

### 814 years of service

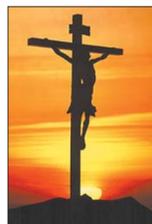
Parish leaders from throughout diocese honored, page 3.



# FaithLife

### They shall look on Him whom they have pierced

Pope Benedict's message for Lent, page 3.



www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

March 25, 2007

## Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

### Feast days

**March 23**  
Annunciation of the Lord

"Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'" — Luke 1:30-33



The Annunciation

### Holy week

**April 1**  
Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)

**April 5**  
Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper

**April 6** Good Friday

**April 7** Holy Saturday, Vigil of Easter

**April 8** Easter Sunday



### Confirmation schedule

**St. Gregory, North East** – Tues., March 27 at 7 p.m.

**St. Boniface, Erie** – Thurs., March 29 at 7 p.m.

### Dedication of Our Lady of the Lake Church, Edinboro – March 31

The new church for Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edinboro will be dedicated at a 4:30 p.m. Mass on Sat., March 31 (the vigil for Palm Sunday) by Bishop Donald Trautman.

During the dedication rites, a relic of St. Anthony of Padua will be installed into the new altar, which has been hand crafted by parishioners.

The new church is adjacent to the current site at 128 Sunset Drive, Edinboro, south of Route 6N.

### Chrim Mass – April 2 at Church of the Beloved Disciple, Grove City



The annual Chrim Mass will be celebrated on April 2, the Monday of Holy Week, at the Church of the Beloved Disciple, Grove City, at 7 p.m. During the Mass, Bishop Donald Trautman will bless the oil of catechumens (used for adult catechumens and infants), the oil of the sick (used in anointing the sick) and the oil of chrim (used for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the ordination of priests and for the consecration of altars).

### Lenten calendar

For a printable Lenten calendar, visit [www.ErieRCD.org](http://www.ErieRCD.org), the official Web site of the Erie Diocese. 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.



## Drawing near to God's love

### Pope reflects on Eucharist, makes concrete suggestions for Mass

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Catholics must believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, celebrate the liturgy with devotion and live in a way that demonstrates their faith, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"The celebration and worship of the Eucharist enable us to draw near to God's love and to persevere in that love," the pope said in his apostolic exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (*The Sacrament of Charity*).

The 131-page document, a papal reflection on the discussions and suggestions made during the 2005 world Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist, was released March 13 by the Vatican.

When Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, he did not simply thank God for the ways he had acted throughout history to save people, the pope said. Rather, Jesus revealed that he himself was the sacrifice that would bring salvation to fulfillment.

"The institution of the Eucharist demonstrates how Jesus' death, for all its violence and absurdity, became in him a supreme act of love and mankind's definitive deliverance from evil," Pope Benedict wrote.

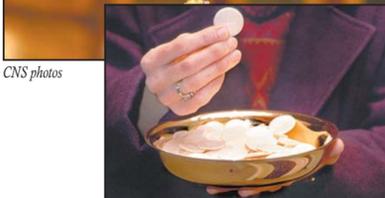
Celebrating the Eucharist, he said, "the church is able to celebrate and adore the mystery of Christ" who is present in the bread and wine through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to offering a spiritual reflection on the meaning of the Eucharist, the liturgy and eucharistic adoration, Pope Benedict made several concrete suggestions for further study and for celebrating the Mass in the Latin rite:

— In expressing his concern for the number of Catholics unable to receive Communion because of irregular marital situations, Pope Benedict confirmed church teaching that those who have been divorced and civilly remarried without having obtained an annulment are not to receive Communion.



CNS photos



However, the pope encouraged bishops to ensure they have fully trained and staffed marriage tribunals to deal with annulment requests "in an expeditious manner."

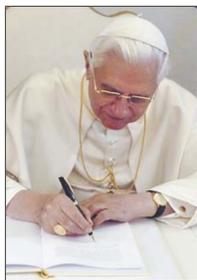
— Pope Benedict said the sign of peace at Mass "has great value," especially in demonstrating the church's responsibility to pray for peace and unity in a world too often troubled by division, violence and hatred.

While Catholics at Mass should exchange a sign of peace with those near them, he also called for "greater restraint" to ensure the moment does not become one of irreparable distraction.

