

Roe Reality Check

Deirdre McQuade, U.S. bishops' rep on life issues, to speak at Clarion University, page 3.



FaithLife

Educator of the Year

Sister Kevin Berdis, OSF, honored by American Legion, page 4.



www.ErieRCD.org

BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

September 16, 2007

Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

Feast days



St. Vincent de Paul

Ss. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael

- Sept. 17 St. Robert Bellarmine
- Sept. 19 St. Januarius
- Sept. 20 Ss. Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang and their companions
- Sept. 21 St. Matthew
- Sept. 26 Ss. Cosmas and Damian
- Sept. 27 St. Vincent de Paul
- Sept. 28 St. Wenceslaus; St. Lawrence Ruiz and his companions
- Sept. 29 Ss. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael

Rainbows session begins Sept. 17

Rainbows, a grief support program for children who have experienced a loss in their life due to separation, divorce or death, will begin a 12-week peer group support session Monday, Sept. 17 from 7-8 p.m. at St. Mark Catholic Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd. in Erie.



The aim is to assist in building a stronger sense of self-esteem; and to direct participants toward a healthy resolution of the changes that have taken place in their personal lives.

There are four programs of support:

Rainbows — for children in the elementary grades

Spectrum — for adolescents who live in single-parent families or stepfamilies

Kaleidoscope — a peer support program for adults dealing with unresolved grief due to any type of parental loss

Prism — support for single parents, step-parents and for parents whose children are in the Rainbows program

For more information on Rainbows, call Catholic Charities at 814.824.1250 or visit www.ErieRCD.org.

100th anniversary Mass for Catholic Daughters Court in Kane area – Sept. 23

Bishop Donald Trautman will celebrate the 100th anniversary Mass for the Catholic Daughters Court in the Kane area on Sunday, Sept. 23 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Callistus Parish in Kane.

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas is the largest national organization of Catholic women in the world, dedicated to strengthening their spiritual life through Christ and the church. Catholic Daughters was founded in 1903 by the Knights of Columbus in Utica, N.Y. There are organized chapters in 42 states, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, the Virgin Islands and Guam.

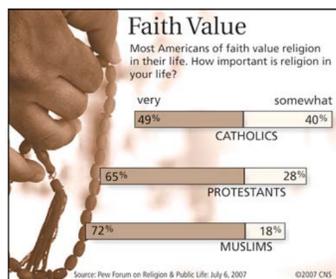
Members include Catholic lay and religious women 18 years or older who support the church and wish to participate in social and charitable activities.

For more information on the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, visit www.catholicdaughters.org.

Clergy appointments

Father Michael DeMartinis, appointed to residency at St. Andrew Parish, Erie, while continuing as campus minister at Cathedral Prep High School, Erie. Effective Sept. 1, 2007.

Deacon Richard Reed, appointed chaplain at Polk Center, Polk, for a term of three years while continuing as deacon assistant at St. Patrick Parish, Franklin. Effective Sept. 6, 2007.



Catechetical Sunday: Encountering the Living Christ

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

Each year in the United States, the importance of catechetical ministry within the midst of the community, both the diocese and the parish, is marked in a particular way on Catechetical Sunday.

This year, Catechetical Sunday is celebrated September 16 with the theme "Catechesis: Encountering the Living Christ."

In parishes throughout the Erie Diocese, those who have been delegated by the community to serve as catechists will be called forth and commissioned for their ministry. Approximately 1,800 catechists will serve religious education programs during the 2007-08 school year.

"The hours that these people put in are amazing," said Karen Streett, with the diocese's Office of Religious Education.

"And they're all volunteering. They are really committed to the ministry."

Joyce Tarr has been involved with religious education for more than 30 years, many of which were spent as a catechist. Tarr is the coordinator of religious education for St. Hippolyte Parish in Frenchtown and its mission of Our Lady of Lourdes in Cochranton. Like many catechists, she is driven by the idea of bringing others to Christ.

"I want to pass the faith down to young people and encourage parents to practice the faith and stay Catholic," she said. "Every year you learn more."

She says she has continually been inspired by her students over the years.

One former student, who is now a lawyer in New York City, calls her every time he comes home to visit. "You taught me how to pray," he tells her. "If it

wasn't for you, I never would be able to pray spontaneously."

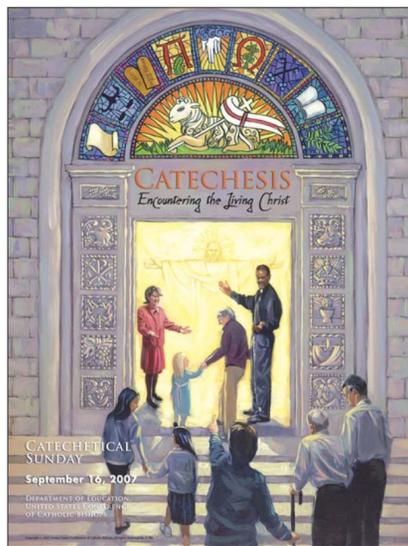
Another year there was a mentally challenged girl in her class. Tarr also serves as a Eucharistic minister. During one Mass, after giving the girl Communion, she said, "Thank you for my Jesus, Joyce."

"That was really touching," Tarr recalls.

Two of her former students, her son and one of his friends, taught religious education at Holy Rosary Parish in Erie while they attended Mercyhurst College.

"I was really proud of them for wanting to teach religious ed and pass on the faith," she said.

The artwork for this year's Catechetical Sunday theme attempts to capture the idea that catechesis serves as a doorway through which Christ is encountered.



Bringing hope and God's compassionate presence

Sisters begin Catholic Rural Ministry in Clarion, Venango counties

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

Nine years ago, two sisters accepted the challenge to bring a permanent presence of women religious to McKean and Potter counties.

Today, two more sisters are following in those footsteps, this time to Clarion and Venango counties.

