

## New faces at school

New principals named at St. Francis, Cathedral Center, Villa Maria Elementary, page 3.



# FaithLife

## Discerning God's call

St. Mark welcomes new, returning seminarians, page 4.



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BI-WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

September 2, 2007

## Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

### Feast days



St. John Chrysostom

Our Lady of Sorrows

Sept. 3	St. Gregory the Great
Sept. 8	The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sept. 12	The Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sept. 13	St. John Chrysostom
Sept. 14	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Sept. 15	Our Lady of Sorrows

### Confirmation schedule

St. Andrew, Erie – Sunday, September 9 at 2 p.m. Confirmation classes include Sacred Heart, Erie, and St. Andrew, Erie.

### Opening Mass of the Holy Spirit for Gannon, Mercyhurst

Gannon University and Mercyhurst College will host their traditional Opening Mass of the Holy Spirit, marking the beginning of the 2007-08 academic year for students, faculty and school community.

Bishop Donald Trautman will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m. on Sept. 6 at Gannon's Mary Seat of Wisdom Chapel. Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, SDB, of Honduras will be the homilist at the 11:15 a.m. Mass at Mercyhurst's Christ the King Chapel on Sept. 7.

### Cardinal Rodríguez lecture at Mercyhurst College – Sept. 7

Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, SDB, the first cardinal from Honduras, will pay an exclusive visit to Mercyhurst College on Friday, Sept. 7.



Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, SDB

Cardinal Rodríguez will deliver an open public lecture on "Social Justice and Solidarity in the Globalized World" at 8 p.m. in the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center. Tickets are free but are required. Call 814.824.3000 for more information.

### Legion of Mary congress – Sept. 8

The Legion of Mary of the Diocese of Erie will hold a congress of all active members in western Pennsylvania on Saturday, September 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Harborcreek. The theme of the congress will be "The New Evangelization." For more information, contact Ray Sullivan at 814.899.3215. To learn more about this apostolate, visit the Legion of Mary's unofficial Web page at [www.legionofmary.org](http://www.legionofmary.org).

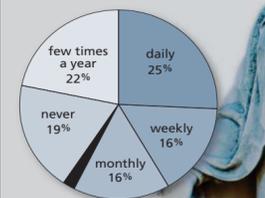


### Blue Mass at St. Luke, Erie – Sept. 9

The John Mark Gannon Assembly of the Knights of Columbus will sponsor a Blue Mass at St. Luke Parish, Erie, on Sunday, Sept. 9 at 2 p.m. Firefighters, police and EMS workers are invited to come in uniform and with equipment if possible. Mass will be concelebrated by Msgr. Tom Snyderwine, chaplain for the Erie Fire Dept., and Msgr. Dan Arnold, friar of the 4th degree assembly. The Blue Mass refers to the color of the uniforms worn by many public safety and law enforcement agencies and offers a special blessing to those in attendance.

### Popular Devotion

Many U.S. Catholics say they frequently engage in devotions centered on Mary. Those who take part in Marian devotions...



Source: LaMotte/Zogby Survey of Catholic Adults, Sept. 2007 ©2007 CNS

## Rosaries for Kids

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

John Walsh pulled up to St. Mark Catholic Center in a van with 15,000 rosaries for Bishop Donald Trautman to bless. That's 795,000 Hail Marys.

Walsh and his wife, Margie, members of St. George Parish in Erie, are a part of Rosaries for Kids, a joint effort between the World Apostolate of Fatima and the Knights of Columbus. Each year, Rosaries for Kids distributes 15,000 rosaries to students throughout the Erie Diocese.

Beginning soon after the new school year, the Walshes will hit the road, giving rosaries to every fourth- and tenth-grade student in the 40 Catholic schools and religious education programs in 124 parishes.

"We always wanted to tell the children that the rosaries have been blessed by a bishop and that the bishop said a special prayer for them," John Walsh said. "The little kids sit there with their eyes wide open, that they actu-

ally have a rosary that's been blessed by a bishop. It means a lot."

Before handing them out on their visits, Margie Walsh instructs students how to use the rosary and goes through the prayers.

Moving her hands across the beads, she said students are captivated by the prayer. Schools will sometimes recite a rosary after her presentation.

Without exaggerating, Walsh said she has received thousands of letters over the years from parents and students alike.

"Parents say the students swell up with the life of the rosary and feel a part of Christ's life while praying it," she said. "They want this. It's children many times that lead us to Christ. The rosary is meant for the young and the old, the rich and the poor. It's for everybody."

Rosaries for Kids, now in its 15th year, was developed in 1993 when the World Apos-



Photos by Jason Koshinski

tolate of Fatima and the Knights of Columbus united their efforts after discovering that both groups were conducting similar programs.

The Knights of Columbus supplies the funds for the beads, crosses and string. A group at St. George, along with groups from other parishes, works year-round making rosaries for the project.

Virginia Spaeder, coordinator of the rosary makers, orders the beads, distributes them



and keeps a count of who has what. Several women from the Mercy Center on Aging also contribute to this effort.

According to Spaeder's records, Helen Trocki is the champion rosary maker. Over the years, Trocki, who is in her 90s, has made 37,000 rosaries and counting, and Cornelia D'Aurora has made 8,000.

Stephen Cash, with the Greater Erie Chapter of the Knights of Columbus, said that over the years, Rosaries

for Kids has put more than 300,000 sets of beads in the hands of children.

