

Bishop Schlert Makes Personal Pledge of Accountability

He expresses strong support for new standards for all Bishops

The following is a statement from Diocese of Allentown Bishop Alfred Schlert.
 "The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' meeting in Baltimore ended without a vote on key issues of bishops' accountability, at the Vatican's request. Nevertheless, my brother bishops and I have provided strong direction to our leadership on this important topic, asking them to carry our proposals to Rome for their planned February meeting with Pope Francis.
 In spite of the lack of a vote, I remain personally committed to preventing abuse, to keeping children safe, and to dealing swiftly and effectively with allegations of misconduct. Upon prayerful reflection, I believe that now is the time to put that commitment into writing, in the form of a pledge to victims and survivors of clergy sexual abuse."



My Pledge to Victims and Survivors:

1. **The Diocese of Allentown will not protect abusers.** No institution, Church or secular, should ever prioritize its own reputation over the safety of the innocent and the vulnerable.
2. **We immediately report all allegations to law enforcement.** We also will continue to act with transparency, in cooperation with law enforcement.
3. **Accused priests will be removed from ministry immediately** pending an investigation. I have never transferred an abuser to cover up the problem, and I never will.
4. **I am willing to meet with you at any time**, no matter how long ago your abuse occurred, to offer pastoral care and support, but mostly, to listen. I will treat all victims with dignity and respect.
5. **I will hold myself accountable to outside oversight.** Our past failures as Bishops must not be repeated. I welcome independent and objective scrutiny as I work to fulfill my grave responsibility to prevent abuse and to keep children safe."

Alfred G. Schlert

Bishop of Allentown

Anyone who knows of incidents of abuse, in the Church or outside it, should report it to the State ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313, the State Attorney General's hotline at 1-888-538-8541, or to local law enforcement. The Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to provide assistance to anyone who, as a minor, was abused by a priest, deacon, employee, or volunteer of the Diocese, or of its parishes. Her direct line is 1-800-791-9209.

IN THIS ISSUE

Advent Ember Days	2
Because We Are Catholic	3
Generation Z	4
Spring Confirmations	7
Spiritual and Religious	9
Addiction Mass	10
March for Life Buses	11
Christmas Novena	14
Christmas Concerts	15
Retired Religious	16



Prelates pray before the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel during a day of prayer Nov. 12 at the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

Bishop Schlert Q&A on U.S. Bishops' Meeting

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) gathered for their Fall General Assembly in Baltimore Nov. 12-14. The bishops' plans to vote on new measures to increase bishop accountability in the handling of clergy sexual abuse of minors were put on hold until February at the request of the Vatican.

Diocese of Allentown Bishop Alfred Schlert participated in the meeting and later answered questions from The A.D. Times about it.

The USCCB President Cardinal Daniel DiNardo said on Nov. 14 that he was leaving the bishops' fall general assembly more hopeful than when the meeting began. Are you hopeful as well?

I am. While the public sessions of the USCCB meeting ended without a vote, at the Vatican's request, on

Please see Q&A page 2 ▶▶

"The Allentown Diocese in the Year of Our Lord"

THE A.D. TIMES

Published biweekly on Thursday by
Allentown Catholic Communications, Inc.
at P.O. Box F
Allentown, PA 18105-1538
Phone: 610-871-5200, Ext. 2264
Fax: 610-439-7694
E-mail: adtimes@allentowndioocese.org

President

Bishop Alfred Schlert

Secretary for External Affairs

Matt Kerr

Editor

Jill Caravan

Staff WritersTara Connolly
Tami Quigley**Design & Production**

Marcus Schneck

Advertising Contact

Lori Anderson

Office Assistant

Priscilla Tatarra

MISSION STATEMENT

As part of the Catholic Press, The A.D. Times is the official newspaper for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Allentown, serving Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Schuylkill counties. The A.D. Times proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the People of God through evangelization, catechesis and the teaching of the Church, the extension of Christ's presence in the world today. It endeavors to nourish, strengthen and challenge the faith of its readers by continually providing news information, formation, inspiration, religious education and Catholic identification. Under the patronage of Mary, Mother of the Church, The A.D. Times serves the Church so that the Kingdom of God might become a reality in our society transformed by His Good News.

POLICY STATEMENTS

The A.D. Times will consider all editorial copy and photos submitted in a fair and objective manner. The newspaper reserves the right to reject or edit any submission.

Any advertising copy accepted does not necessarily reflect the views, opinions or endorsement of The A.D. Times and/or its publisher. The A.D. Times reserves the right to reject any advertising copy submitted.

DEADLINES

Advertising copy must be received by Monday of the week before publication. News copy must be received by Thursday of the week before publication.

MEMBERSHIPS

Catholic Press Association,
Rockville Centre, N.Y.
Catholic News Service,
Washington, D.C.



Catholic Press Association Award Winner
1991, 1992, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999,
2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2010,
2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016
2017, 2018

**POSTAL INFORMATION**

The A.D. Times (USPS 004-111) is published on Thursdays, weekly once/biweekly/triweekly in December, at a subscription cost of \$20 per year by Allentown Catholic Communications, Inc. at 1515 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Allentown, PA 18102-4500. Periodicals Postage paid at Allentown, PA and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The A.D. Times, P.O. Box F, Allentown, PA 18105-1538

Q & A

►Continued from page 1

key proposals to hold American Bishops accountable, my brother Bishops and I provided strong direction on this important topic, and there are very hopeful signs:

-- We plan to establish a third-party reporting mechanism to register any abuse complaints against Bishops.

-- We are proposing to establish a national board to oversee the conduct of Bishops.

-- An alternative proposal is that any abuse claims made against a Bishop be referred to his Metropolitan (regional) Archbishop and his independent review board of lay people to investigate.

-- The Bishops also strongly endorsed the Vatican's on-going thorough investigation of allegations against Archbishop Theodore McCarrick.

I am in strong support of these actions, and I am confident that effective measures of accountability for American Bishops will flow from our work in Baltimore.

You referenced Archbishop McCarrick. The Bishops voted against a resolution calling on the Vatican to release all documents uncovered in the ongoing investigation of the McCarrick matter. Why did that resolution fail?

It was pointed out to the Bishops that the Vatican had, in a statement in October, said that it would release those documents. The majority of the bishops felt that a resolution calling on the Vatican to do something it had already promised to do would be redundant.

I know that there are people who had hoped the bishops would take a stronger

stand on the McCarrick matter. The Bishops did strongly endorse the Vatican's on-going, thorough investigation of the allegations against him. Personally, I would have preferred a vote that rebuked or censured Archbishop McCarrick for his actions.

Several bishops said Catholics in their dioceses had expected the conference to take serious steps to address the abuse crisis, and the Vatican letter delaying that action led to anger among parishioners. Did that happen here?

There was anger among the faithful and justifiably so. I know I was disheartened at first. But I think the bishops over the two days of public discussion made clear their resolve to hold themselves accountable and directed Cardinal DiNardo to take that message with him to the Vatican for the meeting in February.

I am confident that Cardinal DiNardo will share with the Holy Father the strong initiatives proposed by the American bishops.

The Vatican directive put the accountability measures the Bishops hoped to approve at the USCCB meeting on hold until February. Can anything be done in the meantime?

Cardinal DiNardo called on Archbishop Kurtz, Archbishop Gregory and Cardinal Dolan, all former presidents of the USCCB, to lead a task force that will look at the proposals I referenced before. They are to take the suggestions my brother bishops made at the meeting, and make sure they are ready to be presented at the meeting the Pope has called for February.

The Vatican directive said the proposals needed to be reviewed for conformity to Canon Law. What does Canon Law say about this situation?

The issue is the accountability of the Bishops. Currently, the Bishop is accountable to the Metropolitan Archbishop for some things, the Congregation for Bishops and the Holy Father. Having an independent board to oversee bishops would need further definition in Canon Law.

There seems to be a consensus among bishops for greater lay involvement in dealing with abuse-related matters. What form might that involvement take?

A good example that already exists is the predominately lay Independent Review Board that the Diocese of Allentown and almost all dioceses already have to advise the Bishop in matters involving allegations of abuse of minors by clerics.

Similar lay boards can be formed to assist the Diocesan Bishop in other areas and potentially to have some oversight of bishops in that area.

Between now and February, when the Vatican has scheduled a meeting with the presidents of the worlds' Bishops' conferences to discuss the abuse crisis, what can the laity do to help in this difficult time in the Church?

The most important thing Catholics can do is not to lose faith in the Church. I know this is difficult because of the past actions and inactions of some bishops. The best way to sustain our faith is through daily prayer and an active sacramental life.

Also, I ask anyone who has been the subject of sexual abuse to report it to authorities. If the abuse was inflicted by someone in the Church, please also report it to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator. Her number is 1-800-791-9209. She coordinates assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who were sexually abused when they were minors by priests or deacons.

Advent Ember Days in December

As the Season of Advent approaches, Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert asks the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Allentown to celebrate the Ember Days for the season.

Ember Days are quarterly observances with three days set aside (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday) to pray in gratitude for the blessings of the season and human labor, to thank God publicly.

There are 12 Ember Days in all. Traditionally Ember-tide was also decided as a time to pray for priests. Ember Days are no longer included in the Universal Roman Calendar, but they are not abolished.

On these days, Bishop Schlert is asking for abstinence from all meat products, fasting and a Holy Hour by the clergy. The People of God of the Diocese of Allentown are encouraged to join in this practice as a sign of healing.

The Advent Ember Days are as follows: Wednesday, Dec. 19; Friday, Dec. 21; and Saturday, Dec. 22.

**VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR**

The Diocese of Allentown provides assistance to anyone who, as a minor, was sexually abused by a priest, deacon or employee/volunteer of the Diocese/Parish

Parents, guardians, children and survivors of sexual abuse are invited and encouraged to contact the Diocese of Allentown for more information about this program. The fullness of compassion should be extended to these victims by the Church.

To speak directly to the Victim Assistance Coordinator, please call the direct line 1-800-791-9209.

To learn more about the Diocese of Allentown's Youth Protection Programs, Sexual Abuse Policy and Code of Conduct, please visit www.allentowndioocese.org and click on "Youth Protection" at top right.

COORDINADOR DE ASISTENCIA A LAS VÍCTIMAS

La Diócesis de Allentown provee asistencia a cualquier persona que, como menor de edad, fue abusado sexualmente por un sacerdote, diácono o empleado/voluntario de la Diócesis/Parroquia.

Los padres, tutores, niños y los sobrevivientes de abuso sexual están invitados a contactar la Diócesis de Allentown para obtener más información sobre este programa. La plenitud de compasión debe extenderse a las víctimas por la Iglesia.

Para hablar directamente con el coordinador de asistencia a las víctimas por favor llame a la línea directa 1-800-791-9209.

Para obtener más información acerca de los Programas de Protección de la Juventud, Política de Abuso Sexual y el Código de Conducta de la Diócesis de Allentown, por favor visite www.allentowndioocese.org y haga clic en "Protección de la Juventud" en la parte superior derecha.



Because We Are Catholic

School Students Saving Soles

Elementary students at St. Catharine of Siena School in Reading are helping the needy while at the same time learning lessons about economics and world affairs.

Students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade have been collecting gently used shoes for the past two years, more than 2,500 pairs in all. If laid end-to-end, that's enough shoes to stretch the length of 116 school buses.

The kids donate the shoes to a nationwide non-profit called Soles4Souls. The charity ships them around the world to people affected by natural disasters or sends them to developing nations to enable "micro-enterprise," in which poor people start their own businesses selling shoes so they can become economically self-sufficient.

"I feel bad for people who don't have shoes to wear, so I brought as many as I could," said Cece Wright, 13.

"This is a good opportunity for people to donate shoes and help those who need them," said Eddie Oscar, 14.

Evelyn Nguyen, 13, summed up the school shoe collection project this way: "It's about hope. It shows that there are people who really do care. We can keep this going with the help of others, and with our own determination."



Above, from left to right are Eddie Oscar, Evelyn Nguyen and Cece Wright, eighth graders at St. Catharine of Siena School, Reading.

Left, Evelyn Nguyen displays the shirt she designed for the project.

Parish Family Practices Works of Mercy



Members of the parish and school families at Sacred Heart, Bath are coming together to assist those in need with a program they call Helping Hands.

It might be a few home-cooked meals after someone comes home from the hospital. Or it could be some temporary help around the house or a visit for someone who craves companionship.

Stephanie Horn and Cindy Markovcy launched the assistance program in April. Both have appreciated the help of others during difficult times in their own lives, and now they relish the chance to pay it forward.

"We're always looking for others who can volunteer their time," says Markovcy, "either for hands-on tasks like cooking or housecleaning, or simply by praying for those in need."

The group, which has about 30 volunteers, also extends its services to those Sacred Heart School families who are not Catholic.

"Meals are especially easy for me," says Horn, a mother of eight. "I'm used to cooking for an army anyway."

The women see the program as a real-life example of the way Catholics can serve others by practicing corporal and spiritual works of mercy, actions that extend God's compassion to those in need.

Through their strong faith and determination, Horn and Markovcy have begun an assistance and outreach network that will benefit people in the Sacred Heart community for years to come.

They are quick to deflect any credit, however. "In my mind," says Horn, "this is simply the way people in a parish family take care of one another."

Cindy Markovcy, left, and Stephanie Horn.

"Because We Are Catholic" tells the stories of how the people of the Diocese of Allentown make a difference in the lives of others, bringing the Light of Christ to each other and to our community.

Diocesan Cathedral Christmas Schedule

The 2018 Christmas schedule at the Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown is below. For more information, call 610-433-6461 or visit website www.cathedral-church.org.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Regular schedule – 15 minutes before all weekday Masses. Satur-

days 3:15 to 4 p.m.
Additional Advent schedule – 15 minutes before Sunday Masses.
Friday, Dec. 21 – 4 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 22 – 3 to 4 p.m.

Special Penance Service
Monday, Dec. 17 – 7 p.m., several

priests will be available.

