



All Saints Parish in Waterford invites you to reconnect with your Catholic faith, page 2.



Meet the new principals for 2009-10, page 3.

## Church Calendar

Events of the local, American and universal church

### Feast days



Our Lady of Sorrows



St. Peter Claver

- Sept. 8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sept. 9 St. Peter Claver
- Sept. 12 Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sept. 14 The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- Sept. 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- Sept. 16 Pope Cornelius & St. Cyprian
- Sept. 17 St. Robert Bellarmine
- Sept. 19 St. Januarius

## Confirmations

St. Andrew, Erie - Sunday, Sept. 13 at 2 p.m. Confirmation classes include Sacred Heart, Erie, and St. Andrew, Erie.



## Gannon's Opening Mass of the Holy Spirit - Sept. 10

ERIE - Gannon University will host its annual Opening Mass of the Holy Spirit at 11 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 10. The Mass will be held on Friendship Green, located outside the University Waldron Campus Center, 124 W. Seventh St. Bishop Donald Trautman will celebrate. Rain location is the Yehl Room of the Gannon University Waldron Center.



## 125th anniversary Mass for St. Mary's Home - Sept. 20

In honor of the 125th anniversary of St. Mary's Home, founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, Bishop Donald Trautman will celebrate an 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Sept. 20 at Erie's Bayfront Convention Center. The Mass will be followed by an invited luncheon.

## Clergy appointments

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



Msgr. Casimir Bogniak, appointed temporary parochial administrator of Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Edinboro. Effective August 25, 2009.

Father Gerald Wright, O.M.V., appointed assistant chaplain at Saint Vincent Medical System and chaplain at the Erie County Prison, with residency at St. Joseph Parish/Bread of Life Community, Erie. Effective September 1, 2009.

The following priests have been appointed members of the Clergy Continuing Education and Formation Committee for a term of four years, effective August 18, 2009: Father Timothy Balliett, Father John Malthaner, Father Brian Vossler.

The following priests have been appointed members of the Priests' Personnel Board for a term of three years, effective August 25, 2009: Msgr. Desmond McGee, Father George Strommeyer, Father Glenn Whitman.

# Building a new parish family

When parishes merge and reconfigure, there's more to deal with than just logistics



**Editor's note:** This is part one of a three-part special report of parish mergers and reconfigurations. Look for part two in the Oct. 4 issue of FaithLife.

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

Sister Rosemary O'Brien, SSI, was a pastoral associate at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Harborcreek when it was decided to build a new church.

She led parishioners on a walk through the old worship space that had been their faith home for so many years.

"That was so significant to the healing process when we prayed our goodbyes," Sister Rosemary said.

She will do the same this month when Immaculate Conception and St. Mary parishes in Erie merge. The combined congregation will now worship at St. Mary's church under the new title St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish.

Sister Rosemary said a prayerful walk-through will happen at both churches "because St. Mary's will not really have the same identity."

She came on board as a pastoral associate in January to both parishes. She described the early part of her presence as getting a sense of the people in both communities, listening and seeing where the connections are.

"They are both in the same geographical area (on Erie's East side), and they share in a name," she said.

Immaculate Conception was formed in 1946 and is a predominantly African-American parish. St. Mary

was established in 1840 and was originally named St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

After Bishop Donald Trautman announced last year that the parishes would merge, the communities began creating ways in which people could come together. One of the key events, Sister Rosemary said, came May 24 when Bishop Trautman celebrated Mass at St. Mary and blessed two new crosses for the church roof to replace those that had suffered storm damage. The parishes combined to offer their liturgical ministry and hospitality.

"There was a real sense of community," she said.

As pastor, Father Jim Gutting has been celebrating alternating liturgies at each church, which has served as another way for people to meet each other.

On Sept. 12, when the merger officially takes effect, parishioners will process from Immaculate Conception to St. Mary, bringing with them water from the Immaculate Conception baptismal font and a statue of St. Martin de Porres, where space has already been reserved for it at its new home.

Each parish has created a "Book of Sacred Memories" detailing the spiritual histories of its people, which will eventually be combined.