— The pope also said the church should consider providing new texts for the rite of dismissal at the end of Mass so that Catholics would understand better the connection between what they have just celebrated and the fact that they are sent out in a mission to bring God's love and truth to the world.

— The pope asked Catholics to pay more attention to how their postures and gestures at Mass communicate their faith in the Eucharist, particularly by "kneeling during the central moments of the eucharistic prayer."

— As for church architecture, Pope Benedict encouraged parishes to ensure their facilities are fully accessible to people with disabilities and that the tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament is "readily visible to everyone entering the church."



CNS photo

**Pope Benedict XVI signs a 131-page apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (*The Sacrament of Charity*) at the Vatican March 13. In the document, the pope offers reflections on the Eucharist and also makes concrete suggestions for celebrating the Mass.**

## Living Stations of the Cross

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

COUDERSPORT — For Catholics, the Stations of the Cross help the faithful make a spiritual pilgrimage of prayer through the Passion. That pilgrimage is brought to life through the Living Stations.

A growing trend at many churches, the Living Stations use students or adults as actors who help portray Jesus' final hours, bringing a stark realization to the Lenten tradition.



## Youth portrayal of Christ's Passion unites Coudersport parish



Photos by Cori Sevinsky

Pictured at left: Emma Brink plays Mary and Michael Hogan portrays Jesus for St. Eulalia, Coudersport.

Rather than traveling through the series of 14 sculptures, carvings or paintings arranged in churches, the Living Stations are acted out, usually in the sanctuary.

The live-action presentation of the popular devotion has caught on in the Erie Diocese, as well.

For the second straight year, the youth group at St. Eulalia Parish in Coudersport will present the Living Stations at the church. Because of the positive response the group received from last year's presentation,

there will be two performances this year, March 25 and April 1 at 8 p.m.

Andrea Streich, the parish's religious education facilitator, will help coordinate the stations along with Gloria Richardson, for the second year. Streich said the Living Stations are a prayerful reflection on the suffering of Jesus and the actors help make that suffering relevant to modern-day society.

"I think that for our faith community, it really brought us all together reflecting on what Jesus did for us in

the same way," Streich said. "It really lets the youth see the stations in action while it gives the adults a different perspective in their everyday life. Last year was amazing to me. The adults of the parish really recognized our youth. We're all in this faith community together. It's been a bonding experience between the different age groups in our church."

See LIVING STATIONS, page 3

## Ecclesia Center ends residency program

### Staff will continue to offer spiritual direction, counseling

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

GIRARD — Ecclesia Center, a non-profit facility that offers spiritual direction and psychological counseling, will end its residency program for clergy and religious as of March 31.

Citing a steady decrease in the number of clients, Ecclesia staff members said the reality of the decreasing numbers entering seminaries and religious life has impacted the center's ministry.

"For the past eight years, we haven't had a full house which would be 14 people," said Father Jerry Simmons,

who has served as a full-time therapist at the center in Girard since 1988. "We haven't had the budget. The pool we draw from is an aging population."

Since 1982, Ecclesia Center has served as a retreat center for clergy and women religious. It has offered programs designed to meet individual needs based on community living, prayer, spiritual direction and psychological counseling through the integration of body, mind and spirit. In 1985, it developed a residential program, welcoming ministers of the church needing rest and time apart for renewal.

"I would call it soul work," Father Simmons said. "People get out of

See ECCLESIA CENTER, page 3

## Clergy appointments

The Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, STD, SSL, Bishop of Erie, announces the following clergy appointments:

**Msgr. George Adams**, appointed temporary parochial administrator of St. Gabriel Parish in Port Allegany. Effective March 2, 2007.

**Father John G. Barwin**, appointed temporary parochial administrator of St. Bibiana Parish in Galeton and its mission church of Sacred Heart in Genesee. Effective March 6, 2007.

**Father Scott P. Detisch**, appointed pastor of Holy Cross Parish, Fairview, for a term of six years ending June 30, 2013. Effective June 1, 2007.

**Father Scott E. Katren, J.C.L.**, assigned to residency at St. Andrew Parish rectory, Erie, while continuing to serve as adjunct judicial vicar for the Erie Diocese.

**Father Jerry S. Priscaro**, assigned as temporary Catholic chaplain for the Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, Twinbrook Medical Center, the Lutheran Home, Luther Square Residence, Abington Crest, Beverly Health Care and Presque Isle Rehabilitation and Nursing Center (formerly IHS of Erie at Bayside) with residency at St. Ann Parish in Erie. Effective March 6, 2007.

