

At your service

Dawn and Dan SchAAF of Erie offer a concierge service to retired priests.

PAGE 3



# FaithLife

**POPE QUOTE**  
INSPIRING WORDS  
FROM POPE FRANCIS:  
"Rest...is a necessary duty and must be taken seriously."

www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

May 31, 2015

Special Collection

International Needs  
May 30-31

The annual Collection for International Needs will be held at all parishes and missions of the Diocese of Erie May 30-31.

The various tragic events on the world stage over the past year—both natural and man-made—have heightened our awareness of the need to broaden our charitable horizons by reaching out to our suffering brothers and sisters throughout the world. Bishop Lawrence Persico said in announcing the 2015 collection.

The Collection for International Needs is a combination of the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, the Catholic Relief Services Collection, and the Collection for the Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa. It helps to do the following:

- Build churches and train and educate seminarians, clergy and lay leaders in Central and Eastern Europe
- Provide for the victims of war and natural disasters, and aid the church suffering under persecution
- Provide needed material assistance to the Catholic Church in Africa.

## Pastoral planning process continues

BY MARY SOLBERG / FAITHLIFE

The pastoral planning effort in the Diocese of Erie is now at a halfway point, with thousands of people—youth and old—contributing their thoughts on the future of the Catholic Church in northwestern Pennsylvania.

Msgr. Richard Siefert and members of the Parish Listening Task Force of the diocese worked closely this spring with Mettler, the planning consultants to the diocese. They brought together parish leaders and clergy for listening sessions that attracted more than 1,000 people at 10 different locations. Participants had the opportunity to discuss the strengths of parishes, how the diocese supports parishes, challenges facing the local church, and ideas to make parishes more vibrant and healthy.

According to a summary of the parish listening sessions, the greatest challenges parishioners cited were decreasing membership and participation, an aging population, how to increase Mass attendance, fewer priests, and a lack of youth and young families.

As for what excites and energizes Catholics, participants at the listening sessions pointed to these: Pope Francis, the desire of youth to know more about Christ, the Holy Spirit leading and guiding, potential to involve more children, and an optimism that the Catholic community can grow stronger.

These and other opinions, along with hard data collected by Mettler since last fall, will be presented the first week of June at three locations. Clergy, school principals, pastoral ministers, directors of religious education and parish leaders will hear a fact-based presentation on the state of the church—drawing from all the information collected to date—and then engage in a discussion of the future.

"The process is on track with what we set out to do. All the work so far prepares the diocese to prayerfully consider where the church is going and establish plans that set the direction for the future," said Alan Mettler of the Mettler firm.

Besides the parish listening sessions, the diocese has collected 4,515 surveys from parishioners. Those responding most heavily represent Catholics 50 and older who attend weekly Mass. According to an initial review of the surveys, younger parishioners are more positive about the future of the church than their elders. Those who attend Mass monthly or less than monthly tend to view the parish as less in sync with the Gospel, placing less importance on Mass, sacrament or parish ministries. Regular church-goers, not surprisingly, are very supportive of their parishes but also recognize the many challenges facing parishes.

This week, the Parish Listening Task Force began collecting the opinions of youth leaders and young people in the 13-county diocese. According to Msgr. Siefert, outreach to youth is an essential step in the two-year planning process.

In a letter to high school principals and religious education coordinators, Msgr. Siefert stated, "Bishop [Lawrence] Persico wants to ensure that students have a voice in the pastoral planning process. Their perspective on the future of the church is important to hear."

According to Mettler, the diocese is now pivoting from information-gathering to formulating plans for how ministry will be strengthened and more effective. Through the summer, parishes will conduct self-assessments and identify areas for development and improvement.

Go to [www.ErieRCD.org](http://www.ErieRCD.org) for up-to-date information on the pastoral planning process. A special edition of Faith magazine dedicated to the pastoral planning process will be sent to all registered parishioners in July.