Christmas Masses
Christmas Eve, Monday, Dec. 24 – 4:15 p.m. Vigil Mass in church, 4:15 p.m. Vigil Mass in Parish Activity Center, 6 p.m. Vigil Mass in church (children's liturgy), 9:45 p.m. Christmas hymns by Cathedral Choir, 10:30

p.m. Vigil Mass in church.
Christmas Day, Tuesday, Dec. 25 – 7:30, 9 and 10:30 a.m. in church.

New Year's Day Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Monday, Dec. 31 – 4:15 p.m. New Year's Eve Vigil Mass.
Tuesday, Jan. 1 – 8 and 10 a.m. Masses in church.

Workshop Centers on Engaging Generation Z Through Youth Ministry

By TAMI QUIGLEY
Staff writer

“Inspire them with Jesus’ vision – the Kingdom of God,” said Tom East of the Center for Ministry Development, Gig Harbor, Washington, presenter of the workshop “Ministry with Gen Z and Their Families” Nov. 17 at St. Thomas More, Allentown.

The workshop shared the research about Gen Z youth and their families, along with effective ways for parishes to engage youth and their families. There were also practical ideas and starting points within these topics as the session explored the ministry implications for youth ministry, catechesis, sacramental preparation and parish life.

The workshop was designed for all parish leaders whose ministries touch the lives of adolescents – including pastors, deacons, pastoral associates, coordinators of youth ministry, leaders in faith formation, catechists, Confirmation preparation leaders and service/social concerns leaders.

The workshop was facilitated by the Center for Ministry Development, <https://www.cmdnet.org/>. The center promotes the development of ministry and catechesis with youth and families through leadership formation, service learning, and resources rooted in Catholic tradition and Scripture. The vision statement of the center is reflected in three words: faithful, innovative and practical.

The Diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry (OYYAFM) sponsored the event.

Those attending included Thea Aclo, director of OYYAFM; and Francesca Frias, assistant coordinator of OYYAFM.

Three sessions were offered: “Meet Gen Z/Meet Their Parents/Explore Ministry Implications”; “Reimagine Ministry/Inspire the Change Makers/Evangelize Through Technology”; and “Empower Family Faith/Transform Ministries/Name Your Starting Points.”

“Meet Gen Z/Meet Their Parents/



“Inspire them with Jesus’ vision – the Kingdom of Heaven,” Tom East says in the morning session “Reimagine Ministry/Inspire the Change Makers/Evangelize Through Technology.”

Explore Ministry Implications” helped participants listen to and learn more about the youth of Generation Z, get to know their Gen X parents and begin to explore what this means for the ministry of evangelization.

“Reimagine Ministry/Inspire the Change Makers/Evangelize Through Technology” delved into what kind of ministry inspires, engages and forms this generation?

In this session, participants reimaged all of youth ministry as connecting young people and their families to deeper friendship with Christ. Participants considered new resources for helping youth participate in building God’s kingdom and evangelizing youth through technology.

“Empower Family Faith/Transform Ministries/Name Your Starting Points” considered resources and strategies for equipping families to grow in and share faith.

Participants looked at the best practices of parishes who are building relationships with youth and engaging them in active participation. This included an opportunity to look at the starting points for each of the parish communities.

Presenting the morning session “Rei-



Above, listening to speaker Tom East at the workshop “Ministry with Gen Z and Their Families” Nov. 17 at St. Thomas More, Allentown are, from left, Carla Kologie, John Wagstaff, Josette Peckman, Ann Pergosky and Kevin Kimmel. (Photos by John Simitz)

Below, participating in group discussion are, from left, Monica Gutman, Joey Moser (hidden), Christina (Tina) Tran, Bob Michener, Jenn Reasinger and Francesca Frias.



Reimagine Ministry/Inspire the Change Makers/Evangelize Through Technology,” East said members of Gen Z are “kingdom builders,” and spoke of a youth group choosing service projects sometimes tied to the preparation for confirmation, such as planning Vacation Bible School.

“This generation are change makers. They hunger for a cause bigger than themselves.”

East shared the story of a youth group whose project was Humanitarian Land-Mapping for Lesotho, Southeast Africa.

“They didn’t have any good maps in Lesotho, so this high school in Ireland partnered with a high school in Lesotho, and these kids made 3-D mapping so people could even see their farms,” East said.

How did they empower members of Gen Z in ministry projects? East cited five steps: empathize, define, ideate (creation of ideas), prototype (an idea you can test) and test (is it matched with the needs you are trying to address?)

“Building empathy doesn’t just build better projects but better disciples, better people,” East said. “Spend time in the shoes of the people you want to serve.”

“Define the problem you want to solve,” East said, for example something very specific, like “You could define how to design a better way to plant ‘teff’ in Ethiopia.”

Teff is a fine grain – about the size of a poppy seed – that comes in a variety of colors, from white and red to dark

brown. It is an ancient grain from Ethiopia and Eritrea, and comprises the staple grain of their cuisines.

“Leverage the creative power of the group by brainstorming,” East said as he discussed ideation.

“Its quality over quantity of ideas,” he added.

“Think of an issue about which your youth are passionate and write a six-word memoir,” East suggested.

For example, he

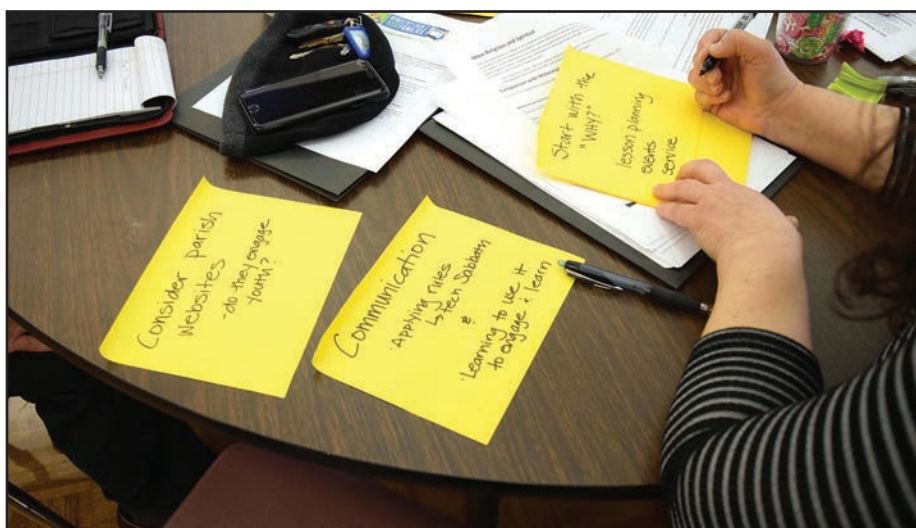
showed a memoir for the injustice your youth want to fix with a photo of a young girl with the words “Not For Sale.” The memoir: “In God’s image: not for sale.”

East noted the famous six-word memoir usually attributed to Ernest Hemingway: “For Sale: baby shoes, never worn.” That memoir really makes the reader wonder about what happened to create that scenario.

“Build your prototype, though Church language may be more likely to use the word pilot,” East said. “Test it from the viewpoint of the people who are using it.” For example, East spoke about programs for the homeless of which many homeless people were not aware, so a group created a process so they’d know what’s available.

“Then test it,” East said, noting this could possibly be done as part of the confirmation process or on a retreat.

“Inspire change makers to find a project that taps into their passions and let them run with their ideas.”



A participant joins in brainstorming ideas.

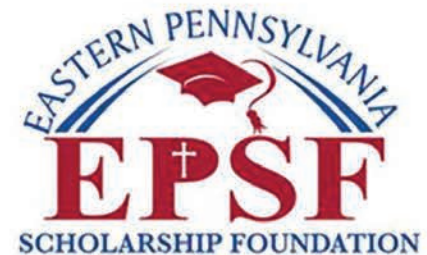
“Inspire change makers to find a project that taps into their passions and let them run with their ideas.”

Catholic School Scholarship Program

Did you know that you can re-direct 90% of your state taxes to fund need-based scholarships for students in any of our Diocesan Schools instead of sending your money to Harrisburg?

Anyone who pays PA state income tax and qualifies as an Accredited Investor is eligible. This is defined as having individual income of \$200,000 or \$300,000 of joint income in each of the two most recent years, or a net worth of \$1,000,000 excluding your primary residence.

For more information call the Office of Education at 610-866-0581, ext. 2328.



The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

The Order's aims are:

To strengthen in its members the practice of Christian life, in absolute fidelity to the Supreme Pontiff and according to the teachings of the Church, observing as its foundation the principles of charity which make the Order a fundamental means of assistance to the Holy Land.

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is the only lay institution of the Vatican State charged with the task of providing for the needs of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and of all the activities and initiatives to support the Christian presence in the Holy Land. The contributions made by its members are therefore the Patriarchal institutions' main source of funding.

The Annual Investiture and Mass for the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem was held at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, N.Y.C. on Saturday, September 29, 2018. Following the Investiture and Mass, the Members, families and friends attended the reception and Banquet held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Manhattan.

**We would like to wish you
A Blessed Merry Christmas and
a Very Happy New Year 2019**



Pictured in the top row are: His Eminence Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Muller, His Eminence Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan, KGCHS- Lieutenantcy Prior, Her Excellency Vicki Downey, DGCHS-Lieutenant, Eastern Lieutenantcy, His Eminence Edwin Frederick Cardinal O'Brien, Knight of the Collar-Grand Master

Pictured in the front row: Sir Robert L. Miller, KHS, Sir John F. Spirk, KHS, Linda Kern (Guest) Sir Louis James, KHS (newly invested Knight), Rev. Msgr. William F. Bayer, KCHS, (Knight Chaplain Commander) Nominations Chair, Sir Michael McGovern, KHS, Sir Eugenio Melendez, KCHS (newly invested Knight Commander)

Sir Robert J. Gowell, KGCHS (newly invested Knight Grand Cross) not pictured at the banquet.

An Advent Question

Sheila was talking to her girlfriend who was Jewish and asked her "Are you still waiting for the Messiah to come?"

"Not really," her friend said.

"Well," Sheila admitted, "we Christians are supposed to be waiting for the Messiah, too, but I'm not really waiting for Jesus' second coming either."

As we begin Advent, let us ask ourselves, "Am I waiting for Jesus to come?"

The liturgical season of Advent is the perfect time for this question. Advent focuses on preparing for the coming of Christ, not just to remember his coming at Christmas, but also for his coming in glory.

This coming is part of our faith. In the Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent Jesus says, "They will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

So, is waiting for his coming really a part of my faith life or has it been pushed it aside?

Perhaps we don't wait for Jesus' coming because we look at it as something we would rather not think about, something destructive and disastrous. After all, in that same passage from the Sunday Gospel Jesus says, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay ... people will die of fright."

We sometimes call it "the end of the world." But we have to always keep in mind the reason for the destruction. "When these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand," Jesus tells us. He

comes to redeem us, to renew all of creation and inaugurate the Kingdom of God in its fullness.

Certainly, to see the need for "a new heavens and a new earth," all we have to do is look at the news. We can also see the need for the renewal of each one of us.

When I was in the seminary in Rome, as deacon part of my apostolate was to take Communion to shut-ins. One I will never forget was Mrs. Lanza.

She was an elderly woman. From the neck up she was fine. From the neck down she was a mess. When I entered her apartment the first thing she would do was give me that week's "medical report": "My cardiologist said.... Oh, my back really hurts.... My blood pressure is up, etc."

Next, she might have some comments on current events from the news. They would show that the world was as unhealthy as she was. She would end with, "And this Jesus, when is he going to come?" Exactly. That is the attitude we as Christ's followers should have.

Our Advent prayer of "Come Lord Jesus" is a longing for Jesus to save us and our world, to usher in his kingdom and renew all.

Jesus warns us against losing that attitude: "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of life."

Perhaps we are having too much fun here to look for renewal. We don't have to go as far as "drunkenness and carousing" (though some people do) to lose our desire for Christ's renewal. Let us never forget that the good things of this world

By Monsignor William Baker,
pastor of All Saints Parish,
McAdoo.



can never fully satisfy us.

Or perhaps we don't long for a new world because we are all caught up in "the anxieties of life." It is all too easy to just concentrate on putting one foot in front of another and forget where the journey is taking us.

The journey of life should take us to the fullness of life in Christ's kingdom. That's where we are made to go; that's where this whole world was created to end up.

"Be vigilant," Jesus tells us. That means we watch and prepare for his coming. It starts in our heart; we must cultivate the desire for the kingdom. We must sincerely pray, "Thy Kingdom come," and we must work to get our world ready for the coming of the kingdom.

Just as we work to prepare our homes for expected holiday visitors, we should be working to get the world ready for Christ to come with the gift of his kingdom. If we are watching for a kingdom of justice and peace and love, then we must work for justice, peace and love in the world.

So let us pray: "Come Lord Jesus. Come into our hearts and make them long for your coming in glory. Come and help us prepare our world for your kingdom that brings renewal to all creation. We need you, come Lord Jesus."

Diocese of Scranton

Diocesan Secretary for Communications

The Diocese of Scranton is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Diocesan Secretary for Communications. This senior management position is responsible for the direction and oversight of all diocesan communications activities including print and electronic media, social and digital media, licensed television station, internal communications, public relations and statements by the Bishop or the Diocese. The successful candidate will also be required to develop and implement proactive and strategic communications initiatives on behalf of the Diocese and its various organizations and ministries.

For a more comprehensive description of the position and required qualifications, individuals are encouraged to visit the diocesan website at www.dioceseofscranton.org.

Interested applicants are asked to send a cover letter with salary requirement and a complete resume with a minimum of three (3) references by December 5, 2018 to:

James Burke

Diocesan Secretary for Human Resources
300 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton PA. 18503
Or email Jim-Burke@dioceseofscranton.org

EOE

For all of your Spiritual needs.

- Daily Rosary
- Weekly Mass
- Worship Services
- Bible Studies

Excellence in senior living,
offering independent living,
personal care, and
memory care.

Suites and apartments
available.

Northampton:
610-262-4300

Saucon Valley:
610-814-2700

Sacred Heart
Senior Living

SacredHeartSeniorLiving.com

Locally Owned Fourth Generation Family Business Celebrating Our 63rd Year!

