



Pleas for peace and justice

Impending immigration reform before the U.S. Congress and looming military involvement in the civil war in Syria this month has prompted the Catholic Church to ask the faithful to pray and work for peace and justice.

Below are excerpts from Pope Francis' call for a global day of prayer and fasting for peace in Syria, as well as excerpts from letters supporting immigration reform from Erie Bishop Lawrence Persico and the Catholic bishops of Pennsylvania.

See full texts at www.ErieRCD.org.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Bishop Lawrence Persico:

"Immigrants are an important part of our communities in northwest Pennsylvania. Migrant workers play a key role on many of the farms in our diocese. The Catholic Church has always provided spiritual, educational, health, and social services to immigrants because we believe that all children of God deserve the same rights and freedoms we enjoy. Hundreds of refugees, who receive permission to come to the United States as a result of persecution in their homeland, are settled in the Erie area each year, many with the help of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie."

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has created an e-postcard that can be directed to your legislators based on your zip code. To participate, go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org/index.shtml. Send a message to elected officials by going to www.pacatholic.org and clicking on "Pass Immigration Reform."

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Pennsylvania's Catholic bishops:

"The Church seeks fair and realistic immigration reform that upholds the God-given dignity of every human being. As Jesus taught us, 'what you do for the least of my brethren, you do unto me.' (Matthew 25: 35 - 41). Therefore, we, the Catholic bishops of Pennsylvania, urge support for reforms that:

- Provide a reasonable path to citizenship for undocumented persons living in the United States.
- Preserve and strengthen family unity as a cornerstone of our immigration system.
- Offer legal avenues for low-skilled immigrants to work in the United States.
- Restore and respect rights of due process for individuals caught up in the immigration system.
- Promote efforts to address the root causes of migration, such as poverty and persecution.

People of good will can legitimately disagree about the specifics of immigration reform, but the time is clearly long past due for America to fix its broken system."

SYRIA

Pope Francis' plea for prayer and fasting:

"With great suffering and concern I continue to follow the situation in Syria. The increase in violence in a war between brothers, with the proliferation of massacres and atrocities...leads me once again to raise my voice that the clatter of arms may cease. It is not confrontation that offers hope to resolve problems, but rather the ability to meet and dialogue."

See and read more at www.usccb.org/news/2013/13-157_cfm.

Immigration reform pushed by Catholics in Erie, nation

Mary Solberg
FaithLife

Catholic activists, priests, religious communities, and parishes in the Diocese of Erie and throughout the country are making a push this month for comprehensive immigration reform.

Bishop Lawrence Persico joined Pennsylvania bishops in calling for changes to current immigration laws in the United States. He said the church needs to protect the basic dignity of immigrants and their families.

"The Catholic church has always provided spiritual, educational, health, and social services to immigrants because we believe that all children of God deserve the same rights and freedoms we enjoy," Bishop Persico said in a statement released Sept. 8 to all Catholics in the Diocese of Erie.

Much of the 13-county diocese is rural and dependent on migrant workers for farm production, the bishop continued.

"Most undocumented immigrants never commit a violent act and want only to contribute to American prosperity," Bishop Persico added. "Our farms and businesses rely on their services."

As members of Congress returned for its fall session this past week, the call for reform was timely and crucial. In June, the U.S. Senate voted to adopt immigration legislation. It's now the House of Representatives' turn to act on how to secure borders, provide fair economic opportunities for migrant workers, and simplify the path toward citizenship.

According to a statement released Sept. 3 by Pennsylvania's bishops: "Our church is an immigrant church, built by our ancestors who left difficult situations abroad to establish communities where they could work, support their families, and be free to worship and live in accordance with their beliefs. Today's immigrants seek the same opportunities."

These statements are among the latest examples of ongoing work by the nation's bishops to change current immigration law. It's an admirable effort, says Erie Benedictine Sister Pat Lupo, because it aims to bring a human face to the complicated immigration debate.

Having worked with undocumented refugees since 1988, Sister Lupo and the Benedictine community have seen first-hand how the current immigration laws have affected people's lives. More than 20 years ago, the Benedictines provided sanctuary for refugees who sought political asylum



CNS photo

Activists with the immigration rights group Border Angels carry wooden crosses to a U.S. bishops' news conference on immigration reform legislation this summer at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in San Diego. The wooden crosses represent undocumented workers who have died crossing into the United States.

