

JPil's sainthood cause

Church looking for people with pope stories to tell, page 2.



FaithLife

Chrism Mass

Bishop, priests gather in Ridgway, page 4.



Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



St. John Baptist de la Salle



St. Stanislaus

- April 7 St. John Baptist de la Salle
- April 11 St. Stanislaus
- April 13 World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Confirmation schedule

St. Boniface, Kersey – Sun., April 6 at 1 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Joseph, Force, and St. Boniface, Kersey.

St. Leo Magnus, Ridgway – Sun., April 6 at 4 p.m.

St. Joseph, Warren – Mon., April 7 at 7 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Anthony, Sheffield; Holy Redeemer, Warren; and St. Joseph, Warren.

St. James, Erie – Tues., April 8 at 7 p.m. Confirmation classes include Mount Calvary, Erie, and St. James, Erie.

St. Lawrence, Albion – Thurs., April 10 at 7 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Philip, Crossingsville, and St. Lawrence, Albion.

St. Tobias, Brockway – Fri., April 11 at 7 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Mary, Reynoldsville; Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sykesville; St. Bernard, Falls Creek; Holy Cross, Brandycamp; and St. Tobias, Brockway.

St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois – Sat., April 12 at 11 a.m. Confirmation classes include St. Joseph, DuBois; St. Michael, DuBois; and St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois.

St. Joseph, Sharon – Sat., April 12 at 5:15 p.m. Confirmation classes include Sacred Heart, Sharon, and St. Joseph, Sharon.

St. Patrick, Franklin – Sat., April 19 at 5:15 p.m.

St. Francis Bradford – Sun., April 20 at 1 p.m. Confirmation classes include St. Bernard, Bradford; Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Lewis Run; and St. Francis, Bradford.

Clergy appointment

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

Father Gerald Wright, OMV, appointed temporary parochial administrator of St. Mary Parish, Erie. Effective March 7, 2008.

Benedict's first visit to U.S. as pope features diverse encounters

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI's first visit to the United States as head of the Catholic Church features a diverse series of encounters with government leaders, interreligious and ecumenical representatives, the academic world and the Catholic faithful.

The pope's events in Washington and New York April 15-20 include a meeting with President George W. Bush at the White House and a visit to ground zero in lower Manhattan.

His address to the United Nations April 18 will be the international highlight of the trip, offering the pope the most significant global platform to date in his three-year pontificate.

It will be Pope Benedict's eighth foreign trip and the first papal visit to the United States since Pope John Paul II made a 30-hour visit to St. Louis in 1999.

U.S. organizers report a high demand for tickets for the two papal Masses, to be celebrated in Nationals Park in Washington and Yankee Stadium in New York.

At the Vatican, too, the excitement is building for what church officials say could be the most important papal trip in years.

Here is how the pope's itinerary will unfold:

Tuesday, April 15



The pope is expected to arrive at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington in the late afternoon after a nine-hour flight on his chartered Alitalia jet. He will be greeted by Bush and the first lady, as well as by local church dignitaries, and both the pope and the president are expected to make brief remarks. Afterward, the pope will go to the apostolic nunciature, the Vatican's version of an embassy, to rest.

Wednesday, April 16



Bush welcomes the pope on the south lawn of the White House at 10:30 a.m., then the two leaders go inside for private talks. It's only the second time in history that a pope has visited the White House, and it takes place on the pope's 81st birthday.

At 5:30 p.m., the pope presides over a prayer service with about 350 U.S. bishops at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Before the service, the pope will greet well-wishers outside.

Thursday, April 17



At 10 a.m., the pope celebrates Mass in Nationals Park, the first nonbaseball event at the new stadium.

See EVENTS, page 3

Scholar, pastor, enigma

German pope defies easy caricature

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Americans will soon have their first close-up encounter with Pope Benedict XVI, a figure who, in the minds of many, is still coming into focus.

Some view him as a vigilant pastor, one who has used virtually every medium possible — books and speeches, sermons and encyclicals — to guide Catholics back to the essential message of Jesus and the Gospel.

Others see the German pope as a doctrinal overseer, policing the church's moral boundaries on issues like end-of-life medical care, marriage and homosexuality.

For many non-Christians, Pope Benedict is an enigma, a man who has visited a mosque and prayed toward Mecca with his Muslim host, yet who repeatedly speaks about the need to proclaim Christ as the unique savior for all people.

He is hailed as a liturgical hero by traditionalist Catholics for having relaxed restrictions on the Tri-

dentine Mass and introduced touches of antiquity in his own liturgies.

The "real Benedict" no doubt has some elements of all these partial portraits, but in a combination that defies easy caricature. This is a pope who brings depth of thought to every word or action, in ways that are not entirely predictable.

He once described heaven as "plunging into the ocean of infinite love," has called saints the real revolutionaries, and compared receiving the Eucharist to nuclear fission — a "chain of intimate explosions of good over evil in the human heart."

One of the pope's most important themes is that when modern society tries to do without God it opens the door to the exaltation of science and technology, economic selfishness, ideological excess and misuse of freedom.

With equal force, he has maintained that religion cannot sever its links to reason without slipping into fanaticism.

U.S. author and scholar George Weigel said Pope Benedict has thus taken aim at the two great problems defining international public life in the early 21st century: religious faith that rejects reason and reason that has lost faith in itself.