Sister Clare Marie Beichner, SSI, and Sister Marian Wehler, OSB, officially began Catholic Rural Ministry on Sept. 1 in the Oil City Deanery of the Erie Diocese, which includes Clarion and Venango counties. They will also cover parts of Crawford and Forest counties, including Titusville and Marienville.

In Pennsylvania, any area that has less than 274 people per square mile is considered rural by the state.

Their mission, they say, is one of hope.

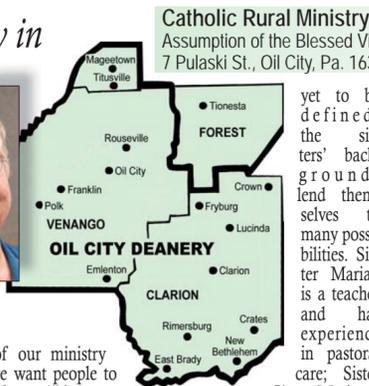
"We need people of hope," said Sister Marian. "Our goal



Sister Clare Marie Beichner, SSI



Sister Marian Wehler, OSB



Catholic Rural Ministry
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish rectory
7 Pulaski St., Oil City, Pa. 16301 Ph. 814.677.2032

is to bring hope and God's compassionate presence."

The sisters have set up shop in the vacant rectory of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Oil City. Having already set up a prayer room in the rectory, the sisters say they are getting to know one another by sharing daily prayer. They are from two different religious communities; Sister Clare Marie is a Sister of St. Joseph of Northwest Pennsylvania and Sister Marian is a Benedictine Sister of Erie.

"Prayer will be an essential

part of our ministry and we want people to know that we'll be praying for them and their needs," Sister Marian said. "We're inviting people to pray for us, as well."

Hitting the ground running, the sisters have been getting to know people in their neighborhood. They've spoken at area Masses, met parish councils and attended neighborhood association meetings.

"We're really listening at this point," Sister Clare Marie said. "We want to let the Spirit lead us so we can meet the needs of the people."

While the ministry has

yet to be defined, the sisters' backgrounds lend themselves to many possibilities. Sister Marian is a teacher and has experience in pastoral care; Sister Clare Marie is also experienced in pastoral care, as well as social work, and will serve as a resource person for St. Elizabeth Center in Oil City.

Possible areas where they may offer assistance include spiritual support, parish support and resources, social needs in the community and pastoral outreach.

"We want to meet people, help them define their needs and build partnerships with parishes and faith communities," Sister Marian said. "We know that this has to be Spirit

led." The sisters do not want to duplicate current ministries in the area but rather connect to them.

"We want to be a bridge builder in that way," Sister Clare Marie said. "The first thing in evangelization is getting to know the people. I think that will come very quickly."

Last year, priests of the deanery were introduced to Sister Phyllis Schleicher, OSB, and Sister Mary William Hoffman, OSB, who have developed Catholic Rural Ministry in McKean and Potter counties over the past nine years. They were impressed with the results and decided to develop the ministry in their area.

"We're looking forward to having their presence with us," said Msgr. John Herbein, dean of the Oil City deanery and pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Franklin, of Sister Clare Marie and Sister Marian. "They will be appreciated by our parishes. This will be a real boost in our area."

Honduran cardinal visits Mercyhurst College

Cardinal Rodriguez celebrates Mass, lectures on social justice, solidarity

By Jason Koshinski
FaithLife editor

ERIE — Even though he is thousands of miles away from his hometown of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Andres Fernandez felt right at home on Sept. 7 after seeing a familiar face.

That familiar face belonged to Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, the archbishop of Tegucigalpa, who paid an exclusive visit to Mercyhurst College.

Fernandez, a senior computer systems major at Mercyhurst College, was confirmed in 2000 by Cardinal Rodriguez at Cristo Resucitado in Tegucigalpa. He was an altar server at the college's opening Mass of the Holy Spirit at Christ the King Chapel, which was celebrated by Cardinal Rodriguez and Bishop Donald Trautman.

"It's an honor, a real blessing," Fernandez said of the cardinal's visit.

Dr. Thomas Gamble, president of Mercyhurst College, said it was an honor that Cardinal Rodriguez accepted the college's invitation to celebrate the college's Mass of the Holy Spirit, a time-honored tradition that is the



In his lecture, "Social Justice and Solidarity in the Globalized World," Cardinal Rodriguez said solidarity with the poor is one of the oldest themes in human history, a theme that recurs time after time.

official welcome of the school year.

He noted that one of the reasons the cardinal accepted the invitation was as an acknowledgement of the college's diversity, particularly as the home of almost 40 Honduran students at the main campus. That is the second largest contingent among international students after Canadians. There are 240 international students from 34 countries studying at Mercyhurst College, which accounts for about seven percent of its

3,300 undergraduate enrollment.

In addition to concelebrating Mass, as well as delivering the homily to the Mercyhurst community, the cardinal gave a free public lecture, on "Social Justice and Solidarity in the Globalized World," in the Arts D'Angelo Performing Arts Center later that evening.

Cardinal Rodriguez, 64, is the first cardinal from Honduras and only the second from Central America. During the papal conclave in 2005, Cardinal Rodriguez was considered by many church observers as a candidate to succeed Pope John Paul II. His commitment to social justice issues and campaign for human rights and the impoverished have won him widespread praise.

His evening presentation to the near-capacity crowd at the D'Angelo Center was warmly received. His voice rose and fell with passion as he underscored various points with impeccable timing and a masterful command of the English language.

The cardinal opened his lecture by saying that solidarity with the poor is one of the oldest themes in human history, a theme that recurs time after time.

"As a pastor of a church, we must always be close to the poor," he said. "I must try



Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga meets with a group of Honduran students during his Sept. 7 visit to Mercyhurst College. The nearly 40 Honduran students represent the second largest international contingent on the college's main campus.

to reconcile the solidarity with the poor with the fact that many people are affected by poverty and for them, solidarity is only a dream. I am conscious that I must be a bridge that unites the two positions that separate the rich and the poor. I must make the effort to judge the history of humanity not as a march towards division of the classes, but always as a hope that through sacrifice, struggle and perseverance, solidarity is possible."

