



## Students finding success in multi-age classrooms

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

At St. Gregory School in North East, multi-age classrooms have translated into multi-positive results for students and teachers.

St. Gregory is one of four schools in the Erie Diocese that are completing the first year of multi-age classrooms. St. Gregory incorporates the multi-age approach throughout its entire school in four levels rather than grades K through 8.

St. Thomas School in Corry has a multi-age classroom incorporating students in grades 6 through 8. St. Boniface School and St. Andrew School, both in Erie, also use the multi-age approach in selected grades.

"We are completing a very successful first year," says Darlene Kovacs, who develops and oversees the elementary and middle school curriculum for the diocese's Office of Education. "We are finding that people have been very open and supportive of multi-age, which works with children devel-

opmentally rather than chronologically."

The curriculum at St. Gregory is designed by levels, not chronological grades. Level 1 includes students formerly in grades K-2, Level 2 is grades 3-4, Level 3 has grades 5-6 and Level 4 includes grades 7-8. Gone are the test scores and report card grades of A-minus and B-plus. They have been replaced by a 4-3-2-1 system, with 4 being a student exceeding the curriculum's expectations.

Mark Egan, principal at St. Gregory, says the multi-age classroom pushes students to the best of their ability. Instead of competing academically with other students, he says, they compete with themselves.

To illustrate, he uses the example of a girl who last year was in 6th grade. This year, when she would have been in 7th grade, she is doing 8th grade work in Level 4 while taking some classes at Mercyhurst Prep.

"The material is geared toward the students' ability," Egan says. "We want the students to be suc-

cessful. We don't hold them back; we push them forward. We expect a lot out of the students, and we want them to expect a lot out of themselves."

In combining traditional classrooms, one added benefit that has proven most helpful is having two instructors in each multi-age level. This ensures that students are not only supervised, Egan says, but also have the opportunity to receive more individual attention.

"There's a structure in place that gives students a great opportunity to show their potential," Egan says. "In our Level 2 room, students will work in small groups for math and reading, and then they'll come together for language arts instruction."

Another positive has been the peer mentoring opportunities. Where the traditional classroom can limit interaction between grade levels, multi-age focuses on that exchange as a learning tool.

"We have older students helping younger students, and we also have the younger ones helping the older ones," Egan says. "They learn



Photo by Jason Koshinski

One of the benefits of multi-age classrooms St. Gregory School has seen in its first year is the increased opportunities for peer mentoring throughout the grade levels.

from that interaction."

Egan is already excited for next school year, which includes a new curriculum for year two of multi-age.

"The model is tremendous," Egan says. "The parents have been

a pillar of support for the school. Initially, there was some concern. But they've trusted the school and the teachers. The teachers have embraced it. Everyone has really taken it under their wing and run with it."

## REFLECTIONS from ROME

VATICAN CORRESPONDENT

By Joseph Campbell

**Editor's note:** Joseph Campbell is a seminarian from the Erie Diocese studying at North American College in Rome. In his third and final Reflections From Rome column, he writes about witnessing Pope Benedict XVI's first appearance. To read more and view his photos, visit [www.ErieRCD.org](http://www.ErieRCD.org).

### Part III – White Smoke

One of the most memorable holy hours I have ever made was on the evening of April 19th, 2005. At approximately 5:45 p.m., as smoke began to seep forth from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel, a friend of mine came exploding through the doors of the Immaculate Conception Chapel (the main chapel at the North American College), slid across the floor and exclaimed in a hushed voice, "The smoke is white! We have a pope!" I immediately concluded my prayers and within seconds sprinted up to my room. I grabbed my backpack, which was filled with religious items to be blessed by the new pope, and ran down to St. Peter's Square as quickly as I could.