See POPE, page 3

Local pilgrims excited for encounters with pope

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

While most of the faithful in the Erie Diocese will have to make a spiritual pilgrimage during Pope Benedict XVI's April visits to Washington and New York, some will be lucky enough to see the Holy Father in person and attend a papal Mass.

Approximately 250 people from the diocese will make up part of a capacity crowd of more than 73,000 for Mass on Sunday, April 20 at Yankee Stadium. The diocese dispensed its allotment of tickets on a first-come, first-served basis.

For Rosa Satoca, an 8th grader at Cathedral Center School in Erie, it will be her first trip to New York City. All 26 students in her

class will be making the trip, as well.

"I just think it's really cool that I'll get to see him," Satoca said of the pope. "I think it will be nice to get to experience a Mass with him. It will be nice to spend time with the whole grade."

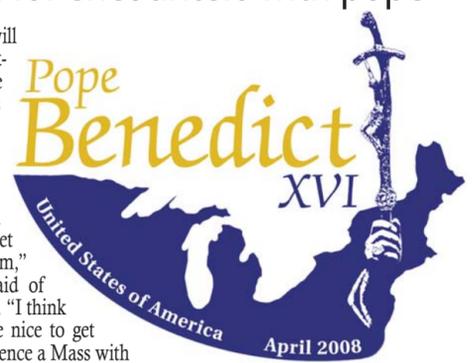
Other than the papal Mass, the class will also visit Ground Zero, St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Empire State Building.

Chris Bleggi, another 8th grader, has never been to New York

either. But he said he's looking forward to seeing the pope in person and going to Mass.

"I haven't really heard much about him," Bleggi said of Pope

See PILGRIMS, page 3



Tracing diocesan history by way of Quebec and Philadelphia

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

While the Diocese of Erie isn't celebrating an official anniversary, it has roots in two of North American churches that are marking milestones this year.

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City, capital of the Canadian province of Quebec, and the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The roots of the church in Erie can be traced to these two events.

"The 400th anniversary of Quebec is very pertinent to us," said Father Ed Lohse, chancellor of the Erie Diocese. "We were part of that group."

Quebec City was founded on July 3, 1608 by Samuel de Champlain. The French settlement served as a base for fur traders and missionaries. The Recollets were the first missionaries to arrive in 1615, followed by the Jesuits, Ursulines and Augustines. By 1618, missionaries had already traversed the Great Lakes territory and passed through the area that would later become the Erie Diocese.

While there may have been prior Masses in the territory, the first known recorded Mass was celebrated by Father Jacques Marquette, a French Jesuit missionary and North American explorer, in 1673 at Presque Isle. Marquette University in Milwaukee, founded in 1881, is named after Father Marquette.

In 1674, Quebec was officially elevated to diocese. It is the first permanent settlement of Catholics in North America. The current diocesan territory was under the jurisdiction of the king of France and the bishop of Quebec. The source of the priests of the area came from France through Quebec. Over time, Quebec became an archdiocese and lost large pieces of its territory.

To mark the 400th anniversary of Quebec City, the 49th International Eucharistic Congress will be held there June 15-22 with the theme, "The Eucharist, gift of God for the life of the world."

Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet of Quebec has invited U.S. Catholics to attend the 2008 International Eucharistic Congress in his see city.

See HISTORY, page 3

Quebec – Philadelphia – Erie TIMELINE

1608

Quebec City is founded by Samuel de Champlain on July 3.



1615

The first missionaries arrive in Quebec.

1618

Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries traverse the Great Lakes area and pass through the territory that would become the Diocese of Erie.

1673

The first recorded Mass in the territory is celebrated by Father Jacques Marquette, a French Jesuit missionary and North American explorer.

1808

On April 8, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is created, which at that time included the entire states of Pennsylvania and Delaware, and the western and southern parts of New Jersey.



1843

The Diocese of Pittsburgh is established in Western Pennsylvania on Aug. 11 and includes parishes that are now part of the Erie Diocese.

1853

The Diocese of Erie, carved out of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, was officially established on July 29 and was to embrace 13 counties of Northwestern Pennsylvania.



2008

Quebec City celebrates the 400th anniversary of its founding and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia honors its bicentennial; other archdioceses celebrating 200 years include New York, Boston and Louisville.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations is April 13

From staff and wire reports

Parish communities with a real sense of obligation to spread the Gospel are places where vocations to be missionary priests and religious thrive, Pope Benedict XVI said in his message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations on Sunday, April 13.

"Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life can only flourish in a spiritual soil that is well cultivated," he said.

The 2008 theme is "Vocations to the Service of the Church on Mission."

The Diocesan Vocation Office, the Sisters' Vocation Awareness Committee and the Serra Club of Erie will sponsor a holy hour for vocations to the consecrated life and the ordained ministry from 7-8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 23 at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse in Erie.

In his message, Pope Benedict insisted that the task of explicitly proclaiming the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ is still at the heart of the vocation of every Christian.

In following Jesus, the pope said, some men are called to the priesthood to carry out the missionary task in a special way by preaching and teaching, caring for

the poor, sick and weak and administering the sacraments.

In addition, in following Jesus who sacrificed everything to bring salvation to humanity, some Christians are called to leave their homelands and set off to bring the message of God's love to a wider audience, he said.

"There have always been in the church many men and women who, prompted by the action of the Holy Spirit, choose to live the Gospel in a radical way, professing the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience," he said.