"I am so grateful for the spirit of both communities," Sister Rosemary said. "There's a real sense of this is where we're being led and called. It's like God is calling us to something new."

Charles Zech, director of the Center for the Study of Church Management at Villanova University School of Business in Pennsylvania, and Robert Miller, director of the Office of Research and Plan-



On Sunday, May 24, Bishop Donald Trautman celebrated 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Mary Parish in Erie and blessed two new crosses for the church roof. It was one of the first times parishioners from merging parishes Immaculate Conception and St. Mary had come together. The merger becomes official Sept. 12.

Photo by Anne-Marie Welch

ning for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, have some advice for parishes going through what some have characterized as the greatest period of change in the history of the American Catholic Church brought on by the recent closing and merging of hundreds of parishes across the country.

First, they said, it's important to recognize that people who lose their parishes are experiencing a trauma that can be as great as the loss of kin.

Second, Zech and Miller advised that when people come together in a new parish the dynamics that emerge are similar to those that surface when a man and a woman with children from previous marriages get married and face blending two family units into one.

Merging parishes involves not just making sure individuals get along and minimizing the appearance of favoritism, but especially requires integrating the experiences, culture and history of both communities into a new Catholic community, said Zech.

Zech and Miller address many of the issues that have surfaced in the 15 years since parish closings and mergers became more commonplace in their 2008 book, "Listening to the People of God: Closing, Rebuilding and Revitalizing Parishes."

They said the model of parish life to which Americans have grown accustomed is changing rapidly. For example, in 2006 fully one-quarter of Catholic parishes were organized in a nontraditional manner, meaning they had no resident pastor.

Further, between 1995 and 2000, Zech and Miller report, 72 percent of dioceses restructured by either

See PARISH MERGER, page 2

## Catholic Education Collection Sept. 12-13

# Supporting lifelong learning of the faith

By Jason Koshinski  
FaithLife editor

Whether you're 3 or 103, there is still something to learn about the Catholic faith.

The annual Catholic Education Collection, which is scheduled for Sept. 12-13 in all parishes of the Erie Diocese, supports lifelong learning of the faith.

Half of the collection goes toward two diocesan education endowments; the other half of every dollar remains in each parish for its own educational efforts. Additionally, the half that comes to the diocese is returned to parishes in the form of grants to help develop education programs across all ages.

Within the past year, the diocese's educational endowments have funded a pre-Kindergarten religion curriculum, grade school chastity education, youth ministry workshops and tuition for graduate programs. It also helped cover the registration fee for nearly 200 people in the diocese to attend the National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities' (NAPRC) annual conference, which was held in July at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Harborcreek.

"That's everything from age 3 or 4 all the way up through the adult years," said Father Nicholas Rouch, the diocese's vicar for education. "All the initiatives were funded or supported by the education endowments of the diocese."

The education endowments' committee, which distributes the grants, tries to identify teaching moments in the faith to help fund certain projects, Father Rouch said.

"We try to be strategic and identify what is the most important and valuable educational opportunity at each age and then fund it," he said.

For example, there's an opportunity to teach the basics of faith during pre-school to our children, Father Rouch added, while during grade school they can begin to be formed in the virtue of chastity.

New for the 2009-10 school year is the endowments' funding of Student Tuition Assistance Grants (STAG) which assist Catholic school teachers who keep their own children in Catholic schools by offering them partial tuition assistance. STAG was initially supported by a grant from the Palumbo Charitable Trust.

Parishioners can have a direct impact on educational efforts in their own parish through the Catholic Education Collection, said Joseph Hoag, director of the Steward-



Funds from the annual Catholic Education Collection, which supports two diocesan education endowments, are used for a number of efforts targeting all ages of Catholic learning. Of the 300 people who attended the annual National Alliance of Parishes Re-

structuring into Communities (NAPRC) conference in July at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Harborcreek, nearly 200 were from the Erie Diocese. Grants from the education endowments helped cover the registration fee for local attendees.

ship and Development Office for the diocese.

"And those efforts are really important. The collection definitely has a local connection because half of the money stays in the parish," Hoag said. "It's much like the Catholic Services Appeal where there is a sharing of funds."

