

Bishops cite abortion deregulation fears in postelection statement
A roundup of the U.S. bishops' fall meeting, page 2.



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FaithLife

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

December 7, 2008

Parish milestone
St. Bonaventure,
Grampian,
celebrates
175 years,
page 4.



Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



St. Nicholas

Our Lady of Guadalupe

| | |
|---------|-----------------------|
| Dec. 6 | St. Nicholas |
| Dec. 8 | Immaculate Conception |
| Dec. 9 | St. Juan Diego |
| Dec. 11 | St. Damasus I |
| Dec. 12 | Our Lady of Guadalupe |
| Dec. 13 | St. Lucy |

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception – Dec. 8 (holy day of obligation)

The Catholic belief that Mary was free from original sin from the moment of her existence was promulgated by Pope Pius IX in 1854.

Monday, Dec. 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of the United States, is a holy day of obligation in the United States.



Retired Religious Fund Collection – Dec. 13-14

By the numbers:

\$51,361

Average cost of skilled care for one religious for one year. (Below the national average of \$55,200)

\$33,442.36

Average cost of care in 2008 for religious past age 70.

21,520

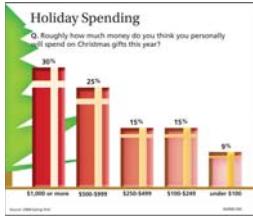
Religious with less than 20 percent of amount needed for projected costs of living and health care in retirement.

Data obtained from the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) and "The Senior Care Acquisitions Report" from Irving Levin Associates, Inc.

Lessons & carols at St. Mark Seminary – Dec. 15

The public is invited to join Bishop Donald Trautman and the students of St. Mark Seminary for an evening of lessons and carols on Monday, Dec. 15 beginning at 7 p.m.

This reflective meditation on the Advent season includes music and Scripture. The program will be presented in the St. Mark Seminary chapel, located at 429 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie.



'I Send You as Servants'

Youth rally inspires students to live out their faith through service

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

Doug Took was bluntly honest with more than 200 high school students throughout the Erie Diocese.

"You have no idea what God's going to do in your life," said Took, who along with David Casey, was a keynote speaker for the high school youth rally Nov. 15 at Our Lady of Peace in Erie.

Tooke and Casey delivered their message with a brand of stories, humor and song.

"Some of you are like, 'I've got plans. I'm gonna play for the Knicks. If that doesn't work out, I'm gonna go to med school,'" Took said, which was followed by laughter from the crowd. "I've got plans. I'm gonna go to Ohio State. I'm gonna be a physician's assistant and I'm gonna save the world." OK. Good plan.

"Let me just be honest with you," Took said. "You have no idea, you have no clue. You do not know what God is going to do when you ask him to really sit and dwell inside you. You don't know. Get over it, embrace it, laugh about it, pray about it. And say, alright, how are you going to use me and change me? Bring me to what you want to bring me to to."

The youth rally, themed "I Send You as Servants," was sponsored by the diocese's Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Each component of the rally was devoted to the topic of service to God and to others.

Teaching about social justice issues, Father John Santor, coordinator of the diocese's Catholic Refugee Ministry, said the United States has increasingly become a very diverse country.

"This has been a real blessing for America, having all kinds of different people and cultures," Father Santor said. "It's made America a very productive and very rich country. But again, there are people who are narrow-minded, people who are slow to accept different kinds of people who speak a different language and who have different values."

He shared some excerpts from the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter, "Welcoming the Stranger Among Us."

"The American Catholic bishops are telling us that we should welcome the strangers among us because,

See RALLY, page 3



Above, students work on their service project during the Nov. 15 diocesan high school youth rally held at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Erie. The project included a card and prayer rock reminder, which were given to guests of the Sisters of St. Joseph Thanksgiving dinner. At right, youth participate in a concert performed by Who Do You Say I Am? music ministry.



Youth ministry looks ahead to 2009

Father Steve Schreiber shares his vision with youth leaders

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

Father Steve Schreiber, director of youth and young adult ministry for the Erie Diocese, laid out his vision for youth ministry in the diocese for 2009 and beyond during the senior high school youth rally Nov. 15 at Our Lady of Peace in Erie.

Father Schreiber, who was named to the post this summer and also serves as the diocese's associate director of vocations, spoke to about 30 youth leaders during one of the rally's afternoon sessions.

Here are a few tidbits to come out of that meeting:

■ The next big youth event is the Youth Stand 4 Life trip in January. The annual March for Life will be held on Jan. 22.

Other groups from the diocese will head down on their own, and we encourage that,"

Father Steve Schreiber said. "With our diocese, as you know being so large geographically, it's hard for us to coordinate events like this. But we're going to do the best we can."