Pope Benedict said that those on the front lines of the church's work in missionary territories almost always are the priests and religious women and men who consecrate their whole lives to serving God and humanity.

All Christians have an obligation to support the missionaries, materially and with their prayers, he said, and to pray for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

For more information on vocations in the Erie Diocese, including marriage, priesthood, women religious and permanent diaconate, visit www.ErieRCD.org/vocations.asp, call 800.374.3723 or e-mail vocations@ErieRCD.org.





IN THE U.S.

■For Maggie Gallagher, president of the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy in Manassas, Va., changing the law to allow same-sex marriage means changing one of the fundamental building blocks of society. But it also would have a direct impact on the institutions that regularly celebrate marriages, such as the Catholic Church, she told an audience in Providence. Gallagher was one of two national speakers who addressed two groups that have a particular stake in marriage law — Catholic clergy and lawyers. The other speaker was Anthony R. Picarello Jr., general counsel for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington. In Rhode Island, same-sex marriage is not legal, but several bills are pending before the General Assembly that would allow them as well as same-sex civil unions. In their presentations, Gallagher presented a case for the importance of marriage to society and Picarello outlined several of the potential legal ramifications that religious institutions could face if marriage law is changed.



■Health care reform has to compete for attention from Congress along with the economic recession and the ongoing war in Iraq, said a Catholic Health Association official. "It will be a battle" to keep health care needs for all Americans on the front burner, said Jeff Tieman, director of CHA's "Covering a Nation" initiative. Tieman spoke March 13 to a group of editors of U.S. and Canadian Catholic publications at the U.S. Conference



www.chausa.org

of Catholic Bishops headquarters in Washington. He said CHA's efforts to reform the health care system in the United States are defined in its newly released reform initiative, "Our Vision for U.S. Health Care." The document establishes principles for reform and proposes that a reformed system should be "available and accessible to everyone" and pay "special attention to the poor and vulnerable."

AROUND THE WORLD

■Kenyan Catholic leaders expressed the importance of resettling internally displaced people in an effort to return the country to normalcy. Nairobi Cardinal John Njue said the church is urging the government to prioritize resettling the internally displaced people as part of its wider implementation of the peace and power-sharing accord between President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga. Such resettlement should aim at establishing a permanent solution to current problems, the cardinal said at an Easter Mass March 23 in Holy Family Basilica. The church already has made its contributions through humanitarian aid, "and we would equally be ready to contribute toward the establishment of a permanent solution to the issues" of displaced Kenyans and peace, the cardinal said.

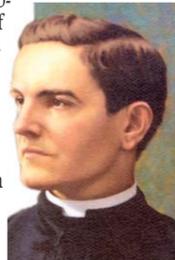
PEOPLE OF FAITH

■The office in charge of promoting Pope John Paul II's sainthood cause is looking for English speakers who have a story to tell about their meeting with the late pope, their prayers for his intercession or graces received after asking for his help. In a March 17 statement, the Rome diocesan office for the sainthood cause said English submissions to the cause's Web site were seriously falling behind those in Italian, Polish and French. The Web site — www.vicariatusurbis.org/Beatificazione/English/credits.htm — also has space set aside for

testimonials in Spanish and Portuguese. A spokeswoman for the office said: "It does not have to be a miracle or something extraordinary. We would like to hear and share stories about an encounter or a grace received or a hope. "This part of the site is very active in other languages, but few English speakers seem to know we have a site and a magazine where they can send these things," she said.



■The sainthood cause of the founder of the Knights of Columbus has taken a major step forward. On March 15 Pope Benedict XVI approved a decree of "heroic virtues" for Father Michael McGivney, a U.S. priest who, after establishing the Knights of Columbus, worked as a pastor until his death at age 38. Father McGivney can be beatified if a miracle is attributed to his intercession. Canonization — a declaration of sainthood — requires an additional miracle. Supporters of Father McGivney's cause are hoping he will be the first U.S.-born priest to be canonized. Father McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., in 1882. The fraternal order for Catholic men has become the largest lay Catholic organization in the world with more than 1.7 million members, sponsoring a wide range of educational, charitable and religious activities.



Father Michael McGivney

By the Way...

Election season is in full swing, and Pennsylvania's primary is set for April 22. While parishes and other non-profit church organizations are prohibited from participating in political campaign activity, the U.S. bishops are making a non-partisan call to political responsibility.



Jason Koshinski

An item that should be enclosed in this issue of FaithLife or your weekly parish bulletin this week or next is a copy of Faithful Citizenship, a document that can help in forming the consciousness of Catholic voters.

Please take a moment to visit the Erie Diocese online at www.ErieRCD.org for a link to the new 2008 Faithful Citizenship Web site or access it directly at www.fithfulcitizenship.org. Created by the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development of the USCCB, it offers a variety of resources useful for parishes, schools, groups and others interested in learning about forming consciences in relation to voting.

As the document says, "... responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation."

The confirmation season in the Erie Diocese began March 29 in Punxsutawney, where Bishop Donald Trautman confirmed classes from several area parishes. Since then, Bishop Trautman has already confirmed students in St. Marys, Erie, North East and West Middlesex and inmates at SCI Cambridge Springs.

It marks the beginning of another busy time of year during which the bishop will put the bulk of more than 35,000 miles on his car visiting parishes throughout the 13-county diocese.

When Pope Benedict XVI returns to the Vatican from his U.S. visit, he'll be toting a gift not generally associated with an 81-year-old pontiff. He'll take home the "official papal skateboard," a gift from the youths of New York.