The local funds that stay in the parish can be used in

a number of ways, he said, including religious education projects, replacing outdated educational materials, sending adult leaders to workshops and conferences and updating technology.

"It can cover everything from religious education to Catholic schools to RCIA to liturgical minister training," Father Rouch added.

A small percentage of this collection also goes to Catholic University in Washington, D.C. All dioceses in the U.S. help support Catholic University.

Father Chris Singer, recent parochial vicar at St. George Parish in Erie and a native of Old City, is currently furthering his priestly education at Catholic University.



## IN THE U.S.

**A new Web site launched by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was produced to educate Catholics about the forthcoming English translation of the new Roman Missal, the book of prayers used for Mass.** The site, [www.usccb.org/romanmissal](http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal), has background material on the process of development of liturgical texts, sample texts from the missal, a glossary of terms and answers to frequently asked questions. Content will be added regularly over the next several months, according to a news release. The bishops' Committee on Divine Worship hopes the site will be a central resource for those preparing to implement the new text, the release said.



**U.S. Catholic religious communities are attracting more ethnically and culturally diverse members now than in previous generations, according to a new in-depth survey.** The "Study of Recent Vocations to Religious Life" also showed that most U.S. religious communities report diminishing numbers with aging populations, but at the same time indicated those who are choosing religious life today are passionate about it and some orders are cultivating vocations from the millennial generation. With less than 10 percent of women religious and 25 percent of men religious under the age of 60, it's imperative that U.S. religious communities figure out effective methods of recruitment, said Mercy

Sister Mary Bendyna, executive director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and principal author of the study. The study — conducted by CARA, a Georgetown University-based research center, on behalf of the National Religious Vocation Conference, based in Chicago — surveyed 4,000 men and women who are in formation or newly vowed members.

**As Catholic schools begin their fall classes amid threats of flu outbreaks, hand sanitizers are going to be more of a staple than ever and school officials will be urged to follow large doses of common sense.** At many schools, more than the usual cleaning up took place over the summer as desks and chairs were scrubbed with bleach in an effort to sterilize classrooms and rid them of possible germs associated with the H1N1 virus, known as swine flu. But despite schools' best efforts to stay germ-free, flu outbreaks are still anticipated. If students at Catholic schools are diagnosed as having the H1N1 virus, school officials are advised to follow the same protocol as public schools — to close the school only as a last resort and instead make sure those who are ill stay home until they are no longer contagious. This advice was announced Aug. 20 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Education. Marie Powell, executive director of Catholic education for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, sent notices during the summer to Catholic school officials urging them to be aware of government guidelines for handling the flu and advising them to make the necessary preparations.

## AROUND THE WORLD

**A leading Vatican official called for greater protection of Iraq's beleaguered Christian minority, saying the disappearance of Christianity from the country would be an enormous religious and cultural loss for everyone.** Archbishop Fernando Filoni, who served as the Vatican's nuncio to Iraq from 2001 to 2006, said it was important that Iraqi Christians stem the widespread emigration of their community. That can only happen if they are given a sound basis for hope in the future, he said. "The authorities

must do everything they can so that Christians are a respected and integral part of the life of the country, even if they are a minority," Archbishop Filoni said. The Iraqi government meets regularly with church leaders and in theory is committed to protecting Christians, but "this also has to be translated into concrete facts," he said. The archbishop pointed to the recent restitution of three church-run schools as an important step in the right direction. The schools, two in Baghdad and one in Kirkuk, will be run by Chaldean Catholic nuns, who managed them before they were nationalized under Saddam Hussein.



A masked policeman mans a machine gun atop an armored vehicle outside a Christian church in Mosul, Iraq, July 14. The city imposed a curfew on vehicles in Christian neighborhoods in response to a series of bomb attacks targeting churches in Mosul and Baghdad, police said.

## PEOPLE OF FAITH

**Pope Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Bishop Joseph F. Martino, 63, from the pastoral governance of the Diocese of Scranton for health reasons.** He has appointed Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia to be apostolic administrator for the diocese. The pope also has accepted the resignation of Scranton Auxiliary Bishop John M. Dougherty, who is 77. Canon law requires that all bishops submit their resignation to the pope when they turn 75. Bishop Martino said he had been experiencing insomnia, "crippling physical fatigue" and frequent bouts of the flu brought on by the stress of his work as bishop.



