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www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

February 25, 2007

Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



St. Katharine Drexel



St. John of God

- March 3 St. Katharine Drexel
- March 7 Ss. Perpetua and Felicity
- March 8 St. John of God
- March 9 St. Frances of Rome

Rite of Election – Sun., Feb. 25 in Erie, DuBois



File photo

In the Erie Diocese, the Rite of Election will be celebrated at two sites: Bishop Donald W. Trautman will preside at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie and Vicar General Msgr. Robert Smith will preside at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in DuBois.

Praise and worship at OLP – March 4

Praise & worship will be held Sun., March 4 from 2-3:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Erie. Deacon Ralph DeCecco will be the celebrant and music will be provided by the Voice of Peace choir. The program includes music, prayer, Scripture and reflection with reconciliation available. Fellowship and refreshments will follow. Sign interpretation will be provided. For more information, contact Jackie Johnson, director of Catholic Charities' Disabilities Ministries, at 800.374.3723 ext. 257 or 824.1257 or e-mail JJohnson@ErieRCD.org.

Crawford County Cursillo Ultreya at St. Mary of Grace, Meadville – March 10

Crawford County Cursillo is hosting a "Homecoming" Ultreya at St. Mary of Grace Parish in Meadville Sat., March 10. Festivities begin with Mass at 5:15 p.m. Social activities will follow in the parish hall — Chinese auction, food and fun. Anyone who has made a Cursillo weekend is invited to come and rejoin the fellowship. For more information, call 814.333.3179. To learn more about the Cursillo movement in the Erie Diocese, visit www.ErieCursillo.org.

Lenten calendar

For a printable Lenten calendar, visit www.ErieRCD.org, the Erie Diocese's official Web site. Sponsored by Catholic Charities' Parish Social Ministry/Respect Life Office, the calendar provides a Scripture verse, reflection and activity suggestion for each day of Lent.



They shall look on Him whom they have pierced

Pope Benedict XVI's message for Lent 2007

By Catholic News Service

Editor's note: Here is part one of the Vatican text of Pope Benedict XVI's message for Lent 2007. Look for part two in the March 11 issue of FaithLife.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

"They shall look on him whom they have pierced" (Jn 19:37). This is the biblical theme that this year guides our Lenten reflection. Lent is a favorable time to learn to stay with Mary and John, the beloved disciple, close to him who on the cross consummated for all mankind the sacrifice of his life (cf. Jn 19:25). With a more fervent participation let us direct our gaze, therefore, in this time of penance and prayer, at Christ crucified who, dying on Calvary, revealed fully for us the love of God. In the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, I dwelt upon this theme of love highlighting its two fundamental forms: agape and eros.

God's love: agape and eros

The term agape, which appears many times in the New Testament, indicates the self-giving love of one who looks exclusively for the good of the other. The word eros, on the other hand,

denotes the love of one who desires to possess what he or she lacks and yearns for union with the beloved. The love with which God surrounds us is undoubtedly agape. Indeed, can man give to God some good that he does not already possess? All that the human creature is and has is divine gift. It is the creature, then, who is in need of God in everything. But God's love is also eros. In the Old Testament, the Creator of the universe manifests toward the people whom he has chosen as his own a predilection that transcends every human motivation. The prophet Hosea expresses this divine passion with daring images such as the love of a man for an adulterous woman (cf. 3:1-3). For his part, Ezekiel, speaking of God's relationship with the people of Israel, is not afraid to use strong and passionate language (cf. 16:1-22). These biblical texts indicate that eros is part of God's very heart: The Almighty awaits the "yes" of his creatures as a young bridegroom that of his bride. Unfortunately, from its very origins, mankind, seduced by the lies of the evil one, rejected God's love in the illusion of a self-sufficiency that is impossible (cf. Gn 3:1-7). Turning in on himself, Adam withdrew from that source of life who is God himself, and became the first of "those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (Heb 2:15). God, however, did not give up. On the contrary, man's "no" was the decisive impulse that moved him to manifest his love in all of its redeeming strength.



CNS photo

Benedictines' annual spring art show opens March 4

Chapter 57 shop offers outlet for sisters' artwork, benefits ministries

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

ERIE — Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB, believes that art is the language of the soul. "Anything that we do is art," said Sister Margaret Ann, artist in residence at Mount St. Benedict and a teacher at the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House. "The mere fact that we walk on this earth is art. The way that we treat each other is art. That's what I mean by language of the soul. If you surround yourself with beauty, you can't help but be able to reach out and be a loving, giving presence to others."