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from the war-torn countries of El Salvador and Guatemala, and are still in touch with some of those people who continue to live in the shadows of undocumented status.

Today, Sister Lupo chairs the Erie-based Hands Across Borders, comprised of the Erie Peace and Justice committee, Community United Church, and the international Voices on the Border.

The organization raises awareness of the impact of the wars in Central America, and maintains a sister-parish relationship with Salinas El Portrero in El Salvador. It is broadening the discussion by talking with local universities and churches.

Sister Lupo and Benedictine Sister Annette Marshall assist families that are documented and living in Erie, as well as those people who are still struggling through the morass of immigration rules.

"I know undocumented children who have been here for 15 or 20 years; surely, they have a right to citizenship. This is the only country they know, this is where they have grown up. Most of them have never returned to their country. It would be a tragedy if they were deported," Sister Lupo told FaithLife.

She would like to see a "speedy enactment" of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act with an option for community service in lieu of military service. And Sister Lupo encourages all people to participate in the U.S. bishops' postcard campaign to legislators. (To participate, go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org/index.shtml.)

Last winter, the Conference of Benedictine Priories joined voices with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), and others in pushing for a bipartisan legislative effort to reform immigration laws.

According to the Benedictine statement, "As immigrants themselves, our Benedictine foremothers understood the needs of immigrants coming to this country.



Sister Pat Lupo, OSB

"The people (immigrants) who I work with here in Erie, in Canada, and in El Salvador are a very resilient and compassionate people.

They suffer so much in their own country and yet they are always looking for ways to create a better life for their children. They are warm, loving, and can't do enough for others.

I think of them as the 'Resurrection People,' and they have a very special part of my heart."

See IMMIGRATION, page 2

Shenango Valley Catholic schools go high-tech, high spirit

HERMITAGE—Parents talked and the administration of the Shenango Valley Catholic School System listened.

Based on the results of a recent parent survey of its more than 500 families, Father Michael Allison, president, has beefed up the faculty programs, and technology of the three Catholic schools in Hermitage, Mercer County. In its third year as a pre-K through 12th-grade system, Father Allison has depended on the collaboration of everyone in this small rural community.

"Everybody is committed... faculty, parents, schools, staff, local pastors. There's just a wonderful desire to put together a successful and thriving enterprise," Father Allison said.

The Shenango Valley Catholic School System is known locally as the Kennedy Catholic Family of Schools. Blessed John Paul II Elementary School includes pre-K classes and is located in a building separate from Kennedy Catholic Middle School and Kennedy Catholic High School.

This academic year, several new teachers and two campus ministers have been hired at the elementary through high

schools. Also, Father Allison appointed and the administration of the Shenango Valley Catholic School System listened. William C. Lyon, who has 35 years of experience as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal at three different public school systems in Pennsylvania.

"Our new principal is a seasoned veteran. He is as good as they get and will bring professionalism and great wisdom," Father Allison added.

Administrators recognized the importance of tapping into the energy of students by hiring two new campus ministers, one for the high school and one for kindergarten through eighth grade. Jim Evans, a social studies teacher at Kennedy Catholic High School, also has taken on new duties as dean of students at the high school.

Some big technology changes have occurred this year, too. By Oct. 1, all three schools will be able to access high-speed commercial wireless. New 23-inch touch-screen computers have been installed in each classroom, and elementary school teachers will have access to 30 iPads, with another 30 expected to be purchased in the future.

According to Pete Iacino, vice president, all of the technology improvements are expected to



Contributed photo

Father Michael Allison, center, walks with students representing each of the three schools that comprise the Shenango Valley Catholic School System. Pictured, left to right, are: Mara Reed, grade 8; Emilee Vargo, grade 8; Taylor Hood, grade 12; Andre Campbell,

grade 11; Nolan Cianci, grade 11; Father Allison; Gavin Cianci, grade 12; Colin Gramley, grade 5; Hunter Kos, grade 7; Haylaya Bradac, grade 6; and Kyara Lowe, grade 5.

be completed by Oct. 1. It was a process started about a year ago. The school budget and ongoing funding from other sources have helped pay for most of the changes.