Christmas Sale

50% OFF – All Permanent Arrangements, Wreaths & Swags (excludes cemetery pieces), Gift Items, Decorations & Home Décor

Christmas Silk Cemetery Logs Starting @ \$10.99
Fresh Poinsettia Plants starting @ \$10.99

RICH MAR FLORIST Phone 610-437-5588

www.RichMarFlorist.com

ALLENTOWN: 1708 Tilghman St.
BETHLEHEM: 2407 Easton Ave.

More than just the average florist... Stop and see for yourself!

Spring 2019 Confirmation Schedule

The diocesan Office for Divine Worship has announced the spring 2019 confirmation schedule as follows. All confirmations will begin at 4:30 p.m.

- Tuesday, Feb. 5 – Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, St. Paul and St. Francis of Assisi, all Allentown.
- Wednesday, Feb. 6 – Immaculate Conception BVM, Our Lady Help of Christians, St. John the Baptist, and SS. Peter and Paul, all Allentown.
- Thursday, Feb. 7 – Holy Trinity and St. John the Baptist, both Whitehall; St. Peter, Coplay.
- Tuesday, Feb. 19 – Sacred Heart of Jesus, Allentown.
- Wednesday, Feb. 20 – St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Whitehall and Annunciation BVM, Catasauqua.
- Thursday, Feb. 21 – Notre Dame of Bethlehem.
- Tuesday, Feb. 26 – St. Anne, Bethlehem.
- Wednesday, Feb. 27 – St. Thomas More, Allentown.
- Thursday, Feb. 28 – Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Bethlehem.
- Thursday, March 7 – St. Rocco, Martins Creek and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Pen Argyl.
- Tuesday, March 12 – Assumption BVM and Queenship of Mary, both Northampton; St. John Fisher, Catasauqua.
- Wednesday, March 13 – St. Ann, Emmaus.
- Thursday, March 14 – St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield.
- Tuesday, March 19 – St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Hellertown; St. Ursula, Fountain Hill; Sacred Heart, Holy Ghost, Incarnation of Our Lord, and SS. Simon and Jude, all Bethlehem.
- Thursday, March 21 – St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Easton.
- Tuesday, March 26 – Assumption BVM, Bethlehem.
- Wednesday, March 27 – St. Joseph, Coopersburg.
- Wednesday, March 27 – All Saints, McAdoo; St. Richard, Barnesville; St. John XXIII, Tamaqua.
- Thursday, March 28 – St. Mary, Hamburg and St. Mary, Kutztown.
- Tuesday, April 2 – Holy Infancy, Bethlehem.
- Thursday, April 4 – St. Joseph, Summit Hill.
- Tuesday, April 9 – St. Ambrose, Schuylkill Haven.
- Thursday, April 11 – St. Peter the Fisherman, Lake Harmony; SS. Peter and Paul, Lehigh; Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph, both Jim Thorpe.
- Thursday, April 25 – Most Blessed Trinity, Tremont; St. Matthew the Evangelist and St. Michael the Archangel, both Minersville.
- Tuesday, April 30 – St. Clare of Assisi, St. Clair; Holy Cross, New Philadelphia; St. Stephen, Port Carbon; St. John the Baptist and St. Patrick, both Pottsville.
- Thursday, May 2 – Snow date.

70th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS VESPERS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15
7:00PM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16
2:00PM & 7:00PM

CONVENT CHAPEL
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW IN RETREAT CENTER DINING HALL
FREE WILL OFFERING

ST. FRANCIS CENTER FOR RENEWAL

395 Bridle Path Road Bethlehem PA 18017 610.867.8890
stfranciscenter@gmail.com www.stfrancisctr.org

WOMEN OF GRACE

A Powerful Catholic Study Just For You

Pope John Paul II asked women to accept God's urgent call to "aid humanity into not falling." Did you know that God created you for a very special purpose and mission and that your womanhood is part of His plan? In this Women of Grace Foundational Study Series you will embark upon a journey of discovery and transformation as you explore the great call and gift of your femininity. You will delve into prayer, Sacred Scripture, Church documents and teachings, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the lives of women saints. By looking to the Blessed Virgin Mary who is our exemplar, you will find a spiritual path that leads you to the heart of the Father and the abundant life of Jesus Christ.

The Women of Grace Foundational Study is 9 classes, every other week, beginning January 15, 2019, Tuesday 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and ending May 7, 2019. Or, beginning January 16, 2019, Wednesday 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and ending May 8, 2019. Classes are held in the library at St Thomas More Church, 1040 Flexer Avenue, Allentown.

Registration is required, space is limited. A fee is required to cover materials.

Please contact:
Bernadette Monchak-Barski at (610) 392-2659
or (610) 398-9096.
Email: bmbarski@gmail.com

Holy Infancy Gift Shop

Your Religious Goods Supplier
"Be a Part of It"

324 East Fourth Street,
Bethlehem, PA 18015
(610) 866-9360

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-4 Sunday 10-1 Closed Monday
www.holyinfancygifts.com email: holyinfancygifts@rcn.com

Information concerning 2019 Sunday Missals is here.
English and Spanish versions available.
Also Guides for Liturgy of the Hours and Missal Guides available.

ProximoTravel

Pilgrimages for Catholics and people of all faiths

Prices starting at \$2,499 ~ Prices are ALL-INCLUSIVE w/Airfare from anywhere in the USA

Travel with Fr. Abraham Ha Assistant Pastor
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Bethlehem PA on our Ireland & Scotland Trip.
Where: Galway, Our lady of Knock, Cliffs of Moher, Killarney, Dublin, Edinburgh Castle, St. Andrews Cathedral.
Trip Dates: June 16-26 2019
Cost: \$4,600.00

We also specialize in custom trips for Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

www.proximotravel.com 508-340-9370
Hablamos Español 855-842-8001
anthony@proximotravel.com call us 24/7



St. Benedict Parish
7th Annual Advent Vespers
Festival of Carols and Lessons



When: Sunday, December 9, 2018

Time: 4:00PM

Where: St. Benedict Parish

2020 Chestnut Hill Road

Mohnton (Plowville) PA, 19560



Please join our Parish Choir, under the direction of Andrew Angstadt, as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus Christ. During this season of running around let us take a moment and reflect on the true meaning of the season. Join us for scripture and music that will fill your spirits!

Our Parish Choir will be joined with a professional String Quartet and our Women's Club will be providing refreshments for all who attend.

O Come All Ye Faithful!!!



THE SALESIAN CENTER
FOR FAITH AND CULTURE

DeSales University
2755 Station Avenue
Center Valley, PA 18034

FREE ONLINE NON-CREDIT SALESIAN COURSE FOR ADVENT



To celebrate the season of Advent, the Salesian Center for Faith & Culture at DeSales University is offering a Catholic/Salesian online non-credit course for spiritual enrichment. This course, *Preparing the Way*, will run from November 30 through December 31, 2018. Self-registration is easy, there is no purchase necessary and you work at your own pace. To register go to www.desales.edu/salesian and click on the free online non-credit courses link.

www.desales.edu/salesian

Contact Lore McFadden, director of programs

610.282.1100, ext. 1244 • lore.mcfadden@desales.edu



DESALES
UNIVERSITY

YOUR LEGACY, THEIR FUTURE.



Leave a gift in your WILL to ensure a **bright future.**

ACCHSLegacy.org

For Planned Giving information, call 610-437-4601

'Faith and Spirits' Upholds Worth in Being Spiritual *and* Religious

By TARA CONNOLLY
Staff writer

More and more Americans describe themselves as "spiritual but not religious" and seek to find God in sunsets and walks along the beach.

While God is present in the nature he created, Dr. Carmina Chapp told faithful during "Truth: What the Catholic Church Really Teaches" that being devoid of religion, ritual and doctrine may prolong their entrance into heaven.

Chapp, program director of Online Theology Programs at St. Joseph College, Standish, Maine and co-owner of Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Farm, Harvey's Lake, led the informal discussion "Spiritual but Not Religious," with more than 50 people Nov. 14 at the Diocesan Shrine of St. Therese of Lisieux, Nesquehoning.

"I am always striving in my spiritual life," she said.

"But if I say I don't need religion, I become my own God. I am no longer accountable to God, to morals or to others. If I believe God likes me just the way I am, then I don't have to change or grow.

There is a real danger to that."

She pointed to ceremonial aspects of the Catholic religion and said rituals like Mass create a bond with other people.

"Because we are human, we are drawn to things that bring us together. In our rituals we aren't simply coming together to hang out. We come together to have an experience with God such as talking to him and meeting

"If I am not shooting to be with God, what am I living for?"



Dr. Carmina Chapp, program director of Online Theology Programs at St. Joseph College, Standish, Maine and co-owner of Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Farm, Harvey's Lake, discusses "Spiritual but Not Religious" at the Diocesan Shrine of St. Therese of Lisieux, Nesquehoning. (Photos by John Simitz)

him. Our rituals as Catholics bring us together with God, the communion of saints and with those who come after us," said Chapp.

Rick Dooley, assistant director of the Diocesan Office of Adult Formation, then asked Dr. Chapp to explore why the Church is needed since it is imperfect.

"The Church is Christ himself," she said. "That's our religious belief. Our spiritual life has to strive to embrace that part. That is very hard to do today with all the wounds in the Church.

"The Church is indefectibly holy because of Christ – not the people who failed Christ," said Chapp.

In their spiritual lives, she told the faithful, they need to know what they are striving for – such as trying to be like



Dr. Chapp, right, responds to a question from Rick Dooley, left, assistant director of the Diocesan Office of Adult Formation during a session of "Truth: What the Catholic Church Really Teaches."



Dr. Larry Chapp, co-owner of Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Farm, offers input during the discussion focusing on the challenges of teaching the faith.

Christ and emulating the saints.

"We need the Church because we need to know what it is to be a true follower of Christ. If we truly know who Christ is, then we can recognize what Christ is not," said Chapp.

The Catholic faith, according to Chapp, believes in the incarnation of Christ – meaning Jesus, the Son of God, took on human flesh and is the only religion that has the Eucharist.

"If one is serious about their spiritual life, they will seek the truth about being a human being, where we came from and where are we going," she said.

As for the difference between Catholicism and other Christian faiths, Chapp said Christian faiths broke away from Catholicism or rejected some aspect of the faith.

"Our faith is whole. You can't take a piece out. Our faith is systematic. If one thing changes, everything else falls apart," she pointed out.

Like the ritual of the Mass, Chapp said when the sacrifice of the Mass is taken out – the ritual is changed and the belief becomes different.

"If I am not shooting to be with God, what am I living for? That's why we need the Church and the community. If I believe my end is to be with God – I don't fear being a martyr. We are all martyrs today in the Church. And I am not going to leave because I meet Jesus in the Eucharist. No one else has it," she said.

In the Catholic religion, she said, faithful experience God more intensely in Mass and are able to see God in others when they go out into the world.

Other rituals in the Church, like the sacrament of reconciliation, bring Christ closer to his people.

"The priest's words of absolution is Jesus Christ forgiving you," stressed Chapp.

"God already forgave you before you even came to confession. He is just waiting for us to 'ask' for forgiveness and repent," she said.

"Our confession reconciles us with the Church – not just God. Sin hurts our relationship with one another. Mortal sin separates us from the Body of Christ, and you want to be back in the Body of Christ."



Father Allen Hoffa, pastor of St. Joseph, Summit Hill and rector of the shrine, participates in the discussion.

Holiday Mass of Remembrance Dec. 15

The annual Holiday Mass of Remembrance of St. Ann Church, Emmaus will be celebrated Saturday, Dec. 15 at 1 p.m.

All parishioners in the Diocese of Allentown are invited to celebrate the lives of our departed loved ones in the midst of the busy holiday season.

Participants may honor their deceased beloved by adding their name(s) in the special Remembrance Book from 12:15

to 12:50 p.m., and then celebrating Mass. Names of those remembered will be read during Mass.

Light reception and fellowship will follow in the school cafeteria.

This eighth annual Holiday Mass of Remembrance is being hosted by the parish's Bereavement Support Committee.

To preregister or for more information, call Annmarie at 610-965-9355.

'Shower for the Unknown Babe' Dec. 12

Celebrate the birth of the Christ child by participating in the "Shower for the Unknown Babe" Wednesday, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. in the Parish Activities Center at the Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown.

The shower – featuring prayer, entertainment and light refreshments – will benefit Mary's Shelter in Bethlehem.

Donations can be taken to the shower

or dropped at the rectory.

Needed are newborn and larger-sized diapers (3, 4, 5) and wipes; baby wash, lotion and diaper cream; new baby clothing (up to 2T); and new or gently used baby items (include all pieces).

Monetary donations are also accepted.

For more information, email Tracey Carbonetto at tcarbonetto@gmail.com.

Bishop Schlert to Celebrate Mass for People Struggling With Addiction and Their Families

Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert will offer a special Mass of Healing and Remembrance for people struggling with addiction and their families.

The Mass will be celebrated at a regularly scheduled parish Sunday Mass on Dec. 2 at 10:30 a.m. at Immaculate Con-

ception, Jim Thorpe, with Father James Ward, pastor.

Homilist will be Father Patrick Lamb, pastor of Queenship of Mary Parish, Northampton.

This is the second Mass for people

struggling with addiction celebrated by Bishop Schlert this year. The first was April 15 at Queenship of Mary.

"We have a responsibility as a family of faith to pray for and offer encouragement to our brothers and sisters coping

with addictions, and to provide support to their families who struggle with them," said Bishop Schlert.

All in the Diocese are most welcome to attend this Mass and unite in prayer for hope and healing.

'Dare to Prepare' Advent Retreat for Teen Girls

St. Joseph Church, Coopersburg is hosting a "Dare to Prepare" Advent retreat for teen girls ages 12+ on Saturday, Dec. 8 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sponsored by Young Women of Grace, this day-long event will feature Mass, social time, games and a very special Christmas craft.

Author Susan Brinkmann, OCDS will

give two presentations on the critical role women play in the world today through the gift of their feminine genius, as well as on how to welcome Emmanuel by learning how to practice the presence of God.

A local youth minister will also address the girls on the importance of respecting themselves in their dress, and in

how they relate to themselves and others.