Sister Margaret Ann, who is a photographer, potter and works in glass, is gearing up for the 12th annual Benedictine Sisters of Erie spring art show, which opens March 4 from 10:30 a.m.-noon in the Chapter 57 gallery at Mount St. Benedict. The show will feature 36 pieces from 18 sisters and oblates. Some pieces will be available for sale, while other will be exhibited only. The show is held during March to coincide with Women's History



Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski, OSB, displays one of her acrylic paintings titled "Water Lily." The painting is one of 36 pieces that will be on display during the 12th annual Benedictine Sisters Spring Art Show.

Month.

"We wanted a show for women to celebrate their different gifts," Sister Margaret Ann said.

The hallway just outside Chapter 57, the monastery's fine art gift shop, will feature photography, fiber, woodwork, paste paper, stained glass, oil painting, cross stitch, poetry and mixed media.

Chapter 57 has been around for 25 years. The store, which is housed in the former sewing room from the days when sisters made their own habits, is an outlet for the sisters' artwork and offers one-of-a-kind items.

"We've been noted as a fine art gift shop," said Sister Margaret Ann, who has been manager of the store since its opening. "We offer items that wouldn't normally be found at the mall or a religious goods store."

See ART SHOW, page 3

Snowy valentine



CNS photo

A St. Valentine's Day rose adorns a snow-covered statue of Mary outside St. Theodore's Church in Rochester, N.Y., Feb. 14. A large storm system that brought heavy snows and below-average temperatures to much of the Midwest and Northeast during the week.

CSA benefits larger and local church

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

In 2006, donors contributed \$5.36 million to the Erie Diocese's annual Catholic Services Appeal.

Out of that contribution, \$1.88 million was retained by parishes for parish projects.

Each parish is assessed a financial goal for the CSA, which helps fund the ministries and operations of the diocese. Once a parish reaches its goal, all funds raised over that amount stay within the parish.

"The bishop is fond of saying that when our parishes are strong, the diocese is strong," said Joseph Hoag, director of the diocesan Stewardship and Development Office. "The Catholic Services Appeal benefits both the larger and local church."

Parishes throughout the 13-county diocese fund various projects once their CSA goals are reached.



Blessed Sacrament Parish, Erie

"What we're looking forward to doing is utilizing some space on the east side of the church and school for additional handicapped parking," said Msgr. Daniel Magraw, pastor of Blessed Sacrament in Erie.

Parishioner David Brennan, an architect, has been working closely with the parish's building and grounds committee to develop the plans for the proposed handicapped parking area.

The parish also plans to

build a cut-in driveway in front of the church to accommodate funeral processions and wedding cars.

A letter explaining the projects went out to parishioners along with information on the parish mission and Lent.

"I'm hoping our people will see this as an important need and respond," Msgr. Magraw said.

St. Boniface Parish, Kersey

According to Father John Kuzilla, pastor of St. Boniface in Kersey, there are four projects the parish is hoping to begin with the help of CSA funds. The first priority is replacing the rectory roof.

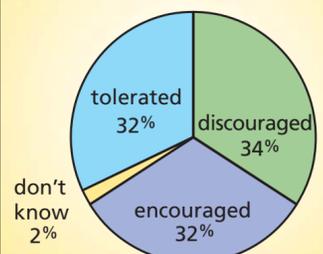
"It's not that old, but we just discovered that it's gone bad on us," Father Kuzilla said.

Other projects include replacing the church doors, repainting the northeast wall of the church and replacing the sanctuary rug.

"We've always been able to go over our goal," Father Kuzilla said, "it's just a matter of how much. The CSA benefits the needs of everyone, that's why I like it. It's been a blessing throughout the years. Without it, we would fall behind financially."

Spirituality at Work

Working Americans are split on whether religious expression is appropriate at work. Those who say it should be...



Source: The Gallup Organization

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Growing church

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The latest Vatican statistics confirm that the church's population and ministerial workforce are continuing to shift to developing countries, especially those in Africa and Asia.

Figures released Feb. 12 showed that the overall number of Catholics increased to nearly 1.1 billion at the end of 2005, an increase of 1.5 percent from the previous year. The Catholic growth rate was slightly higher than the rate of overall population increase, which was 1.2 percent. Catholics now represent 17.2 percent of the global population, the Vatican said.