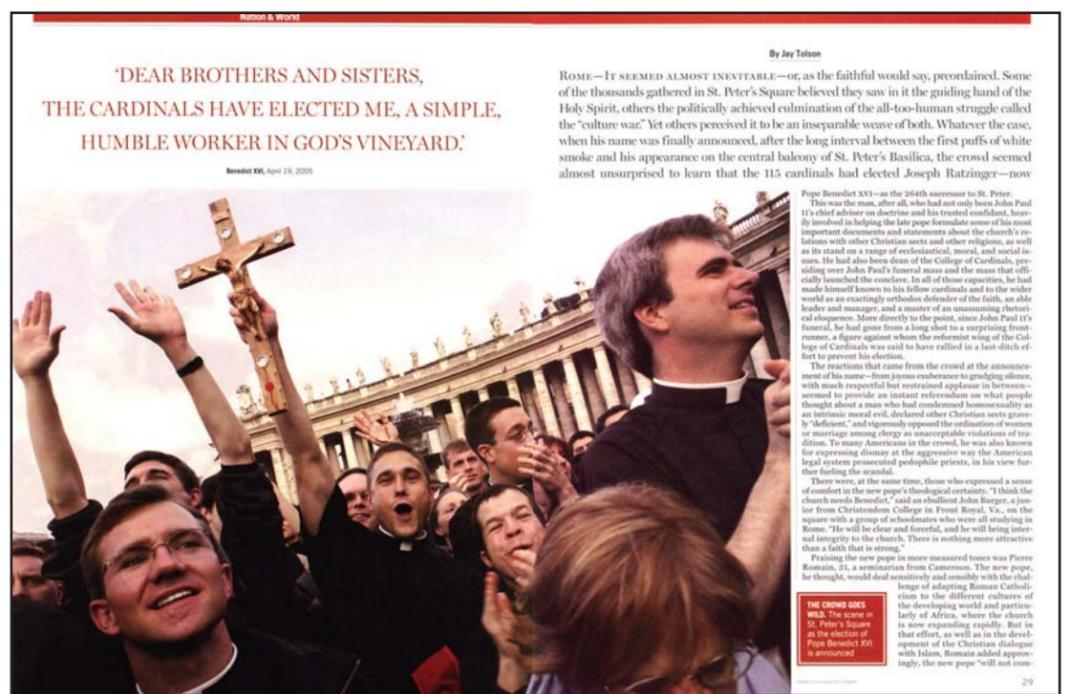
After nearly an entire day of being disappointed by black smoke rising from the chimney, I arrived at the square thrilled to see white smoke and hear the great bells chime. The signal was complete, and we did indeed have a new pope! It took only minutes after the first gong for fifty thousand people to turn into what seemed to be five hundred thousand, as men and women of every race and nation dropped their daily routine to be at the square and usher in the new

Holy Father.

I met up with a group of my seminarian brothers from the North American College, who, having brought their guitars and drums, were singing praise and worship songs. I decided to join them as they sang songs laden with halleluiahs, hosannas, and glories. In the square, there were shouts of "Habemus Papam" and "Viva il Papa." The crowd was ecstatic! There was a growing and almost uncontrollable excitement throughout the crowd. Everyone was on-edge, waiting with eager anticipation to see who would be the new Holy Father.

When the giant red curtains on the center balcony of St. Peter's Basilica opened, the crowd's excitement continued to build. Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez, the cardinal proto-deacon, emerged and greeted us with "Dear brothers and sisters" in several different languages. He proceeded to deliver the solemn announcement of the new bishop of Rome, successor to Peter and servant of the servants of God.

As Cardinal Estevez spoke, the world grew silent. He had everyone clinging to each of his words. With great joy he announced, "Habemus Papam!" The crowd began to release its energy with applause and shouts of jubilation, but he continued in order to keep the excitement contained for the climactic moment. He pronounced the words "The Most Eminent and the Most Reverend Joseph." Knowing how to play the crowd, he paused. He gave everyone time to question and wonder, "How many cardinal



This two-page photo spread appeared with the cover story for the May 2 issue of U.S. News & World Report. Joseph Campbell is pictured in

the center with a crucifix. The photo was taken in St. Peter's Square on April 19 during the announcement of Pope Benedict XVI's election.

electors could there be with the name Joseph?" And then, when the excitement, curiosity and suspense were no longer containable, he completed the proclamation "Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Ratzinger!"