The group has also given them to anyone who wants them, including the Soldiers and Sailors Home and VA Hospital in Erie. Boxes of rosaries were also sent to a group in Florida hoping to get a similar program started there.

"Anybody who needs a rosary, we give it to them," Cash said.

## Catholic Education Collection is Sept. 15-16

### Half of every dollar stays in local parish

Each year, the Catholic Education Collection helps pass on the faith in the Erie Diocese.

This special collection, which will be taken Sept. 15-16, also gives back to local parishes. Half of the collection stays in the parish, and the other half goes to the diocese, the majority of which goes to education endowments, which in turn fund many parish-based initiatives.

"That money comes right to the diocese and goes into our education and formation endowments," said Father Nicholas Rouch, the Erie Diocese's vicar for education.

The endowments fund parish and school initiatives, providing assistance to religious education

personnel, tuition assistance grants and continuing education opportunities for Catholic school teachers.

The Catholic Education Collection is the primary source for bolstering the endowments, Father Rouch said.

"There is a significant 'giving back' to the parishes with this collection," Father Rouch said.

St. Michael in Greenville promotes the Catholic Education Collection through first-hand accounts. Each year on the collection weekend, the parish asks those who have benefited through the endowments over the past year to speak at the parish Masses.

"It's a great way to do it because not only are they the ones who benefited, but they can witness about it through their own enthusiasm," said Msgr. An-

**DID YOU KNOW?:** More than 31,000 children are being educated about the faith in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs throughout the diocese.

drawn Karg, pastor of St. Michael.

This year, a group of junior high and high school students who traveled with Father James Campbell to Italy will speak about their vocational experiences visiting shrines and religious areas.

In previous years, Elaine Shearer, religious education coordinator at St. Michael, spoke about how the collection helped her receive her certification, and Mary Jo Lipani, principal of St. Michael School, has talked about various ways the school has been aided through the collection.

Since its establishment in 1991, the endowment has provided more than \$1 million in grants. Almost every parish and school in the diocese has benefited from these grants, Father Rouch said.

## 'Dedication to God and each other'

### Anniversary celebrations honor couples, marriage as vocation

By Emma Lee McCloskey  
for FaithLife

There was a camaraderie and union in the churches that was truly heartfelt among couples who were celebrating milestone wedding anniversaries.

"I was a little hesitant about going (to the diocesan anniversary celebration). It was my wife's idea," said Bill Jackson. Jackson and his wife, Patty, parishioners from St. George in Erie, attended the Mass at Our Lady of Peace.

"But once I was at the church, I felt just great as we joined others who were celebrating their anniversaries. We became a real faith community. It was an uplifting experience. You look around you and see all these other couples, from St. Marys to Frenchtown, and you are not alone in sharing this marker event."

The Erie Diocese's Family Life Office sponsored the annual anniversary celebration for couples celebrating their 25th, 50th or 60th wedding anniversaries in 2007 on Aug. 5 at Our Lady of Peace, Erie, and Aug. 12 at Immaculate Conception, Clarion, with Bishop Donald Trautman presiding.

"You truly preach the homily by your dedication to God and each other," Bishop Trautman told the couples. "Your lives speak louder and stronger than all of my words. By your Christian lives and by your witness of fidelity to your marriage vows, you teach all of us of the importance of commitment and a God-centered life. The wedding band on your finger is a symbol of your union with each other and with God."

Patty Jackson said the bishop connected well with the attending couples.

"Bishop Trautman asked all of us to go home and



Father Justin Pino (center) poses with his grandparents, Joseph and Christine Pino, who are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary this year, after the anniversary celebration at Immaculate Conception in Clarion. The chalice Father Pino is holding belonged to Father Joseph Meisinger, who performed the marriage ceremony for the Pinos in 1947 at St. Basil the Great in Coalport. The chalice was used during their wedding Mass in 1947 and was used by Bishop Donald Trautman during the anniversary Mass on Aug. 12. Father Meisinger served as pastor of both St. Basil the Great and Immaculate Conception.

Photo by Ann Budach

pull out our wedding photos and remember what a 'leap of faith' it was on our wedding day," she said. "He said that the leap of faith leads to a daily commitment and marriage is like a building block. Every day we are strengthening the foundation by our care for one another and in our roles as teachers for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. And it's true, just as it was for our parents and now for us."

Anniversary couples were also presented with scrolls honoring their years together.

"They are so beautiful, I'm going to frame mine and hang it in our home," Jackson said.

Art and Nola Aaron of Immaculate Conception in Clarion, who are celebrating 50 years, agreed that the experience far exceeded their expectations with the sentiment that it was a great event to hold in the

**FOR YOUR MARRIAGE**

Resources for living happily ever after

Are you married now? Or just thinking about it? The U.S. bishops launched [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org), the latest part of their multiyear National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage. The Web site includes dozens of tips and articles aimed at promoting healthy marriages. Articles available on [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org) include topics such as:

- General marriage stories:** A snapshot of marriage in the U.S., health, safety and sex (benefits for married people), economic impact/finances, why married parents are important for children
- What makes marriage work?:** Commitment, common values
- Issues couples are facing:** Infidelity, addictions, finances, careers, parenting, illness, intimacy and sexuality, infertility, domestic violence
- Preparing for marriage:** Ten important research findings on marriage and choosing a marriage partner, family of origin, spirituality and faith, children, intimacy and cohabitation, getting married in the Catholic Church and frequently asked questions
- Caring for your marriage:** Becoming a life partner
- Stages of marriage:** Newly married, middle years, later years, disillusionment, when to seek counseling
- About Catholic marriage:** Biblical roots of marriage, meaning and purposes of marriage, divorce and remarriage, cohabitation, contraception/Natural Family Planning, same-sex unions, marrying someone of a different religion

diocese.