"There are two ways to go: you

either move forward or backward and we are committed to going forward," Iacino said.

To help parents navigate all the changes, the school system has organized a new Ambassador/Mentorship Program. Ambassadors

have been trained to assist each new pre-K, kindergarten and fifth-grade family. It's a program that speaks to the willingness of everyone to work together, Father Allison said.

"It should be noted that the

Kennedy Catholic Family of Schools' administration took to heart the thoughtful and valuable feedback that we received from the parents' surveys that were conducted several months ago," Father Allison said.



■ Pope writes to Putin: No war

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis asked leaders of the world's 20 largest economies to "lay aside the futile pursuit of a military solution" to the Syrian civil war and promote instead a "peaceful solution through dialogue and negotiation."

The pope's words appeared in a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin, host of the G-20 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, Sept. 5-6. Also, the pope's foreign minister met with ambassadors to underscore the Vatican's concerns over the war, including the fate of Syria's Christian minority and the danger posed by extremists among opponents to the government of President Bashar Assad.

In his letter to Putin, Pope Francis wrote that, "from the very beginning of the conflict in Syria, one-sided interests have prevailed and, in fact, hindered the search for a solution that would have avoided the senseless massacre now unfolding."

■ St. Patrick's Cathedral in midst of \$177 million restoration

NEW YORK (CNS)—Tall metal scaffolding not only fills but surrounds New York's famed St. Patrick's Cathedral. What looks to the uninitiated like a zealous cleaning job is actually a painstaking \$177 million restoration.

If all goes according to plan, worshippers should appreciate how magnificent the iconic church looks when the work is finished without identifying anything that is truly different or out of place.

The work includes thorough research into original materials and drawings to ensure that the outcome reflects both the iconic stature of the 134-year-old building and the not-unlimited budget. The essential tasks include cleaning and repointing the marble exterior, which was damaged by the acidic atmosphere of the city and exacerbated by earlier repairs.

■ Sainthood cause considered for Vietnam chaplain

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As the sainthood cause for a Vietnam War chaplain gathers momentum, the priest was remembered at a Sept. 4 memorial Mass as a man "completely dedicated to the spiritual care of his Marines."

Father Vincent Capodanno, who died in Vietnam Sept. 4, 1967, was one of the "great priest chaplains," said Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

"The cause for his canonization is not for him, but for us," the archbishop said. "Others should know of his dedication and his desire to serve others. His was a response filled with faith to the master who laid down his life for the sheep."

Father Capodanno, a Maryknoll priest and Navy chaplain, died in Operation Swift in the Thang Binh district of the Que Son Valley. He went among the wounded and dying, giving last rites. Wounded in the face and hand, he went to help a wounded corpsman only yards from an enemy machine gun and was killed.

In 2002, Father Capodanno's canonization cause was officially opened. In 2004, the initial documentation for the cause was submitted to the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes. In 2006, a public decree of "servant of God" for Father Capodanno, a native of Staten Island, N.Y., was issued by the military archdiocese.

■ 9/11 depicted in stained-glass

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.—The twin towers of New York's World Trade Center during the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, are depicted in a stained-glass window at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in the New Dorp Beach section of Staten Island.

This year marks the 12th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks that claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 people in New York, at the Pentagon, and in Shanksville, Pa. Staten Island was among the hardest hit boroughs of New York City in terms of the numbers of firefighters lost that day.



CNS photo (courtesy of Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers) **Maryknoll Father Vincent R. Capodanno pictured in undated photo in Vietnam.**



CNS photo/Gregory A. Smetz **Stained-glass window depicting World Trade Center attacks.**



Editor's Notes
Mary SOLBERG

The Catholic Church has clinched its hipness this summer with Pope Francis taking "selfies" with teenagers in Rome and two convents vying for the top spot on Billboard magazine's classical music chart.

As if the pope taking cell phone photos of himself weren't cool enough, the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, based in Ann Arbor, Mich., reached the No. 1 position three weeks ago on Billboard's classical traditional music chart.

The community of Dominican nuns released its first CD, "Mater Eucharistiae," as "a little way for us to get into peoples' homes," said Sister Joseph Andrew Bogdanowicz, vicarress general. The peaceful, soothing sound of the CD's 13 songs centers on Marian devotion.