The gift and a contest to design it started with a remark made by a teen member of the skateboard club at St. Elizabeth Parish in Washington Heights, a neighborhood in northern Manhattan.

Father Peter Pomposello is a skateboarder and the parochial vicar at St. Elizabeth. As he recalled it, he was talking about the papal visit with the club members and they began to ask him questions about why the pope was coming and what he would do in New York. "I said, 'We pray with him and we give him gifts,'" he said, "and one kid, without missing a beat, said, 'Let's give him a skateboard!'"

Father Pomposello sees it as a vehicle for evangelization. "It's no secret that skateboard culture does not have a clean image," he said. "In their age of cell phones and iPods, this is meeting the kids where they're at."

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

Council of Europe report calls for total legalization of abortions

By Simon Caldwell
Catholic News Service

LONDON — The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has called for an end to all restrictions on abortions in every country in Europe.

It urged the predominantly Catholic countries of Andorra, Malta, Ireland and Poland — where abortion is either illegal or severely restricted — to grant women access to the controversial procedure.

The demands were in a March 18 report by the council's Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The report was approved March 11 by a large majority of the equal opportunities committee.

Although the Council of Europe cannot pass laws, it does pass resolutions which may have significant influence on the laws of its 47 member states. It will be discussed during a plenary session April 14-18.

Gisela Wurm, an Austrian member of the committee, said in the report that "even in member states where abortion is legal, conditions are not always such as to guarantee women effective access to this right."

"Women must be allowed freedom of choice and offered the conditions of a free and enlightened choice," she added.

The report invited the member states to end all restrictions that hinder access

Abortion Laws in Europe

Abortion is illegal or restricted only in a few European countries.



Cases in which an abortion can be performed vary by country, but many include to save a woman's life, to preserve physical health, to preserve mental health, in cases of rape or incest, in cases of fetal impairment.

Source: United Nations "World Abortion Policies 2007"

to safe abortion, including medical costs. It also called for access to free or cheap contraception and compulsory sex education in schools.

"The report will undoubtedly be used as leverage toward the creation of a right to abortion on demand in

international law, which has always been the most important and ultimate goal of the worldwide pro-abortion lobby," said John Smeaton, director of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, a pro-life group in the United Kingdom.

Pope will find a spiritual nation during his U.S. visit, survey says

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Pope Benedict XVI will find a spiritual nation when he visits the United States in April, according to a new national survey commissioned by the Knights of Columbus.

The survey, conducted by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., found that "Americans are interested in hearing how God, religion and spirituality may be incorporated into their daily lives."

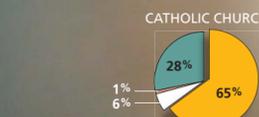
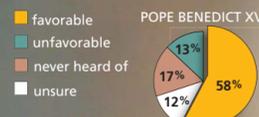
The results were released by Supreme Knight Carl Anderson March 25 at the National Press Club in Washington. His new book, "A Civilization of Love: What Every Catholic Can Do to Transform the World," published by HarperOne, debuted the same day.

By a ratio of more than 4-to-1, the survey said, Americans have a favorable opinion of Pope Benedict; 58 percent of those surveyed said they view him favorably, compared with 13 percent who have an unfavorable opinion. Seventeen percent said they have never heard of him.

Sixty-five percent of Americans have a favorable opinion of the Catholic Church, compared to 28 percent who have an unfavorable view.

American View

Most U.S. adults have a positive view of the pope and the church, according to a survey conducted by the Knights of Columbus.



From a survey of 7,019 U.S. adults interviewed Feb. 25 and March 5, 2008. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.1 percent.



Despite their positive view of the pope, Americans said they don't know much about him, Anderson noted.

Other results from the survey showed that:

■ Sixty-three percent of Americans believe the Catholic Church contributes either "a great deal or a good amount to people and communities" in the U.S.; 24 percent believe the church contributes "not very much or nothing at all."

■ Seventy percent or more of Americans said they want to hear the pope talk about spiritual matters such as allowing God to be

part of their daily lives and finding spiritual fulfillment "by sharing their time and talent," as well as how "they can make a positive difference in the world, their state and communities."

■ Nearly two-thirds of Americans, or 64 percent, expressed an interest in hearing Pope Benedict address "how they can have a society where spiritual values play an important role."

The survey was conducted Feb. 25-March 5; 1,015 adults 18 years of age or older were interviewed. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points for the entire survey.

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Italy Pilgrimage

Nov. 10-20, 2008: Venice, Padua, Florence, Pisa, Assisi, and Rome! **\$2,599 per person** (double occupancy) plus taxes. Includes airfare from Cleveland, first-class hotels, most meals, full-time professional guide, papal audience, and more. **Contact Fred Schwehofer and Pat Gill**, 7125 S. Reidsburg Rd, Sligo, PA 16255, (586) 381-3243, (814) 591-2360 or email: fredpat75@yahoo.com

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Benedict's first visit to U.S. as pope features diverse encounters

EVENTS, from page 1

At 5 p.m., the pope addresses the heads of more than 200 U.S. Catholic colleges and universities at The Catholic University of America in Northeast Washington. Also attending will be school superintendents from U.S. dioceses.

At 6:30 p.m., the pope will join Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and representatives of other religions for a meeting at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center.



