

## What was old is now new

St. Michael Parish in Greenville unveils renovations, rededicates church, page 3



# FaithLife

## Lenten service projects

Find out how students in the Erie Diocese journeyed through Lent, page 4



www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

April 16, 2006

### Confirmation Schedule

**St. Catherine of Siena Parish, DuBois** – Saturday, April 22 at 11 a.m. Confirmation classes include St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois; St. Joseph, DuBois; and St. Michael, DuBois.

**St. Joseph Parish, Warren** – Monday, April 24 at 7 p.m. Confirmation classes include Holy Redeemer, Warren; St. Anthony, Sheffield; St. Joseph, Warren; and St. Luke, Youngsville.

**St. James Parish, Erie** – Wednesday, April 26 at 7 p.m.

**Holy Cross Parish, Fairview** – Thursday, April 27 at 7 p.m.

**St. Tobias Parish, Brockway** – Friday, April 28 at 7 p.m. Confirmation classes include Assumption, Sykesville; Holy Cross, Brandy Camp; St. Bernard, Falls Creek; St. Mary, Reynoldsville; and St. Tobias, Brockway.

## Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

### Catholic Charities Ball – Friday, April 21

The annual Catholic Charities Ball will be held at Lake Shore Country Club in Erie from 7 p.m. to midnight. Black-tie is optional. The Hilbert family (Midge, Bill and Martha, Fr. Tex and Sr. Phyllis) will be honored with the 2006 Helping Hands Award for their outstanding dedication to their community. Tickets are \$45 per person. Proceeds will benefit Rainbows, a grief support program for children who have experienced a loss in their life due to separation, divorce or death. For tickets or more information, call Catholic Charities at 814.824.1250.



### Annual Girl Scout-Boy Scout awards ceremony – Sunday, April 23 at St. Peter Cathedral, 2:30 p.m.

Two-hundred individual and group badges, patches, honors and awards will be presented to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Brownies throughout the Erie Diocese for their achievements in the areas of spiritual growth. For more information on scouting in the Erie Diocese, visit [www.ErieRCD.org/scout.asp](http://www.ErieRCD.org/scout.asp).



### Divine Mercy Sunday – April 23

This feast was granted to the Universal Church by Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the canonization of Sr. Faustina Kowalska on April 30, 2000. For more information, visit [www.divinemercy-sunday.com](http://www.divinemercy-sunday.com).



### Ordination of transitional deacons – Saturday, April 29 at St. Mark Seminary, 10:30 a.m.

Two seminarians will take another step toward the priesthood as they are ordained transitional deacons. Bishop Donald Trautman will ordain seminarians Bill Barron and Justin Pino into the order of the diaconate during a Mass at the St. Mark Seminary chapel, 429 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie. After completing their studies, the transitional deacons will be ordained diocesan priests in 2007.



Bill Barron



Justin Pino

### Dedication of new Beloved Disciple Church, Grove City – Saturday, April 29 at 5:15 p.m.

Bishop Trautman will dedicate the new Church of the Beloved Disciple, located on Route 208 between Grove City and I-79. The new church offers expanded worship space and includes seating for 475, up from 250 in the old church at 321 N. Broad St. in Grove City.



# Risen Jesus is the fulfillment of our lives

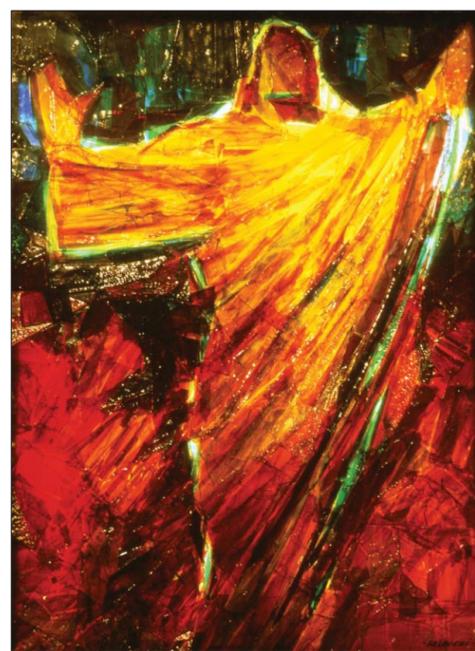
There would be no Gospel, no church, no Christians if the cross had been the last word. But the cross was not the last word. Easter Sunday followed Good Friday. Life followed death. Jesus of Nazareth was nailed to the cross on Good Friday and died at three o'clock in the afternoon. His friends took his body down from the cross, wrapped it in burial linen and laid it in a tomb. The miracle worker was dead. The teacher was silenced forever. His followers had gone back to their fishing boats. It was all over. On Easter Sunday morning, three women — Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James — made a startling discovery. "They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; and when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." Christ had risen from the dead and was now walking around appearing to his disciples. The resurrection of Jesus is the warranty of our faith. It is the guarantee — the proof of proofs — that all that Christ said and did has been vindicated. The risen Jesus has triumphed over death, over Satan, over sin. The Book of Revelation tells us: "Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever (chapter 1:18)." Easter is a day of triumph, of victory, of joy,

