



Tour helps youth and young adults meet Christ, each other, page 2.

Camp to hold family weekend Sept. 11-13, page 3.



Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



- Aug. 24 St. Bartholomew
- Aug. 25 St. Louis of France
- Aug. 27 St. Monica
- Aug. 28 St. Augustine
- Aug. 29 Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist
- Sept. 3 Pope Gregory the Great

SSJ Associates information session – Aug. 26

The Sisters of St. Joseph will offer an informal information session for anyone interested in becoming an associate of the congregation. The session will be held Wednesday, August 26 at 7 p.m. at the Sisters of St. Joseph Community Living Center, 5031 West Ridge Road in Erie.

SSJ Associates are Christian women and men who come together to share the nature and spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Associate membership is open to all Christian men and women, regardless of age, marital status or vocation. Presently, there are more than 220 SSJ Associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

All interested persons are welcome to attend. Please direct replies or inquiries to Linda Kuhn or Audrey McLaughlin at 814.836.4134 or e-mail associates@ssjerie.org.

Our Lady of Fatima statue to visit St. Ann, Erie – Aug. 28-30

The world famous International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima will visit St. Ann Church, part of Our Mother of Sorrows Parish, 10th Street and East Avenue, Erie, Aug. 28-30.

The visit will coincide with a three-day seminar on the Fatima message.

- Aug. 28 – 8:45 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Aug. 29 – 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Aug. 30 – 9:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Events throughout the weekend include Mass, chaplet and rosary, time for private prayers and visitation, as well as talks given by statue custodian Carl Malburg; Father Jerry Priscaro; Father David Poulson, spiritual director of the Erie Diocesan World Apostolate of Fatima—the Blue Army; and David Blum, editor of *Divine Mercy Messenger*.

For a detailed schedule of events, visit www.ErieRCD.org or contact the Apostolate of Divine Mercy of St. Ann at 814.459.3202.

Western Vicariate Care and Concern conference – Sept. 12

The 2009 Western Vicariate Care and Concern Conference will be held on Saturday, September 12, beginning with Mass at 9 a.m. at St. Mary of Grace Parish in Meadville. The conference will allow attendees to learn more about parish social ministry and enhance their outreach and volunteer opportunities. For more information or to RSVP, contact Erin Landini-Grogan at 800.374.3723 Ext. 254 or elandini@ErieRCD.org.

www.ErieRCD.org

View Faithful Servants online

What message should Catholics send Congress on health care?

From staff and wire reports

WASHINGTON – As the House of Representatives headed out of Washington for a five-week summer recess, with the Senate soon to follow, members of Congress were vowing to listen to their constituents' views on health care reform.

But from a Catholic perspective, what should the American public be telling their representatives and senators about what promises to be the hottest topic when Congress returns after Labor Day?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has long advocated health care reform with special concern for the poor and the inclusion of legal immigrants, according to Erin Landini-Grogan, director



Megan Lecluyse from Princeton, N.J., gets her blood pressure taken by Lynn Allia, a student nurse, at a June 24 interfaith event in Washington in support of universal health care.

of the Office of Parish Social Ministries/Respect Life for the Erie Diocese. The Catholic Health Association (CHA) and Catholic Charities USA are in agreement.

"I am gravely concerned that the House thus far has bypassed the Hyde Amendment and any open discussion regarding preventing federal funding of abortion in the health care package. Now is the time to educate ourselves on the various components of health care reform legislation. The current proposed legislation is extremely complex, but as Catholics, we must pray and advocate for health care reform that respects and protects the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death." – Bishop Donald Trautman



For the latest on the Catholic response to health care reform, please become a frequent visitor to www.usccb.org/healthcare.

"The bishops, the CHA and Catholic Charities would like to support health care reform," Grogan said, "but they cannot do so unless it respects all life." See HEALTH CARE, page 3

Parishes reconfigured

Bradford Deanery parishes to share pastor, Farrell, Sharon parishes will merge

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

The Erie Diocese has announced the reconfiguration of several parishes.

St. Eulalia Parish, Coudersport, and St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, Port Allegany, will be under the pastoral care of one pastor, effective the weekend of Aug. 28-29. Although sharing a pastor, both parishes will remain independent parishes with separate pastoral and finance councils.