Friday, April 18

After flying from Washington to New York, the pope addresses the U.N. General Assembly at 10:45 a.m. He's continuing a papal tradition: Pope John Paul II visited the United Nations twice, in 1979 and 1995, and Pope Paul VI did so in 1965.

At 6 p.m., the pope holds a prayer service with representatives of other Christian denominations at St. Joseph Church, a historic German parish in the Yorkville section of Manhattan.



Saturday, April 19

At 9:15 a.m., the pope celebrates Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral in midtown Manhattan for priests, deacons and members of religious orders. The day marks the third anniversary of the pope's election.

At 4:30 p.m., the pope presides over an encounter with young people at St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, north of New York City. The pope will meet with about 50 disabled youths, then speak to several thousand young people — including hundreds of seminarians — at what's being described as a rally/prayer service.



Sunday, April 20

At 9:30 a.m., the pope will visit ground zero, the site of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

At 2:30 p.m., the pope will celebrate Mass in Yankee Stadium. The liturgy will commemorate the 200th anniversaries of the archdioceses of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Louisville, Ky., as well as the elevation of Baltimore — the diocese from which the new sees were created — to an archdiocese.

The pope departs John F. Kennedy International Airport at 8 p.m. on Shepherd One, his chartered Alitalia jet.

Even for those who can't get into papal events, there will be opportunities to at least see the pontiff. Vatican officials are bringing over a glass-walled popemobile and plan to use it at some point in both cities.

German pope defies easy caricature

POPE, from page 1

Those two points were the subject of the pope's address in Regensburg, Germany, in 2006. Among Muslims, the speech provoked an initial uproar, but has eventually led to a major new dialogue initiative between the Vatican and Islamic moderates.

Regensburg was the first instance of what some have called Pope Benedict's tendency to make provocative statements that later need clarification or qualification. Other examples include his speeches on indigenous peoples in Brazil and on the Holocaust at the Nazi death camp Auschwitz in Poland.

"The pope is really trying to speak about very difficult issues, so sometimes clarifications will be requested. And one could say in his favor that he is prepared to clarify," said Jesuit Father Christian W. Troll, a German professor of Islamic studies who has known the pope for many years.

Father Troll said, however, that the pope does not always accurately foresee how his speeches — sometimes delivered in a "professorial" style — will be played by the mass media.

Those who have worked with the pope through the years say that when it comes to the United States, he is surprisingly well-informed.

"He has an amazing power of retention. He reads an enormous amount. Still, I don't know how he does it," said U.S. Jesuit Father Joseph Fessio, who studied under the future pope in the 1970s.

While in the United States, Pope Benedict will celebrate the third anniversary of his election. As inevitable as that event may seem in retrospect, his path to the papacy was long and indirect.

Joseph Ratzinger was born April 16, 1927, in the Bavarian town of Markt am Inn, the third and youngest child of a police officer, Joseph Sr., and his wife, Maria.

Joseph joined his brother, Georg, at a minor seminary in 1939. Like other young students, he was automatically enrolled in the Hitler Youth program, but soon stopped going to meetings. He was conscripted into the army and, as the war drew to a close in 1945, deserted his unit and returned home. When the U.S. military arrived, he was arrested with others who had served in the army and placed in a prisoner-of-war camp for a few months.

He returned to the seminary late in 1945 and was ordained six years later.

In a meeting with young people in 2005, the pope said witnessing the brutality of the Nazi regime helped convince him to become a priest. But he also had to overcome some doubts, he said. For one thing, he asked himself whether he "could faithfully live celibacy" his entire life. He also recognized that his real leanings were toward theology and wondered whether he had the qualities of a good pastor and the ability "to be simple with the simple people."

After serving in a parish for less than a year, he returned to theology studies, writing his doctoral thesis on St. Augustine. He embarked on a teaching career at universities in Bonn, Munster, Tubingen and Regensburg.

At the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council, a

young Father Ratzinger made important contributions as a theological expert and embraced the council's early work and its bold approach to renewal.

But he began to have misgivings in later council sessions. In particular, he warned of an emerging anti-Roman bias and the idea of a "church from below" run on a parliamentary model.

In 1977, Pope Paul VI named him archbishop of Munich and made him a cardinal. In 1981 Pope John Paul II called him to the Vatican to head the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Over the next 24 years, he wielded great influence as the Vatican responded to a wide array of challenges, including liberation theology, dissent from church teachings and pressure for women's ordination.

When Pope John Paul died, Cardinal Ratzinger celebrated his funeral and presided over daily meetings of cardinals before the conclave.

Veteran Vatican-watchers sensed momentum, and by the time white smoke came out of the Sistine Chapel smokestack April 19, 2005, few were surprised at the cardinals' choice.

From the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Benedict made it clear that he would not try to match Pope John Paul's charismatic style. He depersonalized the papacy, saying a pope's task is to make shine "not his own light, but that of Christ."

Yet Pope Benedict has drawn record crowds to the Vatican, and many find his gentle and low-key approach appealing.

"He seems to have a pastoral sense about him ... I feel that he understands the role of shepherd," Rose Marie Lombard, a pilgrim from Rochester, N.Y., said at one of the pope's first public appearances.