## World prepares for pope's ecology encyclical

BY DENNIS SADOWSKI  
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Few papal encyclicals have been as eagerly awaited as Pope Francis' upcoming statement on the environment.

While no other release date than early summer has been announced, anticipation is building among Catholics, non-Catholics and advocates for the environment. Based on the pope's past statements, the encyclical is expected to call people to protect human life and dignity through greater appreciation and preservation of God's creation.

Pope Francis' message is expected to have its roots in God's creation of the world, says Dan Mischel, executive director of the Catholic Climate Covenant.

"Pope Francis is first a priest and a pastor," Mischel told *First Friday Forum* of Elyria, Ohio. "Let us remind ourselves that our creation care tradition goes back to Genesis, not Earth Day. Let us remind ourselves that this ancient teaching is the teaching that was familiar, too, and articulated in new ways by Jesus Christ, reinforced by the witness of St. Francis, expounded upon by St. Thomas Aquinas as well as by St. John Paul and especially Pope Benedict, the 'green pope.'"

The U.S. and Australian Catholic bishops' conferences, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic advocacy groups and local environmental ministry programs are preparing resources for disseminating and implementing the pope's encyclical.

Representatives of Catholic organizations told Catholic News Service that they are not only preparing for active study of the encyclical in parishes and schools, but they are hopeful the document will open doors with leaders of other faiths and religious traditions, secular environmental groups and policymakers in the U.S. and around the world.

The encyclical and follow-up programs also are considered a way to build momentum for Pope Francis' first visit to the U.S. in September and to motivate world leaders to reach a climate change pact during the U.N. Climate Change Confer-

Here is a look at church teaching on the environment. Pope Francis is expected to issue an encyclical on the environment and ecology this summer.

ence in Paris Nov. 30 to Dec. 11. "We want to ensure as best we can that this encyclical is not just written and stuck on a shelf in a library and discussed only by theologians and others in schools. We want this to be

### Quiz on God's Creation

Excerpts from Catholic Relief Services quiz  
(See answers at bottom)

- Known as "Lily of the Mohawks," \_\_\_\_\_ is the first Native American saint from the United States and is popularly considered a patron saint of the environment.
  - a. St. Katharine Drexel
  - b. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
  - c. St. Kateri Tekakwitha
  - d. St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
- "Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith" is a statement from:
  - a. Cesar Chavez
  - b. The U.S. bishops' seven themes of Catholic social teaching
  - c. An Earth Day reflection
  - d. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta
- When popes have spoken about human ecology, they are referring to:
  - a. A branch of science that observes humans in their natural habitat
  - b. The recognition of the interrelatedness between humans and the environment
  - c. A method of urban gardening
  - d. The study of trees

Schools, parishes and families can find a complete quiz along with special prayers, programs and resources about the environment at [www.resources.crs.org](http://www.resources.crs.org)

Search "Pope Francis' Encyclical on the Environment"

ANSWERS: 1. c. St. Kateri Tekakwitha; 2. b. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' seven themes of Catholic social teaching; 3. d. The

## Philly-bound! Helmer family of Corry wins trip to World Meeting of Families

FAITHLIFE staff report

CORRY—The Helmer family of St. Elizabeth Parish in Corry has won the diocesan-sponsored trip to the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia this September.

As guests of the Diocese of Erie, the Helmers will attend the Sept. 22-25 conference that is expected to attract more than 7,000 families from around the world. The annual meeting is designed to strengthen family life through prayer, study, service and celebration.

Rick and Amy Helmer, their 15-year-old daughter, Abbey, and their 11-year-old son, Kyron, will attend meetings throughout the week and stay for the weekend Festival of Families featuring Pope Francis.

The papal visit to Philadelphia will include a Mass with the pontiff on Sunday, Sept. 27. As many as 2 million people are expected to be in attendance.

