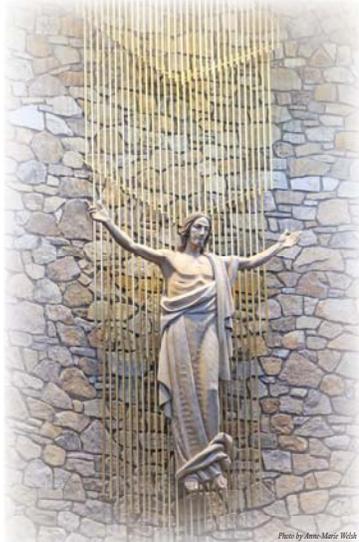


FaithLife



Save May 12 for exciting Catholic Charities event. PAGE 3



Christ redeems us on Easter. This beautiful image of Jesus is located behind the altar at Holy Redeemer Church, Warren.

Bishop's Easter Message

The risen Christ offers joy every day

It's Easter Sunday. Are you more patient? Generous? Forgiving?

If we walked our 40-day Lenten journey to the best of our ability, then today—of all days—we can answer by saying, "Yes! Alleluia!"

All of our Lenten sacrifices and actions help us to cultivate a new spirit. They lead us to God's truth, a truth that is never more clear than on Easter when Jesus rose from the dead.

What is God's truth and what is this new spirit?

There is no other celebration in the church year that better answers these questions than Easter. The power of God—and his love—is at work in and through Jesus' embrace of the cross.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, emphasized the responsibility incumbent upon the followers of Jesus to seek his truth by moving through the struggles of this world.

There are plenty of difficulties, aren't there? Just look at the headlines: Seventeen people killed in one of the worst school shootings in American history. Families torn apart by the opioid epidemic. Racism in our communities.

Christ traveled this road of suffering, but he showed us how to make the passage with trust and faith. Jesus gives us the grace to face the crosses of our lives with

hope. By rising, he restored us to eternal life.

This may sound like a case of easier-said-than-done. So, I ask you to reflect on the thief who hung on a cross next to the crucified Christ in his last hours.

In his agony, the thief said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

Think about it: this criminal experienced paradise—even in his suffering—by recognizing in Jesus his Lord and savior.

If we give ourselves over to Jesus, even in our trials, Christ's promise of salvation begins immediately. We can rise with Christ not only on Easter, but every day that he is in our hearts.

This is the Easter joy that our Catholic faith promises. In all 13 counties of our diocese, I see parishes and charitable agencies make this joy come alive through their outreach to those in need. And every day in our schools, students conduct one project or another to benefit the hungry, the homeless, the troubled.

Every day that we share this good news with others is Easter.

May the joy of the risen Christ surround you and your families.



Bishop Lawrence Persico

Lawrence T. Persico

Bishop of Erie

DIOCESAN NEWS

Mercer County church to close

SHARON—Sacred Heart Church in Sharon, founded by mostly Irish immigrants in the latter half of the 19th century, has been closed according to a decree signed March 12 by Bishop Lawrence Persico.

Father Thomas Whitman, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Sharon, said that his parish finance and pastoral councils had voted in favor of requesting the bishop to close Sacred Heart, which was a secondary church of St. Joseph since their merger in February 2017.

Sacred Heart discontinued the celebration of Sunday Masses at that time.

When a Catholic church is closed, the official verbiage used in the United States is that it will be "relegated to profane but not sordid use." This phrase refers to the canon law process by which a bishop removes the blessing or consecration of a church building.

According to the bishop's decree, the decision to close Sacred Heart was "the best possible means to provide for the care of souls for the faithful" of St. Joseph and the larger Catholic community of the Shenango Valley in Mercer County.

The decree cited security and debt as significant concerns facing Sacred Heart. The area in which the church is located has seen an increase in crime in recent years. In 2017, the rectory attached to the church was vandalized twice. Several fires in the vicinity were ruled as arson.