The day will include a light breakfast, pizza for lunch, and homemade Christmas cookies and treats.

Cost is \$30 per girl. For more information, visit the "Events" page at www.womenofgrace.com.



Women of Diocese to Gather for Advent Day of Reflection

Want to give yourself the perfect Christmas gift?

Join the women of the Diocese at a Day of Reflection Saturday, Dec. 15 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. at the Jesuit Center, Wernersville.

The Commission for Women is hosting the event, with the theme "Advent: New Church Year, New Me."

Deacon James Russo will discuss a Catholic perspective on the Charles Dickens' classic "A Christmas Carol."

He will use the story "to compare and contrast Scrooge to us and his conversion," said Deacon Russo.



"Advent (meaning, 'ad-venio' in Latin or 'to come to'), is the beginning of the

Church's liturgical year.

"The Advent season is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to Christ's second coming at the end of time, and to the anniversary of the Lord's birth on Christmas. During the weeks of Advent, Catholics prepare with expectation for the coming of Christ in a spirit of waiting, conversion and hope.

"But waiting during this season is unlike the waiting for a bus. During Advent we should be doing something very different than what the rest of society is doing."

Practical prayerful suggestions will

be offered to help navigate the days of Advent "by praying the mysteries of our lives, leading us to our destination of peace by being the person God intends us to be and not who our past experiences and others have told us we are."

Cost for the day is \$20, which includes a light breakfast, Mass, rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, lunch and time for fellowship.

To register go to www.allentowndioocese.org/cfw-spirituality.

For questions, contact Joanie Norelli at 917-406-4879 or Susan Teaford at 610-207-5763, or e-mail cfw@allentowndioocese.org.

Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe
Miércoles 12 de Diciembre 2018
 En el **SANTANDER ARENA**
 La Misa Solemne se celebrará a las **6PM** seguida por la fiesta. **(Las Mañanitas empiezan las 4:30AM)**
 La **NOVENA OFICIAL**, organizada por el **COMITÉ GUADALUPANO** y siempre rezada en las parroquias, será del **4-7 de diciembre** en la Iglesia de **San Pablo** y continuará las noches del **8-11 de diciembre** en la Iglesia de **San Pedro**. Salvo que avisado de otro modo, los servicios de la noche inician a las **6:30 PM**. Todos están invitados a honrar la **PATRONA DE LAS AMÉRICAS**.
 THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF **Guadalupe**
 Will be celebrated at the **Santander Arena** on **Wednesday 12 December**.

The Solemn Mass will be celebrated in the evening beginning at **6PM** followed by the fiesta. **(Las Mañanitas begin at 4:30AM.)**
 The **OFFICIAL NOVENA**, organized by the **GUADALUPE COMMITTEE**, and prayed in churches, will be held on **December 4-7** at **St. Paul Church** and continues at **St. Peter Church** the evenings of **December 8-11**. The novena is celebrated in Spanish. Unless advised otherwise, all evening services will begin at **6:30PM**.
 Everyone is welcome to honor the **PATRONESS OF THE AMERICAS**.
cha@allentowndioocese.org
www.allentowndioocese.org/cha

THE SALESIAN CENTER
FOR FAITH AND CULTURE

DeSales University
2755 Station Avenue
Center Valley, PA 18034

Join us for a Salesian Retreat with

Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

DRAWING NEAR TO GOD: PRAYING AND PLAYING WITH COLOR AND SHAPE
 you don't have to be an artist to enjoy this creative day of contemplative prayer. This hands-on workshop teaches even non-artists how to create simple mandalas.

Saturday, December 8, 2018

9:30 am Mass: a celebration of the Immaculate Conception
10:00 am to 3:00 pm: a retreat of prayer, reflection, and art *(lunch will be provided)*

Gambet Center Auditorium
DeSales University, Center Valley PA

This retreat is FREE and open to the public.
Space is limited, online registration is required.
Visit www.desales.edu/salesian and scroll to 'Visiting Artist'

www.desales.edu/salesian

Contact Lore McFadden, director of programs
 610.282.1100, ext. 1244 • lore.mcfadden@desales.edu

Death

Monsignor Dennis Hartgen, Pastor Emeritus of Holy Guardian Angels

Monsignor Dennis Hartgen, 72, pastor emeritus of Holy Guardian Angels Parish, Reading, died Nov. 21 at Lehigh Valley Hospital, Allentown.

Born in Reading, Monsignor Hartgen was the son of the late John and Margaret (Keltz) Hartgen. Surviving are his brother, John Hartgen of Williamsburg, Virginia, and his sister, M. Patricia Soliday of Lebanon.

Monsignor Hartgen attended Sacred Heart School, West Reading, and is a graduate of Reading Central Catholic High School, Reading. He attended St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, where he earned a bachelor degree in philosophy and a master of divinity degree in theology.

He was ordained to the priesthood May 19, 1973 by Bishop of Allentown Joseph McShea at St. Thomas More Church, Allentown. He received papal honors and was conferred the title of

Monsignor on Sept. 11, 2005 by Pope St. John Paul II.

Monsignor Hartgen's first priestly assignment was assistant pastor, St. Elizabeth Parish, Whitehall; then assistant pastor, Cathedral of St. Catherine of Siena, Allentown.

His first pastoral assignment was pastor, St. Elizabeth Parish, Pen Argyl; then pastor, St. Benedict Parish, Mohnton; and pastor, Holy Guardian Angels.

During the course of his priestly ministry, Monsignor Hartgen served as vicar forane, Berks Deanery; member, Committee on Ecumenism; special advocate, Diocesan Tribunal; defender of the bond, Diocesan Tribunal; member of the Bud-



get and Advisory Board, Pius X High School, Bangor; judge, Diocesan Tribunal; and board member, Reading Central Catholic High School.

Monsignor Hartgen retired June 19, 2018 and was named pastor emeritus of Holy Guardian Angels.

Calling hours will be at Holy Guardian Angels Thursday, Nov. 29 from 6 to 9 p.m. and Friday, Nov. 30 from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

A Vigil Service will be Nov. 29 at 7:30 p.m. Father Christopher Zelonis, pastor of St. Michael the Archangel, Minersville, will preside, and Father E. Michael Camilli, spiritual director of Holy Family Villa for Priests, will be homilist.

Mass of Christian Burial for Monsignor Hartgen will be celebrated Nov. 30 at 11 a.m. at Holy Guardian Angels Church, Reading by Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert.

Homilist will be Monsignor Aloysius

Callaghan, rector emeritus of St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Main concelebrants will be Monsignor David James, vicar general; Father Adam Sedar, secretary for clergy; Father Robert Finlan, pastor of Holy Guardian Angels; Father Keith Mathur, assistant in the Diocesan Curia and director of the Office for Divine Worship; Father John Gibbons, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Allentown and administrator of Immaculate Conception BVM Parish, Allentown; Father John Pendzick, pastor of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Whitehall; Monsignor Kenneth McAteer, pastor of St. Ephrem Parish, Bensalem; Father Richard Clement, pastor of St. John Baptist de la Salle Parish, Shillington; Father Camilli; and Monsignor Callaghan.

Interment will take place at Gethsemane Cemetery, Reading.

2019 March for Life Bus Trip and Event Information

The 2019 March for Life will be Friday, Jan. 18 in Washington, D.C.

Local parishes are running buses. Please consult the table on this page for prices and contact information.

Also listed are local prayer opportunities for those who cannot attend the march.

Additional bus information will be published as it becomes available, in The A.D. Times and on the diocesan website at www.allentowndioocese.org/pro-life-and-social-concerns.

If you are running a bus and do not see your parish name and information in the list, please contact the Office of Pro-Life and Social Concerns at 610-289-8900, ext. 2026 or e-mail mhartigan@allentowndioocese.org so it may be included.

For more information about the march, visit www.marchforlife.org/mfl-2019/.



JANUARY 18, 2019 - MARCH FOR LIFE, WASHINGTON, D.C. BUS INFORMATION

Parish	Departure Location (Church Lot)	Time of Departure	Price	Contact	E-mail	Phone
Our Lady of Perpetual Help	Bethlehem	7:30 AM	\$20 Adults \$10 Children	Tony Saldutti	Tsaldutti99@gmail.com	610-533-2711
Assumption BVM	Bethlehem	7:00 AM	\$25 pp \$75 Family	Lisa Temple	Lisa_temple3@yahoo.com	
St. Thomas More	Allentown	7:55 AM	\$20 Adults \$10 Children	Tony Saldutti	Tsaldutti99@gmail.com	610-533-2711
St. Jane Frances de Chantal	Easton	7:15 AM	\$10 Per person \$20 Family	Sue Stigliano	stig-1@rcn.com	610-253-0510
Sacred Heart	Bath	7:30 AM	\$20 Adults \$10 Youth \$30 Max per family	Karen Brynildsen	nannybepop@ptd.net	610-762-2122
St. Joseph the Worker	Orefield	7:00 AM	\$10 Per person	Sue Mueller	Suemueller45@gmail.com	610-392-2957
St. Benedict	Mohnton	7:30 AM	Free Will Offering	Helen MacMinn	hmacminn@gmail.com	484-354-9791
St. Columbkil and Most Blessed Sacrament	Boyertown	7:00 AM	\$50 Adults \$25 Students (Includes dinner)	Candee Holzman	candeeh@stcolumbkil.org	610-367-2371

Local prayer opportunities for those that cannot attend the March for Life in Washington, D.C.:

- St. Jane Frances de Chantal will be offering Eucharistic Adoration on January 18, 2019 following the 8:15 AM Mass ending with Benediction at 5:00 PM.

'Keys to a Powerful Prayer Life' Focus of Theology on Tap Session

By TAMI QUIGLEY
Staff writer

"Mary is our warrior Queen. We can go to her with anything and she will fight for us," said Eva Gontis, presenting "Mary's Toolbox: Keys to a Powerful Prayer Life" at a Theology on Tap session Nov. 12 at Hops at the Paddock, Allentown.

Gontis, of the Diocese of Harrisburg, discussed Mary's toolbox of prayers and devotions, and practical ways young adults can take the next step toward a deeper faith.

The mother of eight is a stay-at-home mom, but has taught theology and English, attaining her master of arts degree in theology and Christian ministry from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio.

Gontis addressed such topics as what makes the rosary so powerful? Why do some Catholics wear scapulars, and what do the different types mean? How can we use the many sacramentals and devotions available to us to enrich our faith and lead a stronger prayer life?

Theology on Tap is a monthly series sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry (OYYAFM). The series is designed to welcome young adults ages 21 to 35, single or married, in a casual setting where they can grow in the faith and share community with one another. It originated in the Archdiocese of Chicago, Illinois.

Alexa Smith, assistant director of OYYAFM, welcomed those gathered.

"I was always close to the Blessed Mother growing up. My Catholic faith always meant the world to me," said Gontis.

Growing up in Southern California, Gontis attended Mass every Sunday and had a great church youth group as a teen. "There was still something missing that was uniquely Catholic in our youth group meetings," Gontis said. "What did



Left, Eva Gontis suggests reading "True Devotion to Mary" and "The Secret of the Rosary" by St. Louis de Montfort while presenting the Theology on Tap session "Mary's Toolbox: Keys to a Powerful Prayer Life" Nov. 12 at Hops at the Paddock, Allentown. (Photos by John Simitz)

Above, young adults enjoy the evening of faith and fellowship sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry.

it mean to be Catholic? I didn't know the doctrine of the Church."

In her high school years in the 1980s, Gontis said she didn't know why she believed what she believed. "I wasn't questioning my faith but what it was I believed." This led her to pursue a degree at Franciscan University, where she also met her husband.

"There I fell in love with my faith and the Blessed Mother. I always had a good relationship with the Blessed Mother but this was on a new level," she said.

"The Blessed Mother is the number one surest way to get to heaven. She leads us to Jesus and to get to heaven."

Gontis suggested we need a "grace-ometer" patterned after the meter Credit Karma shows on its television commercials, because grace is the most important thing.

"Why the Blessed Mother? Why not just go to Jesus?" Gontis asked. "If you know someone who can help you achieve your goal – in this case meeting Jesus and getting to heaven – wouldn't you ask them for help?"

"Mary is the most pure vessel. The Angel Gabriel said, 'Hail, full of grace.' She's the purest human that ever lived," Gontis said, noting Jesus was both human and divine.

"She's also the perfect disciple – in her fiat, she is the perfect disciple, do-

ing what God wants. She's our perfect guide."

Gontis said Mary suffers with and prays with us and for us. "She experiences the sorrow we feel. She is our special intercessor. She is our powerful intercessor."

Gontis said at the Wedding at Cana, Mary beseeches Jesus on behalf of the host, and tells the host, "Do whatever he tells you." Until that point, Jesus had not performed any public miracles.

"There is nothing too small that the Blessed Mother won't intercede for us."

Mary, Gontis said, is the gift Jesus gave us from the cross when he said, "Woman, behold your son," and "John, behold your mother."

Gontis said Mary is also the mother of the Church.

She encouraged everyone to pray novenas, and explained the word novena is a reminder of the nine days between the Ascension and Pentecost that Mary and the apostles spent waiting for the Holy Spirit to come.

"She's the new Eve, the woman that crushes the head of the serpent," Gontis said. "She's the woman of Revelation, the Queen Mother," she said, referring to Revelation 12:1, "A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."

Gontis said there are special things Mary gives to us – sacramental – which are objects that dispose us to receive grace. She especially highlighted the rosary, scapular and miraculous medal.

"After the Mass and Liturgy of the Hours, the rosary is the prayer the church most recommends," Gontis said, adding the rosary comes to us from St. Dominic in the 1200s. Mary appeared and gave him the devotion of the Holy Rosary to assist him in combating the Albigensian heresy – which claimed the body was bad and the spirit was good – then wreaking havoc in the Church.

"She gives it to him as a weapon," Gontis said. "The rosary in its essence is incarnational. It's a vocal prayer; it's the touch of the beads and meditation.

"Satan hates the rosary. It's the perfect weapon against the devil."