The Helmers were among three families interviewed as finalists for the World Meeting of Families trip. In their reflection on the meaning of such an experience, the Helmers discussed their love of Pope Francis.

"To celebrate the gift of our family in the same arena as our Holy Father would be a phenomenal opportunity for us," they wrote. "We would love to meet other families around the country and celebrate with them."

Photo by Anne-Marie Welsh

The Helmer family of Corry enjoyed ice cream after their interview with the Office of Communications and the Family Life Office for the World Meeting of Families contest. Rick and Amy Helmer stand behind their children, Abbey and Kyron.

Their experience will be chronicled in a special edition of Faith magazine about the World Meeting of Families. Look for their story in the November issue.

## Pilgrims anticipate Philadelphia

FAITHLIFE staff report

The World Meeting of Families and the visit by Pope Francis this September in Philadelphia has elicited much excitement in the Diocese of Erie, with 75 people signed up for the diocesan-sponsored pilgrimage and another 150 youth and young leaders expected to participate.

"I am very proud to have such a diverse delegation representing the Diocese of Erie, and hope that their experience of Christ and his church will be transforming, and one that they can bring back into their homes, parishes and schools," says Kathleen Peterson, program coordinator of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Although registration for the adult pilgrimage is closed, a couple of rooms were still available at press time.

This past winter, nearly 60 families registered to win an all-expense paid trip to the international event in Philadelphia. The Office of Communications and the Family Life Office selected three finalist families, all of whom were interviewed in person.

The Helmer family of Corry was named the winner of the trip (see story at left). Two other finalists were the Michael and Stephanie Harmon family of St. Patrick Parish, Franklin; and the Tom and Pam Swanson family of St. Jude the Apostle Parish, Erie.

The Harmonos won a \$1,000 getaway to Splash Lagoon Indoor Water Park in Erie. The Swansons won a professional portrait, valued at \$500, donated by Lorei Portraits in Erie.

**Trappist monks: Beer brewing enhances American monastic life**

SPENCER, Mass. (CNS)—The whoosh of the beer tap opening, the gentle glug of the golden brew pouring into the goblet and the sizzle of the foaming mousse are joyous sounds to Trappist Brother Jonah Pociello's ears as he prepares to savor the signature ale created in his monastery's brewery.

The monk—swathed in his trademark black and white habit—holds a glass above his head, squints to examine the bubbling liquid inside, before drawing it to his nose to savor the aroma radiating from the tumbler, which is ornamented with the name of the brew, Spencer Trappist Ale.

"It's got a wonderful smell to it," said Brother Jonah, as his eyes gently close and his satisfied grin grows wider. "I hesitate to describe it, because it's something I think is pretty subjective. But I can almost taste it without it even touching my lips."



Bottles of beer brewed by Trappist monks sit on a conveyor belt at the new state-of-the-art brewery on the grounds of St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Mass.

He then joins his fellow beer-brewing monks and lay workers to taste the ale at the Spencer Brewery, which officially began operations a little more than a year ago on the grounds of St. Joseph's Abbey in the tiny hamlet of Spencer.

Though Trappist Monastery brew houses have existed in Europe for at least 300 years, this community of monks opened the first Trappist brewery in the United States.

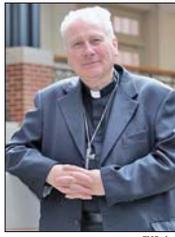
Trappist breweries must be monitored to assure the quality of the beer. Brewers are required to observe business practices that keep the monastic way of life at the forefront, meaning no profits are to be made. The income earned is intended to support living expenses for the monks and maintain the buildings and property at the monastery.

**Archbishop teaches Quran to Christians and Muslims**

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, Ohio (CNS)—There's a book that Archbishop Michael L. Fitzgerald believes can inspire Christians to appreciate the God of all creation. And it's not just the Bible.

Archbishop Fitzgerald, who retired at the end of 2012 as the papal nuncio to Egypt, said the Quran, with all of its names for God, can help Christians deepen their faith and inspire them to see God in new ways.