The cardinal expounded on the value of education early in his talk, addressing the many students who had come to hear his lecture. He said that a sincere person will find that a quality, contemporary Catholic education has a uniquely valid role in a globalized society. He said Catholic schools are privileged with

quality education and try to give a mission of life as a gift.

"With this gift is an obligation to fully develop humanity," he said. "For me, one of the most important aspects of Catholic education is that it empowers students with an expanded capacity for ethical and moral perspectives. To make good decisions and act compassionately in the dynamic, modern world."

Moving into his thoughts on globalization, the cardinal said that as a consequence of faith, he believes the Catholic perspective must include the conscious dedication to the globalization of human rights and human dignity.

"We must globalize human solidarity so as to include sharing the riches of the earth



IN THE U.S.

With an intense thunderstorm providing eerie sound effects, Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes of New Orleans told hundreds gathered at St. Louis Cathedral Aug. 29 in commemoration of the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina to persevere in their faith despite the pitfalls of a painfully slow recovery. Explaining that "hurricane" is a West Indies word for "divine wind" and Katrina means "cleansing," Archbishop Hughes told the congregation, which included Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco, that believers have a responsibility to remain hopeful that God will deliver them from the worst natural disaster in U.S. history.

More than \$10 million was distributed by the U.S. bishops' Hurricane Recovery Task Force to the two dioceses hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina two years ago. The "Rebuild Church, Rebuild Hope" collection approved in June 2006 by the bishops distributed \$6,175,103.41 to the Archdiocese of New Orleans and \$4,116,735.60 to the Diocese of Biloxi, Miss. The first national collection to support hurricane relief and recovery efforts generated more than \$130 million. The \$10 million in funds was raised in a collection in U.S. parishes last year on the weekend closest to the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

AROUND THE WORLD

Pope Benedict XVI urged a megagathering of Italian young people in Loreto, Italy, to embrace Christ and "go against the current" of a culture marked by violence, arrogance and selfishness. The pope also struck a strong ecological theme, saying young people need to press for courageous changes to save the planet "before it's too late." An estimated 500,000 youths applauded the pope's words at a prayer vigil Sept. 1 and at a Mass the following day, on a hillside next to the Marian shrine of Loreto. The weekend assembly also

featured music and skits, but the highlight was clearly the pope's presence.



CNS photos

Pope Benedict XVI waves to the faithful as he arrives to lead a meeting with young people in Loreto, Italy, Sept. 1.

In Calcutta, India, the head of the Missionaries of Charity prayed for victims of the Aug. 25 bomb explosions in Hyderabad, India, during this year's commemoration of the birth of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. "We need to pray that those responsible realize their wrongs. We should also ask pardon from God for those involved and pray for their repentance," Mother Teresa's successor, Sister Nirmala Joshi, told reporters Aug. 26, the 97th anniversary of the birth of the Missionaries of Charity founder.

Cardinal Keith O'Brien of Saint Andrews and Edinburgh in Scotland has announced his resignation from Amnesty International to protest the group's new policy to fight for the decriminalization of abortion around the world. Cardinal O'Brien said it was with "great sadness" that he quit an organization he joined as a student more than 40 years ago. He said he was no longer able to support the human rights group in good conscience after it voted at a mid-August meeting in Mexico to fight for abortion rights.

Salvation through Christ is open to all, but the way is not easy because it requires a real commitment to love and justice, Pope Benedict XVI said. The pope, speaking Aug. 26 to hundreds of pilgrims at his summer residence outside Rome, said that when Christ told his disciples the gate to heaven was narrow he

did not mean it was for the privileged few. "Christ's message goes in the opposite direction: Everyone can enter into (eternal) life, but for everyone the gate is narrow ... because it requires commitment, renunciation and mortification of one's own egotism," the pope said. Christ made clear that people will ultimately be judged on the basis of their works in this world, he said.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

"Bible Road: Signs of Faith in the American Landscape" visually captures what happens when America's love of commercialism intersects with its deep-rooted Judeo-Christian faith. The book of documentary photographs is the work of photographer Sam Fentress, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in University City. It took him 25 years to collect the material and two decades to get his book published. The 160-page book came out earlier this year from the British publisher David & Charles.



This photograph taken in 1984 at a gas station in Palma, Ky., is one of more than 100 images in the book "Bible Road: Signs of Faith in the American Landscape."

More powerful than bodybuilder-turned-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger? Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity who is president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, the trade group for Catholic hospitals, finished first in the sixth annual reader poll conducted by *Modern Healthcare* magazine of the 100 most powerful people in health care. Schwarzenegger, the governor of California, finished third.

By the Way...

Msgr. Robert Smith, vicar general, will represent the Erie Diocese at the installation Mass of Bishop David Zubik as the 12th bishop of Pittsburgh on Friday, Sept. 28. Bishop Zubik will be installed at St. Paul Cathedral in Oakland at 2 p.m. Msgr. Smith will concelebrate the Mass with visiting clergy.



Jason Koshinski

Msgr. Smith, who is also director of the diocese's Office for Protection of Children and Youth, was pleased to learn the diocese has once again passed its annual audit from the U.S. bishops with flying colors. Look for an update in these pages soon.

Our apologies to David Renne, who was inadvertently left off the listing of the diocese's new and returning seminarians in our last issue. David, from Ss. Cosmas and Damian Parish in Punxsutawney, is studying at St. Mark Seminary and Gannon University in Erie.

October 13 marks the 90th anniversary of the last apparition of the Blessed Mother to the shepherd children at Fatima. Many churches throughout the world will be marking that date with a rosary. The 13th annual rosary march sponsored by the World Apostolate of Fatima will begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 14 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie.