of hope. Easter is the day that changed the world. What is the proof for the resurrection? Is the resurrection of Jesus history's most notorious deception, or history's most decisive event? The very existence of the Christian church for two thousand years is testimony of the resurrection. If the crucifixion ended Jesus' life and terminated his following, how could the church come into existence? How could frightened followers of a crucified, dead rabbi become the nucleus of a new movement? Who would have troubled to write the New Testament if Jesus' life had simply ended as a crucified revolutionary? What would have motivated his followers to lay down their lives in preaching the Gospel? Belief in the risen Jesus fills the pages of the New Testament. The disciples preached that God had raised their teacher from the dead, and that they had seen him alive and had talked with him. Their encounter with the risen Lord almost overnight changed these disillusioned, disheartened disciples into confident, courageous apos-



Bishop Donald W. Trautman

bles of faith. Against impossible odds they went forth to preach a radical and demanding message of morality. They preached an impossible doctrine that the founder of Christianity, Jesus of Nazareth, was risen from the dead and lives and is with them. The resurrection is the foundation of the church, and the church has withstood persecution from without and corruption from within. The church has not only persevered but has touched every nation on the face of the earth. What does the resurrection mean for contemporary Christians? What does the resurrection say to people struggling to live their faith in a secular society? What does the resurrection say to those bearing the cross of illness or loneliness, financial worry or broken relationships? By his resurrection, Jesus has taken the tragedies of life and turned them into new hope and life. By his victory on the cross and in the tomb, the risen savior demonstrates that he is the way, the truth and the life. By his resurrection, Christ gives us a new beginning. Jesus reveals the triumph of love over hate, the triumph of mercy over anger and selfishness. We may not always be optimistic about our life, but we need never



CNS photo/Crosiers

be without hope, for Christ has given us new life. What does the empty tomb mean for us? What does the risen Christ mean for us? Easter tells us we cannot live the same as before. Easter is for conversion. Because of the risen Christ we now have new priorities, new hope for handling disappointments and sorrows and crosses. Sinners have a new way of seeking happiness. The empty tomb tells us that we have a new begin-

ning and we have new strength that comes from the risen Lord. The risen Jesus is the fulfillment of our lives. The resurrection proclaims that God has the final word. Good Friday was for a day, but Easter is forever. Alleluia!

*Donald W. Trautman*

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

## A year after Pope Benedict's election, world sees new style of papacy

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — This month, the church marks the first anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI, events that captured the world's attention and introduced a new style of papacy. As his sainthood cause gathers momentum, Pope John Paul remains in people's hearts, a fact witnessed daily in the seemingly endless line of pilgrims who come to his grave carrying flowers, notes or a silent prayer. Pope Benedict, meanwhile, has used a simple and direct approach to win over the record crowds that are flocking to his appearances at the Vatican and elsewhere. Quietly and slowly, in more than 200 sermons and speeches, he has engaged the faithful and the wider society on fundamental issues of truth, freedom, faith and human dignity. In some ways, it has taken a full year for the papal transition — a year to absorb the legacy of Pope John Paul's long pontificate and a year for Pope Benedict's papacy to come into focus. The new pope found himself presiding over many events scheduled under his predecessor, like the Synod of Bishops last October, several canonizations, the closing of the eucharistic year and numerous meetings and liturgies. Pope Benedict has eased gently into his role. Those who hoped for tough new doctrinal pronouncements, wholesale removal of liberal bishops and a rollback in liturgical reform have been disappointed. The pope's only major document so far has been an encyclical that focused on what he called the foundation of the Christian message, God is Love, and its implications for personal and institutional charity. The much-discussed Vatican document barring men with deep-seated homosexual tendencies from the priesthood, although