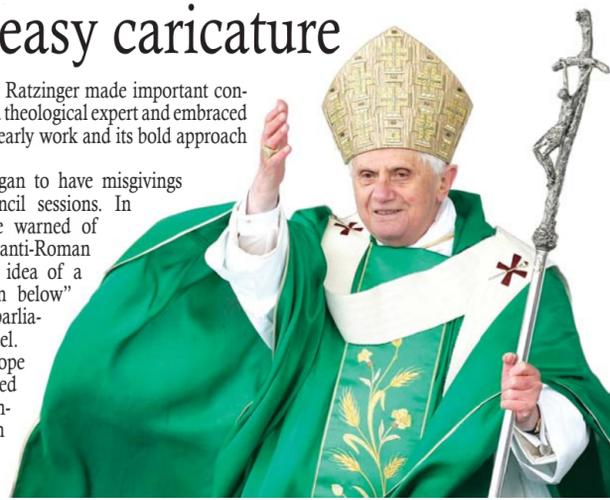
Pope Benedict cut back on the heavy calendar of papal events that had become routine under Pope John Paul. It soon became clear that the new pope's primary goals were about faith, not administration.

Repeatedly, he has warned that "a world emptied of God, a world that has forgotten God, loses life and falls into a culture of death."

It is a theme the pope has brought to bear on all kinds of social and political issues, including poverty, abortion, bioethical research, marriage, consumerism and environmental degradation.

To Catholics, he has emphasized that a personal encounter with Jesus is the key to everything the church does and the factor that ensures Christian actions will have impact in the world.

He also has insisted that every Christian is duty-bound to evangelize and announce Christ as the unique savior to all people. In the perennial internal church debate over dialogue and mission, Pope Benedict clearly comes down on the side of mission.



Much of the pope's pastoral strategy is back to basics, with weekly audience talks on the apostles, the saints and the early Christian theologians — a kind of "Catholicism 101."

His book, "Jesus of Nazareth," which has sold more than 2 million copies, was written in a more challenging style. Its central point, however, is simple: Jesus was God, not merely a moralist or a political revolutionary or a social reformer.

The reaction to all this has been mixed. Many of those who listen to the pope in person or bother to read his talks or documents come away with a favorable impression.

"Today he spoke about Lent in a simple and very clear way. I understood it and appreciated it — what he's preaching, really, is the heart of the Gospel," said Claudio Faltracco, a pilgrim from northern Italy who attended a general audience in February.

But Pope Benedict does not filter especially well through the mass media. He makes headlines primarily when there's potential for controversy, but not when he's drawing lessons from the lives of the early saints.

Three years is not a long time for measuring papal success or failure, but a list of accomplishments for Pope Benedict would have to include:

- His 2006 encyclical "Deus Caritas Est" ("God Is Love"), which described the faith as charity in action.

- The 2007 letter to Chinese Catholics, which indicated a path of unity for the church and challenged the government to a real dialogue.

- Seven foreign trips, including an interreligious pilgrimage to Turkey, where he prayed in a mosque and defused a growing crisis with Islam.

- A series of small but telling liturgical changes, including the relaxation of the restrictions on the Tridentine Mass, the appointment of a new papal liturgist and a return to more traditional vestments and altar decorations.

- The naming of 38 new cardinals from 20 countries.

Those who have watched this pontificate develop say 2008 may be a watershed year. With a crucial dialogue date with Muslims at the Vatican, trips to three continents, a Synod of Bishops on the Bible, and a jubilee year dedicated to St. Paul, the pope will have a chance to stand in the spotlight and give the world a clearer picture of his person and his mission.

Repeatedly, he has warned that "a world emptied of God, a world that has forgotten God, loses life and falls into a culture of death."

Briefly

Benedictine Sisters of Erie open house April 13

To celebrate religious life, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie invite guests to an open house on Sunday, April 13 from 8:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, 6101 East Lake Road, Erie.

The open house will include a tour, morning praise and Mass, dinner and time for conversation with the sisters. This event is for anyone interested in seeing where sisters live and what monastic life is like.

For more information or to make a reservation for dinner, call Sister Janet Goetz at 814.899-0614, Ext. 2424 or e-mail vocations@mtstbenedict.org. To learn more about the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, visit www.ErieBenedictines.org.

Sisters of St. Joseph open house April 19

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania are sponsoring an open house on Saturday, April 19 at their Community Living Center, 5031 West Ridge Road, Erie. Following a 6 p.m. liturgy, the sisters will share stories of how they "Followed a New Path."

For more information or to make a reservation by April 12, call Sister Linda Fusco at 814.836.4212 or e-mail l.fusco@ssjerie.org. To learn more about the Sisters of St. Joseph, visit www.ssjerie.org.

Gannon University spring open house April 20

Gannon University will hold its spring open house on Sunday, April 20 for all prospective students and their families.



- Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. in the Mary, Seat of Wisdom Chapel (on Peach Street, between Fifth and Sixth streets).
- Registration is at 11 a.m. in the lobby of the Waldron Campus Center.

- Welcoming remarks will be given by Gannon President Dr. Antoine Garibaldi at 12:15 p.m. in the Hammermill Center.

- Other presentations and opportunities include: Meeting with Student Development representatives at 11 a.m. at the Waldron Campus Center; meeting faculty at 12:30 p.m. at the Hammermill Center; meeting coaches at 1:30 p.m. at the Carneval Athletic Pavilion; admissions and financial aid presentation at 3 p.m. at the Waldron Campus Center; and an accepted student reception at 3 p.m. at Old Main.

While reservations aren't necessary, it is helpful to let the Office of Admissions know if you are planning to attend. Register online at www.gannon.edu or call 1.800.GANNON.U or 814.871.7240.