Father James Campbell has been appointed pastor of St. Eulalia and St. Gabriel the Archangel parishes, effective Aug. 27. St. Eulalia lists 286 registered families in its membership, and St. Gabriel lists 140 registered families.

A new Mass schedule will be put in place with the cooperation of the leadership of both parishes – allowing one pastor to serve both.

The reconfiguration will also affect two mission churches. The mission church of St. Mary in Roulette will close, effective the same weekend. Originally a mission church of St. Mary in Sarwell, St. Mary in Roulette has been under the pastoral care of St. Gabriel. The mission church of St. Augustine in Austin now comes under the pastoral care of St. Bibiana Parish in Galeton.

Holy Trinity Parish in Farrell will merge with St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish in Sharon, effective Sept. 13. The merger was decided following consultation with and the unanimous approval of the Presbyteral Council of the diocese.

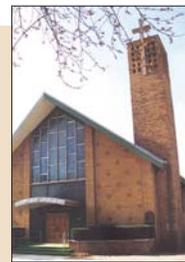


St. Stanislaus Kostka, Sharon

The new title for the merging parishes will be St. Stanislaus Kostka-Holy Trinity Parish. Father Stanley Swacha, pastor of St. Stanislaus, will assume pastoral care of the newly merged parish.

Holy Trinity lists 103 registered families in its membership while St. Stanislaus Kostka lists 407 registered families.

The merger is the second in a little more than a year in the Shenango Valley. In April 2008, Bishop Donald Trautman announced the merger of St. Ann Parish in Farrell with the neighboring parish of Our Lady of Fatima. The combined parish of Our



Holy Trinity, Farrell

Lady of Fatima-St. Ann in Farrell took effect June 1, 2008.

As previously announced in April, Immaculate Conception Parish, Erie, will merge with St. Mary Parish, Erie, effective Sept. 12. The new title of the merged parish is under review by the pastoral team and pastoral councils of both parishes. Father James Gutting is currently pastor of both parishes.

Clergy appointments

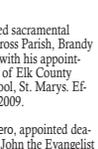
The Most Rev. Donald V. Trautman, STD, SSL, Bishop of Erie, announces the following clergy appointments:

Father James Campbell, appointed pastor of St. Eulalia Parish, Coudersport, and St. Gabriel Parish, Port Allegany, for a term of six years. Effective August 27, 2009.

Father Joseph Campbell, appointed sacramental assistant at Holy Cross Parish, Brandy Camp, concurrent with his appointment to the faculty of Elk County Catholic High School, St. Marys. Effective August 16, 2009.

Deacon Joseph Cicero, appointed deacon assistant at St. John the Evangelist Parish, Girard. Effective July 17, 2009.

Father Joseph Dougherty, appointed pastor of St. Bibiana Parish, Galeton, and the mission churches of Sacred Heart, Genesee, and St. Augustine, Austin, for a term of six years. Effective August 27, 2009.



Deacon Ronald Fronzaglia, appointed deacon assistant at St. Francis Xavier Parish, McKean. Effective July 17, 2009.

Father John Jaquel, appointed pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish, Erie, for a term of six years. Effective August 24, 2009.

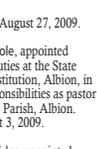
Deacon James Kaschalk, appointed deacon assistant at St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, Erie. Effective July 17, 2009.

Deacon Kevin Kunik, appointed deacon assistant at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Erie. Effective July 17, 2009.

Father John Murphy, appointed pastor of St. Raphael Parish, Eldred; St. Theresa Parish, Shinglehouse; and the mission church of St. Mary, Sarwell, for a term of six years. Effective August 27, 2009.

Father Philip Oriole, appointed to chaplaincy duties at the State Correctional Institution, Albion, in addition to responsibilities as pastor of St. Lawrence Parish, Albion. Effective August 3, 2009.

Father Thomas Tyler, appointed deacon of the St. Marys Deanery until June 2010. Effective immediately.



DOING PARISH DIFFERENTLY

Conference focuses on small Christian communities

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

HARBORCREEK – For 20 years, Sister Nancy Fischer, SSL, said she has listened to Father Art Baranowski talk about a new way of being a parish—a parish where rather than the priests and staff taking sole responsibility for the pastoral care of the people, the people would minister to one another.