"I had this thought while enjoying the liturgy with my wife of 50 years," Art said. "Often we pass through life without thinking, and for a time we stopped and reflected, and saw others of our vintage who have made it this far with the same spouse. What else can I say but time certainly passes when you're having fun!"

The Aarons said they appreciated having both their sons and grandsons there to witness the event.

Edward and Rose Pasqualicchio, celebrating their 60th and members of St. Jude in Erie, said they recalled their own wedding day in 1947 during the Mass.

"We felt very welcomed by our hosts," Rose said. "We felt special. There was camaraderie in the church. You could feel the presence of God."



## IN THE U.S.

■ Catholic Charities USA, the largest private network of social service organizations in the United States, plans to make site visits to local Catholic Charities agencies across the country over the next three years to see firsthand how they are living out their Christian commitment to help those in need. Armed with data from the visits, Catholic Charities USA will develop a plan on how the national association intends to better support its member agencies. Mary Maxwell, executive director for Catholic Charities in the Erie Diocese, said a local visit has not yet been scheduled. Site visits will assess staff, volunteers and clients of local agencies.



■ Pope Benedict XVI has named Bishop Robert J. Baker of Charleston, S.C., as the bishop of Birmingham, Ala. He succeeds Bishop David E. Foley, who retired May 10, 2005. The appointment was announced in Washington Aug. 14. Bishop Baker, 63, has headed the Charleston Diocese since 1999. He will be installed in Birmingham Oct. 2.



Bishop Robert J. Baker

## AROUND THE WORLD

■ Pope Benedict XVI appealed to the international community to quickly come to the aid of millions of people affected by severe flooding in South Asia. After praying the Aug. 12 noonday Angelus, the pope expressed his concern for the "numerous victims and millions of homeless" caused by the "serious floods" in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and China. More than 20 million people are homeless and hundreds more have died.

■ A group of young people wearing white T-shirts emblazoned with the word "pro-life" ended their walk across Canada to promote the pro-life movement and a culture of life. The Crossroads walkers, ages 18-30, left Vancouver, British Columbia, in mid-May. Their trek ended Aug. 11 on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. This was the first time a group has crossed Canada; Crossroads has been sending teams of young people across the United States since 1995. A team leader said the walkers offered their prayers and sufferings, blisters, aches and pains to God for the sake of "those who have no voices."

■ Offering prayers for the victims of the Aug. 15 earthquake in Peru and calling again for international assistance for survivors, Pope Benedict XVI announced that Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, personally would deliver a papal donation to relief efforts. Cardinal Bertone, who had a visit to Peru scheduled before the earthquake struck, expanded his late-August trip to show the pope's concern for the victims. The cardinal delivered a papal check for \$200,000 "for the urgent needs of the people" suffering the consequences of the disaster.

■ Bishops of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory said they are wrestling with issues facing their schools, including the fact that they are well patronized by non-Catholics yet too expensive for poor Catholics. Their pastoral letter, "Catholic Schools at a Crossroads," published Aug. 7, ushers in a debate on the future mission of the Catholic school system in Australia's most populous state, where shifting demographics have seen record numbers of students, but with an increasing number of non-Catholic students.

■ Catholic leaders in Austria hope the pope's Sept. 7-9 visit there will strengthen people's faith in God and encourage Catholics to evangelize, said Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna. "The biggest challenge

today is mission" and taking the Gospel message to others, the cardinal said. The cardinal said that now, "after very difficult times," there is "a great awakening" among Austrian Catholics, who realize "our society needs the Gospel, faith, prayer." In Austria, Catholics nominally make up 78 percent of the population of 8.1 million.

■ Manila parishes baptized more than 5,000 children 6 years old or younger as part of a Special Day for the Poor set by the archdiocese to commemorate its cardinal's birthday. Auxiliary Bishops Bernardino Cortez and Broderick Pabillo designated the special day to mark Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales' 75th birthday Aug. 10.



A boy waits for his turn to be baptized at a mass baptism at the cathedral in Manila, Philippines.

## PEOPLE OF FAITH

■ The National Association of Catholic Chaplains, a Milwaukee-based organization that certifies and supports chaplains and clinical pastoral educators, has named David A. Lichten its new executive director. Lichten will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new strategic plan for the association. He will represent the group to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Spiritual Care Collaborative Partners, the Catholic Health Association, the Catholic health care system and other agencies. He plans to bolster the association's recruiting and fundraising operations.

## By the Way...

Father Frank Ziemkiewicz, OSB, who has served as pastor of St. Mary Parish in St. Marys, has been named president of the Benedictine Military School and prior of the Benedictine Priory in Savannah, Ga. Father Frank is a priest from St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, which sponsors the school.



Jason Koshinski

Father Frank, who began serving as pastor of St. Mary in 1999, had his service interrupted by a tour of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq serving as a chaplain in the U.S. Army from July 2005 through June 2006.

While he was ordained a priest in 1984, the Army has been a large part of Father Frank's life. He received a commission in the Army's engineer branch in 1971 through ROTC and was on active duty in Germany from 1972-74.