The merger of Sacred Heart and St. Joseph left St. Joseph Parish with "considerable debt that has further stretched St. Joseph Parish's already-insufficient financial resources," according to the decree.

Sacred Heart Church has undergone many changes since it was founded as a parish in 1864. In 1892, parishioners responded to their growing numbers by building a larger church, which remains standing today.

But demographic changes in the Shenango Valley took a toll on Sacred Heart. According to the decree, by 2010, the city of Sharon had lost almost half of its population since its peak in 1950. Of the 241 registered households that made up Sacred Heart prior to its merger with St. Joseph last year, only about 40 households re-registered as members of St. Joseph.

The members of both parish and finance councils at St. Joseph unanimously supported relegating Sacred Heart Church.



Sacred Heart Church Sharon

Diocese responds to opioid epidemic

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Father James McCormick, pastor of St. James Parish in Erie, has buried at least 10 people who've succumbed to opioid addiction.

The statistic—while disturbing—is not surprising when considered alongside national figures showing that an estimated 64,000 people per year die from drug overdoses in the United States. Yet this eastside parish of 1,000 families has found itself in the crosshairs of the national opioid epidemic. Nearly all of the 10 funerals at St. James have involved inactive parishioners or someone who has a connection to families of parishioners.

Each death is a moment in which a pastor is called to be a compassionate shepherd.

"Anytime these events happen, I never preach from the pulpit," Father McCormick said. "I always come down to the parents and say, 'You are not responsible for this. This is a choice—although a bad one—that your loved one made. You cannot feel

guilty about this."

As a pastor, Father McCormick knows he must help families comprehend the misunderstood nature of the epidemic: addiction. Narcotics, particularly heroin, are highly addictive and can be mentally and physical difficult to confront and overcome.

As a member of the newly created Opioid Task Force of the Diocese of Erie, Father McCormick was happy to be part of a recent effort to inform clergy about the growing epidemic. On Feb. 22, the task force presented a panel discussion and resources to dozens of clergy who gathered in the Yehi Ballroom at Gannon University in downtown Erie. Under the direction of Ann Badach,

Overdose deaths by county in northwest Pennsylvania:

(Source: 2016 county coroner reports)

Cameron 0	Erie 90	Potter 2
Clarion 7	Forest 0	Venango 9
Clearfield 11	Jefferson 7	Warren 0
Crawford 32	McKean 7	
Elk 3	Mercer 31	



The Opioid Task Force in the Diocese of Erie was established last fall thanks to grants from the Evangelization Endowment of the Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania and from Catholic Charities Inc. Members include:

- Ann Badach, executive director, Catholic Charities
- James Gallagher, superintendent of Catholic Schools
- David González, CEO, St. Martin Center
- Joe Haas, CEO, Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services
- Steven Large, Psy.D., director, Health & Counseling Services, Gannon University
- Father James McCormick, pastor, St. James Parish, and faculty member, Cathedral Prep
- Anne-Marie Welsh, director, Communications Office

executive director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie, the task force offered practical and community-specific information regarding the reality of the opioid crisis. Introduced by Bishop Lawrence Persico, task force members offered their expertise in various areas, including drug and alcohol counseling, worship and education. There was a panel discussion, too, which included the perspective of diocesan priests Father John Jacquiel, pastor of St. John the Baptist and Holy Rosary parishes, both in Erie, and Father Ross Miceli, pastor of St. Boniface Parish, Kersey, and campus minister for the Elk County Catholic School System.

"We all felt on the task force that

>> See OPIOID EPIDEMIC, page 2



Joe Haas, left, CEO of Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services, talks at the Feb. 22 meeting with clergy regarding the opioid epidemic. To his right is Dr. Steven Large, director, Health & Counseling Services, Gannon University.



And they were utterly amazed.
MARK 16:5

He is Risen!