CNS photo

approved by Pope Benedict, was a project inherited from the previous pontificate. The long-rumored tsunami of replacements in the Roman Curia has not hit yet. The pope's only major appointment came last May, when he named U.S. Archbishop William J. Levada as head of the doctrinal congregation and later named him a cardinal. But in March, the pope made his first move to streamline Vatican offices. At least temporarily, the council dealing with migration was combined with the justice and peace council, and the council that dialogues with non-Christian religions — including Muslims — was combined with the council for culture. The final alignment of curial offices is not yet clear and the changes may take months, but most expect a significant shrinking of the number of agencies. For the last year, however, Pope Benedict's priorities have not been administrative. Instead, he has embarked on what might be described as a project to water the roots of the faith. He has urged Catholics to rediscover Christ as the focus of their personal lives and to resist the tendency to make the individual ego "the only criterion" for their choices. The pope has been careful to phrase this as a sympathetic invitation and not a warning. "We continually close our doors; we continually want to feel secure and do not want to be disturbed by others and by God" — and yet still Christ will come for his people, the pope said in a

sermon last May. As a teacher, he has turned to Scripture far more than doctrine, making connections between the early Christians of apostolic times and modern men and women struggling to live their faith. Pope Benedict has tackled contemporary social and political issues by emphasizing a few main principles: that human rights rest on human dignity, that people come before profits, that the right to life is an ancient measure of humanity and not just a Catholic teaching and that efforts to exclude God from civil affairs are corroding modern society. He returns often to a central theme — the relationship between God and man — in language that can be

See **FIRST ANNIVERSARY**, page 3

## A look at pope's first year

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Compared to Pope John Paul II's early years, Pope Benedict XVI appears to be going at a slower pace. All the same, his list of first-year accomplishments is impressive:

- In February, he named 15 new cardinals and convened them March 23 for a discussion on any topic they chose.
- Last fall, he embarked on a reconciliation effort with Lefebvrite traditionalists, meeting with excommunicated Bishop Bernard Fellay and convening top Vatican officials to discuss proposed solutions.
- In October, he opened up the Synod of Bishops to free discussion, joining in the debate at times on such topics as the priest shortage and priestly celibacy.
- In August, he presided over World Youth Day celebrations in his native Germany, winning the respect of young people with a serious demeanor and some thought-provoking talks. He also met with ecumenical leaders, Muslims, government ministers, bishops and seminarians.
- Although not billed as much of a traveler, he has scheduled four foreign visits this year—to Poland, Spain, Germany and Turkey.
- He has engaged in lengthy question-and-answer sessions with groups of priests and surprised other audiences by setting aside his prepared text and improvising.
- Late last year, he reviewed the major documents of the Second Vatican Council 40 years after its close. Then, in a major talk to the Roman Curia, he explained the right way and wrong way to interpret the council's teachings.
- He moved quietly last summer to encourage the successful appointment of new Chinese bishops acceptable to both their government and the Vatican.
- Throughout the year, he presided over ecumenical liturgies and met with a number of ecumenical groups, pledging continued efforts toward Christian unity.
- He also met several times with Jewish leaders, affirming the church's commitment to dialogue and reflecting on the Holocaust. In June, he delayed indefinitely the beatification of an Italian priest because of alleged anti-Semitic writings.
- In December, he named a new apostolic nuncio to the United States, a veteran diplomat, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, and, in the most noteworthy of several recent U.S. appointments, named Archbishop George H. Niederauer to San Francisco.

2005	<b>APRIL</b> Elected pope on the 19th.	<b>MAY</b> Waives 5-year waiting period for John Paul II's sainthood cause. Appoints Archbishop Levada to head doctrinal congregation.	<b>JUNE</b> Denounces gay marriage, cohabitation, birth control. Meets with world Jewish leaders. Releases Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
	<b>JULY</b> Urges G8 leaders to take measures to eradicate poverty.	<b>AUGUST</b> Visits Cologne, Germany for World Youth Day. Approves document barring ordination of men with "deep-seated" homosexual tendencies.	<b>OCTOBER</b> Presides over Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist.
2006	<b>JANUARY</b> At baptism service, calls on Christians to resist "culture of death." Publishes first encyclical, "God Is Love."	<b>FEBRUARY</b> Presides over discussion on reconciliation with Lefebvrites. Names 15 new cardinals. Condemns religious violence in Iraq and Nigeria.	<b>DECEMBER</b> Says human rights must be respected even in war. Calls for proper application of Vatican II.
		<b>NOVEMBER</b> Says created world is "intelligent project" reflecting divine origin.	<b>MARCH</b> Visits Vatican Radio and receives an iPod nano.