He proposed the idea of developing small Christian communities and approaching current ideas in a different way, not adding new programs.

Last year, she heard author Bill Huebsch for the first time. "It sounded like he was saying the same thing," said Sister Nancy, director of community formation and lay minister training for the Erie Diocese. "We need to do parish differently—in whole community catechesis, we need to involve the adults."

She helped bring both of them together for the first time for the National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities' (NAPRC) annual conference, which was held at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Harborcreek July 23-25.

The theme for the conference was New Wine in New Wine-skins: Bringing New Vision to the Church."

Huebsch, a nationally recognized speaker and author focusing on adult faith formation and whole community catechesis programs, was the keynote speaker. Father Baranowski, founder of NAPRC and pastor of

St. Christopher Parish in Marysville, Mich., also presented.

"My hope is to stretch your thinking a bit and help the church shift gears from focusing on children to focus on the wider community," Huebsch told a packed auditorium during one of his sessions. "We know this: If the adults of the church are not engaged, their children never will be."

The conference was attended by 300 participants, 100 involved in the ministry of small church communities throughout the country and 200 from the diocese who were aided by grants through the education endowment fund of The Catholic Foundation.

"We have many people in the diocese who are interested in whole community catechesis, and we have others who for years have been trying to do parish differently," Sister Nancy said. "The conference helped show that both can be done simultaneously."

Both Father Baranowski and Huebsch talked about engaging people with questions.

"You need to ask a question every time people gather, whether it's parish council or Bible study," Father Baranowski said. "Use a question to begin to share your lives with each other. Don't ever leave Mass or a function at the parish without having shared something of yourself."

Huebsch said in whole community catechesis, "we need to be nourishing our faith and grow in how that faith relates to our everyday lives."

Both recommend parish retreats because they give people a chance for a conversion experience.

"Unless you have a conversion experience, you don't really know who Jesus is," Sister Nancy said. "You can teach your children information, but you can't really form them in the faith."



Bill Huebsch



IN THE U.S.

■ **The expertise honed by years of resolute follow-up work with natural disaster victims** has landed Catholic Charities USA a five-year federal contract reportedly worth more than \$100 million. The contract with the Department of Health and Human Services is the first Alexandria, Va.-based agency has received from the federal government. Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, said the contract will allow the agency to step in immediately in the days after a natural disaster strikes anywhere across the U.S.

or its territories to ensure that victims' basic needs are met and to follow up on individual cases for up to 18 months. "When you look at case management, that's where Catholic Charities excels," Father Snyder said. The contract governs disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes provided a federal disaster declaration is issued. It calls for the agency to organize national, regional and local teams to respond quickly and to work with disaster victims to meet their immediate needs as well as long-term needs in putting their lives back together.

■ **The work of two teams of Chinese scientists who created live mice from induced pluripotent stem cells** is "another demonstration that researchers don't need to destroy embryos" to achieve stem-cell advances, according to a pro-life official at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The research done by separate teams in Shanghai and Beijing and published July 23 in the scientific journals *Nature* and *Cell Stem Cell* showed that the so-called iPSCs have "the full range of uses that embryonic stem cells are proposed for," said Richard Doerflinger, associate director of the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities. "The immediate finding is that induced pluripotent stem cells, created without harming any embryos, really are as versatile as embryonic stem cells," he said. But Doerflinger also warned that this lat-

est breakthrough in stem-cell research shows that iPSCs are "so powerful" that researchers "might be able to put them in a human embryo and change the genetic makeup of that child and all the future generations" related to the child. "It's an ominous thing, that they could be remaking people's genetic traits," he added. "It's a powerful technology and it could be misused."



Tiny, a mouse created from stem cells created from mouse skin, is pictured in China in this January 2009 photograph made available July 24.