Since retiring, the England-born archbishop has been leading retreats on the names of God in Islam and contrasting the same or similar names for God found in the Old Testament and the New Testament.



Archbishop Michael L. Fitzgerald

**Priests, seminarians bike to spread vocation message**

BROOKLYN, N.Y. (CNS)—Two priests and three seminarians, all from the New York metropolitan area, are biking their way up the East Coast in hopes of raising awareness about religious vocations.

The team started the trip May 18 in the Diocese of St. Augustine, Fla. Their progress can be followed on the website [www.bikingvocations.org](http://www.bikingvocations.org).

The priests are Father Marc Swartwagner, a Brooklyn diocesan priest who teaches at Cathedral Seminary House of Formation, and Father Joseph Fitzgerald, diocesan vocations director for the Diocese of Rockville Centre. The three college seminarians include Steven Diaz, Dominik Wegiel and Stephen Rooney.

If all goes according to plan, they should arrive in New York June 12 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. On the morning of June 13, they will be at St. Joseph's Seminary, the archdiocesan seminary, and then on to the Diocese of Brooklyn's St. Joseph's Co-Cathedral for Mass and a chance to recap their adventures with young people.

**Faith and sports go together**



Editor's Notes  
Mary SOLBERG

Pope Francis, a native of Argentina, is a sports enthusiast who is particularly fond of soccer.

What he said recently about sports struck a chord with me and, certainly, other Catholic parents of athletes. In typical fashion, he cut to the core of an important issue of our time: how to maintain a healthy spiritual life while remaining active in the demanding world of athletics.

In an address to the Lazio Sports Society, an Italian sports association, the pope cautioned coaches, moms and dads, athletes and sports fans to never let practice and competition get in the way of going to Mass, studying for school, being with friends and helping the poor.

"Sometimes it happens that a boy or girl forgets about Mass and catechism because of work-outs and competition. This is not a good sign," Pope Francis said.

The Holy Father said people don't have their priorities straight if sports take precedence over everything else in life.

As a mother of three sons, I stand guilty as charged...at least a little bit. And I know plenty of other Catholic and Christian parents who struggle with the demands of their children's rigorous athletic schedules.

Over the years, my husband and I have done our best to encourage participation in sports while reminding our kids to put God first, go to Mass or volunteer. That hasn't always been easy, especially since they attend a public school system that doesn't have requirements about Sunday activities.

There has been more than one occasion over the years when their practices and tournaments have been held on Sunday mornings. And I'm not even talking about

special occasions, like Mother's Day or Christmas. In the world of basketball, for example, holiday tournaments are common and quite demanding of family time.

Fortunately, the Catholic schools within the Diocese of Erie have a hard-and-fast rule: no practices or games permitted before noon on Sundays. Doug Chuzie, athletic director, said it's an effort to "achieve a healthy balance" between athletics and faith.

We take pride in using our diocesan athletic programs as a tool to provide for the Christian education and formation of our children, but it is important that we understand what our pope has said, that sports is only one component in "developing a full and authentic life," Chuzie said.

Despite the scheduling demands facing young athletes, the pope recognizes the innate spiritual and physical benefits of sport. According to Pope Francis, athletic participation offers children a chance to experience a more balanced life, including "self-control, sacrifice and loyalty toward others."

I have seen all of these attributes imbued in my own children, despite the challenges that face us on weekends. If done right, though, sports can help build a more caring world. Just look at the impact of the Hoops for Hope basketball effort to fight breast cancer.

Speaking of success on the playing field, congratulations go out to the Villa Maria and Cathedral Preparatory School athletic teams for their spring showings.

Villa and Prep both captured D-10 track and field championships this year. At press time, they were headed to the state championships.

The Prep lacrosse and tennis teams both won D-10 championships this spring as well.

