

Cardinal John Foley dies

Former Vatican communications chief battled leukemia, page 2.



www.ErieRCD.org

Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



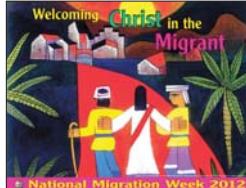
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



St. John Neumann

Dec. 26	St. Stephen
Dec. 27	St. John
Dec. 28	Holy Innocents
Dec. 29	St. Thomas Becket
Dec. 30	Holy Family
Dec. 31	St. Sylvester I
Jan. 1	Mary, Mother of God
Jan. 2	Ss. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen
Jan. 3	Most Holy Name of Jesus
Jan. 4	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Jan. 5	St. John Neumann
Jan. 6	St. André Bessette
Jan. 7	St. Raymond of Peñafort
Jan. 8	Epiphany of the Lord
Jan. 9	Baptism of the Lord
Jan. 13	St. Hilary

National Migration Week – Jan. 8-14



Catholics are called to offer hospitality to those need during National Migration Week, observed in dioceses around the country Jan. 8-14. This year's theme of "Welcoming Christ in the Migrant" is depicted by the disciples welcoming a stranger on the road to Emmaus.

Resources for National Migration Week can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website at www.usccb.org.

Additionally, the U.S. bishops continue to encourage advocacy efforts by the Catholic community on comprehensive immigration reform. For more information, visit the Justice for Immigrants Campaign at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

National Vocation Awareness Week – Jan. 9-14

The Catholic Church in the United States will celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW), Jan. 9-14. The celebration heralds a week dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life through prayer and education.

This distinctive week gives Catholics an opportunity to renew prayers and support for those who are considering one of these particular vocations.

Visit the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Facebook page (www.facebook.com/usccb) during the week to read the stories of clergy and religious. View reflections under the Vocation Retreat tab where each day a Scripture passage, reflection and prayer will be posted.

Resources such as prayer cards, Holy Hour materials, prayers of the faithful and quotes are available on the USCCB vocations webpage at www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations.

2012 directory

The 2012 Directory of the Catholic Diocese of Erie contains updated information on diocesan administration, parishes, clergy, agencies and groups, schools, religious and more.

Copies are \$22 each. Download an order form at www.ErieRCD.org or call the Office of Communications at 814.824.1166.



FaithLife

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

December 25, 2011

Top stories of 2011

Roman Missal, pope named top story, newsmaker of the year, page 2.



Christmas is the joyful reminder that God has not left us alone

A Christmas message from Bishop Donald Trautman

Everywhere you look this Christmas, you see bright colored lights. On every street you see outdoor lights, houses after house draped in shining shimmering lights, Christmas decorations glowing in the dark, windows and doors and porches all decked out with flickering lights, crèches and Christmas trees and wreaths—Christians decorations inside and out—all beaming with sparkling lights.

Why all these lights? What prompts people to decorate and light up their homes? On the surface people would answer, it's the season of joy and

love. But then in the silence of a Bethlehem night, Jesus came as the light of the world. He was like a laser beam that pierced straight through the darkened world into the hearts of people. His rays of love and new life spread throughout the world and down through 21 centuries.

Why do we come? Scripture tells us: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Sin had plunged the world into darkness. People could not see. They had lost their

ion of Jesus but the light did not go out. On Easter morning the light shined brighter than ever, and 21 centuries later the light continues to shine in the darkness, continues to show us the way. Born in the darkness of a Bethlehem night, he comes as our savior. His death and resurrection bring us a radiant new day.

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah foretold: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." We are those people. We see Christ living and risen in the Eucharist.

See CHRISTMAS, page 3

Despite setback, bishop encounters pope during 'ad limina'

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

VATICAN CITY — Despite a rough start to his trip, Bishop Donald Trautman concluded his "ad limina" visit to Rome by meeting with Pope Benedict XVI and celebrating Mass at one of the Eternal City's major basilicas.

Bishop Trautman left Erie Nov. 29 and planned to return Dec. 10. However, upon his arrival, the bishop fell ill and was admitted to a Rome clinic for testing and observation. There he spent several days and was treated for dehydration and an infection. He was released Dec. 4.

"The Lord had his reasons for giving me this little setback there," Bishop Trautman said.

Bishop Trautman was making his "ad limina" visit with the United States bishops from Region III, which includes the dioceses of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

"Ad limina is short for 'ad limina apostolorum' in Latin, which means 'to the thresholds of the apostles.' Even though he did not

feel well enough to participate in the Dec. 1 meeting of the Pennsylvania bishops with Pope Benedict XVI, he joined the contingent of bishops from New Jersey who met with the Holy Father on Dec. 5.