After serving at Fort Stewart, Ga., in the 3rd Engineer Battalion where he had a company command and the Corps of Engineers, he left active duty and entered the monastery at St. Vincent. Following ordination, he served as a chaplain with the 339th General Hospital in Pittsburgh and the 464th Chemical Brigade in Johnston. He attained the rank of colonel before retiring in February 2007.

Many Benedictine priests from St. Vincent have served in St. Marys over the years. And that will continue at St. Mary Parish where Father Meinrad Lawson, OSB, has been named pastor and Brother Matthias Martinez, OSB, has been appointed as deacon assistant.

Sister Phyllis Schleicher, OSB, and Sister Mary Hoffman, OSB, of Catholic Rural Ministry in Port Allegany have sweet corn available. Those in the diocese's Bradford Deaconry or nearby area can place an order by calling the sisters at 814.544.8017 or e-mail [crm@zitomedia.net](mailto:crm@zitomedia.net). While the sisters provide spiritual support and pastoral outreach to many in McKean and Potter counties, they also have a 250-acre farm.

The 16th annual Walk for Life in Smethport will take place from 3-7 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 16 at Hamlin Lake Park. Proceeds benefit the works of the Twin Tiers Pregnancy Care Center in Bradford. A picnic with a live band will take place immediately following the walk. For more information or sponsor forms, call 814.368.3388.

For those who have never attended a Tridentine Mass and may be wondering what Pope Benedict's recent letter was all about or those who want to jog their memory of pre-Vatican II days, here's a chance. EWTN will televise the first Tridentine Mass in the Catholic station's history on Sunday, Sept. 14 at 8 a.m. The Mass will be celebrated by the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter.

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

## Author studied Mother Teresa's writings while promoting her sainthood

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A new book about Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta's writings on feeling abandoned by God has created a flurry of interest and media speculation.

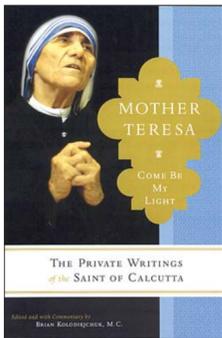
Missionaries of Charity Father Brian Kolodiejchuk, author of "Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light," the book that has caused the recent buzz, told Catholic News Service in 2002 about her writings and her concerns about "interior darkness" and spiritual emptiness. He said he was surprised about how much Mother Teresa accomplished despite feeling for years that God had abandoned her.

Father Kolodiejchuk examined the writings on which his book is based because he is the promoter of Mother Teresa's cause for sainthood. The Indian nun, founder of the Missionaries of Charity, was beatified in 2003.

The 416-page book published by Doubleday will be released Sept. 4, to mark the 10th anniversary of Mother Teresa's death Sept. 5, 1997.

Several of the letters and diary entries were published in 2001 in the "Journal of Theological Reflection" of the Jesuit-run Vidyajyoti School of Theology in New Delhi.

In a letter to her spiritual direc-



This is the cover of "Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light," by Missionaries of Charity Father Brian Kolodiejchuk. The new book about Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta's writings on feeling abandoned by God has created a flurry of interest and media speculation.

tor in a 1959-60 spiritual diary, Mother Teresa said, "In my soul, I feel just the terrible pain of loss, of God not wanting me, of God not being God, of God not really existing."

In another letter she wrote that she wanted to love God "like he has not been loved," and yet she felt her love was not reciprocated.

In the context of Mother Teresa's life, the thoughts are not her-

esy, but signs of holiness, Father Kolodiejchuk told CNS in 2002. Mother Teresa was convinced God existed and had a plan for her life, even if she did not feel his presence, the priest said.

"Everyone wants to share, to talk about things, to be encouraged by others," he said, but Mother Teresa, "hurting on the inside, kept smiling, kept working, kept being joyful."

At one point, a former archbishop of Calcutta, India, wanted to share some of her letters with the struggling founder of another religious congregation, Father Kolodiejchuk said. Mother Teresa begged him not to and asked that all her letters be destroyed.

When asked if he worried that he was betraying her wishes by publicizing the information, Father Kolodiejchuk told CNS, "I think her perspective is very different now."

While some people may be surprised or even shocked by Mother Teresa's spiritual struggles, he told CNS he hoped they would help people come to "a fuller and deeper appreciation of holiness, which Mother Teresa lived in a way both simple and profound: She took what Jesus gave with a smile and stayed faithful even in the smallest things."

## Mexican, civil church workers distribute aid in Yucatan Peninsula

### Diocese's Mission of Friendship assessing sister parish damages

From staff and wire reports

MEXICO CITY — Civil authorities and church workers began distributing emergency supplies and surveying damage the day after Hurricane Dean crossed the Yucatan Peninsula.

Meanwhile, communities on the Gulf of Mexico were bracing for the storm's second landfall Aug. 22.

Father Francisco Velazquez Trejo, a director for Caritas Mexico in the state of Campeche on the western side of the Yucatan Peninsula, said the hurricane had flooded the island city of Ciudad del Carmen. Dean also caused widespread damage to the region's agricultural fields and communities of indigenous Maya, many of whom live in impoverished conditions.

"The region's poorest inhabitants were the worst hit," Father Velazquez said.

The storm also leveled trees and power lines across a southern portion of the peninsula.

As of early Aug. 22, no deaths or serious injuries had been reported as a result of the storm.