# God or the Girl?

Reality series chronicles young men deciding on seminary

By Harry Forbes  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — It's finally happened: Reality TV has found religion.

In the A&E cable channel's new five-part series *God or the Girl*, four young men with a calling to the priesthood must decide whether to enter the seminary or serve God as laypeople.

The series will air, appropriately enough, during Easter week, with the first two episodes premiering on Easter, April 16, 9-11 p.m. EDT. (The third and fourth debut Monday, April 17, 9-11 p.m. with the finale Sunday, April 23, 10-11 p.m.)

Apart from the slightly sensational title — actually a misnomer as none of these devout men would ever consider abandoning God — the series offers a surprisingly reverential treatment of a profound life passage.

In its essentials, the series is as serious-minded as a public television documentary on the subject, albeit fitted out with all the trappings of *Survivor*.

The four are a varied bunch. Joe Adair is a 28-year-old procrastinator from Ohio who has already been in the seminary twice but can't decide about a lifelong commitment.

Steve Horvath, a 25-year-old Virginian, chucked his lucrative consulting job, luxury home and girlfriend to become a campus missionary at the University of Nebraska.

The 24-year-old Mike Lechniak from Scranton felt a calling at



### God or the Girl on A&E

Sunday, April 16, 9-11 p.m.  
Monday, April 17, 9-11 p.m.  
Sunday, April 23, 10-11 p.m.

Steve Horvath is one of four Catholic men with a calling to the priesthood featured in the new A&E reality series *God or the Girl*.

age 17, but has such a natural rapport with sympathetic girlfriend Aly that it's clear why he's highly conflicted.

And finally there's Dan DeMatte, a 21-year-old Ohio Dominican University student with an obvious talent for youth ministry who lives with nine other celibate young men in a house they call "Fort Zion." His relationship with girlfriend Amber is as amiable as Mike's is with Aly. The tug between collar and wedding ring promised by the title seems most vivid with Mike and Dan.

Harry Forbes is director of the Office for Film & Broadcasting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

# By the Way...

St. Ann Parish, 10th & East Avenue in Erie, is presenting several programs and services to celebrate the **Feast of Divine Mercy**. On Wednesday, April 19 at 7 p.m., the parish is hosting a screening of *The Life of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska*. This is the full story of Helen Kowalska (Kowalski), who became the apostle of Divine Mercy canonized by the late Pope John Paul II. The movie was filmed in Rome, Krakow, Warsaw, Czestochowa and her birthplace of Swince. Fr. Seraphim Michalenko, MIC, vice-postulator, narrates the video. About an hour in length, the movie will be presented on a large screen.



Jason Koshinskie

On Sunday, April 23, the parish will hold Divine Mercy services with confessions at 1:45 p.m. and prayer of the Divine Mercy chaplet and rosary at 2:30 p.m. Mass will be celebrated at 3:15 with Fr. James McCormick as the guest homilist. Preliminary hymns will begin at 2 p.m. sung by the Divine Mercy choir.

**Auditions for the all-school summer musical** in Erie, sponsored by the Office of Education, will be held on Sunday, April 30 at 4 p.m. and on Monday, May 1 at 7 p.m. at Cathedral Prep. The musical *OLIVER!* will be presented at Cathedral Prep on June 15 through 18 and auditions are open to any student in the area from any school, from those entering grade 5 in the fall through college age. A large chorus is needed and no previous experience is necessary. The show will be directed by Fr. Mike DeMartinis, with musical direction by Michael Miele, assisted by Fr. Jay Schultz. Those auditioning may attend either session and should come prepared to sing a song.

Jason Koshinskie is editor of FaithLife. Contact him at [JKoshinskie@ErieRCD.org](mailto:JKoshinskie@ErieRCD.org) or 814.824.1171.

# CWC celebrates crystal anniversary with Garden Party

ERIE — A crystal extravaganza is unfolding as St. Peter Cathedral Women's Council finalizes its plans for its Crystal Anniversary Garden Party on Tuesday, May 9.

