media Award. She is the spokesperson for Teen Defenders and Student Life Link.

As part of a school assignment and entry into a speech competition, Mills chose to give a speech on the topic of abortion. Afterward, a YouTube video of her speech went viral and the original posting has more than 1.2 million views. She has also spoken on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario.

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$5 for children. The deadline to purchase tickets is Feb. 6. For tickets, call Kathy Jack at 724.264.4439 or Joan Walker at 724.962.1402.



### Cursillo K.I.S.S. dance at Holy Rosary, Erie

ERIE — The past presidents of the Erie Diocesan Cursillo Movement will host their annual charity K.I.S.S. dance on Saturday, Feb. 9 from 7-9 p.m. in Hastings Hall at Holy Rosary Parish, East 28th Street and East Avenue in Erie.

This is a BYOB event (and thus is intended for those age 21 and over). Munchies, pop and draft beer are being provided. Feel free to bring other snacks for your enjoyment. One need not have made a Cursillo weekend to attend the dance.

The vigil Mass at Holy Rosary is at 5:45 p.m.

All proceeds from the dance will go to the Mother Teresa House. Advance ticket sales are \$7 per person with the cost of \$10 per person at the door. Advance tickets will be available at Cursillo events or by contacting Tim Nowakowski at [TimWWJD@aol.com](mailto:TimWWJD@aol.com) or 814.825.9183.

Cursillista DJ Dean Balkovic will once again be on hand playing favorites. A 50-50 cash drawing will also be featured.

### Venango Catholic High School to celebrate 50th anniversary

OIL CITY — Venango Catholic High School, 1505 W. First St. in Oil City, will hold a 50th anniversary celebration on Saturday, Feb. 23. Venango Catholic and St. Joseph High School alumni are invited to celebrate.

Doors open at 2 p.m. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Lawrence Persico at 4:30 p.m. A light reception will follow.



## Youth ministry continues to 'build young disciples'

YOUTH MINISTRY,  
from page 1

type of person that I wanted to be in my adult life—a type of person that can live a lively faith with a foundation of Christ."

Rhonda Fill said she notices a difference in her son, Danny, a junior at Kennedy Catholic High School in Hermitage, after he returns home from a retreat.

"He talks about these 'amazing' retreats and he's just rejuvenated—mentally and spiritually," said Fill, whose older children have attended CLL.

While attending diocesan youth events, Fill said her son has developed friendships with other youths who share the same morals and values.

"Every Catholic youth should have this opportunity," she said.

Dan and Dawn Schaaf's children are grown now, but they were involved in numerous youth ministry programs over the years.

From a parent's perspective, it has been a blessing to see the growth each of our children has gone through by participating in these experiences," said Dan Schaaf, a member of St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community in Erie. "Each of our children is now an adult, and each has become active in their faith and within their peer circles."

Today, Schaaf notes that his children are leading Bible studies, coordinating faith sharing groups, presenting retreats, ministering to special needs friends and working in Catholic Relief Services among other groups, all while sharing their faith.

"We believe that our children are as involved today in their faith because of the time spent learning about their faith when they were younger," he said. "They saw that glow from those young



people who were presenting their retreats and rallies. Those young people gave back to our kids, and now we continue to pray that our

children will keep reaching out and giving back to other young people who have that yearning to be involved."

### 2013 diocesan youth ministry calendar

Here are some of the scheduled offerings:

- Feb. 1-3: Divine Mercy Encounter No. 68, St. Joseph/Bread of Life, Erie
- Feb. 20: YCEA (Young Church Eucharistic Adoration), 7 p.m., St. Mark Catholic Center, Erie
- April 19-21: Divine Mercy Encounter No. 69, St. Joseph/Bread of Life, Erie
- April 28: Middle School Youth Rally with Myracle, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Kennedy Catholic Middle School, Hermitage
- June 23-29: Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI), St. Philip, Linesville
- July 7-13: Catholic Heart Work Camp, Venango Catholic High School, Oil City
- July 12-14: Divine Mercy Encounter No. 70, St. Joseph/Bread of Life, Erie
- July 23-25: Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI), St. Thomas More House of Prayer, Cranberry
- Aug. 14: YCEA school year kick off, 7 p.m., St. Mark Catholic Center, Erie
- Oct. 12: High School Youth Rally with Jackie Francois, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., DuBois Catholic High School, DuBois
- Nov. 8-10: Divine Mercy Encounter No. 71, St. Joseph/Bread of Life, Erie
- Nov. 21-24: National Catholic Youth Conference, Indianapolis, Ind.
- Dec. 6-8: Testify IV, St. Thomas More House of Prayer, Cranberry
- Dec. 13-15: Anointed II, St. Thomas More House of Prayer, Cranberry

For more information on each event, visit [www.OnTheVine.us](http://www.OnTheVine.us) or contact Kathleen Peterson, coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Erie, at 814.824.1218 or [KPeterson@ErieRCD.org](mailto:KPeterson@ErieRCD.org).

## Newtown community lifted by prayers, generosity

NEWTOWN, from page 1

note of support to the Newtown community.

"We wanted people to do something special," Father Pisarcik said. "It's important to do something positive and affirming in times of tragedy."

A bulletin flier also encouraged parishioners to send a card or

### Sending thoughts, prayers to Newtown

According to Newtown, Conn., Postmaster Cathy Zieff, any mail received at a special address will be forwarded to the Sandy Hook Board of Education, which will distribute mail intended for school families.