"I was very surprised that he remembered me right away," Bishop Trautman said of the pope. "When they introduced me as Bishop Trautman from the Diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania, he said 'Oh, I know him.' He spoke to me and said, 'this bishop has studied in Innsbruck, Austria, under Karl Rahner.' I said, 'Yes, Holy Father.' He said, 'You met me before.' I said, 'Yes, I have.'

The meeting Pope Benedict XVI recalled was when he, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, was the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Bishop Trautman was representing the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on liturgical matters.

"It was a joyful conversation," Bishop Trautman said. "I was amazed that with all that's on his mind he would remember my background in Innsbruck, Austria, and remember my meeting with him

on liturgical matters."

The individual meeting

lasted about five minutes,

the bishop said. The pope met

with each bishop individually

before inviting them to sit in

a circular arrangement for a

group discussion. He opened

up the conversation by giving

each bishop a chance to talk

on a topic of their choosing.

"It was a free dialogue back and forth," Bishop Trautman said. "(The pope) went to each bishop, pointing to speak, and they could speak on whatever they wanted and he would dialogue with them about what they brought up. It turned out very well. We connected."

Because of the seating ar-

rangement, Bishop Trautman said he spoke last. The previous bishops talked about their dioceses' efforts to evangelize.

Several of them will be begin-

ning Catholics Come Home,

an outreach program using

TV spots to invite Catholics

back to the church.

See AD LIMINA, page 3



Photo courtesy of *L'Observatore Romano*

Bishop Donald Trautman is greeted Dec. 5 by Pope Benedict XVI during the bishop's "ad limina" visit to Rome.

Knights of Columbus build confessionals for mall chapel

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

ERIE — While Bishop Donald Trautman has yet to have his resignation letter accepted by Pope Benedict XVI for reasons of age, the bishop has already received a retirement gift from the Knights of Columbus.

The Knights recently completed a renovation project at the Roman Catholic Chapel at Millcreek Mall in Erie which included the construction of two confessionals.

"We did it for the bishop, for the service he's given to the church and the diocese," said Steve Cash, former state master of the Knights of Columbus who helped coordinate the project. "We did it for his retirement, really."

The idea for a small chapel came from Bishop Trautman. On Ash Wednesday in 2008, the diocese opened the chapel—located just outside the concourse entrance to Bon Ton, one of the mall's anchor stores—primarily for hearing confessions.

The chapel is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Priests are available to hear confessions on Wednesday from 2 to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

An empty storefront was transformed into a chapel with a welcoming area, a tabernacle, a reading area and confessionals. The confessionals themselves were reconfigured office partitions that offered both traditional and face-to-face options for penitents.

The Greater Erie Chapter and the Central West Region of the Knights of Columbus decided to take on building two confessionals, Cash said, adding that all the funds for the project were given by the Knights' membership as a private or council donation.

Nine Knights and a number of their wives worked on the labor and management side of the project, Cash said. He singled out two members whom he said went over and above what was asked of them: Mark Urban Sr. offered

his workshop to pre-assemble the walls of the confessionals and Kenneth Rettger Sr. spent several hours daily finishing construction in the chapel.

Most of the work was done at night, Cash said, because the chapel visitors.

"The guys working were just fantastic," he said. The confessionals are free-standing structures which nearly touch the ceiling. They include carpeted walls and offer both traditional and face-to-face opportunities for confession. One of the confessionals is handicapped accessible.

"The diocese is very indebted to our brother Knights who have truly transformed See MALL CHAPEL, page 3



Members of the Knights of Columbus pose Dec. 14 in front of their newly built confessionals at the Roman Catholic Chapel at Millcreek Mall in Erie. Pictured left to right are Kenneth Rettger Sr., Father Jason Feigh, Steve Cash and Mark Urban Sr. Father Feigh was hearing confessions at the chapel that afternoon.

Briefly

Diocesan study week Jan. 9-12

ERIE — Diocesan study week will be held Jan. 9-12 at St. Mark Catholic Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd. in Erie.

The theme is "Vatican II: Locating the Council in its Religious and Secular Contexts." Father John O'Malley, SJ, will be the key-note presenter.

Registration deadline is Friday, Dec. 30. To register, contact the Office of Religious Education at 814.824.1210 or 1.800.374.3723 Ext. 210 or register online at www.ErieRCDOrg.