Vatican officials said a new book detailing Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta's long "crisis of faith" illustrates her spiritual strength in the face of doubt. "This is a figure who had moments of uncertainty and discouragement, experiencing the classic dark night that God gives to chosen people in order to forge them on the road to holiness," said Spanish Cardinal Julian Herranz, a member of the Congregation for Saints' Causes. "These moments of crisis felt by great saints are normal and in line with the church's tradition."

The letters have been published in English in the book, "Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light," edited by Father Brian Kolodiejchuk, a member of the Missionaries of Charity order founded by Mother Teresa and the postulator of her sainthood cause.

Time magazine's Sept. 3 cover story, "The Secret Life of Mother Teresa," was well balanced, fair and a very good read. It is available at www.time.com.

St. Vincent College in Latrobe will host a first-ever gathering of Mother Teresa's family and close friends Oct. 5-7 to celebrate her life's work on the 10th anniversary of her death. The highlight of the three-day conference will be an address by Sister M. Nirmala, MC, successor to Mother Teresa and superior general of the Missionaries of Charity, who will be traveling from Calcutta. Father Kolodiejchuk will also be a featured speaker.

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

Religious communities notice more young women open to religious life

By Andrea Slivka
Catholic News Service

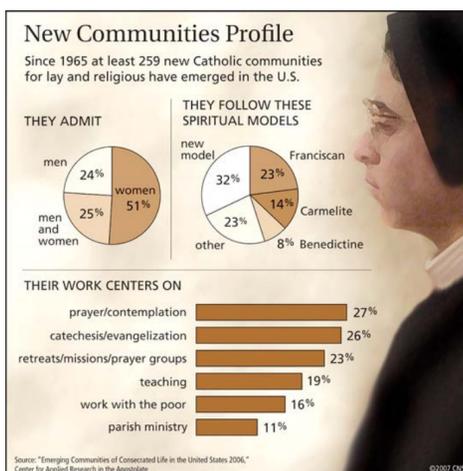
WASHINGTON — Girls often dream of saying "I do" at the altar to their future spouse.

Katrina Gredona hopes she'll be saying those words to Jesus as a religious sister. "When I look at a community of religious women, I see women who contribute fruitfully to the church and to the world in a very special way and in a very essential way, and I think that's exciting," said Gredona, a student at Seton Hall University in New Jersey.

Ten years ago, Gredona's interest in religious life would have been unique in comparison with the majority of other Catholic girls, as reports indicated a decline in the number of religious sisters in the United States. But recently campus ministers and the vocations directors of some women's religious communities have been noticing a new trend of more young women looking into religious life.

Many vocation directors, in interviews with Catholic News Service and in responses to a survey by Vision Vocation Guide, reported a notable increase in the number of women contacting them for information. A small number of communities reported a stable increase in young entrants.

In a recent survey sent to 165 communities' vocations directors, 71 percent said more people inquired about their community recently. Nineteen percent said they have had more candidates preparing to enter in the past three years than in previous years. However,



41 percent said they currently have no women in formation.

The survey was conducted by Vision Vocation Guide, a magazine for those discerning vocations to the religious life and priesthood, and 80 percent of respondents were for women's communities.

Sister Mary Gabriel, vocations director for the Sisters of Life, said the girls she talks with want more than what the society and culture have to offer and are drawn to the freedom they find in religious life through living the vocation to which they are called.

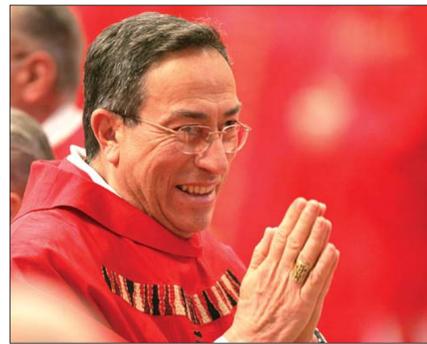
"It's not a kickback to the '50s. It's so different. Young women have seen it all," she said.

In answer to questions sent to them by CNS, young women shared the reasons they're open to and discerning religious life.

The late Pope John Paul II plays a large role in the new trend, according to several vocation directors and campus ministers interviewed by CNS.

At World Youth Days, the pope challenged young people to live their Catholic faith in a radical way and to not be afraid to seek out God's will for their lives, said Sister Mary Emily Knapp, vocations director for the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Nashville. Many of the sisters have told her they first started thinking about vocations at a World Youth Day.

Honduran cardinal visits Mercyhurst



CNS photo

Cardinal Rodriguez celebrated Mercyhurst's Mass of the Holy Spirit with Bishop Donald Trautman. The Mass traditionally has been the official welcome to the new academic year.

CARDINAL from page 1

for the common good with firmness and equity, with respect for options for the poor and self-determination of communities," he asserted. "If we accept the globalization of wealth, technology and power without the globalization of human rights and human dignity, then we have failed in our duty as educated Catholics."

Rich countries no longer need great deposits of gold or diamonds, or an abundance of land or millions of people, he said. They need to educate their population. Those who do not study, suffer, he said, noting that few societies have the discipline it takes to invest and support an effort that will pay off in decades instead of months.

He also offered some statistics, saying the total number of living human beings in Latin America who struggle with chronic malnutrition is equal to about one-third of the population of the United States. Sixty percent of the world population lives in dire poverty, he said, explaining that experts in human development put those earning less than \$2 a day in this category.

While acknowledging the complexity of numerous social issues, Cardinal Rodriguez turned

to Scripture for answers.

"The Gospel teaching is not an intellectual solution," he said. "My Lord, our Lord is direct. He leaves no alternatives. It is yes or no. You are compassionate or you are not compassionate in favor of the Lord." He then emphasized two points concerning Jesus' teachings, the love of peace and the love of neighbor.

"There is no love without peace," he insisted, "there is no peace without love. Peace and love are the foundation of solidarity."

In addressing immigration, he said the solution lies in development, which comes from social justice and human dignity. He added that the real and greatest enemy of peace is poverty.