■ **Orders of women religious in the United States will be asked to complete a comprehensive questionnaire** that looks at six areas of religious life in preparation for a series of apostolic visits set to begin in January. Topics to be considered are outlined in a working document distributed July 28 to the 341 leaders of the religious congregations to share with their members. The topics are related to the life and operation of the orders: identity; governance; vocation promotion, admission and formation policies; spiritual life and common life; mission and ministry; and finances. Members of the orders are being asked to reflect on the working document. Distribution of a questionnaire Sept. 1 will open the second phase of a comprehensive study of U.S. institutes of women religious announced in January and ordered by the Vatican's Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

AROUND THE WORLD

■ **Pope Benedict XVI has laicized a Franciscan priest** who served as the spiritual adviser to the Marian visionaries in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The pontiff, in a document issued "motu proprio" (on his own initiative), returned Father Tomislav Vlasic to the lay state and dispensed him from his religious vows as a member of the Order of Friars Minor. Vlasic was confined to a Franciscan monastery in L'Aquila, Italy, in February 2008 after he refused to cooperate in a Vatican investigation of his activities for suspected heresy and schism. He also was being investigated for "the diffusion of dubious doctrine, manipulation of consciences, suspected mysticism, disobedience towards legitimately issued orders and charges contra sextum (against the Sixth Commandment not to commit adultery)," as stated in the interdict signed by Cardinal William Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. According to the congregation, all the charges against Vlasic were "in the context of the Medjugorje phenomenon."

edly have enriched Mexico's political class at the expense of poor farmers and resulted in the massive theft of petroleum products from the state-run oil company. The scandals, according to a church statement, also have reinforced perceptions that governance has failed to improve in Mexico since the country ended one-party rule in 2000. In a July 31 statement — "Have We Touched Bottom?" — the Mexican bishops' conference said: "The fall has been due to errors, omissions, the manipulation of people and information and, worst of all, a lack of morals. Prevailing corruption has permeated all layers of society."



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By the Way...

Bishop Donald Trautman celebrated the funeral Mass for Erie County District Attorney Brad Foulk Aug. 15 at St. Peter Cathedral, Erie. Foulk, 61, died Aug. 12 after battling lung cancer. He had served as Erie County district attorney since 2000. There wasn't an empty pew for the Mass. Mourners included many dignitaries and officials throughout the state.



Jason Koshinski

The diocese's Presbyteral Council recently voted that clergy would not receive raises this year. The move was made in order that they align themselves with the plight of many laypeople throughout the diocese who are experiencing difficult economic times.

Mall Chapel volunteers were feted at a July 27 picnic at St. Mark Catholic Center in Erie. Bishop Trautman thanked them for their work in helping welcome visitors and staff the chapel, located at the Millcreek Mall. The chapel in open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Priests are available for confession or conversation Wednesday from 2 to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The chapel is scheduled to remain open through the end of the year.

St. Marys Catholic Elementary and Middle Schools, represented by Mary Meyer, director of development/advancement, participated with a select group of nearly 100 Catholic elementary school leaders from 22 states across the country at a recently completed national conference. The four-day session, hosted and presented by Boston-based Partners in Mission, provided a sole focus on the challenges, issues, and opportunities for the advancement of the mission of Catholic education at the elementary school level.

We offer our condolences to Father Greg Kirsch, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Houtzdale, and his family on the death of his father, Clair Kirsch, as well as Father Robert Susa of the Priest Retirement Home and his family on the death of his mother Eleanor Susa.

The folks in our neighboring Diocese of Buffalo are praying for the beatification of Father Nelson Baker to happen this year. "Wouldn't it be great to have an American priest beatified during the Year for Priests," Bishop Edward Kmiec, bishop of Buffalo, said during a recent Mass. "The spiritual importance of his beatification would be a weighty one, at least locally. Lackawanna and the Western New York region would become a popular destination for pilgrim pilgrims throughout the country."

Father Baker developed what was known as the "city of charity" under the patronage of Our Lady of Victory Parish in Lackawanna, which is now a basilica. It consisted of an infant home, a home for unwed mothers, a boys' orphanage, a hospital, a nurses' home and a grade and high school. He died in 1936 at the age of 94. For more information on Father Baker, visit www.ourladyofvictory.org.

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

HOPE & POWER

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

Kayla Bryson-Tucker's favorite part of the Hope & Power tour stop in St. Marys was seeing so many people being forgiven in the sacrament of reconciliation.

"It was so beautiful seeing how happy people are after confession and their sins are forgiven," said Bryson-Tucker, 19. "They just shine."