It was pandemonium. An electrifying jolt shot through the crowd as everyone present unleashed the excitement that they had been holding back. The crowd erupted with shouts of joy and thunderous applause. People were screaming and jumping. High-fives could be seen flying above the crowd and embraces of jubilation were exchanged. It was invigorating. It

was exhilarating. It was awesome!

When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger walked out onto the balcony as the newly elected Pope Benedict XVI, the crowd was elated and my seminarian friends and I were all overjoyed. We were all emboldened with a new sense of confidence and great hope in having the opportunity to experience the ushering in of the "new springtime" by one who was so close to the heart of our late, yet forever beloved Holy Father, John Paul II. Moved by the crowd's enthusiasm, I removed my crucifix from my backpack and raised it into the air, and joined my

friends in shouting out "Viva il Papa," "Viva la Chiesa," "Viva Gesù!"

Having met Pope Benedict XVI on two occasions when he was a cardinal, I can sincerely say that the virtues which struck me most profoundly in this man were his authentic humility and deep sense of prayerfulness. Each time I encountered him, he was praying his rosary and seemed as though he was immersed in a mystical contemplation of the mysteries of Christ. He definitely seems to have been chosen and prepared by the Holy Spirit to be Peter especially for our times.

# Financial report shows positive results for Erie Diocese in 2004

FaithLife staff

The financial picture for the central administrative offices of the Diocese of Erie showed a positive overall result for the 2004 calendar year.

For the second year in a row, total support and revenue was substantially in excess of expenses. This outcome was reflected in the audited financial statements which were recently presented to Bishop Donald Trautman and the diocesan finance council by representatives of the external auditors—Malin, Bergquist, & Company, LLP.

"The overall position of 2004 was helped by strong investment returns, particularly with our endowment funds, along with the resumption of the Catholic Services Appeal," said David Murphy, chief financial officer for the Erie Diocese.

Assets increased by 11.5 percent to \$58.5 million while liabilities rose by 4.6 percent to \$26.0 million. Although there was little change in both operating revenues and expenses as compared with the prior year, investment return was an important factor leading to the positive \$4.9 million change in net assets.

As with most other dioceses, investments represented the single largest asset category—two-thirds of the assets appearing on the diocese's balance sheet. Most of the investments are held in various endowments which generate income each year for specific programs such as priestly formation, Catholic Charities, religious education and the priests' retirement residence. The endowment fund investments are entrusted to professional managers whose perform-

ance is reviewed by the diocesan investment committee.

During 2004, the diocese resumed the Catholic Services Appeal which had been suspended for the prior two years in light of a diocesan-wide capital campaign. This annual appeal is the primary source of funding for the operating budget of the central offices.

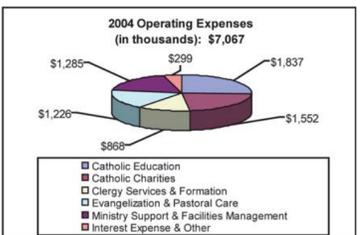
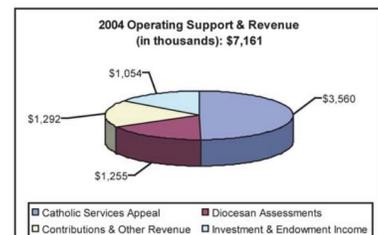
"I commend the diocesan finance council and our own diocesan finance office for their fiscal oversight," Bishop Trautman said. "The progress made helps assure the continuation of the ministries of the church. In the Lord's name, I thank all the donors."

On June 19, Bishop Trautman will celebrate the 11 a.m. Mass at St. Peter Cathedral for all the benefactors of the Catholic Services Appeal.

"This is the best way I can say thank you," he said.