"What else is in our spiritual arsenal? The Brown Scapular," Gontis said. The Blessed Mother appeared to St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite, and gave it to him in the 1200s. Our Lady's promise: "Whoever dies wearing this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire."

Gontis said the Brown Scapular is for the Carmelite order, but people can ask a priest to pray the Prayer of Investiture for them. The scapular must be worn continuously, and you can't just wear it and be saved. "You have to be living a life of grace."

"The devil hates the sacramental, especially those of the Blessed Mother. Why? She crushes the head of the serpent."

Gontis said Our Lady of Fatima told Lucia, one of the children to whom she appeared, that she wants everyone to wear the scapular.

The design of the Miraculous Medal was originated by St. Catherine Laboure after her apparitions of the Blessed Mother in France in 1830.

"God wants to give us all of his graces through Mary," Gontis said.

"O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee," Gontis said, reciting the Miraculous Medal Prayer.

"Mary is our advocate," Gontis said. "She said everyone who wears it will be granted great graces."

Gontis suggested reading "True Devotion to Mary" and "The Secret of the Rosary" by St. Louis de Montfort.

The next Theology on Tap, "Trusting God's Plan: From Federal Government to Full-Time Ministry" presented by Deacon Mike Pascarella of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, is slated for Monday, Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. at Hops at the Paddock.

Theology on Tap events are free of charge. Food and beverage can be ordered from the menu at the event site. For more information, visit www.allentowndiocese.org/tot or email Alexa Smith at asmith@allentowndiocese.org.



Listening to Gontis speak are, from left: her husband Jim Gontis, director of Evangelization and Catechesis and Sports Ministry, Diocese of Harrisburg; Lauren Wagner, parishioner of the Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown; and Alexa Smith.

Next Theology on Tap ‘Trusting God’s Plan’

What happens when your career and your vocation seem to be pulling you in different directions? How can we make the best choices for ourselves and our loved ones when life presents us with a difficult crossroads, and what is God’s role in our journey?

The next Theology on Tap – “Trusting God’s Plan: From Federal Government to Full-Time Ministry” – will be Monday, Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. at Hops at the Paddock, 1945 W. Columbia St., Allentown.

Deacon Mike Pascarella of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia will share his testimony about faith, family and the inter-

section of several passions and callings.

Theology on Tap is a monthly series sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry (OYYAFM). The series is designed to welcome young adults ages 21 to 35, single or married, in a casual setting where they can grow in the faith and share community with one another.

Theology on Tap events are free of charge. Food and beverage can be ordered from the menu at the event site. For more information, visit www.allentown-diocese.org/tot or email Alexa Smith at asmith@allentowndiocese.org.



December 10, 2018 @ 7 PM
Trusting God’s Plan
From Federal Government to Full-Time Ministry

THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN: GOD’S AMAZING PLAN FOR TEENS (AND THEIR PARENTS)

“Be who you are, and be that well, to give honor to the Master Craftsman whose handiwork you are.”
 – St. Francis de Sales –



Parent-Teen Event Planned on ‘God’s Amazing Plan’

The Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry is co-sponsoring a parent event with St. Thomas More Church, Allentown.

“The Master Craftsman: God’s Amazing Plan for Teens (and Their Parents)” will be offered Friday, Jan. 11, 2019 at 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More Church Family Center, 1040 Flexer Ave.

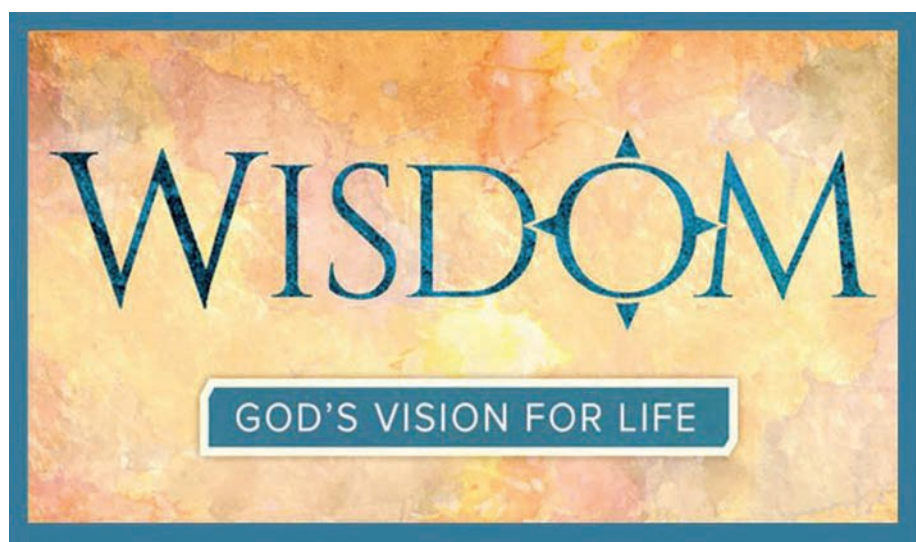
Teens in grades 9-12 and their parents are invited to this faith-filled evening with nationally recognized speaker Scott

Anthony, as he helps us see the Truth of God’s guiding hand in our lives.

After this evening, parents and their youth will look toward the future with a newfound sense of hope.

This event is free of charge. Light refreshments will be provided.

To register, visit www.allentowndiocese.org/craftsman. For questions, call 610-289-8900, ext. 2021 or email Francesca Frias at Ffrias@allentowndiocese.org.



‘Wisdom’ Discussions for Young Adults

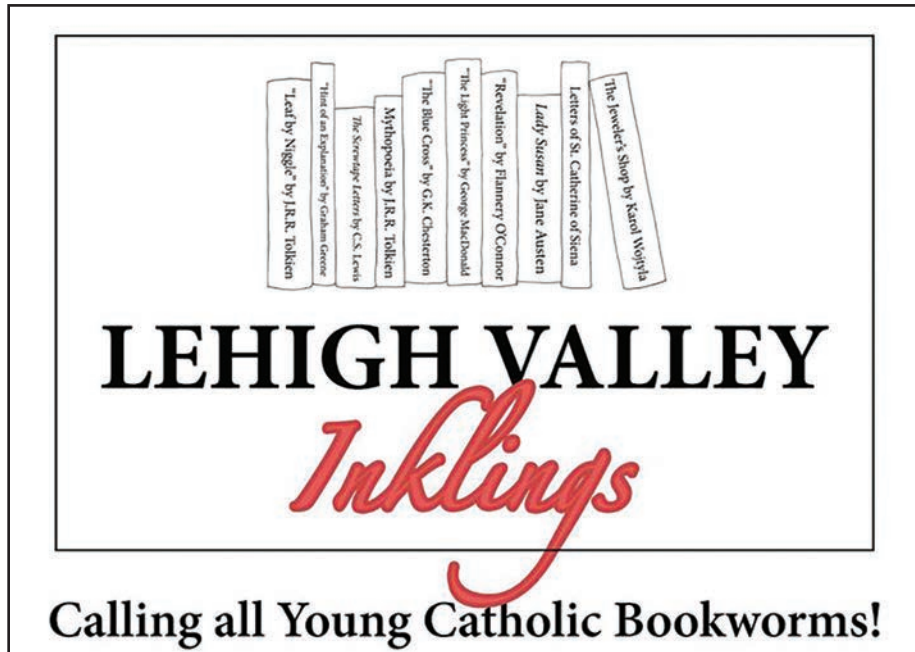
What role does faith have in the decisions we make as young adults? Find out at the new Wisdom discussion series.

The group meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the parish center of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Orefield, with the next event coming up Dec. 18.

Join other young adults (ages 18

to 35) to watch and discuss the “Wisdom Series” by Ascension Press. Learn practical ways to discern and implement God’s will as you face important life decisions, and meet fellow young adults from the area.

For questions, email Katie Rossowski at KatlynRossowski@kings.edu.



LEHIGH VALLEY
Inklings
 Calling all Young Catholic Bookworms!

Young Adult Book Club to Discuss ‘The Greatest Gift’ Nov. 30

From Tolkien to Thomas Merton – from Shakespeare to St. Augustine – from Jane Austen to Julian of Norwich – great works of literature have the power to challenge and strengthen our Christian faith.

“Lehigh Valley Inklings,” a book club for young adult Catholics ages 21 to 35, meets once a month to explore a classic through the lens of Catholicism.

The next meeting will be Friday, Nov. 30 at 7 p.m. at Hamilton Crossings Whole Foods (Foundry Cafe and Beer Hall), 750

N. Klocks Road, Allentown.

The reading will be “The Greatest Gift” by Phillip Van Doren Stern, the story that inspired the movie “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

Members will also be celebrating the holidays with a “secret santa” book swap. Bring a wrapped book (new or used) to trade.

For more information, visit the group’s Facebook page, “Lehigh Valley Inklings: Young Catholic Book Club.”

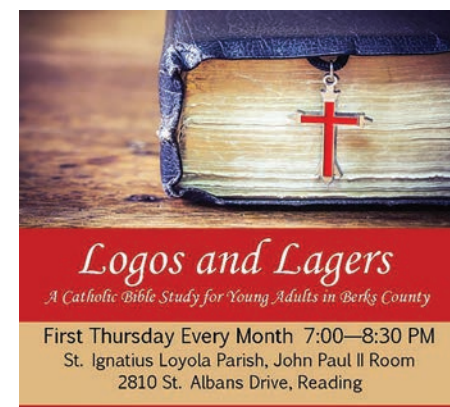
Logos and Lagers for Berks Young Adults

Join Berks County Young Adults for their Bible Study group, Logos and Lagers.

The group meets the first Thursday of each month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. to discuss the Mass readings for the upcoming weekend, followed by food and fellowship at a local establishment.

The next meeting will be Dec. 6 at St. Ignatius Loyola, Sinking Spring in the JPII Room.

For more information, go to Facebook page “Logos and Lagers: A Catholic Bible Study for Young Adults in Berks County.”



Logos and Lagers
A Catholic Bible Study for Young Adults in Berks County
 First Thursday Every Month 7:00–8:30 PM
 St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, John Paul II Room
 2810 St. Albans Drive, Reading

Catholic Scout Activity Weekend

The 2019 Catholic Scout Activity Weekend will be held at Camp Trexler - Selters the weekend of April 26-28.

The fulfilled weekend will include all meals and a Saturday Vigil Mass.

Scouts don’t have to be working on a religious emblem – all Catholic Scouts are welcome.

For more information, visit www.adc-cos.org/bsr.htm.

Becahi Student Named a Finalist in National Teen Spokesperson Search

By TAMI QUIGLEY
Staff writer

It's been an exciting fall for Jeremiah (Jerry) Lyons, a junior at Bethlehem Catholic High School (Becahi), who won the Boys and Girls Clubs of America's Northeast Regional Youth of the Year Award and was awarded a \$40,000 scholarship.

Becahi gave Lyons a very special Golden Hawk send-off Sept. 20, before he left Sept. 21 to join five fellow finalists from across the country in Washington, D.C. to vie for the additional \$100,000 college scholarship and the honor of serving as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America's national teen spokesperson for one year.

Although he was not named the National Youth of the Year, Lyons is the City of Allentown, the State of Pennsylvania and the Northeast (U.S) Regional Youth of the Year. He is an ambassador of the Boys and Girls Club and has a few speaking engagements already booked.

Lyons is the son of Jerald and Ebony Lyons. He plays football at Becahi and volunteers with the Boys and Girls Club.

"This program gave me a chance to represent my community at a national level and really shows some of the great things that we are able to do as a community together," said Lyons.

"We are thankful to the Boys and Girls Club of America for recognizing his hard work and giving him this platform," said Ebony Lyons. "We hope to continue to get exposure so that we can ensure Jeremiah can achieve his dream of attending Lehigh University [Bethlehem] and study psychology."

"Jerry is a truly special young man both on and off the field. His smile is contagious, his personality is magnetic and his heart is kind. We are blessed to have Jerry in our school and on our team," said Joseph Henrich, assistant to the principal and head football coach at Becahi.

"We are so proud of Jeremiah and it is wonderful to share this news with our Catholic community," said Holly Magalengo, director of advancement at Becahi.

"This program gave me a chance to represent my community at a national level and really shows some of the great things that we are able to do as a community together."



Jeremiah Lyons, back left, is given a very special Golden Hawk send-off Sept. 20 at Bethlehem Catholic High School (Becahi) before traveling to Washington, D.C. the next day, where he was named a finalist in the Boys and Girls Clubs of America's national teen spokesperson search. Pictured are, from left: front Solei Rodriguez, Olivia Blasco, Keianna Lopez and Maura Harnett; second row, Mya Mitchell, Angelina Murphy, McKenna Harnett, Reilly McNally, Rebecca Seeds and Gina Gaglione; third row, Madison Gritz, Alyssa Aviles, Paige Mathur, Jeremiah Lyons, Tavion Banks, Nathan Palanica, Dalton Daddona and Paul Carreras. (Photo by Holly Magalengo)



Above, Lyons speaks at the National Youth of the Year Celebration. (Photo by Jon Irons)

Right, Lyons, second from left, chats in Washington, D.C. with, from left: Cynthia A., Midwest Youth of the Year; Carolos P., 2017-18 Youth of the Year; and actor Denzel Washington. (Photo by Jon Irons)



Pray a Christmas Novena for Bishop Schlert

Perhaps you didn't have Bishop Schlert on your shopping list for Christmas. However, there is a wonderful present you can give to him that won't cost much more than a few minutes of your time.

The Diocese of Allentown Commission for Women is sponsoring a Diocesan-wide Christmas Novena for our Bishop, to begin Saturday, Dec. 8 and conclude on Sunday, Dec. 16.

Anyone can sign up for the daily emails that will be delivered right to your inbox.

Your name will be presented to the Bishop by the members of the Commission for Women.

Please consider participating in this wonderful gift of prayer in gratitude to Bishop Schlert for his guidance and love for his flock here in the Diocese of Allentown.

To participate, visit www.allentowndioecese.org/BishopNovena.

For questions, call 610-289-8900, ext. 2021 or e-mail cfw@allentowndioecese.org.



Advent and Christmas Concerts, Vespers and Shows Announced

The annual Christmas Concert at the **Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown** will be Sunday, Dec. 2 at 6 p.m.