He said it was possible to meet other groups along the way and head down together.

■ The youth rallies for middle and high school students, as they are currently constructed, will be reorganized into regional retreats and speakers.

"In talking to a number of you, we've come to the conclusion that it's time to give the youth rallies, as they are, a little break and try something new," Father Schreiber said.

See YOUTH MINISTRY, page 2

Not so retired religious

Even in retirement, Sister Ann Amen brings others closer to God

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor



Sister Ann Amen, SSJ, poses with her autobiography, "Beyond My Dreams," which she published in 2006 at the age of 88.

College and went to summer school at Catholic University for her master's and doctorate degrees.

During World War II, she was with the American Red Cross in Europe. She was stationed in England, France and Germany working at Red Cross Clubs for Seabees, which provided a place for service men and women to relax during her active ministry.

"God has been very good to me," she says. "He's blessed me abundantly and certainly taken care of me."

She was 33 when she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Erie. But that was after she had lived in Europe, served as the dean of women at Quincy

Retirement Fund for Religious Collection – Dec. 13-14

Today, 58 percent of women and men religious are past the age of 70, and 7 percent are past the age of 90. Nearly 5,000 elderly religious in the U.S. need skilled nursing care.

Most women and men religious receive, on average, a Social Security benefit of \$4,402 per year, the average U.S. beneficiary receives \$12,948 annually. Though community living provides economies of scale, health care and living costs in most religious communities far exceed income from investments, government programs and compensated ministries.

of GIs and five American girls who were allowed to see her. They went in about seven at a time.

"I went into her bedroom and it was as though a voice were saying to me that I should be a nun," Sister Ann says. "That was about 99th on a list of a hundred things I thought I might be doing with my life. But I knew it was what God wanted me to do."

Sister says she joined the Sisters of St. Joseph thinking she would probably stay in Erie the rest of her life.

"But I didn't do that exactly," she says.

While teaching at Villa Maria College, she took her students down to Yucatan, Mexico. There were five truckloads

Advent

A season of joyful waiting

Advent, the season of expectation leading up to the celebration of Christmas, began Nov. 30. This joyful period prepares us for the commemoration of the Incarnation.

Advent calendar

An Advent family calendar from Catholic Charities is available on the diocesan Web site at www.ErieRCD.org. The printable calendar includes a Scripture verse, reflection and activity for every day of the season.

Jesse Tree

Faith magazine has created Jesse Tree ornaments to help reflect on the story of salvation from the creation of the world through the birth of Jesus. Download a free, printable set of Jesse Tree ornaments at www.ErieRCD.org. Each of the 28 ornaments is accompanied by a Scripture verse and explanation of what the symbol represents. The ornaments are available in both small and large sizes.

Read comments on the Jesse Tree from visitors throughout the United States and abroad.

Catholic Charities Advent Appeal

Catholic Charities has launched an Advent appeal to support diocesan agencies that provide help and hope.

Donors can make a contribution to the organization of their choice: Good Samaritan Center, St. Martin Center, Prince of Peace Center, St. Elizabeth Center, Counseling & Adoption Services, Christ the King Manor, John XXIII Home, Harborcreek Youth Services and Catholic Charities.

Visit www.ErieRCD.org/charities.asp to print out a donation form.





IN THE U.S.

■ During this period of "severe economic downturn," Christians must focus on faith and family rather than fear, Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles said in a new "spiritual reflection" on the economy. In a brief pastoral letter titled "Worrisome Times," the cardinal said the economic crisis offers families an opportunity to return to the true meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas this year. "I have heard many voices sound special alarm that these economic problems are occurring at our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season," he said in the Nov. 11 letter. "Actually, I believe that this presents us with a good opportunity to help us celebrate what is important: our faith, our families and one another." The reflection is available at www.portlanddiocese.net.

■ Five months after being ordained the bishop of Little Rock, Bishop Anthony Taylor has issued his first pastoral letter in hopes of teaching his flock about the human rights of undocumented immigrants. "I Was a Stranger and You Welcome Me: A Pastoral Letter on the Human Rights of Immigrants" was introduced to the priests of the state Nov. 5 during a study day.

Bishop Taylor said he believes Catholics are not properly informed about the human rights of immigrants. "I hope that people will open their hearts to the call of Jesus in our life," he said. "More than that, I hope it goes down from their head to their heart and (they) see what the Lord is asking of us.... It is the big area where the teaching of the church is not well-known." The letter is available at www.dolr.org.



■ More than 30,000 people attended a Mass in Nagasaki, Japan, Nov. 24, beatifying 188 Japanese martyrs. The ceremony was held in the city's baseball stadium to celebrate the beatification of Jesuit Father Peter Kite Kasui and 187 companions. The 188 17th-century martyrs were tortured and killed in different cities between 1606 and 1639 after the Japanese government outlawed Christianity. During the Mass, which was concelebrated by 10 cardinals and bishops, Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins said martyrs of every age, place and time have displayed the same dedicated faith in Jesus Christ.