**Msgr. Richard J. Stack, J.C.L.**, appointed temporary parochial administrator of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Lawrence Park. Effective March 7, 2007.

U.S.

### Church must defend marriage against societal onslaught, speaker says

WASHINGTON — Despite clear evidence that traditional marriage benefits couples, children and society, legal and other challenges against it continue to mount, a law professor said March 11. Helen M. Alvare, an associate professor at the Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America in Washington, spoke about "The Current Showdown on Marriage: What Can and Should the Church Offer?" in the annual Catholic Daughters of the Americas lecture on campus. Alvare said she deliberately chose the word "showdown" because marriage as it has been traditionally understood is being "directly and very boldly challenged today." But her comments did not focus, as she said some might have expected, on efforts to legalize same-sex marriage. Instead she highlighted the gradual erosion of respect and societal support for the institution. She told her audience, which included all but one member of the national board of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, that she hoped "to attract your energy, your commitment to the cause of marriage" by the end of the talk. Among the "fundamental qualities of marriage" — all under challenge today — are that it is between a man and a woman and that it is permanent, exclusive and open to child-bearing and child-rearing, Alvare said.



Helen Alvare

### Clerics say Muslims, Catholics must teach other's faith accurately

ROME — Muslims and Catholics in the United States need to develop educational programs that will give all of their faithful an accurate picture of the beliefs of the other, said two clerics experienced in Muslim-Catholic dialogue. Father Francis V. Tiso, associate director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs, and Imam Mohamad Bashar Arafat, president of the Islamic Affairs Council of Maryland, participated in a March 8 videoconference organized by the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See. Officials from the U.S. and Canadian embassies, the Vatican Secretariat of State and religious orders attended the conference in Rome. Imam Arafat told participants that while Catholic and Muslim leaders in the United States had been involved in dialogue for decades, it was not until the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that most Muslims and Catholics began to see the importance of understanding each other. "There were obstacles to overcome, including from within the Muslim community," he said. "That changed after 9/11 when people realized we needed to reach out."



CNS photo

Father Francis Tiso speaks during an ecumenical memorial service for Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink in New York March 4. The journalist was murdered Jan. 19 outside his office in Istanbul, Turkey.

### Pennsylvania is latest state to approve 'Choose Life' license plates

PHILADELPHIA — Pennsylvania has become the latest state to approve the use of a "Choose Life" specialty license plate. The plates were approved last November and became available for purchase in January. The cost per plate is \$40. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation receives \$20, and the other \$20 is an annual membership fee in Pennsylvania Choose Life. Every year, when people renew their registration, they will receive a reminder from the pro-life organization to renew their annual \$20 membership. Pennsylvania Choose Life will administer the funds it collects, using the money to support women in crisis pregnancies. Money collected in each county is to go to "crisis pregnancy centers located in those counties," said Mary Wurtz, the organization's administrator.



### Mexican bishop: People suffer, forced to emigrate due to unfair trade

MEXICO CITY — A Mexican bishop said that indigenous and poor people in Mexico are suffering from poor health care, which is a consequence of being left out of the benefits of trade agreements. "Indigenous people are neither lazy nor disorganized," said Bishop Felipe Arizmendi Esquivel of San Cristobal de Las Casas in Mexico's Chiapas state. "If they continue to be poor, it is due to the consequences of free trade agreements which favor the intermediary buyers and speculators on the stock exchanges." Poor Mexicans do not get a just price for the products they sell, said the bishop March 7 during Mass at St. Adalbert Parish in Chicago. His statements were published the same day on the Web site of the Mexican bishops' conference. Those who are poor are forced to emigrate and face the dangers of crossing the U.S. border, he said.



CNS photo

Bishop Felipe Arizmendi Esquivel blesses women during a February Mass in the cathedral in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Mexico.