Easter blessings to you from the Diocese of Erie

A pre-synod selfie

ROME (CNS)—Pope Francis poses for a selfie during a pre-synod gathering of youth delegates at the Pontifical International Maria Mater Ecclesiae College in Rome March 19. Also pictured are Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, and U.S. Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. The meeting was in preparation for the Synod of Bishops on young people, the faith and vocational discernment this October at the Vatican.



CNS photo

Newsmakers



Snippets of Catholic headlines and stories from around the world
from Catholic News Service

■ Extension helps Puerto Rico



CNS photo

Father Jack Wall, right, president of Catholic Extension, joins Father Jorge Morales, pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, and parishioner Lisette Diaz Feb. 28 as they make rounds in hard-hit areas of Puerto Rico.

CHICAGO—Catholic Extension, a Chicago-based papal society, is inviting individual donors, parishes and church groups to partner with it and “adopt” a parish in Puerto Rico still affected by Hurricane Maria.

On its webpage www.catholicextension.org/, an interactive map features examples of Puerto Rico's Catholic communities helping their neighbors.

Catholic Extension raises and distributes funds to support U.S. mission dioceses, many of which are rural, cover a large geographic area, and have limited personnel and pastoral resources. In Puerto Rico, it has a 110-year history of supporting parishes in the six dioceses there.

■ Church leaders want safe water

BRASILIA, Brazil (CNS)—Access to clean water is a fundamental right that must be a global priority, said Catholic leaders at the 8th World Water Forum and the Alternative World Water Forum in Brazil.

Catholic representatives spoke about the need to find ways to create a sustainable supply of fresh drinking water for all, especially the poorer populations around the world.

Caritas Internationalis, the confederation of Catholic relief, development and service organizations, called on all sectors to pull together to tackle water challenges.



CNS photo

A man uses a bucket to collect water March 21 in an improvised reservoir in Brazil.

■ Bishops push for Conscience Act

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairmen of the U.S. bishops' pro-life and religious freedom committees said it was “deeply disappointing” that Congress omitted the Conscience Protection Act from the congressional funding bill for fiscal year 2018.

The Conscience Protection Act aims to protect individual physicians, nurses or other health care professionals who refuse to assist in abortions when asked to do so by their employers.

Youth question Pope Francis

“Even if others keep quiet, if we older people and leaders keep quiet, if the whole world keeps quiet and loses its joy, I ask you: Will you cry out?”

—Pope Francis to youth at Palm Sunday Mass

Editor's Note: More than 15,000 youth from five continents participated—physically or virtually—at a recent meeting in Rome in preparation for the October 2018 Synod of Bishops on Young People. During one session at the Vatican, Pope Francis responded to the following five questions:

How can young people help victims of human trafficking?

Pope Francis referred to the stories he has heard from trafficked women about the dangers they face trying to escape their captors. The pope described this abuse, and even torture, as the “slavery of today.” He denounced the evil of exploiting women and shared especially strong words for baptized Catholics who pay for prostitutes. This is a “crime against humanity,” Pope Francis said.

Where should a young person look for guidance in making life choices?

Pope Francis responded to a young French student seeking direction in his life by suggesting we confide in those who possess wisdom, regardless of whether they are young or old. “The wise person,” he said, “is the one who is not scared of anything, but who knows how to listen and has the God-given gift of saying the right thing at the right time.” The pope warned that when young people fail to find their “path of discernment,” they risk shutting themselves off. This risk weighs them down and takes away their freedom.

How can we teach young people to be open to their neighbor and to the transcendent?

Pope Francis said education should teach three basic languages: those of the head, the heart and the hands. The language of the head,

he said, means thinking well and learning concrete things. That of the heart means understanding feelings and sentiments. The language of the hands is making use of the gifts God has given us to create new things. The key, he said, is to use all three together.

How is a young person preparing for the priesthood to respond to the complexities of present-day culture—like tattoos, for instance?