Hope & Power, a year-long tour sponsored by the Erie Diocese's Youth and Young Adult Ministry, began in April and will hit all areas of northwest Pennsylvania before wrapping up in 2010.

The tour, which is replacing the diocesan senior high school youth rally this year, offers young people an opportunity to meet Christ in a conversion experience, a theme that has been prevalent in some of the early stops, said Father Steve Schreiber, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Father Schreiber said it's also a chance for fellowship.

"These young people are coming together primarily to experience Christ but also to see each other," said Father Schreiber. "They thoroughly enjoy worship-



From left to right, Kayla Bryson-Tucker, Chelsea Laskey, Julie Meier and Abby Schaaf at Hope & Power July 29 at St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys.

ping and praising God with each other."

"The various speakers being featured at the Hope & Power stops provide an opportunity for the young people to hear the same core message—the Gospel message—presented in different ways using different styles," Father Schreiber said.

On July 29 in St. Marys, 100 young adults gathered at St. Joseph Monastery, home of the Benedictine Sisters of Elk County and the oldest Benedictine monastery in the United States. Aside from the local attendees, groups came from Erie, Grove City, Greenville and Oil City to

Tour helps youth and young adults meet Christ, each other

Tour 2009-10 HOPE & POWER

Sept. 20	St. Hippolyte, Frenchtown	5-8 p.m.
Oct. 17	Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Erie	7-10 p.m.
Nov. 7	St. Francis of Assisi, Clearfield	7-10 p.m.
Dec. 4	Blessed Sacrament, Erie	5-8 p.m.
Jan. 10	St. John the Baptist, Erie	6-9 p.m.
Feb. 21	St. Boniface, Erie	6-9 p.m.
March 3	St. Lawrence, Albion	6-9 p.m.
April 11	St. Tobias, Brockway	12-3 p.m.

hear Father Michael Kesicki remind them that to come to Christ means also coming to his church.

"And it's clear that they are doing just that with joy and excitement," said Father Schreiber.

Listening to Sister Josephine Vuoidi, FSO, and Sister Kathleen Dietz, FSO of The Spiritual Family The Work speak at Hope & Power in Titusville from their perspective as religious women gave the youth a window into the church that was quite fascinating, he said.

He said Sister Josephine, who moved to the Diocese from Germany just a few years ago, really captured the kids' attention, es-

pecially with what he called "her wonderful accent."

Bob Summers, a youth consultant and a member of the diocese's CLI (Catholic Leadership Institute) team, was the guest speaker at Hope & Power in Grove City.

In the few hours of the morning after a tour stop, youth and young adults are active on The Vine's page on the social networking site Facebook posting photos and comments about the event. The Vine (www.onthevine.us) has nearly 200 members on Facebook; Father Schreiber said he's hoping it will grow to 500.

Bryson-Tucker, a Gannon University student from St. Mary Parish in St. Marys, said she liked the idea of the tour traveling to different areas of the diocese because it might allow more people to attend a diocesan event.

"It was nice to have people come to St. Marys for once instead of always going other places for events," she said. "I know many people looked forward to the event not only because worshiping God is awesome but because they were able to worship God with friends."

Brandon Peterson, an 11th grader at Commodore Perry and member of St. Michael Parish in Greenville, described the Hope & Power nights as "just so powerful."

"It's just so amazing that we can pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament, lay down all of our troubling sins in confession, listen to some very helpful advice from Father Steve and his speaker, celebrate Mass and consume Jesus in the Eucharist all in one night," Peterson said. "I couldn't think of a better thing to do."

Caitlin O'Neil, a senior at Kennedy Catholic High School in Hermitage and member of St. Joseph Parish in Sharon, was part of the praise and worship band at Hope & Power in Grove City. She said she was impacted by Summers performing a skit about avoiding worldly sins and turning to Christ and hearing testimonies from others.

"It helps everyone realize where they are on their faith journey," O'Neil said.

While stating that one should never underestimate the importance of personal prayer, she said the tour also reiterated the power of communal prayer.

"When a group of people is the idea of the tour traveling to different areas of the diocese because it might allow more people to attend a diocesan event."

Father Schreiber said the priests hearing confessions on the Hope & Power nights are encouraging kids in their parishes and schools to attend, and he's thankful for their presence.

"God is doing so great things in the hearts of our young people," he said.