Father Velazquez said his organization — the local affiliate of Caritas Internationalis, the international network of Catholic aid and development agencies — would provide emergency supplies to Ciudad del Carmen residents and was surveying the situation in other parts of his state.

Pat Marshall, director of international missions for the Erie Diocese, said she has made contact with the diocese's Mission of Friendship office in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico.

"The hurricane missed the Mission of Friendship and passed just south of them," Marshall said. "They are concerned about several sister parishes



that are in the outer areas."

The Mission of Friendship is a cooperative relationship between the Diocese of Erie and the Archdiocese of Yucatan, Mexico. Its sister parish program encourages an exchange between parishes in each diocese, enabling them to share spiritually and culturally. The Mission of Friendship also coordinates and provides volunteer staff for a number of projects that serve the poor.

Hurricane Dean slammed into the Yucatan Peninsula as a Category 5 storm in the early hours of Aug. 21, but weakened as it passed over land. At 9 a.m. Aug. 22, Dean was a Category 1 storm, and meteorologists did not expect it to strengthen past Category 2 again. It was advancing at 20 mph.

However, concerns were high that the storm could still produce a deluge that would loosen the earth and cause landslides in mountainous regions inland from the Gulf of Mexico.

Mexico's Caribbean coast appeared to have escaped the crushing hit that was feared. Flooding, electrical failure and downed trees were reported in Chetumal, 240 miles south of the tourist resort of Cancun, and surrounding areas. In Cancun and nearby areas, damage was light.

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## People in the News

### New principals named for 2007-08 school year

ERIE — Three new principals will be leading schools in the Erie Diocese for the 2007-08 school year.

Michael Spencer has been named principal of St. Francis of Assisi School in Clearfield. Darlene Kovacs has been named principal of Villa Maria Elementary School in Erie and Kathleen Lane has been named interim principal of Cathedral Center School in Erie.

Spencer, a member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Clearfield, previously served as a principal and director of personnel for the Clearfield Area School District.

"I've worked in education all my life and this was a wonderful opportunity to work with a great Catholic school," Spencer said. "St. Francis students have a wonderful reputation for academics, as well, and I look forward to the coming school year."

Kovacs has worked in the Catholic Schools Office of the Erie Diocese for the past five years, serving as the director of curriculum and teacher personnel. She helped develop the elementary and middle school curriculum in the diocese, as well as overseeing standardized testing programs and coordinating Act 48 reporting.

"I'm excited to be back in a school and work directly with students, their parents and teachers," she said.

Kovacs is an associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Villa Maria Elementary was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

She also served as the principal of Blessed Sacrament School in Erie from 1998-2002 and previously taught at St. George School in Erie.

"In her five years in the Catholic Schools Office, Darlene has made many positive contributions to the advancement of Catholic education in our diocese," said Father Nick Rouch, vicar for education. "We thank her for her dedication and support."

Lane has been working in Catholic education for 34 years. She has served as principal at St. Stanislaus School and Mount Calvary School in Erie and most recently taught 7th and 8th grade language arts for the past three years at Cathedral Center.

"I am really excited and looking forward to the new school year," Lane said. "We are going through the Middle States accreditation process and one of our goals we will be focusing on heavily this year is writing."



Michael Spencer



Darlene Kovacs



Kathleen Lane

### Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, receives LCWR award

KANSAS CITY — Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, received the 2007 Outstanding Leadership Award from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) on Sat., Aug. 4, at the annual assembly in Kansas City.

The award honors a woman religious who has made a profound contribution to religious life and the church.

Sister Joan was joined by 11 other Benedictine Sisters of Erie at a reception at the conference prior to receiving her award.

The LCWR is an association of leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States. The conference has more than 1,500 members who represent 68,000 women religious in the U.S.

Sister Joan served as president of the LCWR (1976-77), president of the Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses (1974-90) and was prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie for 12 years.

She is an award-winning author of more than 35 books. Currently she serves as co-chair of the Global Peace Initiative of Women, a partner organization of the UN, facilitating a worldwide network of women peace builders, particularly in Israel and Palestine. She is co-chair of the Network of Spiritual Progressives.

She is the founder and executive director of Benetvision, a resource and research center for contemporary spirituality located in Erie.



Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

## Benedictine Sisters of Elk County elect new prioress

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

ST. MARYS — The Benedictine Sisters of Elk County have elected Sister Jacinta Conklin, OSB, as the congregation's new prioress.

Sister Jacinta was installed during a eucharistic celebration in the St. Joseph Monastery Chapel on June 15, the feast of the Sacred Heart. Sister Laura Vallimont, OSB, speaking for the community, presented Sister Jacinta as the prioress-elect to Father James Faluszczyk, who as the presiding minister gave her a blessing.

Sister Jacinta is the 17th prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Elk County. She has been chosen to guide the community for the next four years. She replaces outgoing prioress Sister Laura Vallimont, OSB.

A native of St. Marys, Sister Jacinta attended Queen of the World School and Elk County Christian High School in St. Marys, and St. Scholastica College in Atchison, Kansas. In 1966, she entered the convent and made final

profession in 1974. She has served in a variety of positions including dietary aide, cook and most notably as maintenance supervisor of the buildings and grounds.

In 1842, the Benedictine Sisters of Elk County were the first Benedictine monastic community established in the United States. Today there are 21 sisters who serve in a variety of ministries including care giving, education, music, art and ceramics, gardening and recycling. The sisters also run Trifles and Treasures gift shop at St. Joseph Monastery.