Bishop Joseph Martino

## By the Way...

In 1998, St. John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minn., commissioned the production of a hand-written, hand-illuminated Bible. The expectations were to unite the ancient Benedictine traditions with the technology and vision of today, illuminating the Word of God for a new millennium.



Jason Koshinski

The *Saint John's Bible* is monumental — two feet tall and three feet wide with nearly 1,100 pages bound in seven distinct volumes. The Benedictine Sisters of Erie will host an exhibit of 25 prints from this Bible at the monastery, 6101 East Lake Road in Erie, October 25-November 25. The public opening will be Sunday, Oct. 25 at 3:30 p.m., featuring a lecture by Sister Mary Irene Nowell, OSB, entitled "Visio Divina." Sister Mary Irene is on the advisory board that initiated and oversaw the development of this first hand-illuminated Bible in a century. Planning is underway for specific days and times to view the exhibit as well as lectures and educational activities. For more information on the Bible, visit [www.saintjohnsbible.org](http://www.saintjohnsbible.org). To find out more about the exhibit's schedule, go to [www.eriebenedictines.org](http://www.eriebenedictines.org).

Even in these times of economic uncertainty and financial distress, the people of the Erie Diocese have been steadfast in their generosity. The 2009 Catholic Services Appeal, themed "With One Heart and Mind," has now exceeded \$5.9 million in pledges, which is the first time ever for the annual CSA. And as we've heard Bishop Donald Trautman note on a number of occasions, "God will not be outdone in generosity."

Prayers and get well wishes go out to John Walsh of the World Apostolate of Fatima who suffered a heart attack a number of weeks ago. John has already complete several rounds of cardio therapy and is busy planning the Blue Army's 15th annual rosy march, which will take place on Sunday, Oct. 11 beginning at 2 p.m. at St. Peter Cathedral in Erie. The guest homilist is Father Bill Barron, parochial vicar of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Erie.

The local chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals is offering a 12-week fundraising course at Penn State Erie-The Behrend College covering the basics from soup to nuts. Classes will be held Mondays starting Sept. 14, from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Many top professionals in the region are on board for this unprecedented effort. Several of the instructors include: Kristina Huber, director of development for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania; Susan Black-Keim, retired vice president of advancement for Gannon University; Kim McCaslin, director of development for Saint Mary's Home of Erie; and Dr. Emma Lee McCloskey, president and chief executive officer of The Catholic Foundation.

For additional information or to register, contact Michelle Hartmann at 814.898.7584 or [maw79@psu.edu](mailto:maw79@psu.edu).

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## Building a new parish family

PARISH MERGER, from page 1

clustering or linking parishes, merging two or more parishes, closing parishes or, in areas of massive growth, opening new parishes with large membership rolls.

At some point, every Catholic parish will face changes that can prove to be troublesome, Miller said.

"The idea is that we need to live our lives in such a way that we expect change," he said. "We are called to change. We are called to transform our hearts. We are called to transform our communities."

Mergers and closings are not new, but have become more commonplace as dioceses seek to "right size" to meet changing demographics, financial realities and the declining number of clergy. In the 1970s it was a shift of rural populations as people left farms and small communities for better opportunities closer to urban centers.

The realities of closings and mergers have shifted today primarily to urban centers in the Northeast and Midwest where Catholic populations are dwin-

View a video and slideshow of the St. Mary and Immaculate Conception Mass and cross blessing at [www.ErieRCD.org/stmary.html](http://www.ErieRCD.org/stmary.html).



ding as people with the financial resources abandon central-city life to seek the American dream in the suburbs.

Zech and Miller expect there will be demographic shifts in the future that will lead to more of the same across the country.

No matter the situation, people in large part are attached to their parishes. For many, losing a parish can

be a traumatic experience. The closing or merger of a parish can leave people bitter, even alienated.

"Our parish is a family and when our parish is closed we feel like we've lost an important part of our family," Zech said.

He recommended all involved tread the situation with great sensitivity.