Local pilgrims excited for encounters with pope

PILGRIMS, from page 1

Benedict. "He's an older pope. That's really all I know."

For Americans, this will be their first up-close glimpse of the Holy Father. During his visit, Pope Benedict XVI will celebrate his 81st birthday and three-year anniversary of his election as pope. With Pope John Paul II's 27-year papacy still fresh in people's minds, perhaps this visit will help many embrace the style of Pope Benedict.

"I don't know if a lot of our students have a feeling about him yet," said Aaron Pfoutz, director of Life Teen, the St. Marys area youth ministry. Twenty students in 8th grade through high school and five adults from St. Marys are going to New York, combining on a bus trip with a group of adults from St. Leo in Ridgway and St. Francis of Assisi in Clearfield.

"I think we're all going to have a better idea when we attend Mass," Pfoutz said. "But this is really their pope. This is the pope they will know. But

we're all really excited. Most of us can't believe that this is even happening."

While the diocese did not have access to tickets for laypeople and deacons to attend the papal Mass in Washington, it is sending nine priests, including Bishop Donald Trautman. The Archdiocese of Washington has invited priests from around the nation to concelebrate the Mass at the new Washington Nationals Park on Thursday, April 17.

Bishop Trautman, along with 350 other U.S. bishops, will also attend a prayer service with the pope at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on April 16.

Seminarians from the Erie Diocese will get a chance to hear the pope speak April 19 at a rally and prayer service at St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers. The encounter is expected to be attended by thousands of young people—including hundreds of seminarians. The diocese's seminarians will also attend the papal Masses in New York and Washington.

Erie Diocese: from Quebec and Philadelphia

HISTORY, from page 1

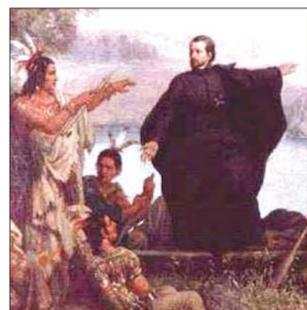
Noting that the Canadian province of Quebec borders the United States, he said that "many U.S. Catholics are closer to Quebec City than many Canadians."

Organizers are expecting 12,000-15,000 foreign participants from 69 countries.

A Web site in English, French, Spanish and Italian is already operating to provide information about the congress, he said. The Web site is: www.cei2008.ca.

On April 8, 1808, Philadelphia officially became a diocese and included the entire states of Pennsylvania and Delaware and parts of New Jersey. The diocese's 30,000 Catholics were attended to by 11 priests.

Current parishes in the Erie Diocese that were originally built under the jurisdiction of Philadelphia include: St. Francis of Assisi, Clearfield; St. Philip, Crossingville; St. Mary, Erie; St. Patrick, Erie; St. Hippolyte, Frenchtown; St. Mary of the Assumption, Frenchville; St. Michael, Fryburg; St. Bonaventure, Grampian; St. Boniface, Kersey; St. Joseph, Lucinda; St. Francis Xavier, McKean; Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mercer (originally St. Ra-



phael); and St. Mary, St. Marys. Bishop Donald Trautman will attend the archdiocese's bicentennial closing Mass on April 13 at Villanova Pavilion in Philadelphia.

In 1843, the Diocese of Pittsburgh was established and included parishes that are now part of the Erie Diocese. Carved out of Pittsburgh, the Diocese of Erie was officially established in 1853 and was to embrace 13 counties in northwestern Pennsylvania.

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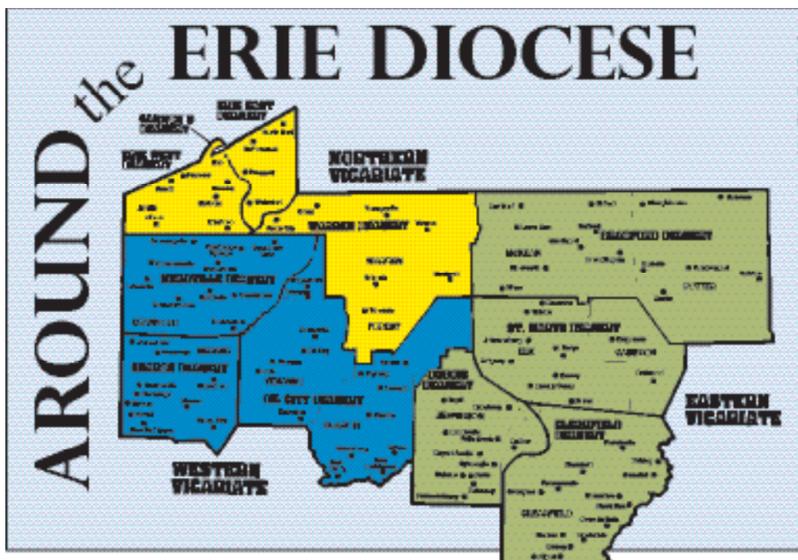
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July 22-27:
Mexico City and the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe

For a packet of details: 724-548-7649 or
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All parishes, missions, schools and groups are encouraged to choose a **correspondent** who can regularly e-mail news items to "Around the Erie Diocese" at FaithLife@ErieRCD.org

Visit ErieRCD.org/faithlife.asp to download quick and easy **photo tips** on a wallet-size card.