The event, to be held at St. Patrick's Cauley Center, 215 E. Fourth St., will have a decidedly elegant theme as the Women's Council hosts its 15th Garden Party, according to Polly Harabedian, decorations chairwoman. Crystal accents and twinkling white lights will fill the center, which is expected to draw 500 guests. An ice sculpture to honor the 15th anniversary party is being carved by Brian Stahlsmith, assistant director of the Mercyhurst College Culinary and Wine Institute, and a quartet from the Young Artists Debut Orchestra will showcase its talents onstage during the social hour.

The evening line-up includes two grand prize raffles, 13 theme baskets valued at more than \$350 each, a silent auction and a fashion show by A. J.'s Famous Labels.

The silent auction, which proved so popular last year, is again being headed by co-chairs Marguerite Evanoff-Jurkovic and Cathy Gallagher. More than 100 offerings, including many hand-crafted items and unique art pieces, are featured along with numerous gift certificates for summer sports camps, landscaping, pottery lessons, house cleaning and a summer theater camp.

Featured artworks by Gretchen Petrarca, Tom Vicary, Sue Hunter, Rose Lucchesi and Jan Kidder will be among the offerings. Mercyhurst College has donated a \$500 tuition voucher to be used by either college students or Mercyhurst Prep high school students taking advanced placement courses. Also highlighting the auction will be stained-glass sun catchers crafted from the more than 100-year-old original stained-glass windows from St. Peter Cathedral.

The crystal grand prize package includes 15 exquisite crystal pieces and a \$500 cash gift, for a value of about \$3,000. The second grand prize is a \$2,000 Cathedral Center Dukes tuition voucher with many accessory items or a \$1,000 cash offering.

A well-lit parking lot and security will be provided at Cauley Center. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. Fergie's Restaurant will cater the event. Tickets are \$25 and reservations can be made by calling Joan White at 814.454.6640, Mary Lou Scottino at 814.459.6258 or Mickey Hosack at 814.456.7637.

The Cathedral Women's Council has raised more than \$130,000 over the past 15 years to aid St. Peter Cathedral, Cathedral Center and outreach efforts, according to Adrien Marnen, CWC president. Last year's garden party was a sold-out event, drawing guests from throughout the diocese.



Cathedral Women's Council members Anne Francani, publicity committee, and Laurie Bretz, Garden Party co-chair, show off some items included in the silent auction.

# Sister Caroline Extein, SSJ dies at 90

Sister Caroline Extein, 90, of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, died March 27, 2006. She was in her 73rd year of religious life.

She was born May 29, 1915 in Harborcreek, daughter of the late Michael and Victoria Extein. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Harborcreek on Sept. 8, 1933 and professed her final vows in 1939. She celebrated her 60th Jubilee in 1993.

Sister Caroline earned a B.S. degree in nursing education from Catholic University of America. She served as director

of nursing at Saint Vincent Health Center for five years and as the director of the Villa Maria Infirmary for five years.

The largest portion of her years in active ministry were spent at St. Mary's Home of Erie where she worked as in-service coordinator from 1970 until 1983 and then as pastoral minister for 11 years until 1994.



Sr. Caroline Extein

## RETREAT FOR SISTERS



### Presented by Fr. William Russell

Father Russell is a diocesan priest of the Peterboro Diocese in Toronto. He has spent many years in Catholic education, serving as administrator and teacher at elementary, secondary and university levels, as well as serving as Superintendent of Schools in Ontario. He has spent more than 25 years in retreat work with women religious.

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**Heaven on Earth: The Mystery Unveiled**

Dr. Scott Hahn, the internationally known Bible expert and convert to Catholicism, will be presenting a series of three talks on

**SATURDAY, MAY 6th, 2006 at St. George Church in Erie.**

**10:00am: The Lamb's Supper**  
**12:30pm: Letter and Spirit**  
**2:00pm: Lord Have Mercy**

Tickets: \$7 in advance; \$10 at the door; \$5 students (12-22)  
For more info: [www.gifts-of-faith.com/scott\\_hahn.html](http://www.gifts-of-faith.com/scott_hahn.html) or call 814-864-0622

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58	5.7%	67	6.2%	76	7.2%	85	9.5%
59	5.7%	68	6.3%	77	7.4%	86	9.9%
60	5.7%	69	6.4%	78	7.6%	87	10.2%
61	5.8%	70	6.5%	79	7.8%	88	10.6%
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# St. Michael celebrates rededication of church

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

GREENVILLE – What was old has become new again for St. Michael Parish in Greenville.