Revenues were further enhanced by the receipt of \$3.3 million in pledge payments from donors to the Diocesan Capital Stewardship Campaign which was concluded early in 2003. The diocesan share of funds committed to the Capital Campaign has been used to establish endowment and capital improvement funds which are intended to support initiatives in the areas of evangelization, education, Catholic Charities, and clergy health and retirement.

"Going forward, as seen in the 2005 appeal, we are confident that the primary ministries and services of the central offices of the diocese will be well supported," Murphy said.



## Prince of Peace Center unveils grotto

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

The Prince of Peace Center in Farrell has unveiled its memorial grotto and garden, which was blessed by Bishop Donald Trautman at a dedication ceremony on May 19.

Constructed with donated funds, the grotto and garden features a 51-inch statue of Jesus as the Prince of Peace. The statue stands upon a stone base and is protected by a grotto enclosure and covered with a copper roof.

The project will be marked with two brass plaques listing the names of donors or the names of the individuals chosen to be honored by the donors.

"It's an extension of our center in the community," says Joe Flecher, the center's director. "It let's people know that we are here and we are permanent. We are building on our community and bringing about change."

The center is a non-profit social service agency dedicated to reducing poverty throughout Mercer County. Prince of Peace offers a variety of services and emergency assistance, including hosting a twice-weekly soup kitchen and food distribution. Its thrift store provides free and low-cost clothes, housewares and other items to those in need.



Outgoing Prince of Peace director Sr. Clare Marie Beichner speaks at the center's grotto dedication while incoming director Joe Flecher and Bishop Donald Trautman look on.

The floor of the garden is constructed from two sizes and colors of brick, and the grotto area is walled in with stone planters holding shrubs, annual flowers, and pergola-like trellises for vines. The walls of the planters permit seating on the top stones to accommodate individuals who choose to sit in quiet contemplation, prayer, and spiritual renewal.

For a donation of \$100, the larger of the two sizes of bricks can be inscribed with a personal message of the donor's choosing and placed permanently into the

memorial grotto, honoring a person, group or occasion. All proceeds from the brick fund will be used to support the center's emergency assistance program and similar services, which provides aid to the marginalized of the Shenango Valley.

To purchase a brick, contact the center at 724.346.5777 or visit [www.princeofpeace.org](http://www.princeofpeace.org) for a printable form or to find out more about the memorial grotto. The center anticipates placing inscribed bricks approximately every four months. Fifty bricks have already been sold.

## By the Way...



Jason Koshinski

The diocese's perpetual adoration chapel at St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community in Erie has a new coordinator. **Dominic Caggese**, along with his wife **Lauren**, have volunteered to be coordinators for one year. The newly married couple is also expecting their first child. Thanks to **Dominic**, **Mary Rizzo** gets a much deserved rest. She has served as the chapel's coordinator since it opened on Ash Wednesday in 2004.

Local seminarian **John Kuzma** was recently installed to the ministry of lector at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe by Bishop Roger Foy of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky. John is the son of Michael and Linda Kuzma of Erie. A 2000 Cathedral Prep grad, he earned a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy from Gannon University in 2004.

After 14 years of being the driving force behind the **Prince of Peace Center** in Farrell, **Sr. Clare Marie Beichner** is answering another calling. Sr. Clare Marie stepped down from her position as the center's director at the end of May to pursue work in formation ministry with her religious community, the Sisters of St. Joseph. **Joe Flecher**, who has been with the center for two years, is the new director.

It's quite an honor for the church in the United States to have Pope Benedict XVI name **Archbishop William Levada** of San Francisco as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It's the first time a U.S. prelate has headed the congregation.

Interestingly enough, Archbishop Levada was nominated to head the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Doctrine in the mid-'90s along with **Bishop Trautman**. Bishop Trautman was chosen by his brother bishops in that election. After Bishop Trautman's term expired, Archbishop Levada was elected for the following term.