It's nice to see how body and soul can go together.

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**'I have called you from the world...'**



"The world is on fire. Men try to condemn Christ again...[and] would raze His Church to the ground." News flash? These words, penned by St. Teresa of Avila, could have been written today. This year is the 500th anniversary of her birth.

In 1562, she sought to remedy the world's problems by founding the Discalced Carmelites, a reform of the Order of Carmelites, which looked to the fiery prophet Elijah as its founder and inspiration.

"As our Lord has so many enemies and so few friends, these last should be trusted ones." St. Teresa of Avila wrote, envisioning each Carmel as a place wherein our Lord could take his delight and rest.

"Hidden with Christ in God," a Carmelite seeks Christ's face alone, while veiling her own. As Pope Francis has said, the Carmelite imitates Our Lady by living "the Gospel in a simple way, supporting all the Church with a life made of prayer," especially for priests, and strives to be what St. Therese of Lisieux called "love in the heart of the Church."

The walls and grates surrounding the mon-



This statue of St. Teresa of Avila stands in the nuns' choir area of the Carmelite Monastery in Erie. She is depicted holding "The Bookmark of St. Teresa of Avila," which states: "Let nothing frighten thee. All things are passing. God alone suffices."

astery form a veritable fortress for their sacrifice of prayer, where, like faithful soldiers, the nuns keep the King company, begging the graces needed by those outside. St. Teresa could thus

write: "Though enclosed...we fight for Him."

On the occasion of the fifth centenary of St. Teresa of Avila's birth, Pope Francis said it was "a providential grace" that the anniversary coincides with the year dedicated to consecrated life. He said that St. Teresa "shines as a sure guide and attractive model of total commitment to God."

No one order can represent the whole Church. Contemplative orders portray Him on the mountain in His prayer to His Father. For Carmelites, the oldest order dedicated to Our Lady, there is an added dimension: to imitate Christ in His love for His Mother.

Father Maximilian Dean, FI, recently wrote: "We need more Marians than Marines." Carmel, then, is as relevant today as it was 500-plus years ago—a perennial conduit of grace from those Two Hearts which Our Lord (to Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration) and Our Lady (to Carmelite Bishop St. Peter Thomas) promised would last until the end of time.

With the recent canonization of St. Mariam of Jesus Crucified, hidden but powerful fruit is still being borne on the vine of Carmel, which numbers many saints and three doctors of the Church: St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and St. Therese of Lisieux.

Through their writings and through the total surrender of Carmelites worldwide, the sweet odor of Christ continues to fill the Church.

As St. Therese has said, "For Thee, my ointment jar I break. The perfume of my life is Thine."

Sister is a member of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of the Carmel of the Holy Family Monastery, 510 E. Gore Road, Erie. Members of the order maintain the religious tradition of joyful anonymity.

**Dorothy Day makes us 'want to be a saint'**

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (CNS)—Saying it was for the church to decide whether Dorothy Day was a saint, Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez told a conference on the co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement that she left a rich legacy for people to follow.

"I don't know if she is a saint...but I do know she makes me want to be a saint. She makes us want to be better. She makes us want to be holy," Archbishop Gomez said in remarks to the conference May 14.

Day has been named a servant of God by the church and the diocesan phase of the canonization process has been underway in the Archdiocese of New York since 2000.

The archbishop discussed the remarkable life and achievements of Day and her impact on the 20th century after she and Peter Maurin opened the Catholic Worker in a storefront in New York's Bowery in the midst of the Great Depression in 1933.

"She once said she spent her days in conversation with Jesus and the saints of the church," Archbishop Gomez said. "I believe that what she has left us is a saint's vision of our times and our society."

The archbishop's address was part of a three-day conference, "Dorothy Day and the Church: Past, Present and Future," co-sponsored by *Our Sunday Visitor*.

Day was a journalist, social activist and devout Catholic convert who became known for her social justice campaigns in defense of poor, hungry, homeless and marginalized people.