"You have a simple life," Sister Jacinta said. "I was taught by sisters who were teachers and farmers when I was young. When it all came back to it, I loved the simple lifestyle. The sisters here are just homey. And they take great pride in their prayer life."

When asked what the community does best, she replied, "Pray. That's our best ministry right now."

Like many religious communities, Sister Jacinta said the sisters are faced with the challenges of an aging community and dwindling



Sister Laura Vallimont, OSB, (left) outgoing prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Elk County, poses with Sister Jacinta Conklin, OSB. Sister Jacinta was elected the 17th prioress of the community and recently installed during a ceremony at St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys.

numbers.

"We are looking for growth in our numbers, good women who are willing to serve God," she said.

## Sisters of St. Joseph install new leadership team

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania formally installed a new leadership team on Aug. 15.

The team includes Sister Mary Ellen Dwyer, SSJ, president; Sister Joyce Lowrey, SSJ, secretary; and Sister Moira Sullivan, SSJ, treasurer, and was identified through a congregational discernment process. On May 5, the congregation selected the new team, which was affirmed during a liturgy on Pentecost Sunday, May 27.

Members of the leadership team serve a four-year term. Canonically, the congregation lists a president, however, all members of the leadership team have equal authority and responsibility under the government model in leading the community of 129 sisters.

Members of the outgoing leadership team include Sister Ricarda Vincent, SSJ, president, and Sister Rosemary O'Brien, SSJ, secretary.

Sister Mary Ellen said the congregation's willingness to change and go where God is calling them inspires her.

"Our charism is that of unity. That lends itself to just about any ministry that is active with people of God," she said.

Like other religious communities, Sister Mary Ellen said the sisters face the challenge of caring for aging members, making sure their care is the best quality that they can give them.

"We also have a responsibility to create new ministries and missions going forward," she said. We still have several sponsored ministries. The questions we have to ask ourselves are, what are we going to take into the future and what are we going to have to let go of. Everything we do is really for the mission."

Sister Mary Ellen has served in leadership as treasurer for the congregation since 2003. She will continue for a second term and assume the responsibilities of president.



Pictured are members of the new leadership team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. From left to right are: Sister Moira Sullivan, SSJ, treasurer; Sister Mary Ellen Dwyer, SSJ, president; and Sister Joyce Lowrey, SSJ, secretary.

## Harrisburg think tank renews call for school choice

By Amy L. Beisel  
Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

HARRISBURG—This time of year there is a lot of talk about taxing and spending here in Harrisburg. The state legislature and the governor just agreed upon a \$27.5 billion spending plan for the 2007-08 budget, including \$9.4 billion for education.

The Commonwealth Foundation for Public Policy Alternatives, a Harrisburg-based think tank, recently released a policy brief that is renewing the call for school choice. The *Dollars and Sense of School Choice* report supports several conclusions:

- Per-pupil expenditures are substantially higher, and continue to rise more rapidly in traditional public schools than public charter, private and home schools.

- In the 2005-06 school year, public school districts spent, on average, nearly \$11,500 per student. The average cost per student in Catholic schools is far less.

- Alternative schools help

relieve the strain on both state and local public education budgets and taxpayers.

If every student who attends a non-public school now returned to their traditional public school, it would cost the taxpayers an additional \$3.073 billion.

Based on enrollment, cost per pupil and cost of operation, Catholic schools in the Erie Diocese saved taxpayers an estimated \$45 million in 2005-06.

- The Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) empowers parents to send their children to a school of choice, and does so while saving taxpayer money and leaving public schools better funded.

Since its inception, the EITC has given opportunities to thousands of families. Assuming a fair number of scholarship recipients would not have attended non-public schools without the assistance, the report concludes that for

each dollar in EITC tax credits, public school districts save at least \$1.89 in instructional costs alone.

- School choice proposals such as the Property Tax Relief Scholarship Act would provide greater choices to parents, while providing property tax relief to homeowners for each student who migrates from a district school to a school of choice.

This legislative proposal would create a scholarship fund from which \$3,000 scholarships would be made available to low income families to send their children to the school of their choice. Per-pupil expenditures far exceed the \$3,000 allotment. The public school could return the difference to the taxpayers, providing property tax relief and taking some of the strain off the budget.

This proposal will be under consideration in the fall. School choice is about more than the money. As the Commonwealth Foundation report

says, "Educational choice gives parents the ability to choose the school that best meets their child's needs, whether their goal is to remove their child from a failing or unsafe school or simply select an institution that better caters to their child's specific educational needs."

Catholic schools have provided parents with an excellent alternative to traditional public schools for generations. Catholic school students excel in math, reading and other skills. They go on to attend college at a very high rate and graduation levels are second to none. Many parents would love to send their children to Catholic schools, but because of economic constraints do not.

School choice makes sense. It's time for Pennsylvania to reconsider this solution.

Amy L. Beisel, APR, is communications director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference—the public affairs arm of the Pennsylvania Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania.



Amy L. Beisel

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### DEATH NOTICES

## Sister Eunice Carlos, SSJ, dies at 95

Served at Villa Maria College, founded SSJ Prayer Call ministry

Sister Eunice Carlos, SSJ, 95, of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, died Friday, August 10, 2007. She was in her 79th year of religious life.

Born in Frogtown, Pa., she was the daughter of the late James and Mary (Driscoll) Carlos. She entered the convent from St. John the Baptist Parish, Erie, in 1929, made her final profession in 1934 and celebrated her diamond jubilee in 2003.