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Friday, September 18, 5 pm - 10:30 pm
Saturday, September 19, 11:30 am - 10:30 pm
Sunday, September 20, 10:30 am - 6 pm
Rainbow Gardens
(Intersection of 6th and 8th Streets, Erie)

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www.erieirishfestival.com

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Catholic Services Appeal parish projects

The 2009 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. While a portion of the financial goal for the appeal benefits the ministries of the diocese, 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.

Here's a look at what some parishes are doing with their CSA coverage funds:

Bradford Deaneary

- Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Lewis Run – No project listed
- St. Bernard, Bradford – Church renovations
- St. Bibiana, Galeton – Monthly expenses
- St. Callistus, Kane – Pointing and waterproofing church exterior
- St. Elizabeth, Smethport – New classroom dividers for parish hall, new entrance for parish office/reactory
- St. Eulalia, Coudersport – Roof repairs, church restoration
- St. Francis of Assisi, Bradford – Upgrading social hall
- St. Gabriel the Archangel, Port Allegany – Monthly expenses
- St. Joseph, Mt. Jewett – Summer youth program
- St. Raphael, Eldred – Replace church roof
- St. Theresa, Shinglehouse – Plans for kitchenette in community room
- Sacred Heart Mission, Genesee – Monthly expenses
- St. Augustine Mission, Austin – Roof repairs, church restoration



What message should Catholics send Congress on health care reform?

HEALTH CARE, from page 1

"We need health reform that respects the life and dignity of every person, from conception to natural death," said Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity who is president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association. "That means the unborn, it means the patient with multiple sclerosis, the patient with cancer, the young mother, the addicted, the mentally ill, the dying patient and the frail, frail elderly."

While the proposed legislation technically does not mention abortion, of particular concern is the "essential benefits package" defined in H.R. 3200. Minimum services to be covered by the public plan in the bill include hospitalization, outpatient hospital and outpatient clinical services as well as professional services of physicians and other health professionals. A nine-member panel appointed by the president under the leadership of the Secretary of Health and Human Services would further define "essential services."

Tim Broderick, president of People for Life in Erie, said that even if the panel decided abortion was not covered, history shows the courts would quickly interpret that abortion as a legal procedure in the United States since 1973—fit the broad definition of essential benefits and therefore had to be covered and paid for by the tax dollars of even those who oppose it.

"If abortion is not going to be covered, why have the committees voted down an amendment specifically excluding it three times?" Broderick asked.

"The church will continue to insist that the health care reform bill specifically exclude abortion coverage or any other provision that threatens the sanctity of life under essential coverage," said Landini-Grogan.

She also noted the Catholic Church supports the Weldon Amendment and other conscience rights laws now attached to the bill ensuring that health care professionals maintain the freedom to exercise their religious and moral objections in serving patients.

"We are watching this very closely," she said. "This is a non-negotiable aspect of the bill as far as the church is concerned."

In an August 11 letter to the U.S. House of Representatives, Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said the bishops' conference views health care as a basic right belonging to all human beings.

"Much-needed reform must not become a vehicle for promoting an 'abortion rights' agenda or reversing longstanding policies against federal funding and mandated coverage of abortion," he wrote. "In this sense we urge you to make this legislation 'abortion neutral,' by preserving longstanding federal policies that

prevent government promotion of abortion and respect conscience rights."

Pointing out that most Americans consider themselves to be pro-life and that 85 percent of counties in the United States do not have an abortion provider, the cardinal asked, "By what right and by what precedent would Congress make abortion coverage into a nationwide norm, or force Americans to subsidize it as a condition for participating in a public health program?"

Cardinal Rigali welcomed the current provisions that do not prevent state laws regulating abortion or federal conscience laws on abortion but criticized the bill for bypassing the Hyde Amendment and other longstanding provisions

dignity of those who are seeking treatment for serious and complex diseases, especially those in the final stages of life.

The topic of euthanasia has been controversial, mostly due to language in section 1233 of the bill titled, "Advance Care Planning Consultation." But according to the AARP, the bill does not in any way encourage euthanasia.