The Catholic Worker Movement continues to combine direct aid for the poor and homeless with nonviolent direct action on their behalf. She served as editor of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper from 1935 until her death in 1980 at the age of 83.

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## News Briefs

### Learn about the permanent diaconate

ERIE—Representatives of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate of the Diocese of Erie will visit various parts of the Diocese of Erie in June and July to meet with people who want to learn more about the diaconate. Questions will be answered and application forms will be distributed at each session. Sessions begin at 7 p.m. The schedule is as follows:

- June 22—St. Mark Catholic Center, Erie
- June 23—Our Lady Queen of the World, St. Marys
- June 25—St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois
- June 29—Holy Redeemer, Warren
- July 2—St. Joseph, Sharon
- July 7—Immaculate Conception, Clarion.

### Annual novena to honor St. Anthony

ERIE—An annual novena in honor of St. Anthony of Padua will be conducted by Father Leo Gallina June 5-13 at St. Paul Church, W. 16th and Walnut streets. Erie. Services will include traditional hymns in Italian, the Litany of St. Anthony, Mass and a homily. For more information, call 814-454-7735, 814-838-9395, or 814-864-6610.

Novena hours are:

- 9 a.m. weekdays
- 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 6
- 10 a.m. on Sunday, June 7
- 9 a.m. concluding Mass on Saturday, June 13, followed by a catered breakfast featuring blessed St. Anthony's bread. (Donation for breakfast is \$6; reserve a space by June 10.)

### Prayer and praise planned in Sharon

SHARON—All are welcome to attend Three Nights of Prayer & Praise in honor of St. Anthony at St. Anthony Parish in Sharon June 14-16. Admission is free.

Guest speaker is Father Angelus Shaughnessy, OFM, Cap., who has devoted his life to spreading the Gospel message and teaching the fundamentals of Christianity through mission work.

The schedule is:

- June 14—Confessions at 9 a.m.; Mass at 9:30 a.m.; holy hour at 7 p.m., followed by confessions.
- June 15—Mass at 8 a.m.; holy hour at 7 p.m., followed by confessions.
- June 16—Mass at 8 a.m.; holy hour at 7 p.m., followed by reception/fellowship.

### Villa Maria Elementary holds golf scramble

ERIE—Villa Maria Elementary School invites the public to participate in the first annual VME Golf Scramble June 19 at Whispering Woods Golf Course, 7214 Grubb Road, Erie. Lunch will be at 11:30 a.m., with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. A social hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., with dinner and awards beginning at 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$125 per golfer, which includes greens fee, a cart, lunch and steak dinner.

Family and friends may attend the dinner only for \$20. The dinner will feature raffles and prizes. All proceeds benefit Villa Maria Elementary. Register at [www.vmelementary.com](http://www.vmelementary.com).

# CONCIERGE SERVICE

## Couple offers help to retired priests

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Dawn and Dan Schaaaf were struck, they say, by "one of those Holy Spirit moments" nearly three years ago.

While attending Bishop Lawrence Persico's installation as bishop of the Diocese of Erie at St. Peter Cathedral in downtown Erie, they looked around and saw a great number of elderly, retired priests.

"For whatever reason, watching them all process in stirred my heart," says Dawn, a member with her husband of St. Joseph/Bread of Life Parish in Erie.

The Schaaafs started researching how these elderly men were able to travel to medical appointments, get prescriptions filled, do their taxes, or even visit a friend. Although the diocese provides assistance to these diocesan priests, there were, as Dawn says, "dots not being connected" for occasional day-to-day incidental needs.

"Dan and I just stepped in to be a concierge service for them. There are always one or two things you need help with," Dawn says.

With the blessing of Msgr. Robert Smith, vicar general, the Schaaafs established Methuselah Ministry, a reference to Methuselah, the oldest individual in Scripture. At first, the humble retirees were a little hesitant to call for help, but gradually word got out and the calls started coming in.