Youth Stand 4 Life bus trip Jan. 22-23

ERIE — Join the Youth Stand 4 Life bus trip Jan. 22-23 to Washington, D.C., for a youth rally, Mass and the March for Life.

Students and chaperones will board buses Jan. 22 at St. Mark Catholic Center in Erie and travel to a Maryland parish for Mass, overnight hosting and breakfast Jan. 23. Activities include a rally and Mass at the DC Armory in Washington. Youth will then join the March for Life at the National Mall.

Planes call to leave Washington at 4 p.m. and arrive in Erie between 11-11:30 p.m.

Cost is \$100 and includes bus transportation, overnight accommodations, meals, a pro-life youth rally and the March for Life.

Youth in grades 8-12 are invited. The deadline to register is Jan. 9. Seating is limited. To make a reservation or for more information, contact Kathleen Peterson in the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at 814.824.1218 or visit www.onthevine.us.

March for Life bus trip Jan. 22-23

ERIE — Attend the March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Monday, Jan. 23. Buses chartered by People for Life will leave Erie Sunday evening, Jan. 22 at 11 p.m. and return about 1:30 a.m. Jan. 24.

Students and families on tight budgets are encouraged to inquire about sponsorships. Reservations should be made as soon as possible. Send \$40 per seat to People for Life, P.O. Box 1126, Erie, PA 16512.

For more information or to use a credit card, call 814.882.1333 or visit www.peopleforlife.org.

DEATH NOTICES

Sister Mary Karen Crawford, SSJ

Sister Mary Karen Crawford, SSJ, 77, of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, died Nov. 22, 2011. She was in her 60th year of religious life.

She was born Shirley Crawford on June 5, 1934 in Erie, daughter of the late Norbert and Catherine Crawford. She graduated from the former St. Michael School and Villa Maria Academy, both in Erie. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Villa Maria College, Erie.

She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph on August 30, 1952 from her home parish, Blessed Sacrament. She professed her final vows on August 15, 1958 and celebrated her 50th anniversary as a

Sister of St. Joseph in 2002.

Sister Mary Karen taught at St. Andrew, St. Ann, Blessed Sacrament, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph and St. Patrick elementary schools in Erie. She attended many workshops in education, pastoral ministry, Head Start and intergenerational programs.

She worked in parish ministry at St. Agatha Parish, Meadville and at St. Mary Parish, Reynoldsburg. She ministered to children and adults at Hitzdale Catechetical Center, traveling to teach religious education to 16 parishes. She also worked with toddlers at St. Joseph's Home, Erie.

Her most recent ministry prior to retirement was as an intergenerational coordinator between Saint Mary's Home of Erie and the Mercyhurst Child Learning Center.

Father Donald Cooper

Father Donald Cooper, 75, died December 16, 2011 at Saint Vincent Hospital in Erie. Look for a complete obituary in Jan. 15 issue of *FaithLife*.



Sister Mary Karen Crawford

8,000 MILES FOR 8,000 KIDS

CFCA President Bob Hentzen, 75, walked nearly 8,000 miles through 12 countries in Latin America to shed light on poverty. Help him reach his goal to find sponsors for 8,000 children in need!

To sponsor a child, call 800.875.6564 or visit www.hopeforafamily.org/kids.

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN AND AGING

Christmas is the joyful reminder that God has not left us alone

CHRISTMAS from page 1

We have seen a great light.

Perhaps there is some darkness in our life this Christmas: sickness, loneliness, unemployment, divorce, alcoholism, the break up of family and friendship. We may be surrounded by different kinds of darkness both personal and global—the darkness of a world haunted by threats of terrorism, the darkness of war in the Near East. There is also a growing darkness of secularism in the West and a rampant religious fanaticism in the East. So we pray: Christ, light our darkness, scatter our darkness, show us the way to a new day. If we embrace Christ present in the Scriptures and the sacraments, he can take away our darkness.

Christmas is the joyful reminder that in spite of our unfaithfulness, in spite of all the darkness in our lives, in spite of the trials and tragedies in our midst, God has not left us alone. God has not abandoned us. A savior has been born for us and that savior dwells in the tabernacles of our churches until the end of time. He is present to us in the Scriptures and in the sacraments. The risen Jesus, savior of the world, is in our midst and he is the way, the truth and the life.