■ Allowing same-sex couples to marry would strip marriage of its essential component — the creation of new life — and render it meaningless and "open it up to endless revision and redefinition," Bishop Richard Malone of Portland, Me., said in a letter to Catholics in the statewide diocese. The bishop defended traditional marriage, writing that he believes opposing its redefinition is a matter of faith, reason and a concern for the good of society. "To claim that marriage is a civil right open to all forms of relationships is a misnomer," he said in the mid-November letter drafted after several Christian ministers at a news conference days earlier called for the state to legalize same-sex marriage. The letter is available at www.portlanddiocese.net.

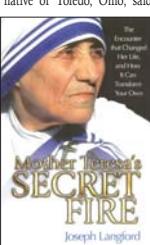
AROUND THE WORLD

■ More than 10 years after her death, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta still has lessons to teach the world, according to the priest who co-founded the Missionaries of Charity Fathers with her and has written a new book about her. Father Joseph Langford, a 57-year-old native of Toledo, Ohio, said he wrote "Mother Teresa's Secret Fire" to try to explain "what made Mother Teresa Teresa" and how she sustained joy and a belief in the possibility of change in the face of inner and external challenges. "As America faces its own dark night of the soul," he said, Mother Teresa shows Americans and the rest of the world "how to live joyfully, creatively, in a way that leaves a legacy."

■ The Catholic Church will resist any moves to legalize abortion in Kenya, said Cardinal John Njue of Nairobi. Cardinal Njue, president of the Kenya Episcopal Conference, led hundreds of Catholics into the streets to demonstrate against the Reproductive Health and Rights Bill 2008, which would legalize abortion. He said the bill should be opposed at all costs. Urging legislators to vote against the measure, he reminded them they were sent to parliament by voters to make good laws. The cardinal described abortion as murder and said it showed disrespect for life and human dignity.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

■ More than 10 years after her death, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta still has lessons to teach the world, according to the priest who co-founded the Missionaries of Charity Fathers with her and has written a new book about her. Father Joseph Langford, a 57-year-old native of Toledo, Ohio, said he wrote "Mother Teresa's Secret Fire" to try to explain "what made Mother Teresa Teresa" and how she sustained joy and a belief in the possibility of change in the face of inner and external challenges. "As America faces its own dark night of the soul," he said, Mother Teresa shows Americans and the rest of the world "how to live joyfully, creatively, in a way that leaves a legacy."



Mother Teresa's SECRET FIRE
Joseph Langford

By the Way...

Cathedral Preparatory School broke ground Nov. 7 for its Events Center at 12th and Cherry streets in Erie, which will be the future home to a multi-sport athletic facility for Prep Catholic elementary schools and the community.

The Cathedral Prep Events Center will be built in three phases, with site work for phase one beginning this year. It will consist of a multi-purpose artificial turf field that will be used for football, soccer and lacrosse, and an eight-lane, quarter-mile competition track. The cost of phase one will be approximately \$7.5 million and is one component of "The Campaign for Cathedral Prep: A Vision for Today...A Legacy for Tomorrow," which also includes \$1 million in renovations to Prep's science wing, completed in the summer, and a \$1.5 million renovation for Cathedral Prep's auditorium, scheduled for the summer of 2009.

Prayers and get well wishes go out to Aaron Pfloutz, youth minister of St. Mary, Queen of the World and Sacred Heart parishes in St. Marys, who recently underwent successful cancer surgery. A day after surgery, Pfloutz sent a text message to Father Steve Schreiber, director of youth ministry for the Erie Diocese that simply said, "We are blessed."

Congratulations to Gail Mayer on her retirement from the Diocese of Erie on Nov. 25. For 27 years, she assisted in the Office of Education and in the Chancery.

Representatives to the Maryknoll fathers and brothers 12th general chapter, held at society headquarters in Ossining, N.Y., have elected veteran Latin America missionary Father Paul Masson, MM, a native of Oil City, to serve as assistant general for the next six years.

The society's new four-man general council, which took office Nov. 25, is responsible for leading some 530 priests and brothers serving in 27 countries worldwide. General chapters convene every six years to hold elections and to set goals and policy for the society.

Father Masson, 64, currently serves as pastor of La Virgen de la Luz Parish in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, where he has lived for the past 10 years while serving as a member of the Maryknoll Mission Board Team.

Born in Oil City in 1943, he attended Rouseville grade school and graduated from St. Joseph High School in Oil City in 1961. He was ordained a priest in 1972 and holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Maryknoll College and a Master of Divinity degree from Maryknoll Seminary.