The statistics were released in connection with the presentation of the 2007 Vatican yearbook, known as the *Annuario Pontificio*, which catalogs the church's presence in each diocese.

The church's population grew fastest in Africa, where the number of Catholics increased 3.1 percent in 2005, about half

Vatican stats confirm growth of church, especially in Africa, Asia

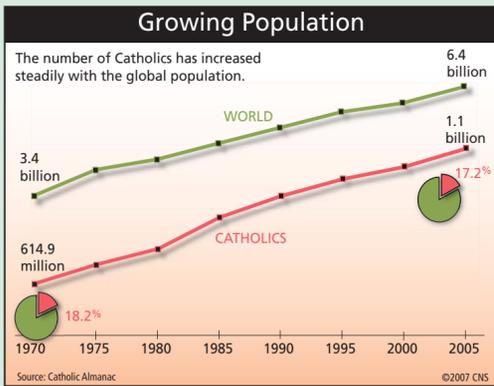
a percentage point higher than the overall population growth rate on the continent.

In Asia, the number of Catholics was up 2.7 percent, and in the Americas up 1.2 percent. In Europe, there was a very slight increase in the number of Catholics, the Vatican said.

Similar geographical differences were reflected in the number of priests and seminarians.

The number of Catholic priests around the world was 406,411 at the end of 2005. That was an increase of 520, or about 0.1 percent, over the previous year.

Broken down by continent, the increase was 3.8 percent in Asia and 3.6 percent in Af-



rica. Europe and the Americas showed a decrease of about half a percentage point in the number of priests, while the number dropped 1.8 percent in Oceania.

The global distribution of priests continued to swing slowly toward Africa and Asia, which at the end of 2005 had 20.3 percent of the world's priests; in 1985, that number was about 11 percent. Europe continued to lose priests and was home to 48.8 percent of the world total; in 1985, Europe had 58 percent of the world's priests.

The distribution numbers were relatively unchanged for the Americas, which have about 30 percent of the total number

of priests, and for Oceania, which has about 1 percent of the total.

Regarding seminarians, the Vatican said that globally the number increased 1.2 percent in 2005, from 113,044 to 114,439. Africa led the way with an increase of 3.46 percent, followed by Asia with 2.9 percent.

The Americas had an increase in seminarians of 0.6 percent, while Oceania remained virtually unchanged. In Europe, the number of seminarians dropped 1.9 percent.

For every 100 seminarians in the world at the end of 2005, 32 were from the Americas, 26 were Asian, 21 African, 20 European and one from Oceania, the Vatican said.

By the Way...

Several parishioners from Holy Rosary Parish in Erie, were on the Cursillo team from the recent weekend for women and are still enjoying the memory of the graces and transformations they witnessed.

The next Cursillo weekends are March 15-18 for men and April 19-22 for women at Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek. To learn more about the Cursillo movement in the Erie Diocese, visit www.ErieCursillo.org.



Jason Koshinski

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwest Pennsylvania, the Sisters of Mercy and the Benedictine Sisters of Erie received a civic honor on Valentine's Day. The three communities of women religious were honored with a special citation for their ministries at the Erie City Council meeting Feb. 14.

For the fourth straight year, Father Mike DeMartinis will host a program for all ages every Wednesday evening during Lent at Blessed Sacrament in Erie. The program begins with Mass at 5:15 p.m. followed by a simple meal of soup and salad. Father Mike will then give a Scriptural reflection at 7 p.m.

"We've had a good group come out the last years," Father Mike said. "This is open to anyone from any parish. So if you're looking for something spiritual to do during Lent, here you go." Blessed Sacrament is located at 1626 W. 26th St. in Erie.

Why Catholic? faith formation workshops will be conducted in April. The workshops, which take place between the two six-week small group sessions, will go into more depth about liturgy and the sacraments. These workshops are open to everyone at parishes conducting *Why Catholic?* and not just those participating in the small groups. Dates and locations will be announced soon.

The general intention for February's Apostleship of Prayer fits in very well with the theme for the Erie Diocese's 2007 Catholic Services Appeal, which began with Commitment Sunday Feb. 18. This month's general intention is "That the goods of the earth, given by God for all people, may be used wisely and in accordance with justice and solidarity." The theme for this year's CSA is *Of One Heart and Mind*.