Pope Francis used this question from a young Ukrainian seminarian to reflect on the priest as a “witness to Christ.” Clericalism, on the contrary, said the pope, is “one of the worst illnesses of the church,” because it confuses the “paternal role of the priest” with the “managerial role of the boss.” Responding to the question of tattoos, Pope Francis recalled how different cultures have used them to distinguish and identify themselves, so “don't be afraid of tattoos,” he said—but don't exaggerate either. If anything, use the tattoo as a talking-point to begin a dialogue about what it signifies.

How can young women religious balance the dominant culture in society and the spiritual life in accomplishing their mission?

The pope said an adequate formation throughout religious life needs to be built on four pillars: formation on an intellectual, communitarian, apostolic and spiritual life. Having only a spiritual formation leads to psychological immaturity, he said. Even though this is often done to protect young religious from the world, Pope Francis said it is not protection, it is “deformation.” Allowing people to mature affectively is the only way to protect them.

Source: Vatican News

Opioid epidemic

Continued from page 1

our hearts were open to the Holy Spirit and we were able to make, hopefully, a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the Diocese of Erie.” Badach said. “It was powerful work, good work, holy work.”

Each priest in attendance at the February meeting was encouraged to share specially prepared prayer resources and other information with parishioners affected by the opioid epidemic. Another idea is for parishes to consider establishing parish action teams to explore ways to respond to the opioid crisis.

Father McCormick said he already has shared some of those newly developed resources with two families whose child and grandchild are addicted. He also will continue to offer a Mass held at St. James every Sept. 14 for those suffering from addiction and their families.

“I think people understand that the bishop and the diocese recognize this crisis,” Father McCormick said. “We can't do a lot to end it, but we can certainly do a lot to bring comfort and healing to those affected.”

Parishioner spotlight LISA TO



Courtesy/John

Hospice care offers hope and help

For Lisa To, “everyday heroes” in life are those families and caregivers who accompany the terminally ill.

A nurse the past 32 years, To has spent the past five years as executive director of Hospice of Warren County. She sees up close the trials of those on the end-of-life journey.

“The families and caregivers of these patients provide unconditional love and support. That's a beautiful thing to witness,” says To, who is a lifelong parishioner of St. Joseph Parish in Warren.

Born and raised at St. Joseph, To's Catholic upbringing helps guide her chosen profession. Her mom, Joan Wozneak, also is a St. Joe's parishioner.

“A huge part of life is empathizing with your fellow man. To be in a position to bring help and hope in situations generally thought to be hopeless is an incredible privilege,” To says. “There is a lot you can do as a human being and as a professional. For me, it's all about ‘do unto others as you would have others do unto you.’”

Working in hospice, she says, has taught her to be more at peace and to let go of feeling like she needs definite answers.

“It's made me more confident that whatever is after

death is OK,” To says. “I've seen situations in hospice where people talk and share stories at the end of life. It pays to listen to that. It can be very comforting.”

One area of hospice that is somewhat misunderstood is services for ill children, To adds. Hospice of Warren County serves adults and children, but most clients are adult patients.

“We just want to make sure folks know that this level of care is also available for children and their families,” To says. “People generally hear about hospice and know people who have experienced hospice services, but when it comes to their own situation, they often don't want to talk about it. It's interpreted as ‘death.’ It's really about helping people to live as well and fully as possible with all they're dealing with.”

Care for terminally ill children is such an important issue that the Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition (PPCC) is bringing a one-day conference to Erie on April 25 at UPMC Hamot Women's Hospital.

As co-chairperson of the conference, To is hoping hospice and pediatric providers, as well as school personnel who care for seriously ill children, will take advantage of the program. Dr. Scott Mauer, medical director of the Supportive Care Program at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, will be the keynote speaker, addressing the topic, “Difficult Conversations in Pediatric Palliative Care.”

Mauer will then join an afternoon session with Lynn Weissert, a registered nurse with Great Lakes Home Health and Hospice.

“The patient and the family are at the center of any hospice and palliative care plan,” To says.