Maryknoll fathers and brothers, the U.S.-based Catholic foreign mission society, has been representing U.S. Catholics in overseas mission since 1911. They currently serve in 28 countries worldwide, promoting human rights and social justice for those in need.

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Jason Koshinskie

Bishops cite abortion deregulation fears in postelection statement

A roundup of the U.S. bishops' fall meeting

By Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — Fears about laws and changes in regulations on abortion that might advance under a new Democratic-run Congress and White House are the central focus of a statement approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 12 during its annual fall meeting.

The majority of the 830-word, untitled statement focuses on concerns about the possible passage of the Freedom of Choice Act, calling it "an evil law that would further divide our country" and adding that the church "should be intent on opposing evil."

It warns against interpreting the outcome of the Nov. 4 elections as "a referendum on abortion" and says "aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans."

The statement was crafted during the bishops' meeting in Baltimore and involved a total of nearly three hours of discussion during executive and public sessions Nov. 11.

Other meeting actions:

■ In their statement on the economic crisis, approved Nov. 11, Auxiliary Bishop Roger Morin of New Orleans explained that the Catholic Campaign for Human Development cut off funding earlier this year to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, known as ACORN, for reasons unrelated to the organization's current troubles over voter registration and partisan politics.

■ Despite some continued

criticism that the latest English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal is plagued by obscure wording and sentences that are too long, the U.S. bishops approved another lengthy section of the translation Nov. 11.

Needing affirmation by two-thirds of the 264 Latinrite U.S. bishops, or 176 bishops, the heavily amended translation of the Proprietary of the Seasons — made up of the proper prayers for Sundays and feast days during the liturgical year — received 189 votes in favor and 30 against. During the bishops' meeting in Orlando, Fla., in June, the document failed to get the required two-thirds majority.

■ To fill a gap in existing prayer books, the U.S. bishops overwhelmingly approved a liturgical service in English and Spanish for blessing children in the womb.

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., praised the new blessing as "a tangible way to witness pastorally and sacramentally to the life of the unborn child" and said it could also serve as an opportunity for parishes to bring together expectant couples for mutual support.

■ In a report to the bishops Nov. 11, Auxiliary Bishop Roger Morin of New Orleans explained that the Catholic Campaign for Human Development cut off funding earlier this year to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, known as ACORN, for reasons unrelated to the organization's current troubles over voter registration and partisan politics.

Bishop Morin, chairman of

Actions at a Glance

Key actions taken by the U.S. bishops' conference at its fall general assembly

- Warned the new administration and new Congress that lifting existing federal abortion restrictions would alienate tens of millions of Americans and could be seen as an attack on religious freedom.
- Issued a statement on the economic crisis saying the church will continue to reach out to those in need.
- Approved another section of the English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal.
- Overwhelmingly approved a liturgical service in English and Spanish for blessing children in the womb.
- Approved a \$144 million budget and a list of plans and programs for 2009.
- Set goals on priority issues ranging from strengthening marriage to cultural diversity in the church.
- Chose the Revised Grail Psalter from Conception Abbey over the Revised New American Bible translation of the Book of Psalms for liturgical use.
- Elected Bishop George V. Murray of Youngstown, Ohio, as USCCB secretary-elect and chose chairmen-elect for five USCCB committees.

the U.S. bishops' subcommittee on the CCHD, said the U.S. bishops' domestic anti-poverty program, which supports community groups, in June suspended \$1.13 million in previously authorized grants to ACORN affiliates. No new applications from ACORN for the coming year were approved, he added.

■ In an action related to key priorities established earlier by the bishops, the prelates agreed to grant five task forces the authority to tackle issues ranging from strengthening marriage to addressing cultural diversity in the church through 2011 and approved a host of goals for each task force for the

next year.

The task forces are on faith formation and sacramental practice; strengthening marriage; the life and dignity of the human person; cultural diversity in the church; and the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

■ Almost lost in the busy

Nov. 11 afternoon session was the 2009 USCCB budget. The bishops approved a budget of \$144 million, a 2.25 percent increase from 2008.

For more information on the

U.S. bishops' fall meeting, visit

www.usccb.org.

Even in retirement, Sister Ann Amen brings others closer to God

RETIREMENT, from page 1

Mexico. This was just as the Mission of Friendship between the Erie Diocese and Archdiocese of Yucatan was getting started.

"The Mexicans have such deep faith in the face of tremendous poverty," Sister Ann says. "You couldn't help but be impressed by that. It was just a tremendous experience for the students and myself."

During a sabbatical, she decided that she'd rather work than go back to school.