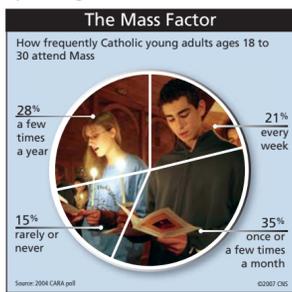
The Apostleship of Prayer includes the monthly prayer intentions of Pope Benedict XVI. They may be found on the Internet at www.apostlesofprayer.org.

Jason Koshinski is editor of FaithLife. Contact him at JKoshinski@ErieRCD.org or 814.824.1171.

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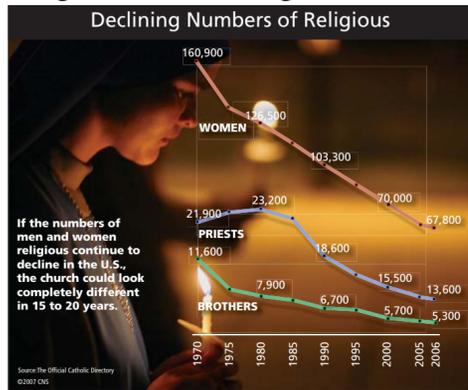
Sociologists see strong identity, less commitment in young Catholics

WASHINGTON — Young adult Catholics have a strong Catholic identity but do not feel much of a commitment to the institutional church or its moral teachings, two sociologists said Feb. 6 in Washington. The seemingly paradoxical assessment came from James A. Davidson of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., and Dean R. Hoge of The Catholic University of America in Washington at a Woodstock Forum on the campus of Georgetown University. Davidson and Hoge are co-authors with William V. D'Antonio of Catholic University and Mary L. Gautier of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown of "American Catholics Today: New Realities of Their Faith and Their Church," to be published in late March by Rowman & Littlefield. The book analyzes Gallup surveys from 1987, 1993, 1999 and 2005, and finds that Catholics born after 1979, in what the authors call the "millennial generation," have deep differences from previous generations of Catholics -- differences that are unlikely to disappear when they marry and have children. "There's a disconnect between them and the institutional church," said Davidson. "And when they get older, they are not going to be like the Catholics of previous generations. They are going to be the Catholics they are now."



WASHINGTON — Present trends suggest a declining future for many communities of men and women religious, but religious are called to imagine a different future, Sister Doris Gottemoeller said Feb. 3. Sister Gottemoeller, former president of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas and of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and Father Canice Connors, a former provincial minister of the Conventual Franciscans and former president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, were the main speakers at Washington Theological Union's annual Religious Life Symposium. The theme of this year's symposium was "Re-Imagining Religious Life in the 21st Century." Sister Gottemoeller addressed the overall theme, while Father Connors described a specific effort by a community of Conventual Franciscans in Syracuse, N.Y., to create a new center of Conventual life and ministry.

Religious called to imagine new future



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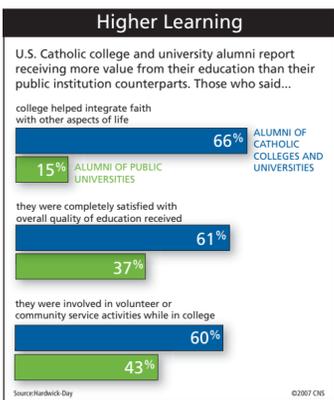
WORLD

Catholic agencies ask rich countries to prove they will increase aid

VATICAN CITY — Two international Catholic organizations have asked the world's richest countries to prove they are serious about the promise to increase development aid and halve world poverty by 2015. Caritas Internationalis, the Vatican-based umbrella organization for national Catholic charities, and the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, or CIDSE, an alliance of 15 Catholic development organizations from Europe and North America, launched their campaign Feb. 8 at the Vatican. The campaign, "Make Aid Work: The World Can't Wait," is aimed at reminding the world's richest nations that they made concrete commitments and that the citizens who voted for their governments expect them to act, said Duncan MacLaren, secretary general of Caritas. The campaign consists of sending postcards to government leaders before the June G-8 summit meeting of the leaders of the world's eight richest nations and having cardinals and bishops meet government officials before the summit to remind the politicians of their commitments.