This Christmas there is no one without a gift. Did not the angels tell the shepherds, "A savior has been born for you?" We are all recipients of this divine gift. We all receive the perfect gift—Jesus, the savior—the greatest gift ever given.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overcome it. Christmas is the assurance of God's love for us. Sin and sinful habits can be strong, but God's love is stronger. Sadness and sorrow can consume our strength, but God's love is stronger. Trials and tragedies can sap our spirits, but God's love is stronger. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness will never overcome it. Rejoice and give thanks. It is Christmas, the birth of Christ, the light of our world.

+Donald W. Trautman

Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL
Bishop of Erie

Despite setback, bishop encounters pope during 'ad limina'

AD LIMINA from page 1

Bishop Trautman said he noted that the Diocese of Erie has already participated in Catholicos Come Home.

"I think programs are very important," he said. "But the basic structure—the foundation of the church—is still the parish. When the parish is strong, the diocese is strong. Everything rises and falls basically at the parish level. That's the faith community that encounters Christ in the Scriptures and in the sacraments. And when that faith community is strong, the church is strong."

Pope Benedict XVI then asked Bishop Trautman about the number of parishes the diocese has been forced to close.

"I said very few," the bishop said. "We've been blessed. We've been able to manage certain situations differently without closing many. We've merged some, but haven't closed many."

Bishop Trautman said he explained the geography of the diocese.

"When you close a parish, you have to consider the distance people have to travel to receive the sacraments," he said. "We've been able to maintain our general pattern of parish coverage. The Holy Father was very pleased and very happy to know that."

Other topics, the bishop said, included the U.S. bishops' growing concern that religious liberty is being eroded by government action



Photo courtesy of L'Observatore Romano

Bishop Donald Trautman poses Dec. 5 with Pope Benedict XVI during his "ad limina" visit to Rome.

and policymaking, the growing Hispanic influence in the church in the U.S. and the secularization of our culture.

"It was a good meeting with good dialogue," Bishop Trautman said. "The Holy Father seemed very intent and vibrant in terms of following the conversation. His English was very, very good."

Each bishop had a moment to greet the pope privately at the end of the dialogue, as well.

"I wished him in German—"Gott segne dich"—which means God bless you, and we parted," Bishop Trautman said.

The bishops celebrated a late-

afternoon Mass Dec. 5 at Rome's Basilica of St. Mary Major with Bishop Trautman presiding and preaching. In his homily at the Marian basilica, the bishop spoke about the Blessed Mother as a model of trust and hope in God.

Although the bishops from Region III were scheduled to remain in Rome until Dec. 10, Bishop Trautman returned home Dec. 6. Upon arriving in Erie, he was treated at Saint Vincent Health Center and released.

"I'm very pleased with the wonderful treatment and great care that was given to me at Saint Vincent Health Center, and I'm back to my full schedule at this point," the bishop said.



CNS photo

Pope Benedict XVI meets Dec. 5 with bishops from New Jersey and Pennsylvania during their "ad limina" visit to the Vatican. Bishop Donald Trautman is seated at far right.

Knights of Columbus build confessional for mall chapel

MALL CHAPEL from page 1

the confessional space at the Millcreek Mall Chapel," Bishop Trautman said. "It is now more soundproof, more presentable and a more fitting environment for the celebration of the sacrament of our Lord's mercy. Thank you, brother Knights."

Bishop Trautman is a fourth-degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

The Knights also donated several additions to the chapel. They include a new front desk, a tapestry behind the crucifix, refurbished statues of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph with matching tables, end tables and lamps outside each



748 confessions were heard at the Roman Catholic Chapel at Millcreek Mall in Erie from January through November this year.

Source: Roman Catholic Chapel



The new mall chapel confessional features both traditional and face-to-face options.

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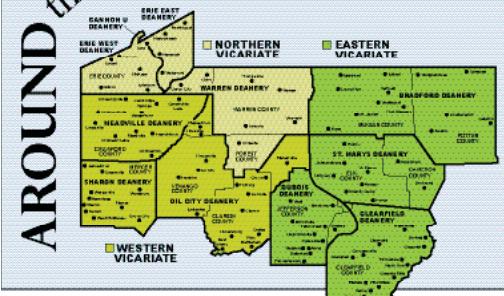
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AROUND the ERIE DIOCESE



Operation Christmas Child at Elk County Catholic High School

ST. MARYS — As part of Elk County Catholic High School's November community outreach project, students, faculty and staff held a dress down day in exchange for a small gift. The gifts collected were then sorted and packed for Operation Christmas Child, a program that brings joy and hope to children in desperate situations worldwide through simple, gift-filled shoe boxes and an opportunity to tell them the Good News of God's love.