Featured will be all the choirs of the Cathedral, including Cathedral Choir, Living Word, Angelorum and the Diocesan Choir. There will be readings, prayers, instrumentalists and voices all raised in worship of "Our Beautiful Savior."

Everyone is invited to begin Advent enjoying the reason for the season. There will be a freewill offering for a family in need in the Lehigh Valley. Carolers will greet attendees as they enter. For more information: 610-433-6461, www.cathedral-church.org.

Also announced:

Sunday, Dec. 2 – 25th annual Advent Concert with Vespers at **Holy Guardian Angels, Reading**, 4 p.m., with Holy Guardian Angels Choir, directed by Sue Swavely, organist Anne Lazar, pianist Donna Ayala; solo performances by Camille Otruba, Julie Sansary, Sue Swavely, Ken Montgomery, Nicholas Pono, and harpist Linda Umstead; 610-921-2729, www.hgaparish.com.

Sunday, Dec. 2 – Benefit Concert for Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, "Constantia" (choir from Philadelphia Korean Catholic Church), **Precious Blood Chapel, Reading**, 3 p.m., silent auction after concert.

Friday, Dec. 7 – "Silent Bells," annual Christmas show at **Mercy School for Special Learning, Allentown**, 11 a.m., call 610-797-8242 if require wheelchair seating, live stream <https://livestream.com/cabinwood/mercy>.

Friday, Dec. 7 – "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" presented by youth theater at **Bethlehem Catholic High School**, 7 p.m.; also Saturday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 9, 3 p.m.; at door adults \$5, student/senior \$3, under 3 free; theater@becahi.org.

Saturday, Dec. 8 – "What Child Is This?" Advent concert in the Main Chapel at the **Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville**, 7 p.m., free; with organist and music director David Gross, flutist Catherine Fronheiser and violinist Neil Fronheiser; 610-670-3642, www.jesuitcenter.org.

Sunday, Dec. 9 – Christmas Concert presented by Music Ministry at **St. Francis of Assisi, Allentown**, 2 p.m., 610-433-6102, www.stfrancisallentown.org.

Sunday, Dec. 9 – "Festival of Carols and Lessons" Advent vespers at **St. Benedict, Mohnton**, 4 p.m., parish choir



The choir of Holy Guardian Angels, Reading.

directed by Andrew Angstadt will be joined by a professional string quartet, refreshments provided by Women's Club, 610-856-1006, www.churchofsaintbenedict.com.

Sunday, Dec. 9 – "Invitation to a Miracle" presented by the Music Ministry of **St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Whitehall**, 5 p.m., directed by Gary Stokes, freewill

offering, be taken, 610-266-0695, www.sercc.org.

Saturday, Dec. 15 and Sunday, Dec. 16 – Christmas Vespers in White House Chapel of **St. Francis Center for Renewal, Bethlehem**, Saturday 7 p.m., Sunday 2 and 7 p.m., freewill offering, followed by refreshments, 610-867-8890, www.stfrancisctr.org.

Workshop on 'Writing Your Legacy Letter'

The Diocese of Allentown will host an inspiring workshop about sharing your legacy with the people you love.

"Writing Your Legacy Letter" will be offered Thursday, Jan. 10 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Hall, Holy Family Manor, Bethlehem.

Participants will learn to create their own unique legacy letter to share with loved ones. Also known as an "ethical will," it is a way to share love, wisdom, life lessons and faith from one generation to the next.

There is no charge for the workshop,

and lunch will be provided. An optional \$5 workbook will be available to purchase at the event.

RSVP by Friday, Jan. 4 to Ginny Downey in the Secretariat for Stewardship and Development at, 610-871-5200, ext. 2244 or gdowney@allentowndiocese.org.



THE ALLENTOWN DIOCESAN UNION HOLY NAME SOCIETIES



ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

The Primary object of the Society is to beget due love and reverence for the Holy Name of God and Jesus Christ. The rule prescribes communion on the second Sunday of every month.

The Secondary object is to suppress blasphemy, perjury, oaths of any character that are forbidden, profanity, unlawful swearing, improper language, and as far as the members can, to prevent those vices in others.

It had its origin in the Council of Lyons in the year 1274. Pope Gregory X selected the Dominicans to preach the devotion which he did by a letter to Blessed John of Vercelli, Master General of the Order on September 20, 1274. It was further ordained that in every Dominican church an altar of the Holy Name should be erected, and that Societies or Confraternities under the title and invocation of the Holy Name of Jesus should be established. Saint Pius V in 1571 absolutely restricted the canonical erection of the Society to the Dominican Order, and the Dominicans are required for the Canonical establishment of the Society.

The Holy Name in the United States was first formed at the Archdiocese of New York on May 21, 1882. Permission was granted by Pope Leo XIII on May 20, 1896 for the Holy Name Society to be establish everywhere in the United States which at that time numbered some 500,000 men.

Dare to be a Disciple; SPREAD THE WORD!

Officers from left to right: John C. Browne, Sr., Vice President, John J. Paul, Jr., Secretary and Past President, Sir Eugenio "Mel" Meléndez, President, Pastor of Saint Anthony of Padua Rev. Stanley M. Moczydlowski and Parish H.N.S host President John Bast



National Appeal Supports Elderly Catholic Sisters, Brothers and Religious Order Priests

The 31st annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection will be the weekend of Dec. 8-9 in the Diocese of Allentown.

Coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) in Washington, D.C., the appeal benefits 31,000 elderly Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests.

The Diocese of Allentown donated \$25,409.89 to the last collection.

In 2018, the following religious congregations with central houses located in the diocese received a combined total of \$302,267.86 in financial assistance made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious: Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, Cistercian Fathers, Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart and Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood.

Additionally, the Diocese of Allentown, in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Harrisburg, also distributes funding to local religious communities to support retirement needs.

Almost 94 percent of donations aid senior religious and their communities, with the remaining funds used for administration and promotion of the national appeal.

The 2017 collection raised just over \$28 million, and the NRRO disbursed \$25 million to 360 religious communities for the direct care of elderly members.

Communities combine these funds with their own income and savings to help furnish necessities such as medications and nursing care. Throughout the year, additional funding is allocated for congregations with critical needs and for retirement planning and educational resources.

Religious communities apply annual-

ly for financial support from the national collection, and distributions are sent to each eligible community's central house. Although women and men religious often minister outside their home dioceses, they may benefit from the allocations disbursed to their individual orders.

"Donations to the Retirement Fund for Religious have a far-reaching impact," said Presentation Sister Stephanie Still, the NRRO's executive director.

"Most important, they help communities care for aging members, but they also underwrite initiatives aimed at addressing the underlying causes of the funding shortages."

Religious orders are financially autonomous and thus responsible for the support of all members. Traditionally, Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests – known collectively as women and men religious – served for little to no pay.

Today, hundreds of orders lack sufficient retirement savings. Of 547 communities providing data to the NRRO, only 4 percent are adequately funded for retirement.

Compounding the financial crisis are the rising cost of care and the increasing number of those needing care.

Catholic bishops of the United States initiated the national collection in 1988 to help address the deficit in retirement funding among U.S. religious communities. Since the collection was launched, U.S. Catholics have donated \$844 million to the appeal, helping many communities stabilize their retirement outlook.

"We are overwhelmed by the ongoing generosity toward the annual appeal and by the love and thanksgiving for the service of our elder religious," said Sister



Please give to those who have given a lifetime.
retiredreligious.org



Still.

"Our office is committed to stewarding these funds in ways that help religious communities care for older mem-

bers while continuing to serve the People of God."

Visit www.retiredreligious.org to learn more.

About the Retirement Fund for Religious

Why We Ask

In 1988, Catholic bishops of the United States launched the Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR) to address the significant lack of retirement funding for Catholic sisters, brothers, and priests in religious orders.

- For most of their lives, elder religious worked for little to no pay. There were no 401(k) plans or pensions.

- Religious communities are financially responsible for the support and care of all members. Income, earnings, and expenses are managed separately from the parish and diocesan structures of the Catholic Church.

- The funding shortage is compounded

by rising health care costs and decreased income. And, as more religious reach retirement age and leave compensated ministry, income will further decline while care needs increase.

- By 2028, religious past age 70 are projected to outnumber religious under age 70 by more than three to one.

- There are 31,000 religious past age 70 living in the United States. In 2017, the average annual cost for their care was more than \$44,000 per person.

- Since 2009, the annual cost to support senior women and men religious has exceeded \$1 billion.

- In 2017, 68 percent of the religious communities providing data to the National Religious Retirement Of-

fice (NRRO) had a median age of 70 or higher.

- The average annual Social Security benefit for a religious is \$6,453.45, while the average U.S. beneficiary receives \$16,849.80.

How Donations Help

Catholics in the United States have donated more than \$844 million to the RFR since the first appeal.

- Roughly 94 percent of donations to the RFR aid elder religious, with the remainder used to administer and promote the appeal.

- Since 1989, almost \$709 million has been distributed to support the day-to-

day care of elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. An additional \$94 million has been allocated toward self-help projects initiated by religious communities, including collaborative health care facilities.

- In addition to direct financial assistance, proceeds from the annual appeal underwrite educational programming, services, and resources that enable religious communities to evaluate and prepare for long-term retirement needs.

- Support from the Retirement Fund for Religious helps religious communities care for senior members while continuing important ministries to the People of God.

In Memoriam

Please remember these clerics of the Diocese of Allentown in your prayers during December, the anniversary month of their death.

1 – Father Stephen Vidocz, 1980
6 – Father Edward Kane, 1963
7 – Monsignor Reginald Billinger, 1989
8 – Monsignor Scott Fasig, 1961
8 – Father Joseph Sangmeister, 1962
9 – Father Joseph Campion, 2016
10 – Father William Dermott, 2015
11 – Father James McCloskey, 1965
11 – Father Andrew Lenahan, 1987
11 – Deacon Daniel Thomson, 2007
11 – Deacon Bernard Wisser, 2012

12 – Father James Magee, 1966
12 – Father Frederick Winkler, 1986
13 – Father Francis Opps, 2004
14 – Father Joseph Morrell, 1996
15 – Father Francis Mockus, 1976
16 – Monsignor George Petro, 1965
16 – Monsignor James Butler, 1997
18 – Deacon John Allison, 2017
20 – Father John Mickun, 1968
20 – Father John Duminiak, 2010
21 – Monsignor Francis Donnelly, 1974
22 – Father Charles Walsh, 1969
23 – Deacon Peter LaFata, 2009
26 – Monsignor Joseph Dooley, 2017
28 – Deacon Fernando Torres, 2015
29 – Father Michael Sverchek, 1997
31 – Father John Zboyovsky, 1965

Advent Course Offered by Salesian Center at DeSales

The Salesian Center for Faith and Culture at DeSales University, Center Valley is offering a free online noncredit course for spiritual enrichment during Advent.

"The Season of Advent: Preparing the Way" will remain open until Dec. 31.

This course will delve into sacred Scripture and what it truly means to pre-

pare for Advent. It will discuss the spirituality taught by St. Francis de Sales and how to live your spirituality every day.

To register: <https://t.co/xirvJeslhr>.
For questions, contact Lore McFadden at lore.mcfadden@desales.edu or 610-282-1100, ext. 1244.

Correction

Lauren Nelson was incorrectly identified in a photo of the volleyball team of

St. Thomas More, Allentown in the Nov. 15 issue of The A.D. Times. We apologize for any inconvenience this misinformation may have caused.

Rite of Candidacy for Seminarian



Diocese of Allentown seminarian and Third Theologian Juan Eduardo Rodriguez, second from left, was admitted to Candidacy for Holy Orders at a Mass celebrated Nov. 16 at Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland. Main celebrant of the Mass was Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore Mark Brennan, center, who conferred candidacy on all the candidates. Also pictured after the Mass are, from left: Father Andrew Gehringer; Monsignor Andrew Baker, rector of Mount St. Mary's Seminary; and Father Michael Mullins.



Bishop Mark Brennan, middle, and Monsignor Andrew Baker, middle right, with all those admitted to candidacy. Allentown Seminarian Juan Eduardo Rodriguez is front third from right.

DISCUSSION REFLECTION PRAYER

Young Men's Discernment Retreat

St. Francis Retreat House
3918 Chipman Rd. Easton, PA 18045
FRIDAY, JAN. 4 - SUNDAY, JAN. 6, 2019
FOR YOUNG MEN AGES 18+ • COST \$50 (ACCOMMODATIONS AND MEALS)

'Young Men's Discernment Retreat' Set for January

The Diocesan Office for Vocations Promotion is sponsoring a new retreat for young adult men in college and older.

The first "Young Men's Discernment Retreat" will be offered Friday, Jan. 4 through Sunday, Jan. 6, 2019 at St. Francis Retreat House, Easton.

Cost for the weekend is \$50 per person to cover the accommodations and meals.

The retreat is open to young men between the ages of 18 and 40.

"We hope to offer this retreat to some of our alumni who have attended our first

few 'Quo Vadis' retreats and who are now older, and any other young men who are open to discerning the priestly vocation in our Diocese," said Father Mark Searles, director of the Office for Vocations Promotion.

Included will be Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, talks and reflections by priests and seminarians, and quiet time for reflection and prayer.

For more information and to register, contact Father Searles, msearles@allentowndiocese.org or 610-437-0755.



'Sing for America' to Present 'Willy Wonka'

The Diocese of Allentown is home to the only major Catholic musical theater production company in Pennsylvania, "Sing for America."

"Sing for America" was founded by a young Catholic family that produces musicals to raise money for military families of the Lehigh Valley. Their mission is to spread light and truth through entertain-

ment.

To support Christian artists and get tickets for the Christmas production of "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," visit www.singforamerican.com.

It will be performed at the Mauch Chunk Opera House Wednesday, Dec. 19 through Monday, Dec. 31. Show times vary.

Calendar

Editor's note: E-mail, fax or mail Church-affiliated items for the Calendar page (Calendar, Retreats, Socials, Festivals, Bazaars, Trips) to: e-mail, adtimes@allentowndioocese.org; fax, 610-439-7694; The A.D. Times, P.O. Box F, Allentown, PA 18105-1538.