### Directives said to help Catholic hospitals be 'schools of compassion'

CHICAGO — If Catholic health providers truly take up the "moral commitments" contained in the "Ethical and Religious Directives for Health Care Services," their hospitals will be "schools of compassion" and "networks of support" for their patients, a gathering of Catholic ethicists was told Feb. 28. John Hardt, an assistant professor at the Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy at Loyola University's Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago, joined Dominican Father Kevin O'Rourke, a professor at the institute, in a presentation on the directives on the first day of a three-day conference on "Catholic Health Care Ethics: The Tradition and Contemporary Culture." The directives, most recently revised by the U.S. bishops in 2001, guide Catholic health care facilities in addressing a wide range of ethical questions, such as abortion, euthanasia, care for the poor, medical research, treatment of rape victims, surrogate motherhood, in vitro fertilization, prenatal testing, nutrition and hydration for the terminally ill and organ donation. Calling the directives a "carefully crafted synopsis of the moral commitments that mark us as Catholic," Hardt said the document describes "not only what we do but also the spirit in which it ought to be done."

WORLD

### Diocesan part of Pope John Paul II's sainthood cause to close April 2

ROME — The diocesan phase of the investigation into the life and holiness of Pope John Paul II will close officially April 2, the second anniversary of the pope's death. Cardinal Camillo Ruini, papal vicar for the Diocese of Rome, announced March 10 the end of the diocesan phase of the process for the late pope's beatification and canonization. The April 2 ceremony will take place in the context of a brief prayer service; Pope Benedict XVI is scheduled to celebrate a memorial Mass later that evening in St. Peter's Basilica. The end of the diocesan phase of a sainthood cause means that the cause's promoter has interviewed all of the eyewitnesses he felt needed to be heard and has examined all of the candidate's writings. In addition, a panel of historians has written a report on the candidate's actions and writings in the historical context in which he lived. While the documentation will be handed over to the Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes after the April 2 ceremony, the promoter and his assistants still must prepare the official "positio," or position paper, arguing that Pope John Paul heroically lived the Christian virtues. Normally in order for a beatification to take place, a separate report must be prepared and accepted recognizing a miracle attributed to the candidate's intervention.

### Prayer matter of eternal life, death for Christians, pope says

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI said prayer was not optional for Christians but a matter of eternal life and death. He made the remarks at a noon blessing March 4, the day after finishing a weeklong spiritual retreat at the Vatican. The pope said Christ demonstrated in key moments of his own life that prayer is not an "evasion of reality" but a way to deepen the acceptance of life's responsibilities and God's will. "Dear brothers and sisters, prayer is not an accessory, an optional, but rather is a question of life or of death. In fact, only someone who prays and who trusts in God with filial love can enter into eternal life," he said. He encouraged everyone to find time for silence, meditation and prayer during Lent.

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PEOPLE

### Priest, related to British royal family, moves closer to canonization

LONDON — The British royal family could soon have its first saint after the Catholic Church took a step forward in the canonization process of a priest related to Princes William and Harry. An inquiry into the possible sainthood of Father Ignatius Spencer was sent to the Congregation for Saints' Causes March 1 after an exhaustive 12-year investigation by British Catholic officials. A tribunal in the Archdiocese of Liverpool, England, concluded Feb. 26 that there was nothing in either the work or 22 volumes of writings by Father Spencer to suggest he did not live a life of heroic virtue. The first step in the canonization process is the declaration of a person's heroic virtues. In general, the church must confirm two miracles through the intercession of the sainthood candidate before canonization. "The next stage is to hope and pray for a miracle that can be attributed to the intercession of Ignatius," said Passionist Father Ben Lodge, the postulator of the cause from Kent, England, in an interview with Catholic News Service March 2. Father Spencer is related to the princes through their mother, Princess Diana of Wales. Born in Admiralty House in 1799, he was the great-great-uncle of Princess Diana and was also the great-uncle of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

### Chaplain says people in U.S. must keep up support for troops in Iraq

FRANKFORT, Ill. — Support from people in the U.S. is important to the nation's troops who are serving in Iraq and must continue, especially for soldiers "in harm's way," a military chaplain told a congregation in the Diocese of Joliet. Father John Hannigan, a priest of the Chicago Archdiocese, has been on leave from active duty since January, but before that he had been stationed in Iraq since the early days of the war.

## By the Way...

Father Leo Gallina, pastor of St. Bernard Parish in Bradford, and the United Way of the Bradford Area Inc. are the 2007 recipients of the George G. Blaisdell Community Service Awards. Given by the Bradford Family YMCA, the awards were recently presented at the YMCA's annual community awards breakfast held at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford.