She served as archivist for the congregation and for Villa Maria College. She was director of alumnae at Villa Maria College and postulant director at the Villa Maria Motherhouse.

Sister worked in the Elementary Education Department at Villa Maria College where she designed the school's Early Childhood Education Program. She was superior of the Villa Maria College convent and had taught at Maryvale Pre-School and became director there

in 1945. She also taught at Erie Day Nursery, St. Joseph's Home for Children and at St. Andrew School, Erie.

She retired in 1973 and resided at the motherhouse where she became founder and coordinator of the SSJ Prayer Call ministry.

Sister Eunice was a graduate of Villa Maria Academy High School and earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Villa Maria College, Erie, and a master's degree in education from St. John College, Cleveland.

She also studied at Mt. St. Joseph Teachers College, Buffalo; George Peabody College, Nashville, Tenn.; Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.; St. Bonaventure University, Olean, N.Y., and Boston College. She participated in numerous other workshops and seminars.



Sister Eunice Carlos, SSJ

## Brother Thomas Bezanson, OSB, dies at 78

Internationally known potter, artist in residence at Mount St. Benedict

Brother Thomas Bezanson, OSB, 78, an internationally known potter and artist in residence at Mount St. Benedict Monastery, died August 16, 2007 at his home.

Brother Thomas, born Charles Bezanson in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada on August 5, 1929, graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Design in 1950 and received a degree in commerce from St. Mary's University, Halifax. He had, at that time, also begun his work in ceramic art.

In 1959, he became a monk of Weston Priory, Vermont, a community of Benedictine men. He continued both his art and his formal education at Weston. Brother Thomas received his doctorate in philosophy from Ottawa University in 1968.

In 1984, he was awarded a grant by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Since 1985, he has been artist

in residence at Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie where he shared his life and art with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie for 22 years.

Over the past 35 years, Brother Thomas's work has been exhibited at more than forty one-man shows. His pots are held in more than 60 public collections in such museums as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Internationally, museums in Japan, Canada, England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Israel and the Vatican also hold examples of his work.

Brother Thomas was the author of numerous articles, monographs, books and lectures on art and its spiritual aspects.



Brother Thomas Bezanson, OSB



**Parish correspondents**

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

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**Secular Franciscans elect regional officers**

**CORAPOLIS** — The Lady Poverty Regional Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order USA held its annual gathering and chapter elections May 19 at Gilmory Retreat Center in Coraopolis, Pa. Two women from the Erie Diocese were elected to serve the regional fraternity.

Mary Lou Kreider, SFO, from All Saints Parish in Waterford, was re-elected as regional minister for her second three-year term, and Victoria Snyder, SFO, from St. Cosmas and Damian Parish in Punxsutawney, was elected regional vice minister.

Other newly elected officers came from the dioceses of Altoona-Johnstown, Greensburg and Pittsburgh. The Secular Franciscan Order is a Catholic

order of single and married people who strive to follow the Gospel in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. It is part of the Franciscan family that includes more than 15,000 professed members who belong to local fraternities.



The Lady Poverty Region was established as Region 68 in 1994 and serves the geographic area north as far as Waterford, south as far as Charleston, W.Va., west as far as Steubenville, Ohio, and east as far as Altoona.

Region 68 has 26 active fraternities and four newly forming groups in seven dioceses and is bonded to six Franciscan provinces.

The region has more than 440 active professed secular Franciscans.

For more information on the order, call 1.800.FRANCIS or visit [www.nafra-sfo.org](http://www.nafra-sfo.org) on the Web.

**Knights of Columbus honor Kiesel as Family of the Year**

**FRANKLIN** — The family of Michael and Carolyn Kiesel of Franklin has been recognized by the Knights of Columbus State Council as the Pennsylvania Family of the Year for 2006-07.

The Kiesel family, parishioners at St. Patrick in Franklin, and their three daughters—Carley, Emiley and Stephanie—were recently honored at a Knights of Columbus state meeting and banquet at Split Rock Resort in the Poconos. More than 500 K of C members and their spouses attended the event, including Cardinal Justin Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, Bishop Lawrence Brandt of Greensburg, Bishop Edward Cullen of Allentown and Father Benedict Groeschel from EWTN.

Mike Kiesel has been a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 1020 in Franklin for 10 years and has been active with youth programs, blood drives and bike derbies. He also serves as the director of St. Patrick's Cemetery in Franklin and helps maintain parish and school buildings.

Carolyn is a stay at home mother and is the leader of Brownie Troop 400 with Emiley and Stephanie. Carley is a junior Girl Scout in Troop 745, where Carolyn also volunteers.

The couple belongs to the Rocky Grove Volunteer Fire Dept. where they help serve dinners and work the annual Fireman's Fair. They also chaired



David Shipton (back), state family director for the Knights of Columbus, and his wife, Marianne, pose with Carolyn and Michael Kiesel and their three daughters (front) Carley, Stephanie and Emiley, during the Knights' recent state council meeting in the Poconos. The Kiesel family, members of St. Patrick Parish in Franklin, were honored by the Knights of Columbus State Council as the Pennsylvania Family of the Year for 2006-07.

a bike derby sponsored by the Franklin Knights which attracted 175 youngsters and conducted a wheel derby in cooperation with Venango County Safe Kids, the Pennsylvania State Police, Franklin Police, Pennsylvania Department of Health and PennDOT to promote bike safety, proper riding skills and use of helmets.