Hospice Event

Pediatric Palliative Care: A Toolkit for Community Providers

April 25, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Lincoln Education Center,
UPMC Hamot Women's
Hospital
118 E. 2nd St., Erie, PA

For more information or to register by April 20, go to www.pgcc-pa.org

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CLUB CC NIGHT

Save May 12 for Charities event

Enjoy a nightclub atmosphere and support the good works of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie at Club CC Night May 12 at Erie's Bayfront Convention Center.

The evening will include dinner, drinks and music provided by Cleveland nightclub DJ Brent Schmidt. Local comedienne Lisa Chiment-Foster, in character as Sister Agnes, will keep things lively as toastmistress.

The Convention Center ballroom will be transformed into an intimate lounge as Catholic Charities celebrates its outreach to the needy in the 13 counties of northwest Pennsylvania.

"As Catholics, sometimes we need to come together and celebrate," said Dawn Schaaf, chairperson of the event. "Our focus always is to celebrate the good works of Catholic Charities and the continuation of it in the future."

This year, Charlie and Ann Rutkowski will be honored with the Helping Hands Award. Ann Rutkowski is a member of the board of Catholic Charities; Charlie Rutkowski is president of the Serra Club.

For more information, go to www.ClubCCnight.com or call 814-824-1251.

EVENTS

- **Pregnancy, parent support**

Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services in Sharon is expanding its Real Alternatives Pregnancy and Parenting Support Program. The program is open to all moms and dads (residents of Pennsylvania) who are expecting. Enroll while you're pregnant and receive a year of free services. For more information, call 724-346-4142.
- **House of Mercy spring tea**

The Sisters of Mercy's House of Mercy will host its annual spring tea April 15 from 1 to 3 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel's Schefner Hall, 1553 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie. Enjoy a traditional tea with sandwiches, cookies, fruit, tea and punch, along with a gift auction. Tickets are \$25. For reservations, contact Mercy Sister Michele Schroeck at michele.schroek@gmail.com or at 814-898-0167.
- **Eastern Vicariate Mass**

Bishop Lawrence Persico invites members of the parishes in the Eastern Vicariate of the Diocese of Erie to join him at St. Peter Cathedral, W. 10th and Sassafras streets, Erie, for 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday, April 15. The Mass is in celebration of the 125th year of worship at the cathedral. There will be a guided tour of the church, including the crypt, immediately following the Mass. Social time will include coffee and donuts.
- **Lancaster bus trip**

St. Mark the Evangelist Church in Lawrence Park is hosting a June 5-6 bus trip to Lancaster, Pa., to see Sight & Sound Theatres' "JESUS." The excursion includes a round-trip deluxe motor coach, one night lodging, three meals, and reserved seating at the event. For more information or to reserve a seat, call Marion Armstrong at 814-897-7707. Reservations with a \$100 deposit are due April 15.
- **Men's Cursillo**

Cursillo is a personal encounter weekend with Christ that is open to both men and women 18 and older. If women are married, the husband must attend first. Submit an application for a men's Cursillo April 19-22 at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Erie. Applications and more information may be found at www.ericcursillo.org. For further questions, call 814-824-1119.

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OBITUARIES

Msgr. William C. (Max) Karg

Msgr. William C. (Max) Karg, 86, died March 15 at the Sharon Regional Medical Center.

In 2017, he celebrated his 60th anniversary as a priest of the Diocese of Erie.

He was born in Oil City, the son of the late Charles A. and Marie (Morrison) Karg.

He graduated from Cathedral Preparatory School, Erie, in 1949, and then entered St. Mark Seminary in Erie. He spent two years at St. Mark before entering Christ the King Major Seminary in East Aurora, N.Y.

He completed his bachelor's degree at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, N.Y.

After his ordination on May 30, 1957, Msgr. Karg began his priestly ministry as a full-time faculty member at Cathedral Prep, while serving as weekend assistant at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Erie.