Items must be received by Thursday of the week before publication. Please type or print. Please notify The A.D. Times if bingos and other regularly listed events are cancelled for the summer or other holiday periods, and again when they resume. Please do not send items again after they are published.

For more information, e-mail adtimes@allentowndioocese.org or call 610-871-5200, ext. 2264.

Friday, Nov. 30

Gently Used Toy Sale, church basement, Holy Family, Nazareth, 5:30-7:30 p.m.; also Saturday, Dec. 1, 9-11 a.m.; drop off toys before and after weekend Masses Nov. 17-18 and Nov. 24-25, for special arrangement drop off call 484-524-9637.

Saturday, Dec. 1

Holiday Spirit Dance, social hall, St. John the Baptist, Allentown, 7-10 p.m., \$5, kitchen will be open, BYOB, 610-432-0034, 610-432-3505.

Sunday, Dec. 2

Pancake and Sausage Breakfast, Knights of Columbus Chapter 16656, St. Nicholas, Walnutport, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m., \$7, kids under 12 free.

Breakfast with Santa, church hall, St. Francis of Assisi, Allentown, 9 a.m.-noon, adults \$6, children \$4, children 4-under free, pictures with Santa \$3.

Spaghetti Dinner, parish center, St. Patrick, Pottsville, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., adults \$8, children \$3.50.

Benefit Concert for Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, "Constantia" (choir from Philadelphia Korean Catholic Church), Precious Blood Chapel, Reading, 3 p.m., silent auction after concert.

Advent Concert with Vespers, Holy Guardian Angels, Reading, 4 p.m., with Holy Guardian Angels Choir.

"Beautiful Savior," Christmas concert, Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown, 6 p.m., featuring all the choirs of the cathedral, free will offering for a family in need in the Lehigh Valley.

Monday, Dec. 3

"Walking in the Dark, Living in the Light," parish mission, St. Anne, Bethlehem, 7 p.m., preacher Father James Wallace, through Wednesday, Dec. 5.

Tuesday, Dec. 4

"Same Kind of Different as Me," Movie Club movie, St. Francis of Assisi, Allentown, 6:30 p.m., free and open to the public.

Wednesday, Dec. 5

Friendly Fifties Christmas Dinner, St. John Byzantine, Northampton, at Northampton Community Center, 11:30 a.m., followed by sing-along with prizes.

Friday, Dec. 7

"Silent Bells," annual Christmas show, Mercy School for Special Learning, Allentown, 11 a.m., call 610-797-8242 if require wheelchair seating, live stream <https://livestream.com/cabinwood/mercy>.

"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," youth theater, Bethlehem Catholic High School, 7 p.m.; also Saturday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 9, 3 p.m.; at door adults \$5, student/senior \$3, under 3 free; theater@becahi.org.

Saturday, Dec. 8

Diocesan-Wide Christmas Novena for Bishop Schlert, through Sunday, Dec. 16; sign up for daily emails, your name will be presented to the Bishop by members of the Commission for Women, <http://www.allentowndioocese.org/BishopNovena>, 610-289-8900, 2021, cfw@allentowndioocese.org.

"What Child Is This?" Advent concert, Main Chapel, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, 501 N. Church Road, Wernersville, 7 p.m., free, mleonowitz@jesuitcenter.org, 610-670-3642.

Simbang Gabi 2018, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Easton, through Sunday, Dec. 16, Mass begins each day 7:30 p.m., fellowship after Mass, sponsored by Filipino Catholic Community in the Diocese of Allentown, yolanda.bermudez@rcn.com.

Prayer Pilgrimage, Helpers of God's Precious Infants, Notre Dame of Bethlehem, Mass 8 a.m.; followed by rosary, abortion facility, 31 Commerce Way, Bethlehem; 610-365-2100.

Sunday, Dec. 9

Christmas Concert, St. Francis of Assisi, Allentown, 2 p.m. Ecumenical Christmas Celebration, St. Stephen Hall, Shenandoah, 2-5 p.m., all Christians welcome, musical entertainment, birthday cake for Baby Jesus, visit from Santa; collecting new, unwrapped toys for boys and girls, nonperishable holiday food, and new or lightly worn coats for those in need.

"Festival of Carols and Lessons," Advent vespers, St. Benedict, Mohnton, 4 p.m., parish choir will be joined by a professional string quartet, refreshments provided by Women's Club.

"Invitation to a Miracle," St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Whitehall, presented by St. Elizabeth Music Ministry, 5 p.m., free-will offering.

Wednesday, Dec. 12

"Shower for the Unknown Babe," Parish Activities Center, Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown, 7 p.m., benefit Mary's Shelter, Bethlehem; bring donation to shower or drop at rectory; newborn and larger-sized diapers (3, 4, 5) and wipes; baby wash, lotion and diaper cream; new baby clothing (up to 2T); and new or gently used baby items (include all pieces); monetary donations also accepted; tcarbonetto@gmail.com.

Saturday, Dec. 15

Holiday Mass of Remembrance, St. Ann, Emmaus, 1 p.m., to celebrate the lives of our departed loved ones in midst of

busy holiday season, light reception and fellowship to follow in the school cafeteria, preregister or more information 610-965-9355.

Christmas Vespers, White House Chapel, St. Francis Center for Renewal, Bethlehem, 7 p.m., freewill offering, also Sunday, Dec. 16, 2 and 7 p.m., 610-867-8890, stfranciscenter@gmail.com, www.stfrancisctr.org.

Tuesday, Dec. 18

International Grandparents Association meeting, parish center, St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield, after 7 p.m. Mass, garcia1047@ptd.net.

Wednesday, Dec. 19

Advent Ember Days, quarterly observances with three days set aside (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday) to pray in gratitude for the blessings of the season and human labor, to thank God publicly; Bishop Schlert is asking for abstinence from all meat products, fasting and a Holy Hour by the clergy; the People of God of the Diocese of Allentown are encouraged to join in this practice as a sign of healing; also Friday, Dec. 21 and Saturday, Dec. 22.

"Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," musical theater production with "Sing for America," founded by a young Catholic family that produces musicals to raise money for military families of the Lehigh Valley and spread Light and Truth through entertainment, Mauch Chunk Opera House, Jim Thorpe, through Monday, Dec. 31, show times vary, www.singforamerican.com.

Friday, Dec. 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents, Tridentine Mass in gratitude for all the 2018 newborns and in reparation for all the unborn lives deliberately taken, St. Stephen of Hungary, Allentown, 7 p.m., bring your child's blankets for a blanket blessing, followed by Respect Life Reception with St. Gianna relics, 267-261-2122.

Monday, Dec. 31

New Year's Eve Celebration, social hall, St. John the Baptist, Allentown, dinner 6:30 p.m., music 9:30 p.m.-midnight, \$35 per person, \$70 per couple, BYOB, advance tickets only, deadline Saturday, Dec. 15, tickets available in the rectory Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-3 p.m., 610-432-3505.

Thursday, Jan. 10

"Writing Your Legacy Letter," St. Mary's Hall, Holy Family Manor, Bethlehem, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., no charge, lunch, optional \$5 workbook available, hosted by Diocese of Allentown, RSVP by Friday, Jan. 4, 610-871-5200, ext. 2244, gdowney@allentowndioocese.org.

Friday, Jan. 11

"The Master Craftsman: God's Amazing Plan for Teens (and Their Parents)," family center, St. Thomas More, Allentown, 7-9 p.m., free admission, keynote speaker, Scott Anthony, register www.allentowndioocese.org/craftsman, information ffrias@allentowndioocese.org, 610-289-8900, ext. 2022.

Tuesday, Jan. 15

Women of Grace Foundational Study, library, St. Thomas More Church, Allentown, 6:30-8:30 p.m., every other week, ending May 7, registration required, fee required to cover materials, 610-392-2659, 610-398-9096, bmbarski@gmail.com; also Wednesdays Jan. 16-May 8, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Saturday, Jan. 26

Collection for Catholic Relief Services, also Sunday, Jan. 27.

Sunday, Jan. 27

"A New Creation – Opus One: ECHO Concert," main chapel, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, 2 p.m., \$15, students \$5, 610-670-3642, www.jesuitcenter.org/A-New-Creation.

Retreats

First Tuesdays

"Simply Prayer," mornings of prayer, reflection and sharing, St. Francis Center for Renewal, Bethlehem, 9:30 a.m.-noon, free will offering, 610-867-8890, stfranciscenter@gmail.com, www.stfrancisctr.org.

Tuesday, Dec. 4

Parish Advent Retreat Day, Divine Mercy Parish, Shenandoah; exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration in the Chapel 7 a.m.-5 p.m.; Adoration, confession, Advent reflection, Rosary and Benediction in Divine Mercy Church 5-7 p.m.

"St. Teresa of Calcutta – Her Lessons of Love and True Devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary," St. Francis Center for Renewal, Bethlehem, 8:45 a.m.-noon, \$35, 610-867-8890, stfranciscenter@gmail.com, www.stfrancisctr.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 5

Waiting in Joyful Hope: Advent Day of Reflection, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., \$50, www.jesuitcenter.org/AdventDayofReflection.

Friday, Dec. 7 – Sunday, Dec. 9

"Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary – Our Models for Advent Waiting," \$165, 610-867-8890, stfranciscenter@gmail.com, www.stfrancisctr.org.

Weekend Directed Retreat, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, \$240, http://www.jesuitcenter.org/directedretreats_bylength.

Saturday, Dec. 8

"Dare to Prepare" Advent retreat for teen girls 12+, St. Joseph, Coopersburg, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$30, features Mass, social time, games and a Christmas craft, 610-967-4171, 610-390-4131, www.womenofgrace.com (events).

"Drawing Near to God: Praying and Playing with Color and Shape," hands-on workshop to create simple mandalas for prayer and meditation, Gambet Center Auditorium, DeSales University, Center Valley, free, online registration required www.desales.edu/salesian, scroll to 'Visiting Artist,' questions 610-282-1100, ext. 1233, lore.mcfadden@desales.edu.

Saturday, Dec. 15

"New Church Year, New Me – A Catholic Perspective on 'A Christmas Carol,'" Advent day of reflection offered by Diocese of Allentown Commission for Women, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, 9:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m., \$20 includes lunch, presenter Deacon James Russo, register www.allentowndioocese.org/cfw-spirituality, questions cfw@allentowndioocese.org, 917-406-4879.

Saturday, Dec. 15 – Friday, Dec. 21

Five-Day Directed Retreat, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, \$540, http://www.jesuitcenter.org/directedretreats_bylength.

Monday, Dec. 17

"A Franciscan Christmas," mini-retreat on characters in the Christmas story and crèche, St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, dinner 6 p.m., presentation and discussion 7-9 p.m., \$30, register by Monday, Dec. 10, www.stfrancisretreathouse.org, 610-258-3053, ext. 10.

2019

Friday, Jan. 4 – Sunday, Jan. 6

Young Men's Discernment Retreat, offered by Diocese of Allentown Office for Vocation Promotion, St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, \$50, includes Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, talks and reflections by priests and seminarians, quiet time for reflection and prayer, msearles@allentowndioocese.org, 610-437-0755.

Saturday, Jan. 12 – Sunday, Jan. 20

Eight-Day Directed Retreat, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, \$720, http://www.jesuitcenter.org/directedretreats_bylength.

Friday, Jan. 25 – Sunday, Jan. 27

Weekend Directed Retreat, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, \$240, http://www.jesuitcenter.org/directedretreats_bylength.

Festivals/Bazaars

Saturday, Dec. 1

Christmas Craft Bazaar, Holy Guardian Angels, Reading, in school building, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 1 – Sunday, Dec. 2

Christmas Boutique, Sacred Heart School, Bath, Saturday 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 8

Christkindmarkt, St. Joseph, Jim Thorpe, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 8 – Sunday, Dec. 9

Special Christmas Sale, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Allentown, Saturday 5-7 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Socials

Sundays

Bingo, St. Joseph, Summit Hill, 6:30 p.m.
Bingo, Immaculate Conception School, Pen Argyl, 1 p.m., doors open 11 a.m., 610-863-4816.

Third Sundays

Bingo, Most Blessed Sacrament, Bally, 12:30 p.m., doors open 11 a.m.

Thursdays

Bingo, St. Joseph, Summit Hill, 6:30 p.m.

Thursdays, Nov. 29, Dec. 13, Jan. 10, April 25, May 16

Bingo, Knights of Columbus Council 4397, Family Center, St. Thomas More, Allentown, 6 p.m., doors open 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 1 – Sunday, Dec. 2

Tricky Tray, Father King Hall, Sacred Heart, Bethlehem, Saturday 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Sunday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 2

Bingo, Knights of Columbus Council 618, St. Stephen's Hall, Shenandoah, 2 p.m., doors open noon, 570-590-3270, 570-590-1188.

Meat Bingo, social hall, St. John the Baptist, Allentown, 1 p.m., doors open noon, \$11 for 15 games, 610-432-3505.

Sunday, Dec. 16

Meat Bingo, social hall, St. John the Baptist, Allentown, 1 p.m., doors open noon, \$11 for 15 games, 610-432-3505.

Trips

Editor's note: The A.D. Times publishes newly announced, Church-affiliated trips in every issue. The entire previously announced list is repeated as space permits.

Send Church-affiliated trips to adtimes@allentowndioocese.org by Thursday of the week before publication. Please notify The A.D. Times when seats are filled for a trip so it can be removed from the repeating list.

Trip listings include sponsoring group, destination, cost and contact information. Contact the sponsor for other details, such as times, dining location, itineraries and what is included in the cost.

Newly announced

2019

Thursday, April 25

Notre Dame of Bethlehem to Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre,

Please see CALENDAR page 19 ▶▶

Prayer for Healing Victims of Abuse

God of endless love,
 ever caring, ever strong,
 always present, always just:
 You gave your only Son
 to save us by the blood of his cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
 join to your own suffering
 the pain of all who have been hurt
 in body, mind, and spirit
 by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear our cries as we agonize
 over the harm done to our brothers and sisters.
 Breathe wisdom into our prayers,
 soothe restless hearts with hope,
 steady shaken spirits with faith:
 Show us the way to justice and wholeness,
 enlightened by truth and enfolded in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
 heal your people's wounds
 and transform our brokenness.
 Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace,
 so that we may act with justice
 and find peace in you.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Copyright © 2004, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
 All rights reserved. Pub. No. 7-074

Calendar

▶▶Continued from page 18

Mount Hope Estate and Winery, Manheim, \$84, 610-866-0360.