Bringing his remarks to a close, the cardinal said he felt joy in speaking about the Gospel in which he and the audience believed.

"The Gospel is still alive in all of us and full of so many challenges," he said. "It tells us to be born again of water and of the Spirit. To live the love of our Lord Jesus Christ by imitating him and seeing in our neighbor's eyes, our Lord himself, who on the final day of judgment will say, 'Whatever you have done to the least of my brothers, you have done to me.'"

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Briefly

Bishops' rep on life issue to speak at Clarion University

CLARION — Deirdre McQuade, spokesperson for the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference on life issues, will speak at Clarion University's Hart Chapel on Tuesday, October 9, at 7:30 p.m. The talk will be entitled, "Roe Reality Check: Taking A Second Look at Abortion."

Currently serving as the director of planning and information for the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, McQuade holds master's degrees in philosophy and theology from the University of Notre Dame. She has worked previously as the national program director at Feminists for Life, director of pastoral research and outreach for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, as well as working as a grant program analyst in the Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institute of Health.

McQuade has been invited by Students for Life at Clarion University, thanks to a generous grant from the Immaculate Conception Council of the Knights of Columbus.



Deirdre McQuade

Bishop Zubik to speak at 2007 Pennsylvania Pro-Life Conference

PITTSBURGH — The Most Rev. David A. Zubik, bishop-designate of Pittsburgh, will deliver opening remarks and the invocation at the Celebrate Life Banquet November 3 at the Radisson Hotel Pittsburgh Green Tree.

The banquet is part of the 2007 Pennsylvania Pro-Life Conference, the statewide event sponsored by the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation Education Fund.

Bishop Zubik, who has been serving as Bishop of Green Bay, Wisconsin, is a dedicated spokesman for the pro-life cause and an energetic advocate for the most vulnerable members of our society, including unborn children and their mothers.

Bishop Zubik will be joined at the banquet by Christian singer and abortion survivor Gianna Jessen. Jessen miraculously survived a doctor's attempt to abort her when she was an unborn baby. She has since gained fame as a Christian singer and a powerful speaker on behalf of the sanctity of human life.

The conference will also feature a talk by Michael Clancy, the photojournalist who captured the famous "Baby Samuel" picture showing an unborn baby reaching out from his mother's womb. In addition, Dr. James Rossetti will explain some of the medical miracles attributed to adult stem cell research, which is considered an ethical alternative to anti-life embryonic stem cell research.

Other sessions include presentations on the "life" issues affecting members of Generation Y and the untold story of the post-abortive woman.

The registration deadline for the conference is October 19. To register for the conference, visit www.paprolife.org or call the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation at 717.541.0034.

The Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation is a grassroots right-to-life organization with members statewide. As the state affiliate of National Right to Life, PPLF is committed to promoting the dignity and value of human life from conception to natural death and to restoring legal protection for the unborn.

Deaf & hard of hearing retreat Sept. 28-29

ERIE — A deaf & hard of hearing retreat in sign and voice will be conducted by Sister Rita Pickhink on September 28-29 from 7 p.m. Friday through 9 p.m. Saturday at St. Mark Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd, Erie.

The theme is "Love of God, Neighbor and Self." Msgr. Robert Siffrin will celebrate Mass and penance in sign.

Meals and overnight accommodations will be provided for a \$10 donation. Scholarships and money for transportation are available. Contact Jackie Johnson at 814.824.1257, toll free at 800.374.3723 or e-mail JJohnson@ErieRCD.org.

Sister Rita has a master's in deaf education from Canisius College in Buffalo and has worked with the deaf as a teacher and researcher. She has also served as a pastoral worker and diocesan coordinator for the deaf.

Msgr. Siffrin is a former pastor of the deaf community in Youngstown, Ohio. He is the vicar general of the Diocese of Youngstown and pastor of St. Edwin Parish.

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As antidote to megachurches, many seek small Christian communities

From staff and wire reports

ST. PAUL, Minn. — In an age of cavernous megachurches, where parishioners sometimes outnumber pastors 2,000 to 1, it can be easy to get lost in the masses, so to speak.

Mounting evidence suggests, however, that a worldwide movement to reclaim the sense of community upon which the church was founded is taking shape. This movement has spawned a new parish model, in which parishioners regularly gather in more intimate groups for prayer and faith-sharing.

Approximately 50 percent of U.S. parishes report having small Christian communities, according to a recent National Pastoral Life Center study.

Attendance at a recent convocation on small Christian communities in St. Paul attested to how widespread this grass-roots phenomenon, which began about three decades ago, has grown.

Catholics from 23 U.S. states and at least nine other countries, including South Korea, Mexico and Tanzania, gathered at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul Aug. 9-12 to share their ideas for organizing and sustaining parish-based small Christian communities.

Father Art Baranowski, founder of the National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities, told a packed room that he believes the church today is failing to transform people's lives.

"By and large, I could say that people in parishes do not have a communal way to be transformed by the mind of Christ," he said.

U.S. parishes often focus on implementing more and more programs rather than creating authentic community, the priest said, adding that small Christian communities provide an alternative to the activity-driven parish model.

"Small communities, in addition to the Eucharist on Sunday, ...get people to realize what it means to live the faith every day," Father Baranowski said after his talk. "Ordinary people help each other do that by speaking from their life experience. That can't happen at Mass on Sunday," he added.

Sister Nancy Fischer, SSJ, director of community formation and lay minister training for the Erie Diocese, not only attended the gathering in Minnesota but also presented workshops on facilitator training and the inclusion of RCIA candidates into small faith sharing communities. All of these national groups, no matter their approach, have one aim, she

WHY CATHOLIC?

The second session of Why Catholic? is quickly approaching. Here is a reminder of some key dates:

- Sept. 15-16 — Sign-up Sunday in parishes
- Sept. 22-23 — Prayer commitment Sunday

With sign-up Sunday and Catechetical Sunday falling on the same day, some parishes have elected to move the sign up and prayer commitment Sunday back a week.