Study finds alumni value Catholic college experience

WASHINGTON — Alumni of Catholic colleges and universities rank their education and the values they learned in those institutions far more highly than alumni of major public universities do, education researcher Jim Day told a national gathering of Catholic college and university presidents Feb. 4. The alumni of Catholic schools were considerably more likely than their public university counterparts to say they benefited from opportunities for spiritual development in their college years, experienced an integration of values and ethics in classroom discussions and were helped to develop moral principles that can guide actions, he reported. Day presented findings of his study, based on extensive telephone surveys over the past several years of more than 2,000 alumni of Catholic colleges and universities, flagship public universities, and church-affiliated and not-church-affiliated private institutions of higher learning, at the annual meeting of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.



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General Information: (814) 824-1161
Fax: (814) 824-1170

E-Mail: FaithLife@erieRCD.org
Editorial: (814) 824-1171
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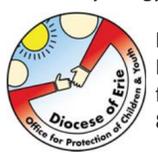
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Doctor Robert Nelsen
Pastoral Assistance Coordinator
for the Diocese of Erie
814.871.7723

For more information, visit
www.ErieRCD.org/protectyouth.htm

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

in State College, PA, is seeking a **part-time youth minister** to develop, coordinate and run our junior high and senior high youth ministry programs. A bachelor's or master's degree in youth ministry or pastoral ministry is preferred; a degree in a youth-related field such as education, child psychology or human development will also be considered. Experience working with youth in faith-based or other settings is also required. Send resume and references to: **Good Shepherd Youth Ministry Search Committee, Box 8186, State College, PA 16805.** Or e-mail to dirred@goodshepherd-sc.org. Application deadline is March 16, 2007.

Briefly

Middle school youth rally March 24

Our Lady of Peace in Erie will host the annual middle school youth rally on March 24.

The deadline for youth to return registration forms to youth leaders is Fri., March 2. Forms are available on the Web at www.ErieRCD.org/youth.asp. The \$25 registration fee includes lunch, a T-shirt and cost for the rally. Find out more from your parish youth leader.

Benedictine Sisters offer Lenten vigils

ERIE – The Benedictine Sisters of Erie will host Lenten vigils every Saturday during Lent at 7 p.m. at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, 6101 East Lake Road. The following will present reflections:

- March 3 – Sister Dianne Sabol, OSB
- March 10 – Sister Ellen Porter, OSB
- March 17 – Sister Kathryn Disbrow, OSB
- March 24 – Sister Mary Ellen Plumb, OSB
- March 31 – Oblate Lyta Seddig

New directory of lay movements, organizations available

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth has published the 2007-2009 Directory of Lay Movements, Organizations and Professional Associations.

The directory contains information about more than 100 groups that are national or international in scope and that have laity as a significant part of their leadership and membership. The groups listed include: lay movements, which have a specific apostolic or pastoral purpose; professional associations, whose membership is drawn from a profession or a particular church ministry; and other lay organizations that provide services related to church ministry.

Copies of the directory are available for \$6 each, including postage, and may be ordered by sending a check made out to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to: Lay Directory, USCCB Committee on the Laity, 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194. Order on the Web at www.usccb.org.

DEATH NOTICE

Sister M. Virginia Bernhardt, RSM, dies at 85

ERIE — Sister M. Virginia Bernhardt, RSM, died February 15, 2007 at St. Vincent Health Center. She was in her 66th year of religious life.

Born March 3, 1921, in Pittsburgh, Sister Virginia (Marie Alberta) was a daughter of the late Albert Richard and Marie Hackett Bernhardt.

On June 26, 1938, she entered the Sisters of Mercy at St. Joseph Convent in Titusville from St. Catherine Parish in DuBois. She professed perpetual vows on August 16, 1944. In 1966 she celebrated her silver jubilee; in 1989 her golden jubilee; and in 1999, her diamond jubilee.

She earned a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Mercyhurst College in 1946 and a master's degree in Spanish language and literature from Western Reserve, Cleveland, in 1951. She received her master's in library science from Clarion University in 1974.

After beginning her service as a language teacher in several Catholic diocesan high schools, Sister Virginia taught Latin and Spanish at Mercyhurst College from 1947-1968. Afterward, she served as a librarian at Mercyhurst Preparatory and Cathedral Preparatory schools. From 1974-99, she was a librarian at Mercyhurst College's Hammermill Library. During retirement, she continued her library service at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse.