Congratulations to 12-year-old **Noah Orris**, a sixth grade student at Meadville's **Seton Catholic School**, who won the Diocesan Spelling Bee on April 27. Noah bested 27 competitors from schools in the 13-county diocese; the winning word was archaeology. His parents are Marianne Oberley-Digiaco and Edward Orris; Marianne wrote for the *Lake Shore Visitor*.

**Mary Maxwell**, executive director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Erie, got a call from the switchboard at St. Mark Center last week, telling her a bag of money had been delivered. What she found was literally a bag of money: pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters, collected by the third grade class at **St. Andrew School** in Erie. The note on the bag read "Donation for Tsunami Relief."

Jason Koshinski is editor of FaithLife. Contact him at [JKoshinski@erieRCD.org](mailto:JKoshinski@erieRCD.org) or 814.824.1171.

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**FaithLife**  
The official news bulletin of the Catholic Diocese of Erie

Volume 1, Issue 8

General Information: (814) 824-1160  
Fax: (814) 824-1170

E-Mail: [FaithLife@erieRCD.org](mailto:FaithLife@erieRCD.org)  
Editorial: (814) 824-1171  
Advertising: (814) 824-1168

Member of the Catholic Press Association. Published bi-weekly. Owned and operated by the Bishop of Erie. Subscription \$10/year. For more information, call (814) 824-1160.

The office of Communications has been serving Catholics in the Diocese of Erie since 1874. Offices are located at St. Mark Catholic Center, 429 East Grandview Blvd., Erie, Pa. Periodical postage paid at Erie, Pa.

Postmaster: Send address changes to FaithLife at St. Mark Catholic Center.

## Briefs

### Emmaus Convocation June 20-23 in Latrobe

The 23rd annual Emmaus Convocation for the diocese's priests, deacons and seminarians will be held June 20-23 at St. Vincent College in Latrobe.

This year's featured speaker is Fr. Richard Fragomeni from the Diocese of Albany and chair of the Department of Word and Worship at Chicago Theological Union. His presentations will draw out significant themes from Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter for the Year of the Eucharist, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*.

Special events include the admission to candidacy of seminarians Bill Barron, Max Pawlowski and Justin Pino and a jubilarian Mass and banquet to honor priests who are celebrating 25, 40, 50 and 60 years of priestly ministry. Gannon University will once again assist with preparations and sponsor the jubilarian celebrations.

Parishoners are asked to pray for their priests, deacons and seminarians while they join with their bishop for these days of prayer and fraternity. Many parishes will have Communion services in place of daily Mass during the days of Emmaus. Priests will be available in each vicariate for emergencies.

## Anniversary Masses Aug. 14 & 28

Anniversary celebrations for couples celebrating 25th, 50th or 60th wedding anniversaries in 2005 will be held at two locations in the diocese: Sunday, Aug. 14 at Sacred Heart Parish in Erie and Sunday, Aug. 28 at St. Boniface Parish in Kersey.

Bishop Donald Trautman will preside at each of these celebrations. They will begin at 2 p.m. and include Mass, presentation of scrolls to the couples and a reception for the couples and their families. To register, please contact your parish rectory or the diocese's Family Ministries Office at 814.824.1250 or 1.800.374.3723 ext. 250.

## Calendar

**Diocesan jubilee Mass for women religious:** June 6, St. Mark Catholic Center, Erie, 5 p.m.

**Deanery youth activity:** "Rock in the Park," June 18, 1-4:30 p.m., Wildcat Park, Ludlow. Take Route 6 west, park on left. Performance by Christian rock band Ember, swimming, games, social. Dress casual. Meal at 2:30 p.m. Event is free. Rain or shine. In case of rain, join us at the Kane Community Center, Fraley Street. RSVP Sr. Frances Therese at 837.6997 or e-mail [stallrep@saintcallistus.org](mailto:stallrep@saintcallistus.org).

## Parishes, diocese address end-of-life issues

With the recent media coverage of the Terri Schiavo case, many are talking about end-of-life issues in the church's view.

Many parishes throughout the Erie Diocese are using this opportunity for discussions and informational meetings regarding this issue and the questions it raises.