After a year of celebrating Mass in the church's Lateran Hall in a consecrated gymnasium using folding chairs, parishioners marveled at the beauty of their renovated and expanded church March 25 during a rededication Mass.

"They're ecstatic because the church looks so nice and yet we kept a lot of the old, familiar artifacts that they've cherished," said Msgr. Andrew Karg, pastor of St. Michael Parish. "We wanted to keep as much of the old as we could."

Project highlights include:

- The carved pew end caps were separated from the boards forming the seats and backs of the pews. The end caps were refinished to match the other wood stain used in the church. The ends are now refitted with longer boards for the seats and backs, increasing seating capacity from 325 to 550.

- To create additional space, the sanctuary was moved back 40 feet. The boards from the old pews were used for the hardwood flooring in the sanctuary and under the piano.

- The rectory was razed to make room for new offices and meeting rooms. A new building connected to the church features ministry gathering and office space for social outreach, religious education, RCIA, children's Liturgy of the Word and others. "This is all in support of worship and liturgy," Msgr. Karg said.

- The choir loft and balcony was removed. The choir is now at floor level to the right of the sanctuary with a new digital organ. There is also a new sound system.

- A new matching altar, ambo/lectern and tabernacle stand have been locally designed and crafted out of wood.



- The carved Stations of the Cross are now placed on a wood backing designed in a Gothic arch motif to complement the style of architecture used throughout the church.

- The crucifix above the tabernacle has a new wooden corpus that was hand carved in Italy. A new cross has been made to match the scale of the sanctuary and corpus, and the original brass detailing from the prior crucifix was used in the new crucifix.

- The stained glass windows were restored, although several have moved to different locations to accommodate the renovation.

- The pendant lights have been rewired and relamped.

Some aspects of the renovation remain unfinished. Plans call for an outside courtyard, landscaping and the construction of a new rectory. The parish priests currently reside in nearby housing.

The renovation and construction took a little less than a year to complete. The parish broke ground April 10, 2005 on the \$2.3 million project. Funds for the renovation came from the parish's capital campaign from several years ago. Established in 1848, St. Michael Parish currently has 1,350 families.

"We come together to dedicate a new upper room," Bishop Donald Trautman said during his homily for the Mass re-dedicating the 113-year-old church. "We re-dedicate this upper room to the honor and glory of God and to the service of God's people."



Photos by Kelly Thompson

Top, the Greenville Council of Knights of Columbus, rear, pose with the bishops and priests participating in the March 25 rededication of St. Michael Roman Catholic Church. Front row, left to right, Fr. Dennis Veltri, Fr. Paul Schill, Bishop Michael Murphy, Msgr. Andrew Karg, Fr. Mark O'Hern, Msgr. John Snyder and Deacon James Campbell. Middle row is Msgr. Paul Tobin, Fr. Glen Whitman and Msgr. Joseph Book, and back middle is Bishop Donald W. Trautman.

Middle, Bishop Donald Trautman anoints a wall of St. Michael Parish with holy oil during a re-dedication Mass for the church as Chancellor Msgr. Michael Gaines and parishioners look on.

Bottom, parishioners fill the newly-renovated St. Michael church for its rededication Mass.

# Weekend retreat makes St. John's a Parish Alive

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

ERIE – Over the weekend of March 31-April 1, St. John the Baptist Parish in Erie became a Parish Alive.

St. John's is the first parish in the diocese to use the new Parish Alive retreat program created by Fr. Tex Hilbert.

Designed as a weekend parish retreat, the event begins on Friday evening with prayer, dinner and presentations. The retreatants then go home and return for breakfast Saturday morning. The second day is filled with talks and activities based on those talks. The retreat weekend concludes with reconciliation and the parish's vigil Mass.

"I was a pastor for 13 years, and we never had anything like this," says Fr. Hilbert, who is the spiritual director for Cursillo and chaplain of the North East campus of Mercyhurst College. "I wanted to allow churches to have an experience of community that I didn't think most of them had had of 24 hours where a number of parishioners simply spent some time together talking about God."

Using some principles of group dynamics in other spiritual experiences, Fr. Hilbert has written Parish Alive during the past year and now wants to share it with parishes in the diocese. St. John's was the first to jump on board.

Because of work schedules or other responsibilities, many people may not be able to attend an overnight retreat, says Fr. Rick Tomasone, pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish.

"This is a way for parishes to give people a retreat opportunity. The focus is to build up the

parish," Fr. Tomasone says. "The whole thing is put on by parishioners. You build from the inside, so to speak."