Jason Koshinskie

According to the criteria for the awards, "the recipients demonstrate a continual commitment to the improvement of our community by their actions, words and deeds that exemplify the YMCA mission of building a healthy spirit, mind and body for all."

Also, the Bradford Regional Medical Center (BRMC) and Bradford Hospital Foundation have announced the establishment of the Rev. Leo J. Gallina Honorary Fund, which honors Father Gallina, who "has spent his life serving the communities in which he has lived." Father Gallina is a member of the Bradford Hospital Foundation's community relations committee and the YMCA Board, Futures Rehabilitation Board and Beacon Light Board. Gifts to the honorary fund will support the ongoing services of BRMC.

Father Gallina is a Bradford native and was named pastor of St. Bernard in 1999.

The confirmation season in the Erie Diocese began March 17 in St. Marys, where Bishop Donald Trautman confirmed classes from St. Mary, Queen of the World and Sacred Heart parishes. Students from St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community in Erie were also confirmed March 18. It marks the beginning of another busy confirmation season during which Bishop Trautman will put more than 35,000 miles on his car visiting parishes throughout the 13-county diocese.

The Knights of Columbus will be conducting an order-wide "blitz" program March 24-25, which is the weekend before Founder's Day. This Founder's Day, the Knights will celebrate 125 years of serving the church and community. The purpose of the "blitz" program is to provide information about the Knights of Columbus to all families and parishes and to collect as many prospective member's names and telephone numbers as possible.

Jason Koshinskie is editor of FaithLife. Contact him at JKoshinskie@ErieRCD.org or 814.824.1171.

He would travel every day in convoys with American soldiers along desert roads, dodging bullets and roadside bombs with his comrades while evading rocket-propelled grenades. The U.S. Navy commander who is a Marine Corps chaplain relied on donations from people state-side — including members of St. Anthony Parish in Frankfort — to secure rosaries, Bibles, medals and other religious items for the troops. He paid a visit to the parish in mid-February to express his thanks.



CNS photo

Father Paul Halladay, a U.S. Army chaplain serving in Iraq, is seen with soldiers in 2005. He and other chaplains agree that the looming mortality and the absence of distractions in Iraq call for spiritual counseling. This has led some to return to the Catholic faith and others to join.

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# Briefly

## St. Peter Cathedral presents 'Crucifixion' concert April 1

ERIE — St. Peter Cathedral choirs will present a performance of "The Crucifixion" by John Stainer at 4 p.m. on Palm Sunday, April 1. The combined cathedral choirs will be conducted by William Herring with organist Bruce Gringrich. "The Crucifixion" is one of Stainer's (1840-1901) major works that is regularly performed, often in English churches, during Holy Week.

## Catholic charismatic women's retreat April 13-15

ERIE — Word of Life Center is sponsoring a Catholic Charismatic women's retreat April 13-15 at the Family First Sports Park conference building in Erie. Arlene Apone, associate liaison for the renewal to the Archdiocese of Detroit, will direct the retreat. The theme is "I will betroth you to myself forever" (Hosea 2:19). For more information or to register, contact Sister Gerry at 814.824.1286 or 814.868.6447.

## Ecclesia Center ends residency program

ECCLISIA CENTER from page 1

ministry to rediscover their connection to God, themselves and others in a new way. And we've provided a way to do that."

The center has operated under a collaborative ministry since 1991. Joining Father Simmons in this ministry are Sister Sylvia Burnett, OSBM, Sister Barbara Lenarcic, HM, and Sister Marilyn Zimmerman, SSI.

Father Simmons said the staff hopes to continue offering spiritual direction and counseling for those who seek it, including laypersons.

"We don't have a location yet," Father Simmons said.

"We're hoping to close this place down, sell it and keep the ministry going in another location."

Over the past 22 years, Ecclesia Center has hosted people not only from the Erie Diocese and the United States but throughout the world.

"I got a phone call last week from a nun in Pakistan who recently stayed here," Father Simmons said. "She said, 'I waited 25 years for someone to listen to me.' She was full of joy and full of life."

"This truly was a unique ministry, and I've been privileged to be a part of it."

## Parish leaders from throughout the diocese honored

By Anne-Marie Welsh  
FaithLife executive editor

ERIE — Eight hundred-and-fourteen years of service were applauded at a Leader Recognition Dinner hosted by the Department of Religious Education of the Erie Diocese on March 8. That's the combined total of years those being recognized—religious education leaders, youth leaders and people working to develop small communities in their parishes—had given in service.