- Oct. 7 through Nov. 11 — Weekly group sessions

Area retreats for all parishes participating in Why Catholic? will be held the week of Dec. 1-6

Training for all Why Catholic? small group facilitators will be held from 7-9 p.m. at the following locations:

- Mon., Sept. 24 — Queen of the World, St. Marys
- Tues., Sept. 25 — Notre Dame, Hermitage
- Wed., Sept. 26 — St. Mark Center, Erie
- Thurs., Sept. 27 — Meadville area

said, and that's to build up the church.

"In the past, because of the way society was, there was a sense of community built into family, neighborhoods and the church itself," she said. "But with social mobility and a lot of other things that are going on in the world itself, we need to go back to being community for our members. In order to defend our faith in a society that doesn't necessarily keep Christian values at the center, we need to support our members in the living of their faith."

Approximately 50 parishes in the Erie Diocese are getting ready to begin session two of year two of *Why Catholic?*, a national program designed to help develop small faith sharing communities. *Why Catholic?* is a four-year program focusing on the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

"During *Why Catholic?*, people experience two things," Sister Nancy said. "One, they have learned more about their faith through studying the Catechism. The byproduct of that is the way that they're doing it. In this communal model, they're also growing closer and deepening their relationships with one another. For some people, that's just as important as learning more about the faith."

SSJs announce Spirit of Courage honorees

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania will host the 11th Annual SSJ Spirit of Courage dinner on Tuesday, October 9 at the Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center in Erie. WSEE's Raychel Vendetti, a previous Spirit of Courage honoree, will again emcee the event.

The SSJ Spirit of Courage Awards honor individuals who have shown remarkable courage in overcoming adversity. Secondly, the event raises funds to support various ministries and community service projects of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

This year's honorees are Beverly Davis-Migliaccio, Joshua Dolecki, Stephanie Tate, Liz Triglio and Lori Zampogna. WSEE will air a preview of each honoree's story Tuesdays in September during its 6 p.m. newscast beginning September 4.

Beverly Davis-Migliaccio was born with lymphagenoma, a disease in which non-cancerous tumors grow throughout the inside and outside of her body. She struggled to fit in and the strain on

11th Annual SSJ Spirit of Courage Awards Dinner
Tuesday, October 9
Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center, Erie
\$30 per person
For more information or to make reservations, contact Kristina Huber at 814.836.4202 or e-mail kristina.huber@ssjerie.org.
Learn more about the Spirit of Courage awards at www.ssjerie.org.

her family was too much. She was adopted at age 14 into a family better equipped to help her overcome her challenges. Despite the amputation of her left arm, she plays piano. She is a graduate of Mercyhurst College and serves on several local boards and advocates for others.

Joshua Dolecki began drinking and using drugs at the age of 12 and LSD and crystal meth at 14. He finally was receptive to help and at just 24 years old, is four years in recovery from chemical dependency. His motto, "one day at a time," has led him to a job at Millcreek Community Hospital as

a chemical dependency technician. He now attends Mercyhurst College and is studying to become a registered nurse.

Elizabeth (Liz) Triglio, an emergency room nurse at Saint Vincent Hospital for many years, privately suffered several terrible personal losses. She has endured the death of an infant daughter, two sons and her husband all at young ages. She maintains an upbeat attitude and has a goal in life to make others comfortable and happy.

Although born with cerebral palsy, Stephanie Tate chooses to live an independent life despite

Starting a small Christian community

Catholic News Service

Barb Howard, the founding national coordinator of Small Christian Community Connection, offered several tips for parishes interested in starting small Christian communities:

- Introduce people to small groups during Lent. Many publishers and organizations have developed small-group programs and resources designed specifically for the Lenten season.

- Use as many tools as possible to make parishioners aware of small Christian communities. Include information on the parish Web site and in the bulletin, create a newsletter, design a brochure, have the pastor speak about small Christian communities from the pulpit and post a sign-up sheet.

- Create a kit for members of small Christian communities. Include items such as a cross, a compact disc of sacred music, a booklet of Sunday Scripture readings with reflections, a list of prayer rituals suitable for small groups, ideas for outreach, a candle and anything else that might facilitate prayer and faith sharing.

- Organize an event, such as a potluck dinner, a retreat or a movie night, for all of the parish's small groups to come together.

- Set up a small Christian communities resource room at the parish.

- Encourage people participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults to join a small Christian community.

"Otherwise they'll be walking right out the door they walked in," Howard said.

limitations that require a personal care attendant. She graduated from Edinboro University with a master's in communications and provides service coordination and skills training for others with physical disabilities. She is a member of YEP (Young Erie Professionals), volunteers at Shriners Hospital and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. She has also tried her hand at adaptive sailing.

Lori Zampogna lost her mother in a tragic car accident, was diagnosed with MS, went through a divorce and was diagnosed with ovarian cancer all within 10 years. Yet she quietly dealt with these things and continues to receive daily treatments for her MS. This human resources professional with the Millcreek School District is sought out for her professional advice and compassion. She is an active volunteer with the American Cancer Society and is a mentor for those newly diagnosed. She also has a support group in the school district for those who have been diagnosed with cancer.

DEATH NOTICE

Msgr. A. Joseph Book dies at 70

Served as educator, parish priest

ERIE — The Reverend Monsignor A. Joseph Book, 70, died August 30, 2007 at St. Vincent Health Center, Erie.

Born May 16, 1937 in New Martinsville, W. Va., he was the son of the late Albert J. and Jenny Irvin Book. Msgr. Book attended St. Joseph School in Warren and graduated from Warren Area High School in 1955.

He entered St. Mark Seminary in Erie and went on to earn a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore in 1957. He completed seminary studies at Theological College and Catholic University in Washington, D.C., in 1963. He was ordained as a priest on May 23, 1963 at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie by Bishop Edward P. McManaman. His home parish was St. Joseph Parish, Warren. In 1992, Pope John Paul II

named him a Prelate of Honor to His Holiness with the title of monsignor.