"I think all the way along the line, God was leading me to Australia because that's where I feel I came up with the work that God intended me to do," she says.

That work was the Parish Care and Concern program.

She went to Australia to work with the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. The agency was working on plans for parish social ministries, but the requirements were proving to be difficult. Any parish that wanted an outreach program was required to employ a social worker with a master's degree.

Sister Ann was the Parish Care and Concern program.

She worked to Australia to work with the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. The agency was working on plans for parish social ministries, but the requirements were proving to be difficult. Any parish that wanted an outreach program was required to employ a social worker with a master's degree.

"You don't need any kind of a degree to help your neighbor, and that was what it was all about," she says.

She developed Parish Care and Concern as a model of service in which members of a parish community volunteer for a year at a time to meet some of the social welfare needs of the parish and local community. Under the direction of volunteer coordinators, parishioners provide services to any needy person regardless of race, religion or ethnic affiliation.

Services depend on the specific needs of a parish but may

include: transportation; visiting the homebound, the lonely, the bereaved or the newcomer; emergency home help; minor repairs; advocating for the disabled or companion relief for caregivers.

"It doesn't cost the parish one cent, which is one of the things that's appealing to the parishes," Sister Ann says. "Not only that, but people have the opportunity to use their talents to meet the needs of their neighbor. To me, that's the important thing."

When Sister Ann left Australia, there were between 5,000 and 6,000 volunteers at 76 parishes. When she came back to Erie, she became director of the diocese's Parish Social Ministry for Catholic Charities. She worked in that capacity for 10 years, setting up the outreach ministry throughout the diocese.

Today, the model of Parish Care and Concern is used throughout the U.S. and abroad. It's been continued in the diocese.

At the age of 82, she left Catholic Charities but wasn't sure what else she wanted to do.

"People said, 'Why don't you write a book about your life?' I didn't want the book published unless I thought it would bring people closer to God."

Her editor, Sister Phyllis Hilbert, SSJ, told her she thought it would. In 2006, Sister Ann released "Beyond My Dreams." In it, she details her encounters with St. Therese Neumann, Pope Paul VI in Rome, Pope John Paul II and Mother Theresa of Calcutta in Australia and chronicles her many travels and faith experiences.

The book is available at the Sisters of St. Joseph Community Living Center, Hofmann's Religious Goods and the book stores at St. Mary's Home East and Asbury Ridge.

CLOCK REPAIR

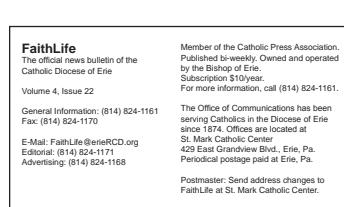
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FaithLife
The official news bulletin of the Catholic Diocese of Erie

Volume 4, Issue 22

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

The Office of Communications has been serving Catholics in the Diocese of Erie since 1982. Its Office is located at St. Mark Catholic Center
429 East Grandview Blvd., Erie, Pa.
Periodical postage paid at Erie, Pa.
Postmaster: Send address changes to FaithLife at St. Mark Catholic Center.

Briefly

Mall chapel Advent hours

ERIE — The Roman Catholic Chapel at the Millcreek Mall in Erie will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday during Advent. The chapel is closed on Sunday.

Priests are available for confession or conversation on Wednesday from 2-4 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Handel's 'Messiah' sing-along at St. Patrick, Erie

ERIE — Join the Erie Philharmonic Chorus for a Handel's "Messiah" sing-along from selected choruses with orchestral accompaniment on Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick Parish, 130 E. Fourth St. in Erie.

Anyone who has sung—or always wanted to sing—G.F. Handel's most famous composition is invited to join the 70-voice chorus. Participants who have a "Messiah" score are encouraged to bring it that evening.

Admission is \$5 per person, and all proceeds benefit the Young People's Chorus of Erie, the newest youth outreach program in residence at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College.

The sing-along will be conducted by Dr. Jason Bishop, conductor of the Erie Philharmonic Chorus, founder and artistic director of the Young People's Chorus of Erie and director of choral activities at Penn State Behrend. Organist Erik Meyer, cantor at Luther Memorial Church, will be the accompanist.

For more information, call 814.898.6789.

Christmas cantate in Titusville

TITUSVILLE — The Catholic community of Titusville will present an afternoon of Christmas worship through music on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m.

The program, which will be held at St. Titus Parish in Titusville, will include a Christmas cantata titled "And This Shall Be a Sign" with music score by Larry Shackley and lyrics by John and Audra Parker. This original work is an unusual blend of new music coupled with familiar Christmas favorites in the context of the Christmas story. Christmas favorites incorporated into the cantata include "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World."