St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community, Erie, is sponsoring a talk as part of its Matters of Truth lecture series. Fr. Edward Krause, Ph.D., who teaches medical ethics at Gannon University, will present *The Last Horizon: End-of-Life Issues & the Church's View* on June 8 at 7:30 p.m. in the St. Joseph Community Center.

The talk will also feature information about living wills, power of attorney, advanced directives and family/patient rights. Also presented will be the church's teaching on these matters and the origins of those teachings.

St. Jude medical mission ministry is sponsoring a panel discussion, *Dying with Dignity*:

*Parishioner's Guide to Living Wills and End-of-Life Decisions*, on June 13 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Jude Parish, Erie.

The discussion includes several panelists. Physician Geoffrey Dunn is an author and lecturer and practices medicine in concert with the Hospice program. Attorney Richard Zamboldi, a partner with Knox Law Firm, will discuss the legal aspects of living wills. Msgr. Joseph Gregorek and Msgr. Gerald Koos will give insight on the spiritual aspects of end of life issues.

The discussion will be followed by a question and answer session.

The diocese has also prepared information for its Web site, including a sample living will from the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference. Go to [www.erieRCD.org](http://www.erieRCD.org) and click on the "Living Will Resources" button on the homepage. The information can also be accessed through the Diocesan Offices button. Click on Justice and Peace/Respect Life.

## All-school shows offer Guys and Dolls, Fiddler

Two all-school shows will be sponsored by the Erie Diocesan Office of Education this summer. *Guys and Dolls* will be performed at the Barrow Civic Theatre in Franklin June 17, 18 and 19, while *Fiddler on the Roof* will be performed at Mercyhurst Prep High School the weekends of July 15 and July 22.

The casts and production crews are made up of students in both Catholic and public schools throughout the diocese in all grade levels.

"It's one of the only chances the kids throughout the diocese have to come together as a team and do a project," says Fr. Jay Schultz, vicar for education and director of the all-school shows. "A lot of them only

see each other as competition in athletics until they do the show."

The summer shows have developed into a tradition for both students and Fr. Jay. This year marks the 13th annual show in the Oil City area and 5th annual show in Erie.

"The kids get to work on their acting and performance skills," Fr. Jay says. "For a lot of kids, it's a way for them to come out of their shells. They may find they have a talent and a love for this, and it comes out in the shows."

Auditions for *Fiddler* will be held at MPS on June 6 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 7 p.m. For more information, contact the Education Office at 814.824.1220.

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## Obituary

**Fr. Gerard H. Krebs**, 67, died May 25, 2005 at the Bishop Michael J. Murphy Residence for Retired Priests.



Fr. Gerard Krebs

He was ordained as a priest on December 18, 1963 in Rome by Archbishop Martin J. O'Conner. His home parish was St. Patrick, Erie.

Fr. Krebs taught at Venango Christian High School from 1964 to 1970, during which time he resided at St. Stephen Parish in Oil City. During the summer of 1970 he assisted briefly at Our Lady Queen of the Americas Parish in Conneaut Lake before being transferred to St.

John the Baptist Parish in Erie as an assistant, where he served from 1970 to 1978. He served as pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Brandy Camp from 1978 to 1983. He served at St. Patrick Parish in Erie as co-pastor from 1983 to 1985, and then as pastor from 1985 to 1990 and again as co-pastor from 1990 to 1992. From 1992 to 2003, he served as diocesan director for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), with residence at Blessed Sacrament Parish from 1992 to 1994 and at St. Joseph Parish, Erie from 1994 to 2004. From 1996 to 2003, he was also assigned as diocesan director for activities connected to the coming of the third millennium. He served briefly as Catholic chaplain of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, Erie, in 1996.



Photos by Jason Koshinski

A large marble monument depicting the Miraculous Medal has been installed at Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Fairview.

The medal itself, made of black and gray marble, is roughly 6-foot tall and sits on a two-foot base. The medal, which was donated, includes an inscription that encourages praying for the faithful departed.