In recent years, the USCCB has strongly urged people to sign a living will so that physicians and family members would not be forced to make end-of-life decisions on their behalf if they were too ill to do so. The health care reform bill says only that doctors can be reimbursed for having this discussion with their patients

for abortions, has not been successfully attached to the proposed legislation in committee. Unless it is included when the legislation comes out of committee and reaches the floor for debate, the church will not be able to support the reform.

Catholic advocates and lobbyists were scouring the various bills and amendments in an effort to ensure that the legislation meets the health reform priorities outlined by the USCCB, CHA and Catholic Charities – respect for human life at all stages and universal, affordable access.

Sufficient funding should be maintained for safety-net clinics, hospitals and other providers that serve those who will continue to fall through the cracks of a reformed system, Landini-Grogan said. "Every individual should have access to affordable, quality health care."

She said the church is also mindful that health care reform costs need to be restrained and that costs be applied equitably across the spectrum of payers.

Landini-Grogan underscored the fluidity of the situation, noting that proposed legislation will likely go through considerable changes before it is brought to a vote.

"The fact is that nothing that's in existence today is likely" to come up for a vote on the House or Senate floor, said Kathy Sailer, director of the U.S. Bishops' Office of Domestic Social Development. "There are still other steps to go through."

A considerable amount of work remains for members of Congress and for Catholics who hope to influence them.

"I have been working closely with Bishop Trautman throughout the process," Landini-Grogan said. "The bishops, the Catholic Health Association and Catholic Charities are making their views known and lobbying Congress. But Bishop Trautman is also preparing to ask members of the Erie Diocese to contact their legislators this fall when the bill is closer to its final form."

Catholic health care facts and stats

The Catholic Church is one of the largest health care providers in the United States. It's therefore a credible voice and a significant player in the debate surrounding health care reform and the many Americans who will be affected by it. Here's a snapshot of the size and scope in one year of Catholic health care in the U.S.:

- More than 16.9 million emergency room visits
- More than 92.7 million outpatient visits
- 5,542,314 Admissions

Fast facts about Catholic health care

- 624 Catholic hospitals
- 499 Catholic long-term care nursing facilities
- 164 home health agencies
- 41 hospice organizations

Source: Catholic Health Association



Briefly

Camp Notre Dame Family Weekend Sept. 11-13

FAIRVIEW — Camp Notre Dame will hold a Family Weekend Friday, Sept. 11 through Sunday, Sept. 13. Building on the success of its mother/daughter and father/son weekends, the camp now offers a weekend for families with children between the ages of 5-14.

The Family Weekend of campers cabin rentals with outdoor activities such as canoeing, fishing, hiking and more. Evenings are filled with campfires and indoor games like "Gotcha" and "Swamp Ball." For more information, visit www.campnotredame.com.



Rainbows support group begins fall session Sept. 21

ERIE — Rainbows, a support group curriculum for children who have suffered a significant loss in their lives either through death, separation or divorce, will begin Monday, September 21 and will run for 12 weeks. It will be held at St. Mark's Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie from 7-8 p.m.

Rainbows is designed to provide these children with an opportunity to meet new friends who have shared similar experiences and to have trained, caring adults present while they sort through and understand their grief.

For more information, call Sister Ann Bannon at 814.824.1253 or for a complete schedule visit www.ErieRCDD.org.



NPM Day of Reflection Oct. 24

ST. MARYS — The Erie Diocese Chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) will hold a Day of Reflection for Musicians on Saturday, October 24 at St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys.

Although this day is designed as a retreat for musicians serving in parishes throughout the diocese, clergy are encouraged to attend as well as anyone interested in music and liturgy.

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., and the retreat will conclude at 2:30 p.m. The fee for this event, which includes lunch, will be \$8 for members of the local NPM Chapter and \$10 for non-members. Father Stephen Concordia, OSB, will be the retreat master. For more information, call Rita McConnell at 814.591.2362.



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that prevent federal funding of abortion and health benefits packages that include abortion.

"Abortion is far from the only issue of interest to Catholics monitoring health care reform. In a July 17 letter to Congress, Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Center, chair of the US Bishops' Domestic Justice and Human Development Committee, explained that health care is a critical component of the Catholic Church's ministry.

"The church provides health care, purchases health care and picks up the pieces of a failing health care system," he wrote.