"This commitment prompted us to call you together, our seasoned veterans, to celebrate the gift that you are to the church and to recognize the role that you play in realizing God's mission to the world," said keynote speaker Dr. Mary Ann Rivera, director for pastoral studies at Gannon University. "We realize full well the importance of your task."

Rivera told the honorees they stood on the front line of a crucial ministry that enabled the

church to carry on its central mission of evangelization and catechesis.

"You have an august responsibility," she told the crowd after dinner. "Thank you for taking this mission so seriously and for embracing it with your lives."

The evening, which began with a prayer service in the chapel at St. Mark Catholic Center in Erie, included comments from Greg Baker, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry; Sister Nancy Fischer, SSI, director of Community Formation and Lay Ministry Training; and Joe Streett, director of Religious Education. Father Nick Rouch, vicar for education, and Bishop Donald Trautman, who personally congratulated each honoree, also spoke at the event.

"All of you have been instruments of God in transmitting the Gospel to the next generation," Bishop Trautman said, noting that catechism and religious formation are responsibilities of the entire faith com-



Carol Hoffman, religious education coordinator at St. Andrew Parish in Erie, received congratulations from Bishop Donald Trautman during the Leader Recognition Dinner sponsored by the diocesan Department of Religious Education.

he observed. "It creates the great opportunity for you to exercise your baptismal and confirmational call, and you fulfill a vital role in the church's mission of modeling and handing on the Good News of Jesus."

Because this was the first time the diocese has held such an event, recognition was given to those who have served 10 to 14 years, 15 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years and 25 years or longer.

"While we know that their pastors are supportive and have recognized their service, we thought it was time for us as a diocese to acknowledge them," Streett said. "It's something our department has wanted to do for a long time and we were pleased to have this opportunity to thank everyone."

Among those recognized were Sister Colette Hilow with 46 years of service as a principal and religious education leader at St. James in Erie and Evelyn Porta, who served as coordinator of religious education at St. Anthony in Tionesta for 37 years.



Parish leaders from all corners of the diocese gathered for a photo after a recognition dinner March 8 at St. Mark Catholic Center.

## They shall look on Him whom they have pierced

By Catholic News Service

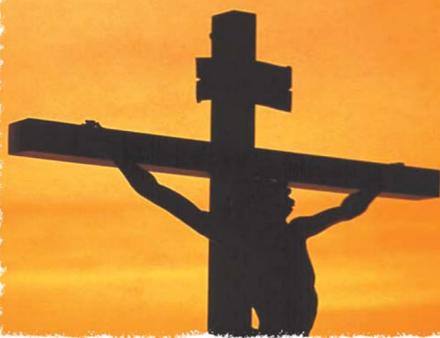
Editor's note: Here is the third and final part of the Vatican text of Pope Benedict XVI's message for Lent 2007.

### Blood and water

"They shall look on him whom they have pierced." Let us look with trust at the pierced side of Jesus from which flow "blood and water" (Jn 19:34). The Fathers of the Church considered these elements as symbols of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. Through the water of baptism, thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit, we are given access to the intimacy of Trinitarian love.

In the Lenten journey, memorial of our baptism, we are exhorted to come out of ourselves in order to open ourselves, in trustful abandonment, to the merciful embrace of the Father (cf. St. John Chrysostom, Catecheses, 3,14ff). Blood,

### Pope Benedict XVI's message for Lent



symbol of the love of the Good Shepherd, flows into us especially in the eucharistic mystery: "The Eucharist draws us into Jesus' act of self-oblation ... we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giv-

ing" ("Deus Caritas Est," 13). Let us live Lent then, as a "eucharistic" time in which, welcoming the love of Jesus, we learn to spread it around us with every word and deed.

Contemplating "him whom they have pierced" moves us in this way to open our hearts to others, recognizing the wounds inflicted upon the dignity of the human person; it moves us, in particular, to fight every form of contempt for life and human exploitation and to alleviate the tragedies of loneliness and abandonment of so many people.

May Lent be for every Christian a renewed experience of God's love given to us in Christ, a love that each day we, in turn, must "regive" to our neighbor, especially to the one who suffers most and is in need. Only in this way will we be able to participate fully in the joy of Easter.