Last year, 8.2 million shoe boxes were delivered to children living in places like earthquake-devastated Haiti and war-scarred Sudan. This project taught Elk County Catholic High School students about the power of a simple gift.



Pictured, left to right, sorting and wrapping gifts are Kennedy Ginther, Laurel Pierotti, Kelsey Karpinski, Corey Koss and Linnea Stager.

Saints alive for Clearfield Deanery youth

HOUTZDALE — Fifth grade religious education students from Christ the King Parish in Houtzdale, Holy Trinity Parish in Ramey and Immaculate Conception Mission in Madera celebrated the Nov. 1 feast of All Saints with a look into the lives of some of the holy men and women.

Some of the students picked well-known saints to study, said catechist Shelly Hansel, while others picked saints who shared their name or the name of a loved one. Each student did research, dressed as their featured saint and shared some interesting facts about their saint with the other students in grades K-6.

Pictured, left to right, are: (front row) Emma Kitko, Alex Kitko, Caleb Gresh, Jacob Matchock, (back row) Nick Hansel, Olivia



Kitko, Jordan Flango, Paige Tiesi and Tess Randolph. Missing from the photo is Brooke Thompson.

St. Bonaventure presents 'Life in the Town of Nazareth'

GRAMPIAN — On Nov. 6 the parish life committee and religious education staff of St. Bonaventure Parish in Grampian presented "Life in the Town of Nazareth—When Jesus was a Kid," a day of authentic Hebrew culture.

The afternoon event, which showed how Jesus lived as a boy, was well-attended by all ages within the parish. There were songs and a dance, a visit to Mary's home (complete with lambs, roosters and a rabbit), workshops on making jewelry and olive oil scrub, a visit to a petting playground to see some toys and learn the games of Jesus' time, and Hebrew school sessions in which students learned to write in the language of Jesus day.

Attendees were assigned to one of eight tribes of Judah, given



A tribe of Judah makes olive oil scrub with herb and olive oil market shop owner Terri Clarkson.

headbands to identify their tribe and sent off in groups to experience life in Nazareth. The event

ended with a song of praise and the sharing of a meal of bread and grapes.

St. James School takes second place in Lego robotics competition



ERIE — A team of seventh and eighth grade students from St. James School in Erie took second place out of 40 teams in a Lego robotics competition Nov. 12 at Penn State Behrend. The team is

coached by John Madura.

Pictured left to right are: John Groshek, Jacob Van Slyke, Kevin Bello, Ben Ladka, Daniel Serafin, Mark Gorski, Timothy Snyder and Jayme Cooper.

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

Photo Tips

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



Warren box village raises awareness for homelessness

WARREN — To raise awareness for homelessness, 37 students and eight adults from the religious education programs at St. Joseph and Holy Redeemer parishes in Warren recently spent an evening living outside in cardboard boxes.

The students created their own box city Oct. 8-9 on the grounds of St. Joseph Parish and solicited monetary pledges for a cause. The event, organized by Betsy Williams, raised more than \$2,200 for A Safe Place, a crisis prevention center in Warren.

Organizers said they are looking to make this an annual event in Warren.

Pictured, left to right, are students from Warren's Cool



Catholic Youth (CCY) group (grades 6-12) presenting a check to A Safe Place: (standing) Bryce Bauer, Megan Smoulder, Alex Sherman, Ryan Shattuck, Sam Sherrard, Emily Sherman, Terri Allison from A Safe Place, Will Cole, Father Michael Polinek, Laura Smoulder, Betsy Williams, (kneeling) Joey Close, Nick Pellegrino, Jason Peterson, Eric Cecco and Bob McAvoy.

Sacred Heart parishioners help provide 'White Christmas'

SHARON — Parishioners from Sacred Heart Parish in Sharon recently collected bedding items for their "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" program. These items were blessed during Mass on Thanksgiving Day before they were distributed to needy families in the area in time for Christmas.

Pictured left to right are Margaret Scully, Agnes Gilliland and Theresa Rodgers.



SSCD School learns about saints

PUNXSUTAWNEY — Seventh and eighth grade students at St. Cosmas and Damian School in Punxsutawney are studying church history during the first half of the school year. They've discussed how the early church was challenged to carry out Christ's teachings to the world and how the faithful struggled to continue his mission.

To further enhance the understanding, teacher Liz LaBanc had each student research the life of a martyr and then complete a report on that person, along with a poster



illustrating important aspects of that person's life.

Robert Welsh, Maggie Prutzna and Nina Test display their posters on the martyr they researched.

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