*Catholic News Services contributed to this report.*

## Inspiring teens featured in Faith

Homes across the diocese received the September/October 2009 edition of *Faith* magazine this week, the fifth annual issue created for young people.

Featured on the cover enjoying ice cream cones at Presque Isle State Park are the magazine's 2009 Teens of the Year: Sarah Rose of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Erie and Daniel Berdis of All Saints Parish in Waterford.



The September/October 2009 cover of Faith magazine

"The teen years are never easy," says Anne-Marie Welsh, editor, "but Sarah and Daniel are getting through them well in spite of challenges most of us don't face. I think both young people and adults will find their stories inspiring."

*Faith* magazine, an outreach of the Office of Evangelization for Communications, is mailed to all registered parishioners in the Erie Diocese, free of charge, on a bi-monthly basis.

## Small Communities

### Awakening Faith at All Saints

WATERFORD — All Saints Parish in Waterford invites you to reconnect with your Catholic faith.

Awakening Faith is a six-session series to help participants explore, learn and share with others in a welcoming, confidential, small group setting.

The sessions will be held on six consecutive Wednesdays beginning Sept. 16 from 7-8:30 p.m. at All Saints Parish, 11264 Route 97 N in Waterford.

- Sept. 16 — Spirituality: What's the Buzz?
- Sept. 23 — Who is Jesus?
- Sept. 30 — Do We Need the Spirit?
- Oct. 7 — Can I Accept God's Mercy?
- Oct. 14 — Can Mass Make My Life Meaningful?
- Oct. 21 — The Church and Me

There is no charge, and no registration is required. Visit [www.allsaintsrcc.org](http://www.allsaintsrcc.org) for more information or contact the parish at 814.796.3023 [allsaint@allsaintsrcc.org](mailto:allsaint@allsaintsrcc.org) to receive your personal invitation with all the details. (w/photo Awakening Faith)

### Why Catholic? retreats

Four parishes in the Erie Diocese will host *Why Catholic?* retreats Sept. 26-30.

The retreats are open to all *Why Catholic?* faith sharing groups, as well as parishes participating in *Why Catholic?* No registration is necessary.

*Why Catholic?* is a four-year program that focuses on Scripture related to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Small faith-sharing groups have been meeting once a week during two six-week sessions each year.

The theme of the retreats is "Life in Christ: Living the Beatitudes."

- Sept. 26 — Queen of the World, St. Marys, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- Sept. 28 — St. Brigid, Meadville, 7-9 p.m.
- Sept. 29 — Our Lady of Peace, Erie, 7-9 p.m.
- Sept. 30 — Notre Dame, Hermitage, 7-9 p.m.

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## Catholic Services Appeal parish projects

The 2009 Catholic Services Appeal, "Of One Heart and Mind," supports the Erie Diocese in helping to provide health and social services, education, diocesan administration and pastoral services throughout the 13 counties of northwestern Pennsylvania.

While a portion of the financial goal for the appeal benefits the ministries of the diocese, parishes also benefit from the appeal. Each parish is assessed a financial goal. Once a parish reaches its assessment, every dollar pledged over that amount stays within the parish for local projects.

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

### Clearfield Deanery

- Christ the King, Houtzdale – Parish pictorial book
- Holy Trinity, Ramey – Replace church carpeting and roof
- Immacolata Conception, Osceola Mills – Repair sidewalks
- St. Agnes, Morrisdale – Church roof
- St. Basil the Great, Coalport – Church window restoration
- St. Bonaventure, Grampian – Continual maintenance of church grounds and building
- St. Francis of Assisi, Clearfield – Church roof
- St. Mary, Frenchville – Social hall insulation
- St. Timothy, Curwensville – Finish paying off diocesan loan
- Immacolata Conception Mission, Madera – Parish pictorial book
- St. Peter & Paul Mission, Grassflat – Repair or replace church doors
- St. Peter & Paul Mission, Hawk Run – Parking lot repairs
- St. Severin Mission, Drifting – Concrete floor in building on picnic grounds



# Catholic schools welcome new principals for 2009-10

Catholic schools in the Erie Diocese welcome a number of new principals for the 2009-10 school year. Here's a look at the newly appointed administrators:

### Dawn Bressler St. Cosmas and Damian Punxsutawney

A native of DuBois, Dawn Bressler attended St. Catherine of Sienna School. She received her bachelor's degree in education from Clarion University and her master's degree and principal certification from Gannon University.