"The Kiesel family inspires us with their enthusiasm, service and

involvement in council, church and community programs," the Franklin K of C stated in its Family of the Year nomination.

Franklin Grand Knight Regis Senko and his wife, Susan, and District Deputy Melvin Ruminiski and his wife, Gladys, also attended the event to receive awards for the local council for service to community, family and youth and public relations.

**Youth wins St. Anthony K of C Soccer Challenge Award**

**TIONESTA** — Knights of Columbus Council 4881 from St Anthony Parish in Tionesta presented Antonio Troese with the international Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge Award during Mass on Sunday, Aug. 12. The trophy was presented by Neil Polumbo, grand knight. Antonio and his family are members of Immaculate Conception Parish in Clarion. He is also a student at Immaculate Conception School.

The Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge is open to boys and girls between the ages of 10-14 and the competition is designed for players to demonstrate the most basic of soccer skills — the penalty kick. Each player is allowed 15 shots at the goal from the penalty line. The goal is divided into five scoring zones and points are awarded depending upon where the ball passes.

Troese earned the award by winning the competition for kids at the 10-year-old level at the local council's soccer challenge in Sept. 2006. His score at the local level helped him advance to the state challenge in November, which



Pictured from left to right are the Troese family, Richard, Allie, Jan and Antonio, along with members of the Knights of Columbus Council 4881 Neil Polumbo, grand knight, and Joe Klabnek, knight, after Mass Aug. 12 at St. Anthony, Tionesta.

he won. His score was submitted to the Knights of Columbus headquarters in New Haven, Conn., to be compared to those across the county.

Troese's score was higher than any other child in all age categories across the country

and internationally. For his effort, he was presented with the Knights of Columbus International Award.

**St. Mark welcomes new, returning seminarians**

**ERIE** — St. Mark Seminary welcomed four new seminarians for the 2007-08 school year who arrived on Aug. 19.

Pictured from left to right are new seminarians Eric Dinga (Christ Prince of Peace, Ford City), Thomas Trocchio (St. Patrick, Franklin), Matthew Morelli (St. James, New Alexandria) and Christopher Manderino (Epiphany of Our Lord, Monessen). Trocchio is from the Diocese of Erie, and Dinga, Manderino and Morelli are from the Diocese of Greensburg.

Returning seminarians include: Tyler Bandura (Christ Prince of Peace, Ford City), Cody Bienkowski (St. Mary, St. Marys), Michael Gornick (Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Greensburg), Brandon Kleckner (Sacred Heart, Erie), Robert McDonald (St. Brigid, Meadville), Philip Pochatko (Holy Family, Erie), Michael Rodgers (Good Shepherd, West Middlesex), Brandon Wiley (Our Lady of Fatima, Farrell), Patrick Wiler



(St. Luke, Erie) and Jacob Williamson (St. Mary Our Lady of Guadalupe, Kittanning).

Seminarians studying at major seminary include: Matias Quimno (All Saints, Waterford) at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, N.Y.; Timothy Ballelli (Blessed Sacrament, Erie), Jason Feigh (St. Basil the Great, Coalport), Daniel Hoffman (Our

Lady of Peace, Erie), Ross Miceli (St. Catherine of Siena, DuBois), Johnathan Schmolt (St. Basil the Great, Coalport) and Matthew Strickenberger (St. Stephen, Oil City) at St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore; and Christopher Barnes (St. Venantius, Rouseville) and Michael Polinek (St. Joseph/Bread of Life, Erie) at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe.

**Benedictines, oblates named top fundraisers for Relay for Life**

**ERIE** — This year's two Benedictine "Relay for Life" teams raised more than \$13,000 in their effort to make cancer a thing of the past. One of the teams received the platinum award and collected top honors for its fundraising efforts in three areas: overall, online and online individual. "Relay for Life" was held July 21-22 at the McDowell High School field in Millcreek.

Sister Dianne Sabol, OSB, who has been a team member for 14 years and captain for the past 11 years, said, "I can't imagine not doing Relay. The support and camaraderie is incredible. I want to find a cure for this disease that has touched my family and friends. I want a younger generation to grow up without the threat of cancer hanging over their heads. The American Cancer Society is working toward that day through its research and education."

Jo Clarke, an oblate and herself a cancer survivor, was the winner of the individual online fundraising. "The Relay is a small way that I feel I am doing something to fight this disease that touches all of us, in one way or another,



Members of the Benedictine Relay for Life team. Back row, from left: Nancy Sabol, Kelsey Kresse, Shelly Miller, Margaret Kloecker, Sister Dianne Sabol, OSB; Sister Laura Beichner, OSB; Mark Bliely. Front row: Jo Clarke, Sister Marlene Bertke, OSB; Sister Marla Bleil, OSB; Sharon Kresse, Sister Marcia Sigler, OSB; Corinne Schaeffer.

Not pictured are team members: Cathy Anderson, Penny Hanes, Maureen Sabol, Jen Eagley, Darcie Ellis, Michelle Kephart, Sister Rosanne Loneck, OSB; Sister Mary Daniel Meahl, OSB; Ann Daugherty, Cindy Liotta and Nancy Henry.

even our pets," said Clarke, the director of annual giving in the Benedictine Sisters Development

Office. Sister Dianne is the director of the St. Benedict Community Center.

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