Sister M. Virginia Bernhardt, RSM

Operation Rice Bowl

Lenten tradition aids hungry, unites through solidarity

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

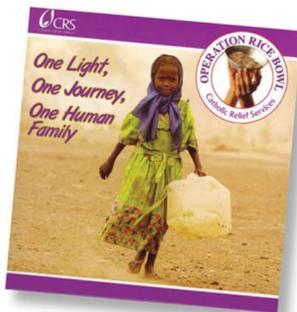
For more than 30 years, Operation Rice Bowl has been a Lenten tradition that may be best known for the millions of dollars it raises each year in schools and parishes to fight hunger.

But through acts of solidarity—by fasting and offering additional sacrifices, including the monetary value of a fasted meal—participants unite themselves with the hungry around the world while learning about the global community and the challenges of poverty overseas.

In 2006, Operation Rice Bowl distributed more than \$5 million to the poor and vulnerable in 45 countries through Catholic Relief Services' programs.

In the Erie Diocese, 60 percent of Operation Rice Bowl proceeds go toward Catholic Relief Services while the remaining 40 percent of contributions support hunger and poverty alleviation efforts within its 13 counties. In 2006, CRS received \$88,615 from the diocese while \$35,446 stayed here to benefit area food banks and community organizations including the Prince of Peace Center in Farrell, the Friendship Table in Bradford and the Dayspring Outreach Fund in Warren.

Schools and parishes have already begun distributing Operation Rice Bowl materials,



Visit Operation Rice Bowl at <http://orb.crs.org> for more information or to print materials such as a home calendar guide and suggested activities.

which include the traditional cardboard rice bowl. By placing the bowls on dining room tables and kitchen counters, people can unite themselves with their brothers and sisters around the world in a very tangible way, said Erin Landini, director of Catholic Charities' Parish Social Ministry/Respect Life Office.

"In Lent, there are three basic themes of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Fasting is where Rice Bowl comes into importance," Landini said. "It's a reminder that we have brothers and sisters throughout the world

and in our own diocese who do not have food on their table every night. Spiritually, we are uniting ourselves in an act of solidarity with those who are in need. That's what Scripture and the teachings of the church call us to do. It reminds us of the needs of others."

Support helps families around the world through CRS development projects such as improving crop yields for farmers and bringing clean water to communities. Projects also encourage the growth of small businesses, provide basic health and nutrition services and support the church in addressing the needs of people affected by HIV/AIDS throughout the world.

"As we think about our own daily living, we're providing clean drinking water, basic health care, good farming techniques and income-producing projects to people throughout the world," said Emma Lee McCloskey, director of development for Catholic Charities.

Countries featured in this year's campaign include Mexico, Pakistan, Angola, Cambodia and Niger. The theme is One Light, One Journey, One Human Family. It is expected to net close to \$6 million, of which \$2 million will be retained to combat local hunger and poverty in the U.S.

"We see that in our own agencies the number of people standing in lines at thrift shops and the need for clothing and food is only increasing," McCloskey said.

Benedictines' annual spring art show opens March 4

ART SHOW from page 1

The shop takes its name from Chapter 57 of the Rule of St. Benedict, which is on the artisans of a monastery.

Excerpts from Chapter 57: "If there are artisans in the monastery, let them practice their crafts with all humility... let the goods always be sold a little cheaper than they can be sold by people in the world, 'that in all things God may be glorified' (1 Peter 4:11)."

All proceeds from the sale of artwork at Chapter 57 help fund the ministries of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.

The bulk of the artistry lies in photography and written media. The shop offers books published by Benedictine Sisters, oblates and other women, Benedictine authors, a line of spirituality books, books for children and art books.

Chapter 57 also offers Third World or "sanctuary items" from artists in other countries, Salvador particularly. Sisters who travel bring the items back to sell in the shop. This way, with no middle-man, prices are kept down and the artists receives more for their work.

Sisters also offer their wood workings—one sister turns wood from the monastery grounds into candleholders—while others work in jewelry, weaving or knitting. The shop also offers children's art, mostly ceramics, from the Neighborhood Art House.



"The main thing is that we can help fund our ministries," Sister Margaret Ann said. "All the proceeds from anything that's purchased in this store go back into the community to help fund our ministries so that we can help the poor, and women and children in particular."

Chapter 57 is open after Sunday liturgies at the Mount or by prior arrangement. Contact Sister Margaret Ann Pilewski at 814.899.0614.