Following ordination in 1963, Msgr. Book was assigned to the faculty of Elk County Christian High School (now Elk County Catholic), St. Marys, while residing at Holy Rosary Parish in Johnsonburg. He was also athletic director of the school. In 1967, he was reassigned as parochial vicar at St. Paul Parish, Erie, and part-time faculty member at Cathedral Preparatory School. In 1976, he was appointed as pastor of St. Cosmas and Damian Parish, Punxsutawney, where he remained



Reverend Monsignor A. Joseph Book

until 1987. In 1987, he was named episcopal vicar for the Eastern Vicariate of the Diocese of Erie, serving in this capacity until 1994. As vicar, he resided first at Holy Redeemer Parish in Warren, then at St. Joseph Parish in Warren and then, following realignment of the vicariate in 1988, at St. Tobias Parish in Brockway from 1988 to 1994.

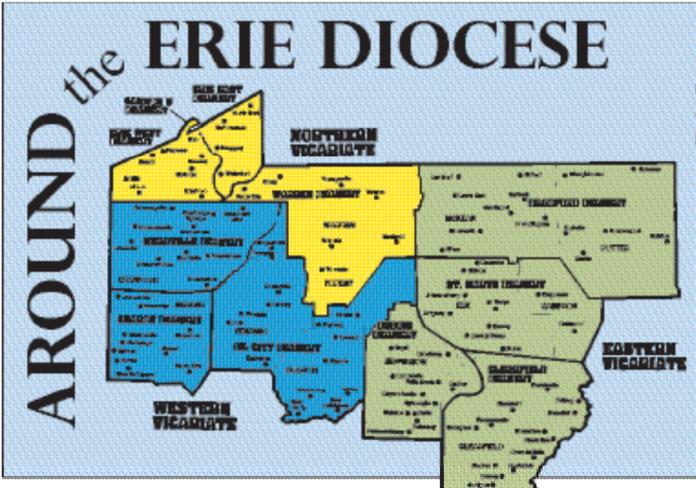
During his years as eastern vicar, he also served briefly as vicar general of the diocese in 1989 and as parochial administrator of St. Mary Parish in Frenchville from 1991 to 1992. Likewise, he served on the bishop's administrative cabinet, as well as on the diocesan finance commission.

In 1994, Msgr. Book was named pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenville and its mission of St. Margaret in Jamestown, serving there until 1999. In that year, he was named pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in McKean, serving there until his retirement in 2004.

Burial was in the priest circle of St. Joseph Cemetery, Warren.

St. Stanislaus Church
Annual Parish Day
Sunday, October 7, Noon-6pm
Parish Hall: 520 E. 13 St. (handicap accessible)
"Polish Platter Dinner"
(includes kielbasa, golabki, pierogi, and more)
Homemade czarnina and noodles for sale as takeout
Adults: \$8, Children 6-12: \$3.50, 5 and under: FREE
•Cash Prizes •Bake Sale •Proceeds benefit
•Children's Games •Chinese Auction St. Stanislaus
•Raffles •Theme Baskets Parish

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AROUND the ERIE DIOCESE

Parish correspondents

FaithLife encourages all parishes, missions, schools and groups to choose a correspondent who regularly submits news items to *Around the Erie Diocese*.

E-mail your parish news

Many parish correspondents have found e-mail to be a quick and easy way to send news to FaithLife.
FaithLife@ErieRCD.org

Sacred Heart searching for past, present Girl Scouts



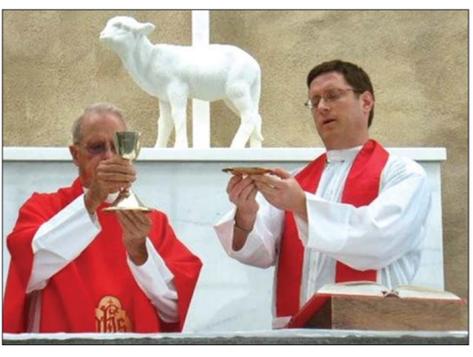
ERIE — After more than 70 years, the Girl Scouts at Sacred Heart Parish in Erie are getting ready to say goodbye. Due to the closing of Sacred Heart School, the Girl Scout movement at the parish will no longer exist. Sacred Heart is searching for all its past and present Girl Scouts, who are invited to a final gathering. The parish will host "The End of an Era" on Sunday, Sept. 23 from 1-4 p.m. in the church auditorium. Bring your memories to share and join the troop one last time. Light refreshments



Clockwise: Troop 102 in 2005; Erie Zoo parade 1997 with Brownie Troop 169; investiture ceremony, 1987. will be served. For more information or questions, call Kay at 814.864.6681 or Joanne at 814.825.4755.

Priests celebrate Mass at Our Lady of Knock Shrine in Ireland

Msgr. John Hagerty (left), a retired priest and former pastor of Notre Dame Parish in Hermitage, and Father Rich Toohy, pastor of St. Mary of Grace Parish in Meadville, concelebrated Mass at Our Lady of Knock Shrine in Ireland during an Aug. 4-12 visit. Knock Shrine, recognized as Ireland's national Marian shrine, is located in County Mayo on the West Coast of Ireland and the western edge of Europe. The story of Knock began on Aug. 21, 1879 when 15 people witnessed an apparition of Our Lady, St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist at the south gable of Knock Parish.



Commemorating the centenary of the apparition, Pope John Paul II visited the shrine in 1979, inspiring greater devotion. The shrine is visited by 1.5 million pilgrims annually.

Reynoldsville Knights of Columbus hold pro-life fundraiser

REYNOLDSVILLE — The Reynoldsville Council of the Knights of Columbus No. 935 recently held a pro-life baby bottle drive. Empty baby bottles were distributed to members of St. Mary Parish in Reynoldsville and St. Joseph Parish in DuBois on Mother's Day. Parishioners were asked to fill the bottles with their spare change and return them to church on Father's Day. More than 400 bottles were distributed and \$2,972.98 was collected. The money was donated to the DuBois Chapter of The Citizens Concerned for Human Life.