The medal was installed on May 25 and dedicated by Bishop Trautman at the Memorial Day Mass at the cemetery May 30.

The original design for the Miraculous Medal was given to St. Catherine Labouré by the Blessed Mother in 1830. To learn more about the medal's history, visit [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org).

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Please submit a cover letter and resume by fax (814-824-3638) or by mail: Sr. Mary Ann Bader, President, Mercyhurst Preparatory School, 538 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, PA 16504. Review of applicants will begin June 10, 2005.

For more information about Mercyhurst Preparatory School visit our Web page, [www.mpslakers.com](http://www.mpslakers.com).

# Child protection charter, missal on bishops' June agenda

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will face revisions in its *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the accompanying *Essential Norms* when the bishops meet this month in Chicago.

They will also be asked to approve funding for an in-depth study of the causes and context behind the decades of abuse of minors that exploded into a crisis in 2002.

Although those items are likely to draw the most media attention, the bishops have a number of other decisions to deal with at the June 16-18 meeting. These include:

- Adoption of a pastoral letter on world mission.
- A revision of the U.S. Program of Priestly Formation.
- Continuing several current U.S. adaptations of the Roman Missal.
- A statement of renewed commitment to Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

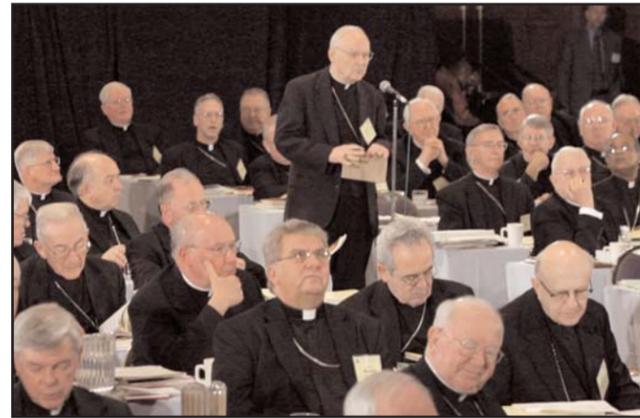
- Possible establishment of an annual day of prayer for vocations.

In the child protection charter the bishops committed themselves to two major studies, one on the nature and extent of abuse of minors and the other on its causes and context. The first study has been completed and groundwork has been laid for the second.

The proposed 10-page letter on world mission aims at reviving mission awareness, interest and activity among U.S. Catholics.

If the bishops adopt the revised Program of Priestly Formation, it will be the fifth edition. It will replace the version adopted by the bishops and approved by the Vatican in 1992.

Its norms for priestly formation in the United States are largely the same as in 1992, but the commentary has been refashioned to reflect Pope John Paul II's 1992 apostolic exhortation on priestly vocations and formation more fully and addi-



CNS photo by Paul Haring

**Bishop Donald Trautman addresses his colleagues at a previous U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' general meeting in Washington.**

tional papal teaching since then. The statement in support of Catholic schools addresses what Catholic schools are doing now and what challenges await them in coming years.

A proposal to continue six U.S. adaptations in the Mass says that these adaptations, in force since 1970, are well-known to priests and people, have helped shaped their liturgi-

cal formation and spirituality and would cause "great consternation" if they were to be abandoned now.

The issue arises because the bishops are preparing to consider revisions in the U.S. missal texts in light of recent revisions of the Roman Missal, which is the basis for Mass texts and norms throughout the Latin church.

Bi-weekly news bulletin of the Catholic Diocese of Erie

# FaithLife

June 5, 2005



## Financial Report 2004

Annual report shows favorable results for diocese's finances



## Learning in a Multi-age Classroom

## White Smoke

Joseph Campbell reflects on his 'Habemus Papam' experience in Rome



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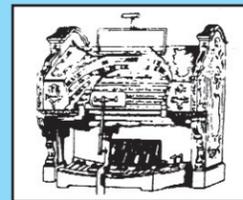
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