The average age of the Dominican sisters is 29, so they weren't against a little competition. In an interesting twist, they attained the top spot by bumping out the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of the Apostles, a cloistered convent in Missouri, whose CD "Angels and Saints at Ephesus" previously stayed at the No. 1 in the classical music chart for at least 13 weeks straight.

Search "Mater Eucharistiae" on YouTube to hear more about the making of the CD.

Of course, we have our own Benedictine Sisters in Erie. But they are not cloistered, nor do they have a top-selling CD. Mostly, they are known for their peace and justice work. *National Catholic Reporter* recently published its special ministries edition in which the Benedictines are recognized for their work in inner-city Erie.

Reporter Tom Roberts wrote a full-page spread titled, "Erie Benedictines' collection of ministries serves a wounded city." He writes: "In downtown Erie, you'll find some striking exceptions to the urban blight that is the norm. Most of those exceptions are the work of the women who are members of the Erie Benedictines and the ministries that have come to define their presence in this depressed city."

While some may debate his choice of the word "depressed," the article accurately depicts the care and concern that the Benedictines have given to the neediest in our inner city.

Many of us at the Diocese of Erie were shocked and saddened to hear the news about the Aug. 31 head-on crash that claimed the lives of six people along Route 219 in McKean County.

Four adults killed in the accident were members of parishes in St. Marys. They were: Gary Beigel, 62, and his wife, Elaine Beigel, 55, both of St. Mary Parish, St. Marys; and David Cuneo, 54, and Florence Donachy, 81, both of Queen of the World Parish, St. Marys. All their funerals were held last weekend at Elk County Catholic High School.

Also, a memorial service was held at St. Callistus Parish in Kane for the two children killed in the crash: Jarrett Costanzo, 6, and Olivia Douglas, 12.

Our deepest, heartfelt sympathies go out to the Catholic communities of Kane and St. Marys.

The newest priest in our diocese is Father David Renne, who already is living up to the accolades he received at his graduation ceremony last May from Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe.

Besides earning master of divinity and master of arts degrees, both with honors, Father Renne received two awards: the Diakonia Award and the Omer U. Kline, O.S.B., Excellence in Preaching Award.

The Diakonia Award is given for praiseworthy academic performance and service to the seminary community through building student morale and spirit, exercising leadership within the community, and demonstrating creative outreach to others.

The Rector's Council chose Father Renne as the recipient of the preaching award because he demonstrated excellence in preaching during his fourth year of study.

As this edition went to press, the world was still waiting to hear whether there would be a military response by the United States against Syria's alleged use of chemical weapons on its own people.

Pope Francis led 100,000 people in prayer in St. Peter Square at the Vatican last Saturday, saying, "War always marks the failure of peace; it is always a defeat for humanity."

It was good to hear so many parishes in our own diocese pray at Masses for a peaceful resolution to the Syrian crisis. I especially liked what Father Jim Kenneley, pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Mercer, said to his parishioners:

Responding to Pope Francis' call for a day of prayer and fasting for Syria, Father Kenneley asked his congregation to pick a day during the week to say a rosary for world peace and, if possible, skip three meals.

"There is much to pray about—then communicate clearly about—and finally to take action on to bring an end to irrational destruction of human life," Father Kenneley told me.

Benedictine Father Paul Taylor, a native of St. Marys, recently made news when he was photographed Aug. 17 with Pittsburgh Steelers offensive guard Ramon Foster during a workout session at the Steelers' football training camp on the St. Vincent College campus in Latrobe.

Father Taylor, who is executive vice president of the college, sure looked like a Steelers fan as he talked to Foster. Who wouldn't? The three-week camp draws tens of thousands of fans to the campus.

See Father Taylor's picture below.

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CNS photo **Pittsburgh Steelers offensive guard Ramon Foster shares a laugh with Benedictine Father Paul Taylor at football training camp, located at St. Vincent College, Latrobe. Father Taylor is a native of St. Marys, Pa., and executive vice president of the college.**

Immigration

IMMIGRATION, from page 1
They served well and nurtured faith in this new land."

Throughout the Diocese of Erie last weekend, pastors asked their congregations to consider the bishop's plea for immigration reform. Parishioners are encouraged to call their elected representatives as the fall session of Congress ramps up its discussion of immigration law.