Cultivating Pennsylvania's Catholic grassroots

By Amy L. Beisel
Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 2006) states, "Catholics must participate in political life and bring to bear upon it — by their voice and their vote — what they have learned about human nature, human destiny, and God's will for human beings from his self-revelation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is relevant for all times and all places."

As faithful citizens, our political participation does not stop at the ballot box. The new legislative sessions in Washington, and Harrisburg, will present many opportunities to participate with our voices.

Legislation is introduced for many reasons. It might be in response to a perception of some need, or to show a public reaction to a situation or crisis. Legislators may feel they have to do

something to correct a problem or to encourage positive change. Hundreds of bills on every topic are introduced every session. To become law, these bills must pass both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate by a majority vote then be signed by the president. Laws in Pennsylvania pass through a similar procedure.

Every legislator has different reasons for each vote. Individual lawmakers use many methods for determining what to support or oppose. But, one thing is certain — public input from voters in the district is one of the most influential factors. Legislators listen to arguments from different sides of every issue. Lobbyists and other experts provide points and coun-

terpoints to persuade the vote. But often, the "squeaky wheel" principle plays a large role in formulating a legislator's position. Simply put, if more constituents contact the legislator's office to voice support for a piece of legislation, then the legislator is more likely to vote "yes." It shows him or her that the issue matters to people back home.

This is where you can participate.

There are three easy ways to voice your opinion on important Catholic issues.

1. Write a letter. Even in today's fast-paced high-tech world, a typed or handwritten letter is still a great way to communicate. Pen a few sentences telling your legislator how you want him or her to vote on an issue and why it is important to you. Legislators' mailing addresses are usually listed in your telephone directory's blue pages. Be sure to sign your name and list your address. The opinions of the

citizens who live and vote in the district carry more weight.

2. Pick up the phone. Call your legislator's office. Don't be discouraged if you do not talk to him or her directly. The office staff is very knowledgeable about issues and is paid to keep track of public opinion. Your message will get across.

3. Log on and hit send. E-mail is the most effective and cost efficient way to voice your opinion. Log on to www.pacatholic.org and click "contact legislators." By typing in your zip-code, you can send an e-mail directly to your state legislator.

Whichever method you choose, your voice will make a difference.

Amy L. Beisel, APR, is communications director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference — the public affairs arm of Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania.

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St. Brigid Parish, Meadville, PA

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Also available: Macaroni & Cheese Dinner for \$5.
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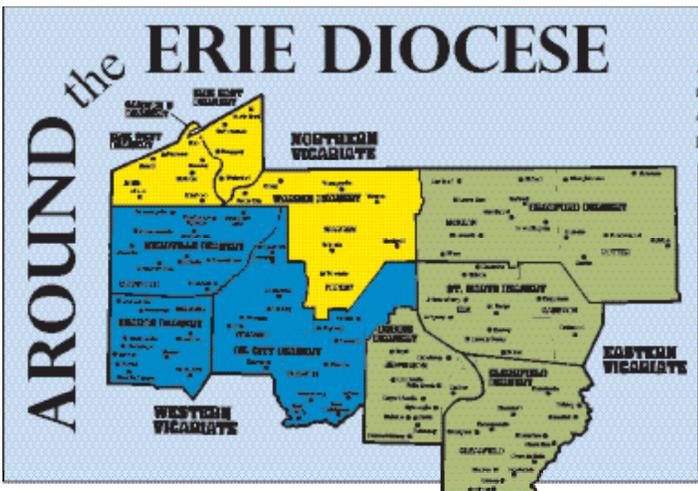
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KidWriting helps DuBois kindergartners learn how to write

DUBOIS — Kindergartners at DuBois Area Catholic School (DACS) are learning how to write through a process called KidWriting. After hearing a story and getting an idea, students adorn "crowns" with short sight words. The children can look at the crowns if they use one of the words in their writing for correct spelling. This program has kindergartners writing short sentences early in their first year of school.



At DACS, the program was initiated by the DuBois Area Title One program and runs in cooperation with the three kindergarten classes at the DuBois Area Central Catholic Elementary School.

Pictured left to right are: Hunter Benton, Emma Cooper, Jacob Snyder, Justin Miknis,

Title One aide Debbie Showers, Alyssa Bittner, Sophia DeMark, Eriq Donahue, Meghan Martin, Kyle Gould and Hayden Ferdarko.