Chrim Mass at St. Leo Magnus, Ridgway



The diocese's annual Chrism Mass took place March 17 at St. Leo Parish in Ridgway.

During the Mass, Bishop Donald Trautman blessed the sacred oils used throughout the diocese for the entire year, including the oil of catechumens (used for adult catechumens and infants), the oil of the sick (used in anointing the sick) and the oil of chrism (used for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the ordination of priests and for the consecration of altars). The oils from this Mass are then brought back to each parish in the diocese for use in celebrating the sacraments.

More than 80 priests (top) gathered to concelebrate Mass with the bishop and to renew their vows to the ministerial priesthood.

One of the most sacred moments of this Mass occurs during the consecration of the chrism when the bishop breathes into the oil (right), a gesture that symbolizes the infusion of the Holy Spirit.

Photos courtesy of [Frank Quattrone](http://www.quattronephotography.com)



Catholic Services Appeal parish projects

The 2008 Catholic Services Appeal, "Of One Heart and Mind," supports the Erie Diocese in helping to provide health and social services, education, diocesan administration and pastoral services throughout the 13 counties of northwestern Pennsylvania.

Parishes also benefit from the appeal. Each parish is assessed a financial goal. Once a parish reaches its assessment, every dollar pledged over that amount stays within the parish for local projects.

The 2008 CSA currently has \$4.5 million in

pledges from a little more than 16,000 families throughout the diocese. According to the Diocesan Finance Office, the amount pledged is about the same at this point as the 2007 CSA, which netted a record \$5.8 million.

If you haven't yet made a pledge to the CSA, it's not too late. Contact your parish office.

Here's a look at what some parishes are doing with their CSA overage funds.



Bradford Deanery

Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Lewis Run – Improvement to the exterior of the parish social hall
St. Bernard, Bradford – For the parish building fund

St. Bibiana, Galeton – Sidewalk repair and improve sewage system

St. Callistus, Kane – Repair rectory roof and sidewalk in front of the church

St. Elizabeth, Smethport – Repair rectory porch roof and church water damage and remodel religious education office

St. Eulalia, Coudersport – Parish center bathroom

St. Francis, Bradford – Construction of Our Lady of Fatima shrine

St. Gabriel, Port Allegany – Debt reduction

St. Joseph, Mt. Jewett – Funding summer youth program

St. Raphael, Eldred – Repair church roof, replace gutters, install a ramp to sacristy, replace boiler and removal of trees

St. Theresa, Shinglehouse – Replace rectory roof

Sacred Heart, Genesee – For projects in the church and parish center

St. Augustine, Austin – New lights in the church

CLOCK REPAIR

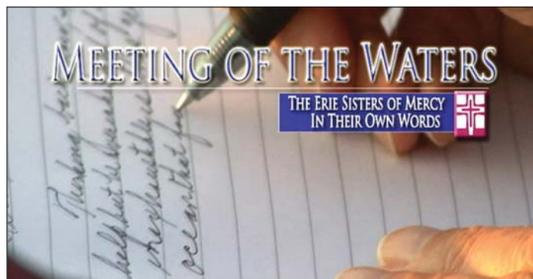
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"We Make House Calls"



Sisters of Mercy film debuts



Last summer, five regional communities of Sisters of Mercy, including Erie, united to form a new community: the New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community. A dramatic mixing of waters from each geographic location along with water from Ireland symbolized the beginning of a new era for the sisters. The moment was caught on film, and is included in "Meeting of the Waters," a one-hour documentary by Greg Schlueter of Imago Dei Video Productions which premiered at St. Mark Catholic Center on March 12.

The film explores how several sisters from Erie were called to their vocation and how they live it out today; the impact of Vatican II and the role Sisters of Mercy foundress Catherine McAuley has in their lives. It serves as a powerful statement on why the women involved have chosen to live in community and follow the Gospel.

"Meeting of the Waters" is available from the Sisters of Mercy for \$24.95 plus \$3 for postage and handling at 444 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA 16504. For more information, to purchase the DVD online or to see a preview of the film, visit www.IDVidPro.com/MOTW.

Dr. Galligan-Stierle speaks at Gannon



Father Nick Rouch, vice president for university mission and ministry, left, chatted with Dr. Michael Galligan-Stierle, vice president of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, center, and Ward McCracken, dean of Student Development at Gannon University, after Galligan-Stierle's presentation to a capacity crowd of faculty and staff on the spirituality of college students today.

Galligan-Stierle, who was invited to the university as part of National Catholic Colleges Week in February, later spoke to students about leadership. The week's events also included a Lenten evening of reflection for faculty and staff with Bishop Donald Trautman, as well as a basketball game against Mercyhurst College. The Gannon Golden Knights prevailed, 68-55.

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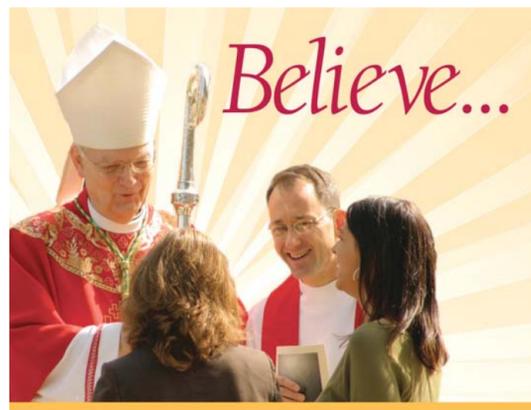
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