May Mary, mother of beautiful love, guide us in this Lenten journey, a journey of authentic conversion to the love of Christ.

I wish you, dear brothers and sisters, a fruitful Lenten journey, imparting with affection to all of you a special apostolic blessing.

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## Living Stations of the Cross

LIVING STATIONS from page 1

The stations are made as realistic as possible while maintaining a dramatic element, she said, through the use of costumes, scenery and lighting. Veronica will wipe Jesus' face with her veil. When Jesus is nailed to the cross, a hammer will strike the wood, making a pounding sound. Different colored lighting will shine from the balcony throughout the stations. When Jesus is comforting the women of Jerusalem, the women will be sobbing and crying.

Streich said the living Stations give students the opportunity to personalize the people and events of Christ's final hours.

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The seventh and eighth graders at St. Boniface School, Erie, will portray a live version of the Stations of the Cross March 28 at 7 p.m. in the Coleman Center. Pictured (left to right) are front row: Kelsey Schupp and Jacob Twaroski.

Back row: Cody Bujnowski, Nick Wilczynski, Jake Hodapp, Gabby Kennelley, Ellie Johnson, Samantha Fugagli, Ben Cermak, Kyle Hodapp, Zack Palmer, Alex Johnson, Chris Say and Joe Kuzma.

"The kids are really into it," said Streich, who has guided the 18-member cast and crew through several dress rehearsals for this year's performances.

"You have to believe you're in the part. During our rehearsals, the expressions on their faces showed

that they were trying to live the part."

Like traditional Stations of the Cross, each station has a Scripture reading, which will be read by a student. Bringing a contemporary element to the stations will be what Streich called a modern reader, which will be a student stepping out

from the crowd when the action of each station freezes. The modern reader will apply each station to a contemporary situation and ask why Jesus is offering himself up.

Father Joseph Czarkowski, pastor of St. Eulalia, will portray Pontius Pilate during the March 25 performance.

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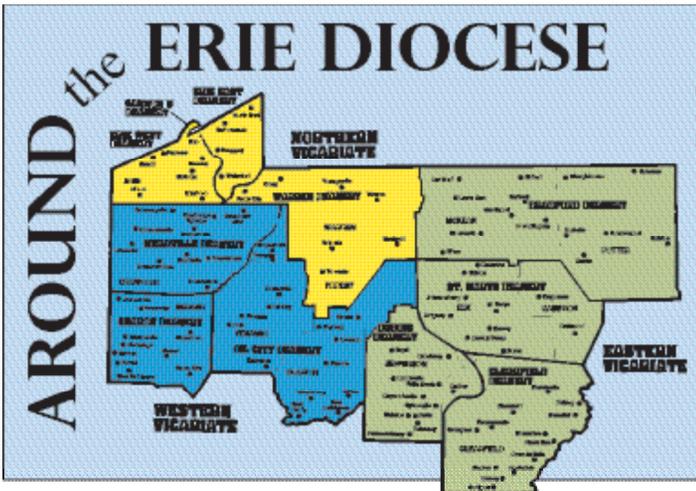
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SSJs share gifts from 18th annual Thanksgiving dinner

ERIE — The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, in cooperation with Marketplace Grill, prepared and served more than 1,000 meals to persons who were alone, in need or otherwise would not have celebrated the holiday, at the sisters' 18th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Nearly 600 donors supported the sisters' efforts through financial gifts as well as food donations. Numerous others volunteered at the dinner by preparing, serving or delivering meals to homebound individuals. Monetary donations helped cover the cost of the dinner and provide needed resources that the sisters share with local shelters, food banks and agencies throughout the year.



Pictured from left to right are: Joe Fletcher, Prince of Peace Center; Annette Morrison, Prince of Peace Center; Mike Murnock, International Institute; Sister Margaret Ann Hardner, SSJ, Shankar Service Foundation; Dr. Richard Rahner, Shankar Service Foundation; Mr. & Mrs. Bob Jenkins, St. Luke Food Pantry and Sister Mary Claire Kennedy, SSJ.