VME, Cathedral Center teams excel at Quiz Bowl

ERIE — Villa Maria Elementary School took first place at Cathedral Prep's seventh annual Quiz Bowl Tournament held in November. There were a total of 22 teams representing eight schools. Twenty-nine students from VME participated in the event. A team from Cathedral Center took third place in the competition.



The VME winning team (top) included: John Campbell, Beth Chitester, Conner Drost, Jessie Smith, Lydia Laythe and Natalie Osiecki. Also pictured are math teacher Sister Anne Marie Joint, SSJ, and science teacher Mary Wright, who served as advisers for the group.

Pictured from the Cathedral Center team (right) are (from left to right): Greg Joy, Luke Trucilla, Dylan Nantes, Alex Prichard, Ellen Zegarelli and Nate Jurkovic.



VMA senior receives CCHD award

ERIE — Mackenzie Cherban (center), a senior at Villa Maria Academy, donated a \$375 matching gift awarded through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) to Kimberly Lytle (left), executive director of Erie DAWN, Inc., to help women and their children. Emma Lee McCloskey (right), Catholic Charities development director, provided Mackenzie with a second-place CCHD national monetary award of \$375 for her original artwork entry, a mosaic mirror addressing poverty, in the 2006 Multi Media Youth Arts Contest. The contest focused on recognizing youth's creative talent and faith commitment in promoting the issues of justice and empowerment of people living in poverty. Lydia Zibelman, also a



senior at Villa Maria Academy, this national initiative and a \$50 received an honorable mention in award.

Many activities highlight Catholic Schools Week at OLMC

ERIE — Our Lady of Mount Carmel School celebrated Catholic Schools Week with many activities. Students had a game day and participated in school-wide bingo. Between games of bingo there were trivia questions for different grade levels. On Career Day, Dr. Pregler spoke about his career as a doctor. There were also speakers from the A.N.N.A. Shelter. The school collected \$200 and boxes of goods for the shelter. Pictured are Ruth Delio with Elvis and Kris Watkins with Bo from the A.N.N.A. Shelter. Also pictured are (left) Jessica and Nick Rinke and (right) Elizabeth and Daniel Rathburn.



Allegheny students go on mission trip to NYC

MEADVILLE — Father Mark Hoffman, pastor of St. Mary of Grace Parish in Meadville, took a group of students from the Catholic community of Allegheny College on a mission trip to New York City Jan. 9-14. Seven students and an alumns spent their Christmas break volunteering at the various ministries of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in the South Bronx. This was the fourth year that Father Hoffman, Catholic chaplain at Allegheny College, organized the trip. Look for a story on the mission trip in the March/April issue of Faith magazine. Father Hoffman (center) is pictured with several of the friars as well as Allegheny students (left to right) Tiffany Firko, Deidre Geary, Donald Marsh, J.R. Lovre, Eric Crowley, Jason Kolcun, Michael McKay and Brandon Tirpak.

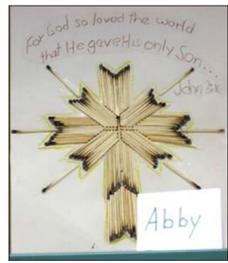


St. Francis School celebrates CSW, 100th day of school



CLEARFIELD — During Catholic Schools Week, St. Francis School in Clearfield held a quiz show event called Whose Life is It Anyway? The panel consisted of (from left to right) Msgr. Henry Krebs, Sister Therese Dush, Msgr. Desmond McGee, Sister Suzanne Thibault

and Father Joseph Campbell. One student from each grade tried to guess the answer to each question asked about a particular panel member, such as who once worked at McDonald's (Sister Suzanne). Students held up numbered cards to respond to each question.



On Feb. 2, Cathy Mullen's kindergarten students at St. Francis celebrated the 100th day of the school year by creating an art picture using 100 items. The results of this child-parent project are now displayed in the kindergarten room.

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SACRED HEART 54th annual Spaghetti Dinner Auditorium, W. 25th & Liberty streets, Erie Sunday, March 11 Serving noon - 6 p.m. Savory spaghetti with meatballs, Italian tossed salad, bread & butter, dessert and beverage Adults\$6 Children (6-12)\$3 Small Fry (under 6) ... FREE CARRY-OUT ORDERS FROM 11:30 a.m. Bring Your Own Containers

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