After 10 years, he was appointed to the faculty of Elk County Catholic, St. Marys, while serving as weekend assistant at St. Leo Mag-

nus Parish in Ridgway.

In 1971, he was named pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Frenchville, and in 1973 became pastor of St. Brigid Parish, Meadville.

In 1984, Msgr. Karg became pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Sharon, where he remained until 2001. At that time, he was made senior associate in his home parish of St. Stephen in Oil City.

Msgr. Karg retired in 2012.

Msgr. Karg served on the Diocesan Board of Continuing Education from 1976-80 and from 2003-11, the Priests' Personnel Board from 1985-87 and from 2008-11, the Presbyteral Council from 1989-99, and the College of Consultors from 1992-99.

He was the director of Ecumenical Affairs from 1982-90, and was regional director of Ecumenical Affairs of the Western Vicariate from

1990 to 2001.

In addition, he served as president of the Budd Foundation and the Shenango Valley Initiative, and was a board member of the Farrell Food Bank, Mercer County, and the Christian Associates of Shenango Valley.

He also served as president of the Sharon Ministerium, the Meadville Clergy Association, the Meadville Kiwanis Club, and the Christ the King Seminary Alumni.

He was an enthusiastic boater, world traveler, and lover of classical music.

Survivors include two brothers, Paul J. Karg, and his wife, Patricia, of Wilmington, N.C., and Thomas Karg, and his wife, Judy, of Oil City; and many nieces and nephews, and great- and great-great-nieces and nephews.

Bishop Lawrence Persico was the main celebrant of a funeral Mass March 20 at St. Stephen Church in Oil City. Interment was at Sunset Hill Memorial Gardens.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Venango Catholic High School, 1505 W. First St., Oil City, PA 16301, or to St. Stephen School, 214 Reed St., Oil City, PA 16301.



Msgr. William C. (Max) Karg

Sister Rita Kartavich, RSM

Mercy Sister Rita Kartavich, 84, a medical professional who was a missionary in Africa and served as a leader for her religious community, died March 8 at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse in Erie.

The former Sister Mary Anthony was a Sister of Mercy for 62 years.

A native of St. Catherine Parish in DuBois, she was a daughter of the late Bernard and Bertha (Mehok) Kartavich.

On Feb. 5, 1956, Sister Rita entered the Sisters of Mercy at St. Joseph Convent in Titusville. She professed her perpetual vows on July 31, 1961.

She studied to be a registered nurse at the Saint Vincent Hospital School of Nursing, Erie, and earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Loretta Heights College, Denver, Colo.

At the University of Notre Dame,

she received a master's degree in hospital administration. She holds a certificate in gerontology from St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, Terra Haute, Ind., and a medical ethics certificate from St. Louis University, St. Louis.

Dedicated to nursing, Sister Rita spent most of her ministry years at DuBois Hospital/DuBois Regional Medical Center.

She was a licensed nursing home administrator and became an administrator and the director of outreach at DRMC.

After retiring, her commitment to DRMC remained through her service on its board of directors. During her nursing career, Sister Rita left the hospital to serve as the college nurse at Mercyhurst Univer-

sity, Erie, and to serve as a nurse in the Foreign Missions in Ethiopia.

She was mission educator for the Diocese of Erie and a nurse at the Dr. Martin Luther King Center, Erie, from 1980-82.

Sister Rita gave a term of service to her Sisters of Mercy community, traveling from DuBois as an elected member of the Sisters of Mercy Leadership Team in the Erie Regional Community, and as a resident local leader of the Erie Sisters of Mercy at the motherhouse.

Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by two sisters, Evelyn Simbeck and Dorothy Johnston. Survivors include members of her religious community and several nieces and nephews.

A funeral Mass was held March 13 in the chapel of the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse. Burial was at Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Sisters of Mercy Ministry Fund, 444 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA 16504.