St. John's had 16 parishioners participate in the retreat weekend. Another group of 17 parishioners volunteered to put



St. John the Baptist parishioners Bernie Lucas and Donna Compemile make a presentation during the Parish Alive retreat.

the weekend together, which included preparing and serving meals, giving talks and facilitating the weekend. All events took place at the parish. Students at the school even designed individual placemats for the meals.

The talks given included topics such as leadership, ideals, piety and spiritual growth. Time was also included for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

"Many of the people were surprised by how quickly the time passed," Fr. Tomasone says. "This was really a great experience and something special for our parishioners to do during Lent."

For parishes interested in the Parish Alive retreat, Fr. Hilbert recommends about 12 weeks of preparation time by a team of parishioners in collaboration with the pastor. "It's a 24-hour experience that's just tremendous," Fr. Hilbert says. "I think it has potential mainly to give the experience of community within the parish. And I have a feeling that if this catches on, it could be used on a basis outside our diocese."

For more information of Parish Alive, contact Fr. Hilbert at 814.456.2948.

# First anniversary: World sees new style of papacy

from page 1

clear-cut and gripping.

"Human life is a relationship ... and the basic relationship is with the Creator, otherwise all relationships are fragile. To choose God, that is the essential thing. A world emptied of God, a world that has forgotten God, loses life and falls into a culture of death," the pope said in a talk in March.

He has zeroed in on what he has called Europe's spiritual fatigue, occasionally rattling the cages and rallying the forces on issues like gay marriage, cohabitation and abortion.

The pope's style — deliberate and thoughtful — was seen in the way he took up residence in the Apostolic Palace. He commissioned a lengthy remodeling of the papal apartment, and only in December did he really move in, along with his 20,000 books.

It impressed people at the Vatican that the pope took the time to meet separately with the often-overlooked groups of employees who serve him every day, including ushers, papal gentlemen, members of the papal antechamber and the Vatican's security force.

Pope Benedict has had an overwhelmingly favorable reception, too, among the tens

of thousands of pilgrims who come to see him each week. When he moves through a crowd, he seems to look people in the eye.

Last year, when the pope waived the normal five-year waiting period for the start of Pope John Paul II's sainthood cause, he showed he was sensitive to the popular voice of the church.

When the crowds gather this month to pray in St. Peter's Square, he will join them in remembering the late pontiff and the dramatic events set in motion by his death.

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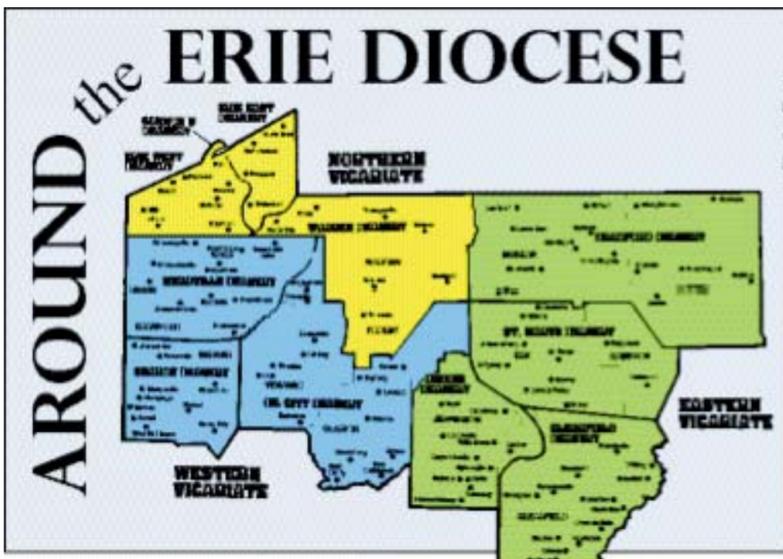
- Conference Retreat**  
*The Universal Message of St. Francis*  
June 18-25, 2006  
Michael Crosby, OFM, Cap.
- Conference Retreat**  
*Living with Balance Life in Abundance*  
July 23-30, 2006  
Margaret Picha, SSND and Michael Laratonda, FMS
- Conference Retreat**  
*Seeing with New Eyes: Encountering the Hidden God*  
October 8-15, 2006  
Barbara Fiand, SNDdeN
- Directed Retreats**  
June 25-July 2; July 9-16; August 6-13, August 13-20; and October 1-8, 2006.
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*Gentle Yoga, Gentle Journaling Retreat*  
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**Parish correspondents**

*FaithLife* encourages all parishes, missions, schools and groups to choose a correspondent who regularly submits news items to *Around the Erie Diocese*.