At Prince of Peace Center in Farrell, Joe Flecher, director, said much of its outreach involves offering emergency aid to families and individuals,

not direct legal counseling to undocumented workers.

"We did have a family that was sent back because of immigration problems," Flecher added.

Like all of the Catholic Charities organizations in the diocese, Prince of Peace does not handle the specific legal needs of undocumented people. In the City of Erie, Catholic Charities assists people who are adjusting to a new life in the United States through its Resettlement Program for Refugees.

But, according to Mary Maxwell, director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Erie, that doesn't mean the church isn't serving the untold num-

bers of immigrants who are here illegally and seeking emergency help due to a lack of money, lack of employment, and separation from families.

Catholic Charities programs like Prince of Peace and St. Martin Center, along with various other independent emergency shelters and soup kitchens, offer free food and shelter to anyone who asks for it.

"We are pro-immigration reform," Maxwell said. "We do not have the expertise in helping undocumented immigrants, but if they are poor and in need, we will help all people who are in need."

Added Flecher, "We serve people regardless of circumstances."

Diocesan Rosary March coincides with Miracle of the Sun anniversary

ERIE—It's never too early to prepare for the annual Diocesan Rosary March, scheduled this year for Oct. 13.

Ironically, this year's walk coincides with the Miracle of the Sun, an event on Oct. 13, 1917, which was attended by 30,000 to 100,000 people in Fatima, Portugal. Newspaper reporters at the time testified along with many others that they had witnessed extraordinary solar activity that lasted about 10 minutes.

Three children also reported seeing a panorama of visions, including those of Jesus, Our Lady of Sorrows,

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, and of St. Joseph blessing the people.

The event was officially accepted as a miracle by the Roman Catholic Church on Oct. 13, 1930.

John Walsh, who is a member of the Erie Diocesan World Apostolate of Fatima, is excited about the correlation between this year's 19th annual Diocesan Rosary March and the Miracle of the Sun.

"It's definitely a unique year," Marsh said.

He expects between 200 to 300 people to participate in the walk, which starts at St. Peter Cathedral

in downtown Erie at 2 p.m. Marchers will walk from W. Ninth Street to State Street, north to Seventh Street, and back to the church, a 10-block area.

While they walk, participants say the rosary. Those who are unable to walk, stay inside St. Peter and recite the rosary.

Afterward, walkers gather again at St. Peter and participate in a Benediction and a Divine Mercy Chaplet.

"In all the 18 years we have had the Rosary March, it has never rained," Marsh said. "About 10 years ago, with faith and the Blessed Mother, we kept going despite the weather looking very threatening. We walked outside and it was beautiful."

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Briefly

PCC official to discuss living wills

GROVE CITY—Amy Hill, director of communications for the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, will speak on living wills Sept. 19 at Beloved Disciple Parish in Grove City. Hill's talk is titled, "A Conversation about Saying Goodbye: Advance Health Care Directives and Living Wills." The one-hour event begins at 7 p.m. and will include a question-and-answer segment. Beloved Disciple and the Office of Parish Social Ministry and Respect Life of the Diocese of Erie are sponsoring the event. For additional information, contact Erin Landini-Grogan at 814-824-1254 or by email at elandini@ErieRCD.org.

Diocesan seminarians to be recognized

ERIE—Knights of Columbus Council 4121 at St. Julia Parish in Erie is hosting a Mass and breakfast to support seminarians in the Diocese of Erie.

The Mass is scheduled for Oct. 27 at 9 a.m. at St. Mark Seminary in Erie, with breakfast to follow. Cost for the breakfast is \$10. Reservations can be made by calling 814-838-1775 or 814-866-7078.

Catholic Rural Ministry hosts overnight retreat at Olmsted Manor

LUDLOW—Catholic Rural Ministry in Oil City is hosting an overnight retreat Nov. 6-7 at Olmsted Manor Conference Center in Ludlow. Benedictine Sisters Marian Wehler and Anne McCarthy and Mercy Sister Tina Geiger will lead reflection and prayer and discuss ways to grow in faith and love. Overnight accommodations and four meals are included in the cost, which is \$45 per person (double), and \$55 (private room).

The reservation deadline is Sept. 17 by calling 814-677-2032. Send name, address, phone number, and a non-refundable deposit of \$25 to: Catholic Rural Ministry, 7 Pulaski St., Oil City, PA 16301.