At St. Francis School in Clearfield, Bressler taught middle school math and served as director of religious education for St. Francis Parish.

Prior to her experience at St. Francis, Bressler worked at a Pyramid Health Care group home for children specializing in alternative education.

She also taught first grade for two years in North Carolina.

Bressler is a member of ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development).



### Dr. Howard Ferguson St. Joseph, Warren

After coming in mid-way through last school year, Dr. Howard Ferguson begins his first full year as principal of St. Joseph School in Warren.

Dr. Ferguson received his bachelor's degree in secondary education from Clarion University, his master's in English from Gannon University and his superintendent's certification from St. Bonaventure University.

He has served as an English teacher and assistant principal at Warren Area High School and principal of Tidouche School. He is formerly the assistant superintendent and acting superintendent of the Warren County School District and superintendent of the Forest Area and Sherman Central school districts.

Following a period of retirement, Dr. Ferguson came to St. Joseph School as principal.

### Damon Finazzo

Villa Maria Elementary, Erie  
Villa Maria Elementary School in Erie welcomes Damon Finazzo as its first male principal in the school's 118-year history.

An Erie native and McDowell High School graduate who was raised at St. George Parish, Finazzo returns to the area after eight years in Virginia as an elementary teacher and administrator. He received his bachelor's degree in elementary education from Grove City College in 2000 and a master's in educational leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University.

He held the position of resource teacher at Cashell Donahoe Elementary School in Sandstone, Va. Finazzo also



taught 4th grade for seven years and was active in regional and national educational organizations.

He replaces Sister Margaret Frank, SSJ, who was the principal at Villa Maria Elementary for 30 years. Sister Margaret will assume the position of director of development and alumni relations for the school.

### Nancy Pierce St. Gregory, North East

Nancy Pierce enters her second year as principal at St. Gregory School in North East and her first full academic year.

Pierce has been a certified teacher since 1988 and has taught all grade levels K-8. She has also served as enrichment coordinator, curriculum director and adjunct professor at Mercyhurst College.

She received her bachelor's degree in education from Penn State University and her master's from Lehigh University. She also has certification for mental and physical handicap Level II and elementary education Level II.

Pierce served as vice president of Erie Reading Council in 2007 and is currently a member of the North East Historical Society and the International Reading Association.



### Father Marc Stockton DuBois Central Catholic High School

Father Marc Stockton assumes the duties of secondary school principal (grades 6-12) at DuBois Central Catholic.

Ordained a priest in 2002, Father Stockton has served as parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish in Sharon and St. Peter Cathedral in Erie. While at the cathedral he was a member of the faculty at Cathedral Prep.

In 2006, he was appointed to the faculty of DuBois Central Catholic High School with residency at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in DuBois.

He has also served as the administrator of St. Bernard Parish in Falls Creek, the regional vocation director for Erie, Jefferson, Clearfield, Elk and Cameron counties and chaplain of the Knights of Columbus Council No. 519.



### Father Richard Tomasone DCC president

In June, Father Richard Tomasone was appointed president of all DuBois Central Catholic schools—elementary, middle and high school.

Father Tomasone has served in secondary education at Kennedy Catholic High School in Hermitage and as a member of the faculty of St. Mark Seminary in Erie.

He has been a weekend sacramental assistant at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Farrell, St. Joseph Parish in Sharon and Sacred Heart Parish in Sharon and an administrator of Immaculate Heart of Mercy Parish in Mercer and St. Ann Parish in Farrell.

Father Tomasone served as the pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Erie since 2001.

### Victoria Wagner Notre Dame, Hermitage

Victoria Wagner and her family moved to Hermitage 10 years ago from Massachusetts where she was teaching kindergarten. She enters 2009-10 as the new principal of Notre Dame School in Hermitage.

A native of New Jersey, Wagner received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and her master's from George Washington University.

Wagner previously taught preschool through fifth grade at schools from Virginia to Maine. She has a background in both parochial and public schools, and she attended Catholic school through 12th grade.