The choir, under the direction of Allison Moll-Mattis, includes the St. Titus members of St. Walburga choir and others joining them for this special musical experience. Additionally, several members of the group will perform solo works.

Advent vespers and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Peter Cathedral

ERIE — During Advent, St. Peter Cathedral in Erie will use themes from the Year of St. Paul—the apostle of conversion—to pray for the conversion and renewal of all the people of God.

All are invited for sung vespers and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament during the four Sundays of Advent at 4 p.m.

Intentions include prayer for the success of the newly elected officials in bringing peace, prosperity and calm to the United States; the conversion of all people, especially for government officials, that they lead the U.S. to concern and love for all peoples of all ages; that all come to respect life; for the unborn; those who are burdened and in need; and for the sick and aged.

Pa. Pro-Life Federation starts online petition against FOCA

The Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation, the state affiliate of National Right to Life, has established an online petition to stop FOCA, the Freedom of Choice Act.

Possible FOCA legislation would wipe out virtually all restrictions on abortion, including Pennsylvania's landmark Abortion Control Act, which would mean an end to parental consent, informed consent and 24-hour waiting periods for abortion. It would also mean the return of the practice of partial-birth abortion.

To sign the online petition against FOCA or for more information, visit www.paprolife.org.



People in the News

Father Ron Witherup to be keynote speaker at Gannon's winter commencement Dec. 14

ERIE — Father Ron Witherup, SS, STD, superior general of the Society of St. Sulpice and a native of Franklin, will be the keynote speaker at Gannon University's winter commencement on Sunday, Dec. 14.

Gannon President Dr. Antoine Garibaldi will confer 327 degrees at the university's Hammermill Center beginning at 2 p.m.

Father Witherup attended Gannon from 1968-70, during which time he resided at St. Mark Seminary in Erie. He will be awarded an honorary degree during the ceremony.

At 11 a.m. on Dec. 14, the Gannon University community will converge for a special Mass at St. Peter Cathedral to honor the graduates.

In 1976, Father Witherup was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Erie. He entered the Society of St. Sulpice in 1981. He is a Scripture scholar and the author of 11 books and more than 80 articles on Scripture. He resides at the Sulpicians' headquarters in Paris, France.



Father Ron Witherup

Youth rally inspires students to live out their faith through service

RALLY, from page 1

as Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Father Santor said.

He said Erie is a refugee-friendly city because of agencies and many entry-level jobs.

He then introduced five young refugee boys from Burundi who are studying and working in Erie. Prior to coming to Erie, they spent 10 years in refugee camps in Tanzania. The boys talked about the tough life in the camps and adapting to the culture in the U.S.

The best way to help refugees is to be friendly, Father Santor said.

"As our brothers and sisters, they have many gifts to share with us," he said. "They have strong faith and trust in God and high family values."

Sister Nancy Fischer, SSJ, introduced the rally's service project.

Each year, the Sisters of St. Joseph and Marketplace Grill in Erie provide a Thanksgiving dinner for those who would not be able to have one if it were not offered.

"Every year, we serve about a thousand people," Sister Nancy said. "Some of them line up at eight in the morning to get a dinner.

The group performed popular cover and praise songs, as well as original material.

The final event was a youth Mass celebrated by Father Steve

and we'll deliver hundreds of others to people who can't get out. This year, we decided to give them a little gift from the youth of the diocese."

In small groups, students wrapped small rocks in cloth, then tied them with string and attached a prayer card to each one. The cards read: "Many blessings from the youth of the Erie Roman Catholic Diocese, November 2008. 'May the Lord bless you and keep you... and give you peace.' Numbers 6:22-27."

The card asks the recipient to place the rock somewhere they will see it everyday as a reminder to help them pray. "Pray to the Lord; ask him for help and guidance. Pray to the Lord, thank him for his goodness," says.

After lunch, Who Do You Say I Am? music ministry performed in the OLP gymnasium. The ministry includes a diverse group of youth and music ministers from the Cleveland area.

"We're just musicians who like to praise and worship God," lead singer Andy Andino told the crowd.

The group performed popular cover and praise songs, as well as original material.

The final event was a youth Mass celebrated by Father Steve



Sarah Pratt, a junior at Fairview High School and member of St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community in Erie, poses with the T-shirt she designed for the Nov. 15 high school youth rally.

starts."

A few months ago, Pratt's youth leader approached her about a design for the rally and asked her if she could draw something. All she knew was the theme and that the thematic passage was the foot washing from the Last Supper.

"That's where I got the idea for the water pitcher and the basin," Pratt said. "And then I figured since it's God sending us as servants, it would be appropriate to have Christ's hands, which are indicated by the nail marks."

Father Steve Schreiber shares his vision with youth leaders

YOUTH MINISTRY, from page 1

schools.