Currently, the Schaaafs regularly assist about eight priests, transporting them to medical appointments, helping them with shopping, scheduling appointments, researching information, even offering tax help. The Schaaafs



Photo by Mary Solberg

Dawn and Dan Schaaaf, founders of Methuselah Ministry, stand in front of the Priests' Retirement Residence in Erie.

and their growing list of volunteers also assist other priests only during tax season or when someone can't find a friend or family member to help.

"I love it, and they appreciate it, which is fun," says Dan, who is co-owner of Building Systems Inc. of Erie.

Dawn and Dan, the parents of three adult children, are inspired by the humility of the priests, many of whom want to pay for the help they receive. Methuselah Ministry does

not charge for any services.

"It's really our joy. The help we receive doing this is beyond any monetary value. But I always ask for a blessing because I need that," Dawn says.

If retired priests require the services of Methuselah Ministry, or if anyone would like to volunteer their time with the Schaaafs, call Dawn Schaaaf at 814-450-6761 or email her at [dawnmarieschaaaf@me.com](mailto:dawnmarieschaaaf@me.com).

## Seventh-graders enjoy Career Day

FAITHLIFE staff report



Evan Olszowska and Michael Gulick, both of St. Luke School, Erie, enjoy talking to Evan Williams of Mercyhurst University, North East.

Nearly 200 seventh-graders from eight schools in the Erie area attended the inaugural Career Day at St. Mark Catholic Center May 20.

Thanks to a grant from Career Street, a non-profit organization based in Erie, students had an opportunity to consider various career options and discuss ways to prepare themselves academically and spiritually for their future.

"It's important for kids to set some goals and to make good choices for their future," said Kim Lytle, director of curriculum, who organized the event with the Catholic Schools Office.

Students attended various presentations, including a talk by Father Michael Polinek, director of vocations for the diocese; Miles Vida, associate director of undergraduate admissions at Gannon University; and Kristen Reno, a volunteer with the Junior Achievement Center. They also heard about mission and volunteer work.

"It gives you new ideas about your future," said Evan Olszowska of St. Luke.

Several businesses participated, including Mercyhurst University, Erie Insurance, GE Transportation, H&H Machined Products, Erie Times-News, ROTC, Pennsylvania State Police, Saint Vincent Hospital, Early Connections, Barber National Institute, and Bensus Creative Marketing Group.

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## OBITUARY

### Sister Mary Carmel committed her life to education

Sister Mary Carmel Skeabeck, SSI, 91, died May 7. A member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, she was in her 74th year of religious life.

She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Ann Parish, Erie, on Sept. 8, 1941, professing her final vows Aug. 15, 1947.

Sister Mary Carmel graduated from St. Ann Elementary School and Villa Maria Academy, both in Erie. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in English from Villa Maria College in 1953. She received her master's in guidance and counseling from St. Bonaventure University, Allegany, N.Y.,

in 1968. She also studied at Al-legheny College, Meadville; Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisc.; and Edinboro University of Pennsylvania.

For nearly all of her religious life, Sister Mary Carmel ministered in the field of education. However, for two years she served as an administrative assistant in the Career Counsel-

ing Center at Villa Maria College and one year as an aide in the Ambulatory Clinic at Saint Vincent Health Center. She spent 14 years in elementary education at St. Agatha School, Meadville; St. Joseph Home for Children, Erie; St. Peter, Holy Rosary and St. Joseph schools, all in Erie; and St. Leo Magnus School in Ridgway.

She began her high school teaching career at St. Bernard in Bradford, continuing at St. Agatha in Meadville, St. Leo High School in Ridgway, Elk County Christian High School in St. Marys, and Villa Maria Academy in Erie. She also spent many years teaching religious education in

the Diocese of Erie.