Official mailing address for the families of Newtown:  
P.O. Box 3700  
Newtown, CT 06470

Those who wish to send a card, letter or note may also include the specific name of a family in the address box.

For example:  
Emilie Parker Family  
P.O. Box 3700  
Newtown, CT 06470

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PILGRIMAGE, from page 1

expects to meet with the group.

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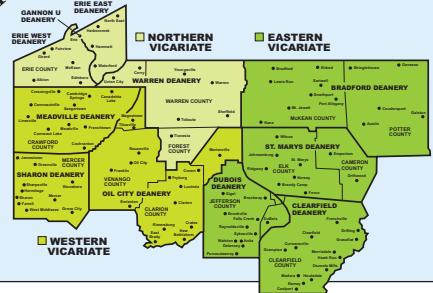
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# AROUND the ERIE DIOCESE



## Mercyhurst University students visit New Orleans for Katrina cleanup

ERIE — Hurricane Sandy might be the more recent name in the news, but for residents of New Orleans, the recovery from Hurricane Katrina is still far from over.

Starting Nov. 14, 16 students and three staff members from Mercyhurst University in Erie traveled to New Orleans for a week-long service trip.

It marks the sixth consecutive year that members of the Mercyhurst University community have dedicated their break to rebuilding homes for Hurricane Katrina cleanup efforts. Students and staff took on flooring, tiling and other construction projects in the city's Upper Ninth Ward and Gentilly neighborhoods, as well as part-



nered with the New Orleans Mission to deliver Thanksgiving dinners to families in need.

Mercyhurst students and staff also traveled to New Orleans during spring break for rebuilding efforts with Habitat for Humanity.

The Mercyhurst Office of Service Learning sponsors the fall service trip. Students contribute most of the funding for the trip with additional funds provided by the Service Learning Office and an academic enrichment grant.

## OLMC School in Erie raises funds to benefit longtime teacher

ERIE — Students, faculty, staff and school families at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in Erie held a spaghetti dinner fundraiser Dec. 2 for Mary Jo Justka.

Proceeds will help Justka, a longtime science teacher at the school, with medical expenses she has incurred due to a recent illness. She was presented with a check for \$8,416.45 which was raised through the dinner and a Chinese auction.

Pictured left to right are PTC treasurer Karen Janosek, student Griffin Herron, Mary Jo Justka, student Alexei Kowalski and PTC vice president Heidi Patterson.



## Knights of Columbus serve as honor guard for bishop

DUBOIS — The DuBois Assembly of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus recently acted as honor guard for Bishop Lawrence Persico. Bishop Persico celebrated Mass Nov. 18 for the 100th anniversary of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in DuBois.

Pictured left to right are William Adamson, Art Allen, Jerry McIntosh, Bishop Persico, Ken Straub, Bill Baruffalo, Paul Baruffalo and Tom Tarson.



All parishes, missions, schools and groups are encouraged to choose a **correspondent** who can regularly e-mail news items to "Around the Erie Diocese" at mailto:[FaithLife@ErieRCD.org](mailto:FaithLife@ErieRCD.org)

### Photo Tips

Quick, important tips for taking good digital pictures.  
<http://www.ErieRCD.org/faithlife.asp>



## Living Nativity at Sacred Heart, St. Marys



ST. MARYS — The children of Sacred Heart Parish in St. Marys observed the birthday of Jesus in a very special way at the 11 a.m. Christmas Day Mass celebrated by Father Eric Vogt, OSB, who was assisted at Mass by Deacon Bill Gibson. For the homily, Father Vogt invited all of the children to sit at the foot of the altar while he read the story, "Saint Francis Celebrates Christmas," by Mary Caswell Walsh.

At the offertory, the children carried wrapped baby gifts for the Christ child to a living Nativity scene at the foot of the altar. Many other parishioners joined in the procession of gifts with their young children bearing gifts for the Christ child while Lydia Gibson played and sang "O Come Little Children." All baby gifts will be distributed as needed through the Maternity Closet, a local pro-life effort.

At the end of Mass, Father Vogt again invited the children to come forward to sing "Happy Birthday" to baby Jesus. The procession included angels Maria Radkowski, Sophia Radkowski, Abby Spong, Dean Rakieski, Marcella Dollinger, Audrey Dornish, Hope Farley, Lauren Rakieski and Tiffani Total, sheepherds Ruby Bish and Elizabeth Anderson and Delana Spong and Erik Rakieski as Mary and Joseph.

## Dinner at St. John-Holy Rosary brightens Christmas for many

ERIE — Students from the former St. John-Holy Rosary Eastside Catholic School in Erie helped out with the second annual holiday dinner for the less fortunate Dec. 15 at Holy Rosary Parish in Erie. The dinner originated in 2011 when students wanted to do something for the less fortunate.

The students, former staff members and volunteers of St. John-Holy Rosary joined forces with Erie police and firefighters and the local U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program to help brighten Christmastime for many.

Guests were treated to a turkey



and ham dinner with all the trimmings and each child received a gift. In the last two years, the dinner has fed nearly 600 people, with leftovers going to the City Mission.

## Jeans day at St. James School in Erie aids Catholic Charities Refugee Ministry

ERIE — Students at St. James School in Erie recently held a jeans day to raise funds to purchase furniture for Catholic Charities Refugee Ministry. The items will benefit refugee families resettling in the Erie area.

Pictured are St. James students Ryan Kruszewski (left) and John Groshek (right) assisting Catholic Charities volunteers with loading furniture onto a truck.



For updates, follow the  
Diocese of Erie  
on



@ErieDiocese

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