"The idea is for him to make an impact on our students and then to get them involved with the Family Honor program and to excite them," Father Schreiber said.

He then announced that the diocese is hoping to bring in Jason Evert, "who's probably the most in-demand chastity speaker in the country," Father Schreiber said. "He's a young Catholic. He and his wife have three young children. He spends 170-plus days each year out on the road giving talks to young people and parents about chastity."

The Archdiocese of Boston has been bringing in Evert to speak at parishes for the past four years and now has a two-and-a-half year waiting list, Father Schreiber said.

"That's how successful his talks have been," he said. "From all the feedback we've heard, he truly impacts the kids not just for that moment but also down the road."

— Father Steve Schreiber

said. "We'd really like to make the emphasis next year on chastity."

"We're probably looking at November or December of next year," Father Schreiber said.

Evert will give six talks, with four of them taking place at high

schools.

"The idea is for him to make an impact on our students and then to get them involved with the Family Honor program and to excite them," Father Schreiber said.

"Instead of big rallies, we're envisioning events like this and going out to different places throughout the year and having nights like this," Father Schreiber said.

"With speakers and events planned for high school students, Father Schreiber said the question remains about what to do to help the faith of middle schoolers. The middle school youth rally for 2009 is scheduled for April 18 at St. Bernard School in Bradford.

"After that, we hope that is something you can help us with," he said. "We're looking for input from the youth leaders."

He pointed to programs that are available for 2009 including

the Catholic Leadership Institute, Notre Dame Vision and TEC (To Encounter Christ) retreats. The National Catholic Youth Ministry Conference is also set for Nov. 19-21, 2009 in Kansas City.

Father Schreiber noted that the diocese's Youth Ministry Office is available to aid groups with resources for retreats and speakers.

In January, the office will also launch a redesigned Web site for youth, which will include videos, a weekly message, a Q & A section, saint of the day, vocation info, links, a section for leaders, a place for feedback and diocesan calendar.

"Please e-mail us all your stuff," Father Schreiber said. "We want to have everything in there because it's hard to know what's going on everywhere, and there's some really neat stuff going on. No event is too small. We want to list it."

E-mail events to schreiber@eriecd.org or lcc@eriecd.org

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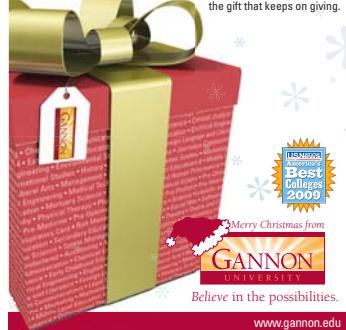
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Benedictine oblates renew and commit

ERIE — Nineteen people joined together Oct. 25 to renew their commitment to the Benedictine Sisters of Erie as oblates. Eighteen initiates and one transfer made their initial commitment.

Oblates include men and women from all walks of life with one goal: to seek God through a life based on the Rule of Benedict and through a formal relationship with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.

At vigil prayer at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, the oblates rededicated themselves to supporting the charism and corporate commitment of the Benedictine sisters. The sisters then blessed and welcomed the oblates in a relationship of mutual support.

Pictured from left to right are:



tine Nicoletti, Helen Gzowicz (transfer), Betsy Monsalve, Sarah Signorino, (back row) Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, prioress, Joyce Masquelier, Emma Kueger, Mary Schwendeman, Caren Meyer, Marco Monsalve, Melanie Titel and Sister Mari-

lyn Schable, OSB, oblate director.

Those unable to attend included: Ruth Brennan, Patricia Cassidy, Shea Godwin, Mary Jo Minello, Jackie Muechenheim, Helen Schneider, Daniel Schuler and Carol Smith.

Christian leadership fostered at DuBois Central Catholic

DUBOIS — Members of DuBois Central Catholic High School's Class of 2009 were invited to be a part of the mandated training to become student eucharistic ministers at DCC, and 28 students chose to complete the training. These students were inducted recently in front of their peers and their families at a school Mass. Families of the seniors were also invited to a reception afterward, hosted by other members of DCC's Campus Ministry.

Central's student eucharistic ministers are sanctioned by the Diocese of Erie to also serve this role in their home parishes.

Pictured, Kim Cadori, Meagan Thomas and Katie Plyler listen carefully to the list of responsibilities for their new role as student eucharistic ministers for their peers at DuBois Central Catholic. Father Mark Swoger installed the students.



St. Elizabeth of Hungary students make gifts to food bank

SMEOTPHT — The religious education classes in grades 1-4 at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Smethport visited the food bank of Christian Community Services (CCS) in Smethport on Nov. 18 and contributed non-perishable food items.