She retired from teaching in June 1993 and served as a volunteer in several departments at Villa Maria Academy.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by two brothers, Father Andrew H. Skeabeck, CSSR, and Francis Skeabeck. She is survived by two sisters, Marilyn Boyd of Oakton, Va., and Ann Marie Silverman of Sonoma, Calif.

Memorials may be made to the Community Support Fund of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, 5031 W. Ridge Road, Erie, PA 16506.

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 Business Administrator: [rcjolazz@cpprov.org](mailto:rcjolazz@cpprov.org)

## The Maternity Closet moves to new location

ST. MARYS—The Maternity Closet recently moved from the St. Joseph Monastery convent to the former annex building at 139 Church St., St. Marys. The Maternity Closet provides an assortment of items for babies up to three years of age and to mothers who need assistance.

The staff thanks those who attended and/or donated gifts at a recent open house/baby shower. **Benedictine Father Alfred Paterson**, pastor of St. Mary Parish, blessed children and volunteers, as well as the new site. **Gianna Miller** is shown holding baby **Emerie Mather**. Also pictured are **Maria Radkowski**, **Sophia Radkowski** and **Aidan Radkowski**.



## Knights clean up God's good earth



Photo by Ed Maillard

MEADVILLE—Steven Steider joins members of the Meadville Knights of Columbus Council #388 in picking up trash along Route 322 in Crawford County. The recent clean-up was part of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's

Adopt-A-Highway program. In the background are council members **Jeffrey Choffel**, left, and **Ted Jastromb Sr.**, who contributed in the collection of 30 large bags of trash.

## Congressman Glenn Thompson announces winners of art competition

DuBOIS—Pennsylvania Congressman Glenn Thompson has announced the state winners of the 2015 Congressional Art Competition.

**Bethany Stoddard**, a sophomore at DuBois Central Catholic High School, is this year's second place overall winner for the 5th District.

Her work is titled, "Ballet Self-Portrait" and was selected by Thompson to be hung in his Washington, D.C., office.

The Congressional Art Competition began in 1982 to recognize and encourage artistic talent among U.S. high school students.



## Villa junior wins People's Choice Award



ERIE—Abby Mercatoris-Morrison, center, a junior at Villa Maria Academy, displays her artwork that received the People's Choice Award in this spring's 8th annual Dr. & Mrs. Robert Guelcher Art Show at the Barber National Institute. **Bridget Barber**, right, director of External Affairs at the

Barber National Institute, presented the award to Abby, who is joined by her art teacher, **Jessica Alesso**. Visitors to the show voted on their favorite piece of student and adult art. Abby's drawing in charcoal, "James Lafferty," was selected out of more than 180 pieces of exhibited youth artwork.

## St. James takes first-place honors at PJAS



ERIE—Seventh- and eighth-graders at St. James School in Erie participated in the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition this spring at Penn State Behrend. Sixteen St. James students received first-place awards.

Winning students pictured in the front row, from left, are: **Rebekah Hollenbeck**, **Gretchen Hess**, **Ashley Benek**, **Jenna Babay**, **Mary Swigon-**

**ski** and **Erin Fleming**.

In the middle row, from left, are: **Kristine Serafin**, **Rebekah Ladnika**, **Nick Thompson**, **Rachel Anderson** and **Mary Jo McQueeney**.

In the back row, from left, are: **Jacob Rose**, **Eric Duma**, **Mitchell Razanasukas**, **Dat Phan** and **Arthur Thompson**.

## May crowning is school-wide event



GREENVILLE—Eighth-graders were joined by first-graders and third-graders in May crowning ceremonies at St. Michael Church in Greenville on May 1.

Pictured in the first row are: **Matthew Guy**, **Owen Cianci**, **Caroline Hoover**, **Maddie Blatt** and **Ame Smith**.

In the second row are: **Noah Guy**, **Alex Harpst**, **Jacob Salsbury**, **Carly Fattman** and **Cassie Hockett**.

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