Gannon breaks ground for \$14.5 million rec expansion in downtown Erie

ERIE—Gannon University broke ground Aug. 30 for a modernized recreation center on its downtown Erie campus. The first phase of the \$14.5 million project already is underway and will transform the block bound by Peach and Sassafras streets between W. Third and W. Fourth streets.

The expanded center will include:

- a 14,000-square-foot addition with a glass front facing W. Fourth Street

- a complete interior renovation that includes new locker rooms, new varsity weight room, and areas for wrestling and a new acrobatics and tumbling program
- a new Human Performance Center that will house a motion analysis lab and a human performance and testing lab, and serve as a space for collaboration between faculty and students in the physical therapy, sport and exercise science, human performance, occupational therapy, biomedical engineering, and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs

- a new 51,300-square-foot indoor field house to the west of the center on the W. Third Street side that will feature an 80-yard indoor field house allowing for year-round practice and increased intramural and club sports programs.

"People will look to the rec center as a place to get healthier and stronger," said Gannon President Keith Taylor.

The current construction is only the first phase of a comprehensive modernization of the center. Future phases of the project call for changes to the pool and to other existing spaces.



Photo courtesy of Gannon University

Leading the groundbreaking and blessing ceremony of Gannon University's recreation center are, from left to right: Bishop Lawrence Persico, Gannon University President Keith Taylor, and Gannon Student Government Association President Luke King.

Enrichment series continues at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery

ERIE—Alan Kolp, Ph.D., a professor of religion at Baldwin Wallace University, will speak at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in Erie on Sept. 18 at 7 p.m.

Dr. Kolp is presenting his address, "A Quaker in the Cloister: Shared Views of Contemplation," as part of the Benedictine's Enrichment Series that started in 2012. He is the author of *Fresh Winds of the Spirit*, and *Cannoy of Light and Love*.

He has authored two books with his business colleague, Peter Rea, titled *Integrity is a Growth Market: Character-Based Leadership, and Igniting Innovation with Integrity: Following the BRIC Road*. The event is free and open to the public.

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CALL OF THE WILD

Elk County parish handles elk problem

FORCE—Elk are a big problem for St. Joseph Parish in this rural area of Elk County.

For several years, the large creatures with massive antlers have wreaked havoc on the parish cemetery environment along Bennetts Valley Highway. It is a prime spot for elk as they feed on grasses, flowers, and sweet clover, and rub their antlers on trees.

"We needed to determine the best possible solution since the elk are not leaving and we needed to reduce damage to our cemetery," said Father Tom Tyler, pastor of St. Joseph.

Father Tyler and Rawley Cogan, the chief executive officer of the Keystone Elk Country Alliance (KECA), combined funding to purchase a 5-foot-high tensile steel electric fence to deter elk from entering the cemetery that is adjacent to the church.

Parishioners Jim Betta and Fran Bleggi worked with the contractor, BASH Fencing of Clearfield, to design the best approach to prevent elk from entering the cemetery while maintaining the aesthetics of the environment.

"Jim and Fran did an outstanding job of balancing all these needs and we are thankful for their efforts," Father Tyler said.

As an elk biologist, Cogan has



Contributed photo

The high-tensile steel electric fence that encircles the cemetery at St. Joseph Parish, Force, is expected to deter elk. The wires are located between the wooden posts. The inset picture above shows the new cattle guard crossing.

had extensive experience using high-tensile steel electric fencing for agriculture applications. KECA contributed \$5,000 toward the \$12,400 project.

"I know the problem will be greatly reduced if not eliminated," Cogan said.

The new fencing encircles the cemetery, but it still allows visitors

easy access. Walk-in gates and a "cattle guard" were installed. The guard is a device used to deter cattle and elk from crossing into a field while still allowing vehicles to cross without opening a gate.

The device is made of rounded cement columns placed horizontally across an access road. Elk and cattle usually will not step

into such a crevice due to unusual footing.

"KECA is honored to partner with St. Joseph's Catholic Church on this fencing project," Cogan added. "We look forward to continuing to be a valued member of our community."

KECA operates the Elk Country Visitor Center in Benetette.