At the same time, Amy Sage, facilitator of religious education (pictured at left), presented four checks in the amount of \$1,923.65 to the food bank, which supplies food to families throughout the year. Ruth Covert, a volunteer at the food bank, accepts one of the checks.

The money represents: \$941 the proceeds from St. Elizabeth's feast day dinner; \$485 from the religious education classes' scarecrow contest; \$300 from the parish's annual ticket party; and \$197.65 from Operation Rice Bowl.

CCS is supported by the church of the Smethport Area Ministerium.



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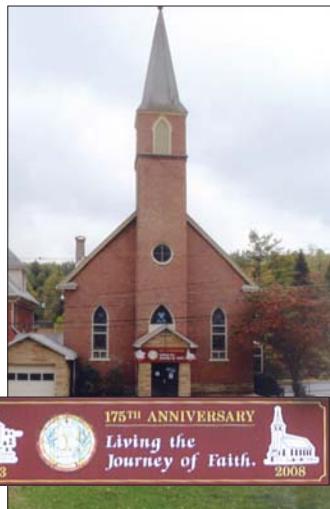
St. Bonaventure, Grampian, celebrates 175 years

GRAMPIAN — St. Bonaventure Parish in Grampian recently observed its 175th anniversary with a Mass and dinner for parishioners. The theme was "Living the Journey of Faith."

The Mass began with a procession that included a banner representing religious education, the seal of St. Bonaventure which was presented by the parish council and a papal blessing offered by the St. Theresa Guild. Bishop Donald Trautman celebrated the anniversary liturgy.

"There are two things that stand out about this parish," said Father Mark Swoger, pastor of St. Bonaventure. "One is that the people love to participate in the Eucharist. It's very lively. Second, they work hard to obtain their goals. When they set out to grow in their faith, they do just that."

The Catholic community in and around Grampian Hills in the 1830s was made up mostly of Irish immigrants. The first church was blessed in 1840 and was located at the site of the current church's cemetery. It was serviced by itinerant priests about every three months. A second church was built in 1869. In 1897, the third and current church was completed.



Mercyhurst Prep takes first place in Bread Box Awards

ERIE — Mercyhurst Prep High School took first place in Second Harvest Food Bank's 20th Annual Bread Box Award for high schools. Proudly displaying the winning plaque are juniors J. J. Mitchell, Ryan Niedzwiecki, Lisa Medina, Brianna Lockwood and Shannon McKnight. Mercyhurst also won the Penny Challenge by collecting more than \$2,000.

In 1989, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania began the Bread Box Awards. This event, held in October in the food bank's warehouse, recognizes the efforts of groups and individuals who do projects for the food bank. The awards honor those who did the most during the last year to increase public awareness of hunger in



our area.

Awards are presented in nine categories: elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, colleges/technical schools, individu-

als, churches, organizations and small business/big business.

Mercyhurst Prep also won first place in the high school category in 2007.

Car raffle raises more than \$86,000 for St. Michael School

GREENVILLE — Msgr. Andrew Karg, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenville, hands the keys over to Kyle McGranahan of Greenville, winner of the 2008 Shelby Cobra GT500 Mustang. This was the 16th annual car raffle to benefit St. Michael School. The winning ticket was drawn at the annual golf scramble held at Pine Hill Golf Course on Sept. 28. Tickets for the car raffle were sold in all 50 states plus four countries.

Proceeds netted more than \$86,000 in profit for the school.

McGranahan decided to keep the car, valued at more than \$60,000, instead of taking the \$30,000 cash option. The car was autographed by racing and automotive designer and former racing driver Carroll Shelby.



St. Mary of Grace's Centennial Year Pilgrimage to Italy

Please join us in celebrating our centennial year! St. Mary of Grace is planning an eleven day tour of Italy with visits to Venice, Florence, Rome, and Assisi...just to mention a few!

We will be departing from Pittsburgh April 13, 2009 and returning April 23, 2009. The cost of the trip is \$3,825 which includes roundtrip airfare, breakfast daily and dinners per itinerary, specially selected hotel accommodations, land transportation, taxes, tips, and current fuel charge.

For more information or to make reservations, please call St. Mary of Grace's parish office at (814) 333-6161 or The Travel Experience at (814) 724-1053.



About 58% of women and men religious are past age 70; 7% are past age 90. More than 4,900 need skilled nursing care. Even at advanced ages, many work in compensated or volunteer ministry that benefits others.

Religious institutes are financially autonomous and responsible for the support of their members. Income sources include compensated ministry, government benefits and investment return.

Retirement Fund for Religious

Ninety-five percent of donations to the National Religious Retirement Office aid elderly religious.

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Most elderly religious receive, on average, a Social Security benefit of just \$4,402 per year. Community living provides some economies of scale, but health care and living costs in most religious communities far exceed income.