Pictured from left to right, kneeling: Tom Shade, K of C district deputy, and Dick Reed. Standing: Tom and Judy Tarcson, Citizens Concerned for Human Life; Fred Deemer, campaign chairman; Jim McIntyre, Ron Hannah and John Kutoloski, members of the K of C.



St. Luke float takes first place at Youngsville corn festival

YOUNGVILLE — Pictured at left is the float entered by St. Luke Parish during the recent Corn Festival held in Youngsville. The float, with the theme "Corn is Medicine," won first place in its class. Pictured top left, Father John Neff, pastor of St. Luke and riding in the parade on his 1994 Honda Shadow, won the "People's Choice Award" for best looking motorcycle during the cruise-in.

Sister Kevin Berdis, OSF, named Educator of the Year

HARRISBURG — The American Legion Department of Pennsylvania, representing 285,000 members, has chosen Sister Kevin Berdis, OSF, principal of Holy Family School in Erie, as Educator of the Year for Pennsylvania. Sister Kevin was honored at the state convention held July 21 in Harrisburg. According to the award's description, the Educator of the Year must promote and possess the ideals of the American Legion, "For God and country." Sister Kevin was chosen for her academic achievements which include the encouragement of good citizenship through responsibility and service to the community. Her students participate in many patriotic functions throughout the year, and she



Pictured from left to right: Daniel Dougherty, state vice commander; Sister Kevin Berdis, OSF; and Kay Snyder, Educator of the Year committee. also invites alumni and parents returning from duty with the armed forces to speak at school. She encourages students to participate in Scouting and Junior ROTC. Sister Kevin was sponsored by Lake Shore Post 105, North East and the 29th District of the American Legion.

Mercyhurst College grads commissioned by Mercy Volunteer Corps

ERIE — Two Mercyhurst College graduates were commissioned by Mercy Volunteer Corps (MVC) for a year of service. Katy Gehringer, a Mercyhurst Prep alumna from Erie, has been assigned to Mercy Center, New York City, to work in an after school program with disadvantaged youth. Meghan O'Hara of Philadelphia will volunteer in shelter and food services at the Loaves and Fishes Clean and Sober Program in Sacramento, Calif. MVC is a volunteer program of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas that invites women and men to service with people who are economically poor or marginalized.



Pictured from left are Meghan O'Hara; Sister Michele Marie Schrock, RSM, MVC regional coordinator for Erie; and Katy Gehringer.

Parish missions

Our Lady of Peace, Erie
 Our Lady of Peace in Erie welcomes the team of Father Robert Vaughn and Father Ron Henery, two Dominican priests who will present "Walking with the Word," a four-day mission Sept. 17-20. All are invited to the daily Mass at 12:10 p.m. and the evening program from 7-8:30 p.m. Childcare will be provided. Plans for the week include vespers on Monday, Sept. 17 along with "People of the Book: Entering into the Story"; evening prayer on Tuesday, Sept. 18 with "God's Forgiveness: Closing the Gates on the Past" (confession will be available); "Living the Mystery of Eucharist" on Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 7 p.m. after evening prayer; and "If I could only Touch his Garment: God's Healing Love," on Thursday, Sept. 20 at 7 p.m., including both evening prayer and a healing service. The OLP Knights of Columbus will host a reception in the school cafeteria after Thursday evening's gathering.

Holy Redeemer, Warren
 Father Edward Litavec will present a four-day mission at Holy Redeemer in Warren September 23-26. The mission, which will focus on the meaning of the Eucharist, will open with an evening service at 7 p.m. on Sunday, September 23. Monday, Sept. 24, Tuesday, Sept. 25 and Wednesday, Sept. 26 will include two daily Masses at 7 and 11 a.m. and an evening service at 7 p.m. Confession will be available after the 11 a.m. Mass and after the 7 p.m. evening service. Father Litavec is a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and currently serves as pastor of St. Mary Czestochowa and administrator of St. Pius V in McKeesport. He has given retreats for many years at St. Emma Retreat House sponsored by the Benedictine Nuns of St. Emma Monastery in Greensburg.

Join Other Catholics on an...

Alaska Cruise

And Pacific Northwest Vacation

Join other Catholics and depart (your choice) May 11 or June 22, 2008 on this 15-day vacation including a seven-day deluxe Alaska Cruise with Holland America Line and a seven-day Pacific Northwest vacation with Your Man Tours. Mass will be celebrated daily while on board ship for those in the group who wish to participate. Your group will fly into Salt Lake City starting a six-night motor coach tour of the Pacific Northwest visiting Salt Lake City (including the Mormon Tabernacle, Beehive House and Great Salt Lake); Jackson Hole, Wyoming; Grand Teton National Park; West Yellowstone; two days in Yellowstone (Old Faithful) National Park; Montana; Lake Coeur d'Alene; the Grand Coulee Dam; Washington; the Cascade Mountains; and British Columbia. In Vancouver you will board your five-star ship, HAL's ms Statendam. Next, travel through a wondrous maze of forested-island and glacier-carved fjords, past charming coastal villages, migrating whales and calving glaciers to Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan and spectacular Glacier Bay. After the cruise you'll take a scenic drive to Seattle, spending one night before flying home. Prices for this 15-day vacation start at only \$1998 (per person, double occupancy) (add \$150 for the June 22 departure). Included is the seven-day deluxe Alaska cruise, seven nights hotels, lots of motor coach sightseeing throughout the Pacific Northwest, transfers, baggage handling, port charges and taxes. Enjoy springtime on the May 11 departure or longer daylight hours departing June 22. Add \$700 for round-trip airfare from Erie. \$100 deposits are now due. Friends and family are welcome.

For Information, Reservations, Brochure, Call 7 Days a Week: 'YOUR MAN' TOURS 1-800-968-7626

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