"The Catholic community encounters and serves the sick and uninsured in our emergency rooms, shelters and on the doorsteps of our parishes. One out of six patients is cared for in Catholic hospitals. We bring both strong convictions and everyday experience to the issue of health care."

Multiple sources have speculated about care of the elderly, the disabled and the terminally ill under the proposed health care reform bill. The church's position is that any legislation must address the medical needs of the elderly, disabled and terminally ill to ensure compassionate and quality health care, regardless of their ability to pay or quality of life. It must also reflect the inherent

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



St. Boniface quilters give to Kuhl Hose Fire Co.

ERIE – The St. Boniface Quilters recently donated quilts to the Kuhl Hose Fire Co. The quilts are for those who are affected by fire or another disaster.

The quilters meet every Wednesday at the Greene Township Municipal Building to hand-piece large quilts for non-profit organizations to use in raffles for fundraisers. The Greene Township Lioness & Lions' Clubs and St. Boniface Parish spring and fall festivals are always first on the list to receive these quilts. However, when time permits, extra quilts are completed and given to other agencies. The quilters depend largely on donations of 100-percent cotton fabric.

Pictured are quilters Lila Buter-



baugh, Jean Teed, Betty Rose, Brenda Pyle, Marge Worley, Gloria Miller, Charlotte Kolesar and Rita and John Altman. The members of Kuhl Hose Fire Co. pictured are George Pencille, Joe Petrone Sr., John Foran, Chuck Will, Sarah Dorigan, Kelli Martin, Don Erbin Sr., Tom Allgeier and Dan Twaroski.

Smethport parishioners publish faith-filled poetry book

SMETHPORT – Ramona Mallison of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Smethport is well-known for writing inspirational poetry. In fact, Bonnie Frisina, another parishioner, found her poetry so impressive, she talked with other church members, Toni Morris and Judy Healy, about Mallison's poems, which were written for the parish women and shared for many years.

According to Morris and Healy, Mallison recorded her poems in personal notebooks.

"We discussed the idea of having the poems typed so she could share them with her friends and family," Frisina said. "Ramona agreed and allowed me to type them."

Throughout that process, Frisina was reminded how Mallison spoke from her heart and how her faith influenced her life. "When I see her now," Frisina said, "I see this amazing lady with the light of the Spirit in her. She is gentle and kind, and through her poems, we can see the love of God. What I wanted to share with the entire parish is that anyone they meet, those people are the likeness of Christ."

Frisina discussed the idea of compiling a book of poetry with Mallison, and they selected the poems they thought would be appropriate. Frisina found one of the poems, "Do You Know Prayer?" so inspiring that she chose that for the title of the book.

Parishioners were also invited to submit their own poems for this book. Frisina herself contributed



From left to right are Shirley Good, Romona Mallison and Bonnie Frisina with a copy of their poetry book, "Do You Know Prayer?"

10 poems to the effort, including "Ramona, Child of God," inspired by Mallison. Parishioner Shirley Good submitted several poems, including "I Wonder."

Mallison has been writing poems for at least ten years. What inspires her to write her poetry? "Anything that touches my heart," she said. "Sometimes, thoughts come to me when I look out the window. I can't stand it when ideas are floating around in my head and heart. I have to put them on paper."

As Frisina assembled the book, she included Bible quotes or hymn verses, which could be helpful in prayer, hoping they would motivate readers to read the Bible or think about the words they were

singing at Mass.

Sixty books were printed and quickly sold out. The \$500 in proceeds was donated to the parish and has been earmarked for catechism classroom dividers.

The book has been so well received that a second volume is in the discussion stages.

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Knights of Columbus aid Barber Institute in Girard

GIRARD – Knights of Columbus member Tim Knapp (second from left) presents a donation to Jennifer Lawrence, adult day services program manager at the Girard campus of the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute. Joining them are, from left, Theresa Fullerton, associate instructor at the Barber Institute, Ralph Snyder of the Knights of Columbus and Gary Bukowski, vice president for advancement at the Barber Institute. Each spring, the Knights of Columbus hold fundraising activities to benefit the Girard campus of the Barber Institute. The \$1,000 raised this year will be used for construction of a wheelchair ramp at the facility located on Lake Street in Girard.



Photo courtesy of Becky Fusch/West County News-Journal

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