Sister Rita Kartavich, RSM

Sister Catherine Anne Mesanko, RSM

Sister Catherine Anne Mesanko, RSM, 83, a Sister of Mercy for 65 years, died March 11 at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse in Erie.

A native of St. Adrian Parish in DeLancey, she was the daughter of the late George and Mary (Pluchinsky) Mesanko.

On June 28, 1953, she entered the Sisters of Mercy at St. Joseph Convent, Titusville. She received the name Sister Mary Berchmans, but later returned to her baptismal name. She professed perpetual vows on Aug. 2, 1959.

She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Mercyhurst University, Erie, in 1965, and her master's in general education from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, in 1985.

She pursued additional studies at Villa Maria College and Gannon University, both in Erie, Saint

John's College in Cleveland, Ohio, and LaRoche and Carlow colleges in Pittsburgh.

Throughout her ministry, Sister Catherine Anne taught primary education in numerous schools of the Erie Catholic Diocese: St. Patrick in DRMC, Franklin, St. Cosmas and Damian in Punxsutawney, St. Walburga and St. Titus in Titusville, St. Thomas in Corry, and St. Michael in Greensville.

She also served as assistant principal at St. Luke School, Erie; as a receptionist at Mercy Center of Aging (Mercy Hilltop Center); and as sacristan of Christ the King Chapel at Mercyhurst.

She spent two summers minister-

ing to children in the Head Start Program for Erie County.

In 1973, the Teen-Age Action Club at St. Luke gave her an award for 20 years of dedicated service to youth.

She was a telemarketer for the *Lake Shore Visitor*, the former newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Erie, and led the newspaper recycling effort at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse.

Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother, George.

Survivors include members of her religious community; two sisters, Dolores Poy of Stump Creek, Pa., and Mary Jane Holveva of Rossiter, Pa.; and many nieces and nephews. A funeral Mass was held March 16 in the chapel of the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse. Burial was at Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Sisters of Mercy Ministry Fund, 444 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA 16504.



Sister Catherine Anne Mesanko, RSM



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PHOTOS from AROUND the DIOCESE

Email news items to: FaithLife@ErieRCD.org

Check out more photos at www.ErieRCD.org/atd.htm



Parish women hear Lenten presentation



ALBION—Mercy Sister Natalie Rossi, front row, center, recently presented the message of Jesus' call to holiness to the women of St. Lawrence Parish and St. Philip Church in Crossingsville. Because the presentation was held during Lent, it reinforced the message of letting go of negativity and welcoming positive experiences of faith, hope and love.

Retreat League sponsors special day



SHARON—The Mercer County Catholic Women's Retreat League sponsored a Day of Recollection at St. Joseph Church in Sharon. Deacon Owen Wagner offered the opening prayer. Father Michael Allison, pastor of Church of the Beloved Disciple Parish in Grove City, served as retreat master and spoke about assisting others in their needs and how we are witnesses to the power of Jesus' love. More than 100 women participated in the retreat. Pictured, from left, are: Carol Bralski, Deacon Owen Wagner, Patricia Demas, Father Michael Allison, Karen Zoccolo, Carol Seward and Veronica Garry.

Diocesan staff attend Harrisburg rally



HARRISBURG—Michele Inter, left, director of the Office of Disabilities Ministries of the Diocese of Erie, and Patrice Swick, director of the Office of Social Justice and Life, attended a Life Worth Living event March 12 in Harrisburg. They met with legislators and rallied for House Bill 2050 and Senate Bill 1050, which would prohibit aborting a child solely due to a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome. For more information about the bill and proposed action, go to www.pacatholic.org.

Students remember fallen peers from Florida shooting rampage



ERIE—Eighth-graders at St. Luke School in Erie stand silently over 17 empty desks that were placed before the altar at St. Luke Church to commemorate the Feb. 14 shooting deaths of high school students and staff in Florida. All of St. Luke's sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders attended the prayer service on March 14. They listened to the names of each of the Florida victims and then lit a candle that was placed on each desk.

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