A Catholic in Cairo

Only U.S.-born, native English-speaking Catholic priest in Egypt talks to FaithLife

Maryknoll Father Douglas May has visited the Diocese of Erie several times in the past 20 years, eagerly sharing his experience living with the people of Egypt.

Recent attacks on Christian churches and institutions in Cairo have not deterred the 64-year-old priest from staying in the city. Although Maryknoll closed its Middle East Unit in 1998, Father May received permission from his order to return to Egypt in 1999. He previously served there as a seminarian beginning in 1982.

FaithLife communicated via email recently with Father May, who is originally from the Diocese of Buffalo. When he is visiting the United States, he sometimes celebrates Coptic-rite liturgies in English and gives presentations on Middle East and Egyptian topics at nearby Chautauqua Institution.

Here is the conversation:

FaithLife: How many Catholic priests are in Cairo?

Father May: There are probably over 100 Catholic priests in Cairo of the seven Catholic rites in Egypt. I am the only U.S.-born, native English-speaking, American Catholic priest in Egypt. No other U.S. priests have wanted to be assigned here. There may be one or two U.S. military chaplains assigned to the MFO [Multinational Force and Observers] in Sinai assigned to the U.S. military here.

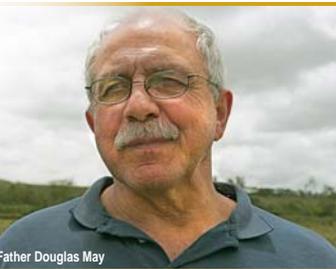
FaithLife: Do you feel safe? Where are you staying?

Father May: Yes, I feel safe. Currently, I am flat-sitting for one of my parishioners visiting family in Australia. Until this, I was living with the Franciscans at St. Joseph Church in downtown Cairo. I will either return there or move into a religious facility in the Maadi suburb of Cairo within the next week or two.

FaithLife: As a priest, what do you think your most important role is in a troubled nation like Egypt?

Father May: Over the years, and especially now, it has been important to offer what support I can to the local Coptic Catholic Church and offer pastoral services to the English-speaking Catholic expat communities in Cairo. I also do some translating and editing for the Coptic Catholic Patriarch.

There are about 22 nationalities that speak English as a first, second, or third language. After being part of the formation-education staff at the Coptic Catholic Seminary in Cairo for 10 years, I am "Uncle Doug" to many former seminarians who are now priests scattered



Maryknoll Father Douglas May

Contributed photo by Maryknoll

around Upper Egypt by "checking in" when I call/visit them or they call/visit me in Cairo. I am an "uncle" who listens, counsels, encourages, challenges, and gives them big hugs.

It is also very important that I review/critique media information reported in the West and give talks in the U.S. whenever/wherever possible. The misinformation about Egyptian and Middle-East issues is something that boggles my mind along with a lot of editorial bias by cable and regular networks.

FaithLife: The "Arab Spring," as you know, was simply a precursor to the upheaval that was to come. It is a complicated international situation, but what would you like people here to most understand about the turmoil in Cairo? Why is it important for us to know?

Father May: While most of us here prefer "Arab Awakening," maybe "Arab Spring" is now more appropriate as it implies that there are rotating seasons. Egypt has passed through several "seasons" over the last two and a half years. Egyptians have lived under military dictators for the past 60 years, the last 30 with the support of the U.S.

Illiteracy and poverty are major issues in Egypt along with all the socio-political, economic, and interreligious issues. Back in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, Egypt was much more secular than now. I call Muslim extremists the Ku Klux Klan of the Middle East as they hide behind Islam much the way the KKK hides behind Christianity. There is a great photo of the Klan meeting in a church in the U.S. back in the 1950s with a huge sign across the back of the church saying: "Jesus Saves." Now that the Muslim Brotherhood has shown how undemocratic it can be when it has power, the democratic election that put them in power is null and void. The hope is that there will be a new constitution and elections before the end of 2014. As much as the Egyptian military may have its own self-serving agenda, it is also what is keeping Egypt alive and moving forward right now.

FaithLife: What do you hope to accomplish by staying there? Are authorities asking you to leave?