**E-mail your parish news**

Many parish correspondents have found e-mail to be a quick and easy way to send news to *FaithLife*.  
**FaithLife@ErieRCD.org**



Seniors Dann Cuneo and Karla Vogt receive their simple meal from cafeteria staff member Diane McCullough.

**Mercyhurst Preparatory School, Erie**

Mercyhurst Preparatory School students raised \$300 for Operation Rice Bowl and the MPS Sunday dinner project. The money will be used for world hunger and to feed Erie's homeless. For a \$2 donation, students received a simple meal of tomato soup with noodles or rice, a carton of milk and were permitted to wear jeans.

**Holy Rosary, Erie**

Holy Rosary's 10th grade religious education students created a labyrinth prayer experience in the parish's education building for students and adults. It involved setting up the environment at 12 different stations. Participants, geared with personal CD players and headsets, traveled through the labyrinth at their own pace, stopping for prayer, meditation and reflection.

Students throughout the Erie Diocese journeyed through Lent with prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The following photos and news items feature many different Lenten service projects from diocesan schools and religious education programs.

This listing will be continued in the April 30 issue of



**Our Lady of Peace School, Erie**



Front row: Ashlyn Perkins and Andrew Stromenger; Back row: Student Council officers Joey Alward, Paul Vojtek, Kelly Ek and Kaitlyn Vitale.

At Our Lady of Peace School, all grades K-8 participated in the yearly Helpful Pennies project during Lent. Every student in the school was encouraged to bring in pennies, nickels, dimes and even dollars, which will be donated to local charities. To promote great participation, there was a friendly competition between home-rooms. The class that brings in the most money at its grade level will receive a dress down day along with a movie and a snack. The class with the highest total will receive a dress down day, movie and pizza instead of a snack.

**St. Boniface School, Erie**



The students in Cindy Srnka's kindergarten class at St. Boniface filled baskets with goodies for the shut-ins of the parish. Students brought in items such as candy, tissues, flowers, soup, fruit and plush animals. First-grade students helped decorate bookmarks and foam crosses to add to the baskets. On March 30, the kindergarten students accompanied eucharistic ministers on their visits to deliver the baskets to 16 delighted shut-ins.

Nick Srnka of the K/1 religion class at St. Boniface gives a basket to Eileen Susmarski.

**Our Lady's Christian School, Erie**

Our Lady's Christian School students are contributing to Operation Rice Bowl. Every grade attends Stations of the Cross and on Friday of every week during Lent there is a school-wide "Pause for Prayer." This is a time when teachers read the upcoming Sunday Gospel reading and students silently reflect on the reading. This time of reflection is often followed by a prayer offered for many people.

**St. Brigid, Meadville**

As part of their Lenten service project, students in the St. Brigid elementary religious education program held a candle fundraiser. Students accumulated more than \$1,300 in candle sales. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Meadville Soup Kitchen.

**Ss. Cosmas & Damian School, Punxsutawney**



From the first station, Jesus is made to carry his cross.

Students at Ss. Cosmas and Damian School in Punxsutawney attended weekly Stations of the Cross during Lent. Students in grades 6 through 8, under the supervision of Sue Dahrouge, took a step to make the Stations come alive. The "Shadow Stations" were presented March 31 for the public and April 11 for the student body. "This program seems to give the last long walk of Jesus such a meaningful touch," says Principal Ann Smith.

**St. Boniface School, Kersey**



Fifth-grade students from St. Boniface School perform the Living Stations during Lent yearly. They showed the students how Jesus journeyed through his last days on earth on April 10. Parishioners viewed the Living Stations on the evening of Good Friday. Pictured are cast members Nicholas Quagliani (Jesus), Shane Gradl (Pontius Pilate), Stephanie Zimmerman, Rachel Ginther (gathered crowd) and Jordan Lenox (praying near Jesus).

**Cathedral Center School, Erie**



Cathedral Center's fourth-grade students and members of its honors choir visited St. Mary's Home East on April 3 to present the Living Stations of the Cross. Pictured are Ryan Bleggi (guard), Katlyn Unger (guard), Joseph Weibel (Jesus) and Caroline Cipriani (Mary).

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