She supervised student teachers from Slippery Rock University for three years and was the rehab director at Lark Enterprises, which specializes in education for intellectually challenged adults.

Wagner is a member of ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

### Rita Wray DuBois Elementary

Rita Wray becomes the new principal at DuBois Central Catholic Elementary School for 2009-10.

Raised in Pittsburgh, Wray received her master's degree in education from Clarion University and her administration certification from Penn State University.

No stranger to DuBois, she taught for 13 years in DuBois area elementary schools and served as principal at DuBois area schools for 19 years.

For two years, she also was a supervisor of student teachers at Clarion University.

After retiring from public school administration, Wray became a substitute teacher at DuBois Central Catholic Elementary School.



## Briefly

### Natural Family Planning classes

Natural Family Planning is the practice of achieving or postponing pregnancy by observing and recording observable fertility signs. NFP is not the rhythm method.

Learn Natural Family Planning by attending a class taught by a couple who personally use the method and have been trained to teach.

■ St. Marys – Starting Sept. 13 from 6-8 p.m. at Sacred Heart Parish activity center. Call Cathy at 814.834.6208.

■ Erie – Starting Sept. 25 from 7-9 p.m. at instructors' home. Call Annette at 814.866.0122.

■ DuBois – Starting Oct. 8 from 7-9 at instructors' home. Call Judy at 814.371.5852.

### Mercy Associates program begins Sept. 13

ERIE – The 2009-10 Mercy Associate program will begin Sunday, Sept. 13, at 12:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse, 444 E. Grandview Blvd in Erie.

For information regarding the program or to register to be a Mercy Associate, please call Sister Phyllis Marie McDonald, associate director, at 814.864.4889 or Carol Costello, co-director, at 814.866.7583.



### Catholic Rural Ministry celebrates 10 years

COUDERSPORT – This year, Catholic Rural Ministry in McKean and Potter counties celebrates its 10th anniversary.

To mark the occasion, "Evening Praise" will be held on Sunday, Sept. 20 at 3:30 p.m. at St. Eulalia Parish in Coudersport. Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, will offer reflections.

Preceding this event at 1:30 p.m. in the parish center, Sister Joan will moderate a roundtable discussion which is open to all who have attended a Reflection Day for Women sponsored by Catholic Rural Ministry during the past 10 years.



### Catholic Charismatic Conference Oct. 2-3

ERIE – Word of Life Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center will hold its 19th annual Catholic Charismatic Conference Oct. 2-3 at St. Mark Catholic Center, 429 E. Grandview Blvd. in Erie.

The theme, "Fruits of the Holy Spirit: Holiness Revealed," will be presented by Father Rich Toohy, pastor of St. Mary of Grace Parish in Meadville.

The conference begins Friday, Oct. 2 at 6:30 p.m. and ends with a healing service at 9 p.m. The schedule for Saturday, Oct. 3 begins with 9 a.m. Mass and includes praise, worship and talks by Father Toohy.

For more information or to register, contact Word of Life Center at 814.824.1286.



Father Rich Toohy

### St. Martin Center marks 40 years

ERIE – In October, St. Martin Center celebrates 40 years of guiding families and individuals toward a path of self reliance. Join St. Martin Center for a celebration Saturday, Oct. 24 at the Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center in Erie.

Tickets are \$50 each and include dinner. The celebration begins with a cash bar at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and a presentation at 7 p.m.

The Jeff Gibbons Trio will provide music for the evening. Brady Louis, one of SMC's original board members, will be the emcee for the evening and he and his wife will be honorary co-chairs. The event will also feature a silent auction with approximately 20 silent auction baskets with a value of at least \$300 each.

For tickets, sponsorship opportunities or more information, call 814.452.6113 Ext. 216 or e-mail jhancock@stmartincenter.org.