Father May: I simply want to be as supportive a presence as I can for expats and Egyptians. The bishop of Minya wants me to work more with him once things calm down some. The German sisters here (most of whom are now German-speaking Egyptians) use me for pastoral services. In conjunction with a Dominican here, I am having the classic, *A Theology of Liberation*, translated from English into Arabic to be used as a text next year at the Catechetical Center in Cairo. The center has Catholic, Orthodox, and some Muslim students. I feel the principles of liberation theology might be helpful in the process of nation-building. No one is asking me to leave.

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7-10 pm Music and	Pot Roast Dinners
Dancing with Timeless	Bake Sale

Girls gather for overnight self-esteem program

PUNXSUTAWNEY—The first-ever Locked-In Faith Time (LIFT) for girls in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades was held recently at St. Cosmas and Damian School, Punxsutawney.

LIFT is designed to help girls develop their self-esteem, self-image, friendship skills, and prayer lives. Twenty girls participated in the overnight program.

Pictured, left to right, are Hannah Neal, a Gannon Univer-



sity junior and a LIFT volunteer; and students Kylee Lingenfelter, Katie Horner, Leah Miller, and Taylor Covatch.

Knights support pro-life initiatives

BROOKVILLE—Brookville Council 3966 of the Knights of Columbus, represented by Financial Secretary Dan Fiscus and Grand Knight John Palmer, presented a check in the amount of \$2051.80 to Vicki Metzger and Kate Nevins of Catholic Charities in DuBois for pro-life initiatives.

Funds were donated by the parishioners of Immaculate Conception Parish, Brookville, and St. Dominic Parish, Sigel.



Knights donation supports autism program

GIRARD—Knights of Columbus Pope John XXIII Council 5430 recently donated \$1,000 to benefit the Barber National Institute, Girard campus. The Knights raised the contribution through its annual "Measure Up" Campaign held in western Erie County. Proceeds will be used to fund a new service provided on the Girard campus for adults with autism, focusing on developing communication, reasoning, and socialization skills.

Pictured, left to right, are Gary Bukowski, vice president for advancement, Barber National Institute; Ralph Snyder and Mark Wilkoczek, both of the Knights of Columbus; and Jennifer Lawrence, program manager at the Girard campus.



Zabawa festival attracts large crowds



ERIE—The 20th annual Zabawa Polish heritage festival attracted large crowds at Holy Trinity Parish on Erie's east side Aug. 23-25. Folk dancers, Polish foods, and a Polka Mass highlighted the weekend. Pictured is Sophie Huff of Wiyaty Polish Folk Dancers.

Sharpsville youth earns rank of Eagle Scout

SHARPSVILLE—Samuel Vincent Ference, 16, a parishioner of St. Bartholomew Parish, Sharpsville, has been awarded the rank of Eagle Scout.

He is a member of Boy Scout Troop 45, sponsored by the Sharpsville American Legion. For his Eagle Scout project, he organized the planning and construction of a gazebo in the front courtyard of his parish.

An altar server and member of the Holy Name Society, he earned 31 merit badges and held several leadership positions with the Scouts.



Getting ready to sail to the bayfront

ERIE—This large sail was specially made for the 2013 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions at Erie's Bayfront Convention Center Oct. 8-12. About 200 people are expected to attend the meeting.

The sail is one component of the "Barque of Christ," a symbol of the Year of Faith which comes to an end in November. It will be hung from the ceiling in the worship space created at the convention center.

Attending the Chi-Rho on the sail are Joseph Streett, director of Religious Education for the Diocese of Erie, at left, and Matt Clark, director of the Office of Worship.

The registration deadline for the event has been extended. Call Matt Clark at 814-824-1270 for details.



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PARISH DAY

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 Sacred Heart Auditorium, 26th and Liberty, Erie

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Sunday, Sept. 22, 2013, Noon-4 pm
 St. George School Cafeteria: Takeout available
 Cost Adults - \$7 in advance, \$8 at the door
 Children 6 to 12 - \$4; Under age 5 - Free

Please purchase your tickets in advance at the St. George Rectory Office. Tickets will also be sold after Masses on Sept. 14 and 15.

Proceeds to benefit St. George Parish KOC projects.

19th Annual Erie Diocesan Rosary March

Sunday, October 13, 2013
 Saint Peter Cathedral (10th and Sassafras Sts., Erie)

Assemble at 2:00 pm
 Speaker: Msgr. Richard Sullivan
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 More info: John Walsh, 814-868-1100

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