On Feb. 7, the sisters hosted representatives from various lo-

cal agencies and organizations for lunch at the Villa Maria Community Living Center and presented them with donations from the proceeds of the Thanksgiving Dinner. Those agencies include: St. Paul's Neighborhood Free Clinic, Erie; Prince of Peace Center, Farrell; International Institute; Shankar Service Foundation; St. Luke Food Pantry; St. John/Holy Rosary Food Bank; St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry; Mercy Center for Women, Erie; Sister Mary Pascal Food Pantry; MHEDS; Second Harvest Food Bank; L'Arche Erie; St. Martin Center.

"The Thanksgiving Dinner project is in keeping with our mission of unity of neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God. We believe that sharing the spirit of the holiday is one of the greatest gifts we can give," said Sister Mary Claire Kennedy, SSJ, co-chairperson of the dinner. "And to be able to share these gifts with other agencies that serve the lonely and less fortunate throughout the year is a great way of extending the holiday spirit of giving."

Sisters honored for making a difference by city council

ERIE — Erie City Council issued special proclamations Feb. 21 recognizing three Erie area communities of women religious for making a difference through their respective ministries. The leaders of each community pictured after the ceremony, from left, are: Sister Ricarda Vincent, president, Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania; Sister Bernadette Bell, president, Mercy Regional Community of Erie; and Sister Christine Vladimiroff, prioress, Benedictine Sisters of Erie. Council president Rubye Jenkins-Husband sponsored and presented the proclamations. Thirteen Mercy sisters attended the ceremony.



Photo by Gary Loncki

St. Julia 'opening doors, building bridges' with sister parish

ERIE — St. Julia Parish in Erie held its ninth annual Fiesta this year to celebrate its sister parish relationship with Santa Ines in Yucatán, Mexico. This year's Fiesta theme was taken from a quote by Archbishop Berlie Belanzaran of the Archdiocese of Yucatán. During a visit from Mother Teresa of Calcutta to Mexico, he told her, "You are always opening doors and building bridges." He further stated that the Mission of Friendship, the formal relationship between the Erie Diocese and the Archdiocese of Yucatán, is doing the same.



Decorations included representations of the church fronts of St. Julia and Santa Ines (St. Agnes), with a bridge connecting them. For a donation, paper cutouts of children could be placed on the churches or bridge.

Pictured, from left to right, are: Tori Klep, Brittany Pinter and Tamara Klep. The event raised more than \$500 for Santa Ines, along with donations of vitamins, toothbrushes and toothpaste. Parishioners enjoyed a tureen dinner, a Mexican auction and

piñatas made by the youth group for the children. Pat Marshall, director of the diocesan Mission Office, who recently witnessed the Mayan celebration of the feast of Santa Ines during a visit to Mexico, gave a reflection on the Mission of Friendship.

St. James students compete in Quiz Bowl, Mathcounts

ERIE — A team of 8th graders from St. James School in Erie took second place at Cathedral Prep's seventh annual Quiz Bowl Tournament, where 22 teams represented eight schools. St. James entered three teams, which were coached by Sister Marianne Perrone, CDS, and Gail Blaszczyk. Pictured at top, left to right, is the winning team of Adam Malinowski, Donald Holl III, Branden Wawrzyniak and Michael Yurkovic.



St. James School also placed second out of 25 schools that participated in the annual Mathcounts competition held at Gannon University on Feb. 10. Mathcounts is a national competition that promotes excellence in mathematics. Michael Yurkovic ranked second out of 135 individual participants. He moved on to compete in the state competition in Harrisburg March 23-24. Pictured at bottom, from left to right, are team members Rebecca Cooper, Michael Yurkovic, Julia Yurkovic and Demi Nguyen. The team is coached by Gail Blaszczyk.



St. Patrick School, Franklin, tells life story of patron saint



FRANKLIN — Second graders at St. Patrick School in Franklin celebrated the feast of St. Patrick, patron saint of the school and Erie Diocese, on March 16. Students told the life story of St. Patrick during the homily of the student Mass.

At right, pictured left to right, are: Jasmyr James (rock), Taylor Dziekciasz (sun), Rene Combs and Joshua Guth (sheep). Back row: William Thompson (pagan king), Ryan Guth (pirate), Adriane Felmler (shamrock), Mason Crivelli (pirate), Trey Weaver (St. Patrick), Madeline Gresco (Patrick's mother, Conchessa), Malik Richburg (St. Germanus) and Sarah Shook (heart).



Pictured at left, in a scene from the story, St. Patrick (Weaver) explains to the pagan

king (Thompson) about the one true God.

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