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### Scheduled Days of Reflection

- September 12: A Look at the Journey of Exodus
- October 24: A Look at Genesis
- November 14: The Prophet Isaiah
- December 12: Two Unknowns, Amos and Osee
- January 9: Now to Matthew
- February: The Acts of the Apostles
- March: The Letter to the Hebrews

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### St. Mary of Grace Annual Columbus Day Spaghetti Dinner

Social Center, 1088 Walter St., Meadville  
Sunday Oct. 11, 2009, 11:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Pasta dinner includes homemade Italian sauce, meatballs, salad, beverage and dessert.  
Cost: \$7 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10  
Dine in or take out. Cancelli will be available for purchase.  
Unique gift baskets, used book sale, bake sale and  
"A Taste of St. Mary's" cookbooks will be available.  
EXCITING RAFFLES! CASH DRAWING!  
Come enjoy a great day of Italian cuisine and hospitality!



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All parishes, missions, schools and groups are encouraged to choose a correspondent who can regularly e-mail news items to "Around the Erie Diocese" at [FaithLife@ErieRCD.org](mailto:FaithLife@ErieRCD.org)

Visit [ErieRCD.org/faithlife.asp](http://ErieRCD.org/faithlife.asp) to download quick and easy photo tips on a wallet-size card.



### St. George students Walk for Autism

ERIE – Seventh and 8th grade students from St. George School in Erie gathered together for a group service project this spring for the 8th annual Walk for Autism sponsored by the Northwestern Pennsylvania Autism Society. The two-mile leisurely walk took place at Presque Isle State Park near Beach 11. Pictured with the students are religion teacher Marielle Lafaro and special needs friend Rick Zeiner.



### St. Mark welcomes new seminarians

ERIE – St. Mark Seminary welcomed 10 new seminarians for the 2009-10 academic year.

Pictured from left to right are: (front row) Jamie Power (St. Patrick, Erie), David Whiteford (St. Boniface, Erie), Paul Kuzma (Holy Family, Erie), Sean Kerins (Notre Dame, Hermitage), (back row) Ryan Ravis (Sacred Heart, Youngstown), Tony Klimko (St. Joseph, Uniontown), Kyle Seyler (St. Patrick, Franklin), Joseph Caulfield (St. George, Erie), James Morely (St. Vincent Basilica, Latrobe) and Christopher Wheeler (St. Lawrence, Albion).



Klimko, Morely and Ravis are from the Greensburg Diocese; the other seven are from the Erie Diocese.

### Diocese honors anniversary couples at Masses

One hundred and sixty-three couples participated in the diocesan wedding anniversary Masses for those celebrating 25, 50, and 60-plus years together in August. The anniversary celebrations, an annual offering of the Catholic Charities Family Life Office, were held at St. Luke Parish in Erie on Aug. 2 (pictured below) and at St. Leo Magnus Parish in Ridgway on Aug. 9. Among those present at St. Leo were Ann Marie and Aaron Pfoutz (with Bishop Donald Trautman) of St. Mary Parish in St. Marys, who are marking their 25th year of marriage this year.



### Meadville parishes unite for Corpus Christi procession



MEADVILLE – Nearly 300 people from the Meadville area Catholic community recently celebrated the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ with a Corpus Christi procession involving all three area parishes.

The procession, led by the Knights of Columbus Council No. 388, began at St. Mary of Grace Parish, with Father Rich Toohy, pastor, carrying the Blessed Sacrament under a canopy. The procession stopped at Bob Powell's Auto Service where an outside altar was set up (inset). Father Toohy then led the group in prayer before proceeding to St. Agatha Parish.

The group was then met by

parishioners from St. Agatha and St. Brigid parishes along with pastors Father Raymond Gramata of St. Agatha and Father Mark O'Hern of St. Brigid and deacons Harvey McQueen and Matias Quimno of St. Agatha. Father Gramata led prayer at another outside altar.

The march concluded at St. Brigid with prayer and benediction led by Father O'Hern.

Refreshments prepared by parishioners from all three parishes were served at St. Brigid's McCrory Hall.

The procession was organized by St. Mary of Grace as part of the parish's 100th anniversary celebration.



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- Already in 2009, grants totaling over \$120,000 have been awarded.



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The website of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie

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**NEW PROGRAM** Family Weekend: Sept. 11-13, 2009

Mother & Daughter: Oct. 2-4, 2009; Nov. 6-8, 2009; Feb. 5-7, 2010

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