Friday, June 21
 Seniors in Action, Holy Trinity, Whitehall to "Guys and Dolls" Shawnee Playhouse, Shawnee on the Delaware, \$71, 610-262-6058.

Previously announced

Thursday, Dec. 6
 Assumption Travel Club, Slatington to "A Christmas Carol – the Musical," Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre, Lancaster, \$90, 610-767-3036.

Wednesday, Dec. 12
 Friendly Fifties, St. John Byzantine, Northampton to Christmas Show, Hunterdon Hills Playhouse, Hampton, New Jersey, \$98, 610-767-4881.

Thursday, Dec. 13
 Golden Agers, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Whitehall to "First Noel," American Music Theatre, \$93, 610-264-3721.
 St. Thomas More, Allentown to Christmas Show, Radio City Music Hall, New York City, \$110, 484-951-0440, johra2179@aol.com.

Wednesday, Dec. 19
 Golden Agers, Holy Family, Nazareth to "The First Noel," American Music Theater, Lancaster, \$94, 610-759-0576.

2019

Monday, Jan. 28 – Friday, Feb. 1
 St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield to Woodloch Pines Lodge, Hawley, \$590, 610-797-5773, 610-216-8667.

Thursday, Feb. 7 – Thursday March 7
 Assumption Travel Club, Slatington to Costa del Sol, Spain, \$3,499, 610-767-3036.

Tuesday, June 25 – Friday, June 28
 Fellowship Group, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Bethlehem to Villa Roma, New York, \$505, 484-456-6818, 484-767-8669.

Thursday, Nov. 7 – Saturday, Nov. 16
 Assumption Travel Club, Slatington to Rome and Amalfi Coast, Italy, \$3,899, 610-767-3036.

Upcoming Issues of THE A.D. TIMES

Publication Date	Dec. 20, 2018
Advertising Deadline	Dec. 10, 2018
News Deadline	Dec. 13, 2018

2019

Publication Date	Jan. 10, 2019
Advertising Deadline	Dec. 31, 2018
News Deadline	Jan. 3, 2019

Publication Date	Jan. 24
Advertising Deadline	Jan. 14
News Deadline	Jan. 17

Publication Date	Feb. 7
Advertising Deadline	Jan. 28
News Deadline	Jan. 31

Publication Date	Feb. 21
Advertising Deadline	Feb. 11
News Deadline	Feb. 14

Publication Date	March 7
Advertising Deadline	Feb. 25
News Deadline	Feb. 28

Publication Date	March 21
Advertising Deadline	March 11
News Deadline	March 14

Publication Date	April 4
Advertising Deadline	March 25
News Deadline	March 28

Publication Date	April 18
Advertising Deadline	April 8
News Deadline	April 11



Affordable Senior Communities of Catholic Senior Housing Development and Management

A DIVISION OF CATHOLIC SENIOR HOUSING AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES, INC.

Queen of Peace Apartments
 777 Water Street
 POTTSVILLE
 570-628-4504

Neumann Apartments
 25 North Nichols Street
 ST. CLAIR
 570-429-0699

St. Ann Senior Apartments
 30 East Bertsch Street
 LANSFORD
 570-805-4640

Holy Family New Philadelphia
 100 Valley Street
 NEW PHILADELPHIA
 570-429-0699

Holy Family Bethlehem Apartments
 330-338 13th Avenue
 BETHLEHEM
 610-866-4603

Queen of Angels Apartments
 22 Rothermel Street
 LAURELDALE
 610-921-3115

Antonion Towers
 2405 Hillside Avenue
 EASTON
 610-258-2033

St. Catharine Senior Apartments
 2000 Perkiomen Avenue
 READING
 610-743-5374

Affordable senior housing applicants must meet federal guidelines for seniors 62+ and disabled individuals 18+. One bedroom and studio apartments rent limited to 30% of your annual income.



ALL FAITHS WELCOME



St. Ambrose Parishioners Celebrate End of Capital Campaign

By JANIS MCGOWAN

Parishioners of St. Ambrose Church, Schuylkill Haven got the chance to fulfill the third part of their three-year capital campaign titled "Revive, Restore and Rejoice" Oct. 20 at a Mass celebrated by Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert.

"While we have been reviving and restoring for the past three years, we now get to come together as a parish and rejoice over our accomplishments," said Monsignor Edward Zemanik, pastor.

Concelebrating the Mass were Monsignor Zemanik, Monsignor William Handges, Father Robert Riley and Father James Lofton. Master of ceremonies was Father Keith Mathur.

The combined choir from St. Ambrose and All Saints Church in McAdoo sang.

"Revive, restore and rejoice – I'm the luckiest guy in the world because after three years of your doing all the reviving and restoring, I get to rejoice," said Bishop Schlert.

"To me, one of the greatest outcomes of the capital campaign has been the restoration of the Blessed Sacrament to the center of the church, where Our Lord belongs.

"I want to thank Monsignor Zemanik for his taskful vision in understanding that and promoting devotion to Our Lord."

Previously, the Blessed Sacrament was off to the right side of the altar.

"The tabernacle is the heart of every parish," said Bishop Schlert. "It should be at the center of where we worship. That's what makes us a Catholic family. Nothing could be greater than giving Our Lord his rightful place – at the center of the church."

The Mass was in celebration of the ending of the capital campaign, a three-year campaign with a goal of \$1.1 million. The money raised went toward renovations of the interior and exterior of the church, paving and concrete work on the parking lots, and electrical work throughout.

The last phase of the renovations is the exterior of the rectory, which is slated to begin soon.

Many of the renovations inside the church were done with the help of the Men's Club of St. Ambrose and local parishioners.

After Mass participants gathered in the parish center for dinner with the Bishop. The dinner, paid for by the Men's Club and served by the Women's Auxiliary, was attended by more than 225 parishioners.

Prior to the dinner, a group of schoolchildren led Monsignor Zemanik to a table where a large cake read, "Happy Birthday Msgr. Zemanik." The children led the parishioners in singing "Happy Birthday."

"I knew that when I came here that there was a lot of work to do," said Monsignor Zemanik. "But the 40th anniversary of the church building in 2017 was the catalyst for the 'Revive, Restore and Rejoice' campaign. I figured that after 40 years it could use a facelift.

"One of my goals when I came to St. Ambrose was to get the parish debt-free by 2017. It didn't happen in 2017 due to some major repairs at the school, but it is becoming a reality in 2018. It is a blessing that as of Thursday, Oct. 18, the

Please see CAMPAIGN page 21 ▶▶



Bishop Alfred Schlert, second from right, is seated during celebration of the Mass of Thanksgiving.



Monsignor Zemanik's birthday was also part of the celebration of the completion of the capital campaign.

BENEFIT CONCERT

FOR THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

CONSTANTIA

(Choir from the Philadelphia Korean Catholic Church)

2018. 12. 02(Sun) at 3 PM


Silent Auction after the concert

Precious Blood Chapel
1094 Welsh Rd. Reading, PA 19607

NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
Tuesdays at the Shrine/Los Martes en el Santuario
SANTUARIO NACIONAL de NTRA. SRA. DE GUADALUPE

501 Ridge Ave. Allentown, PA. 18102


Am I not here your Mother?
¿No estoy aquí, yo, que soy tu Madre?



*¿No estás bajo mi sombra y protección?
¿No soy la fuente de tu gozo?
No estás en el pliegue de mi manto,
en el cruzar de mis brazos?*

*Are you not under my shadow and protection?
Am I not the source of your joy?
Are you not in the hollow of my mantle,
in the crossing of my arms*

EL SANTO ROSARIO	---2:00 PM---	THE HOLY ROSARY
LA CORONILLA DE LA DIVINA MISERICORDIA	---3:00 PM---	THE CHAPLET OF THE DIVINE MERCY



"En esta hora nada la será negado al alma que lo pida por los méritos de Mi Pasión."

(Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, #1320)

"I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion."

(Diario de Santa Faustina Kowalska, #1320)

Jesus, I Trust in You

La Hora de Gran Misericordia
"...sumérgete en Mi Pasión..." "...immerse yourself in My Passion..."
The Hour of Great Mercy

SCCs Celebrate Commitments to Consecrated Religious Life

“I will give thanks to thee, O Lord, among the people” was the prevailing theme as the Sisters of Christian Charity celebrated renewal of vows, profession of vows, reception of novices, and jubilee at the Chapel of Mary Immaculate, Mallinckrodt Convent, Mendham, New Jersey this August.

Father Timothy Christy, vicar general of the Diocese of Metuchen, was retreat director and main celebrant for the Renewal of Vows Liturgy Aug. 14.

Sisters Lucianna Le, John Paul Thorley, Mary Amata Reifsnnyder and Clara Kim serve in various ministries in the Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey.

Sisters Regina Bathalon, Bridget Harakel and Mathilde De Lucy teach in schools in the Diocese of Metuchen.

In the Diocese of Allentown Sister Sophia Marie Peralta serves as campus minister of Allentown Central Catholic High School, and Sister Luiza Simon ministers as director of religious education at Holy Infancy Parish, Bethlehem.

On Aug. 16 Sisters Maria Pia Arca of Darma, Peru and Josephine Wagner of Allentown pronounced vows of first

profession. Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert officiated and Sister Mary Edward Spohrer, provincial superior, received the vows of these sisters at each ceremony.

Sister Josephine resides at St. Nicholas Convent, Wilkes-Barre and ministers as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at Little Flower Manor, Wilkes-Barre.

Sister Maria Pia ministers to the sisters at the motherhouse as a CNA and lives at St. Elizabeth Convent, Bernardsville, New Jersey.

Relatives and friends joined 14 sisters as they celebrated 80, 75, 60, 50 and 25 years as an SCC Aug. 18 at Mallinckrodt Convent, Mendham, New Jersey.

Father Bert Kozen, cousin of jubilarian Sister Theresa Bower and pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, Williamsport and St. Luke Parish, Jersey Shore, was the presiding celebrant of the liturgy.

The evening of Aug. 20 two postulants were received as novices into the congregation of the Sisters of Christian Charity: Cynthia Pearce of Helmetta, New Jersey, now Sister Elena, and Kathryn Stimpfle of Quakertown, now Sister Chiara Marie.



Renewing their vows Aug. 14 are Sisters of Christian Charity, from left: front, Clara Kim, Luiza Simon, Lucianna Le, Bridget Harakel, Mathilde DeLucy, Regina Bathalon; back, John Paul Thorley, Mary Amata Reifsnnyder and Sophia Marie Peralta.



Received as novices were Cynthia Pearce, now Sister Elena, left, and Kathryn Stimpfle, now Sister Chiara Marie.



Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert shares the joy of the day with Sister Mary Edward Spohrer, provincial superior, and the newly professed Sisters Josephine Wagner, left, and Maria Pia Arca, right.



Sisters celebrating their jubilees are, from left: front, Sister Dolores, McKenna, 80 years; Sister Helen Marie Cronin, 75 years; Sister Pierre Koesters, 80 years; Sister Paul Marie Beiter, 60 years; Sister Theresa DiNunzio, 70 years; Sister Marietta DiNunzio, 70 years; back, Sister Rose William Fallon, 60 years; Sister Mary Annette Engel, 60 years; Sister Theresa Bower, 50 years; Sister Josine Glunk, 60 years; Sister Joanne Korn, 60 years; Sister Mary Clare Stopper, Williamsport, 60 years; Sister Marisol Garcia, SCC's Uruguay-Argentina Region, 25 years; Sister Maria Lan Nguyen, Metuchen, 25 years.

Campaign

►►Continued from page 20

church made the final mortgage payment on St. Ambrose School.

“I extend my gratitude to then Monsignor Schlert, now Bishop Schlert, for giving me permission to do all of this and for the trust in me and the parish.”

Monsignor Zemanik also thanked the Capital Campaign Committee, led by

Diane Roeder and Jack McGowan, as well as the Hospitality Committee, the Men's Club, the Women's Auxiliary and all those who contributed to the capital campaign.

“This is not an accomplishment of one

person, it is an accomplishment of the people of this parish,” said Monsignor Zemanik said.

The campaign has achieved 87 percent of its final goal and is still making final adjustments.



Mass Commemorates Cemetery Sunday

Monsignor William Baver, director of cemeteries for the Diocese of Allentown, celebrates Mass Oct. 13 at Resurrection Cemetery, Allentown to commemorate Cemetery Sunday. The commemoration of Cemetery Sunday (the first Sunday of November) and All Souls Day (Nov. 2) highlight the importance of the Catholic cemetery. It affords the opportunity to visit and pray for our deceased at the site of interment at the local diocesan or parish cemetery. Resurrection is one of two diocesan cemeteries. The other is Resurrection Cemetery, Allentown. For more information, visit www.allentowndioocesecemeteries.org. (Photo courtesy of David Duch)

Veterans Day at Sacred Heart Parish, Palmerton

At all Masses on the recent Veterans Day weekend Nov. 10-11, Father William Campion offered a special prayer of blessing for the men and women of Sacred Heart Parish, Palmerton who served our nation in the various branches of the military. Over 40 veterans were invited forward and presented with a special coin of St. Michael the Archangel, who is recognized as the protector and defender of God's people against evil among the Catholic faithful. Also a special holy card was given to each veteran, of Our Blessed Mother, patroness of the United States. Pictured, Father Campion gives the coin to veterans Richard Frey and Duane Costenbader.

Parish Mission Dec. 3-5 at St. Anne

“Walking in the Dark, Living in the Light” will be the theme of a parish mission in December at St. Anne Church, Bethlehem.

Preacher will be Father James Wallace, rector and director of San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, New Jersey.

The mission will be Monday, Dec. 3 through Wednesday, Dec. 5 each evening at 7 p.m.

Topics will be:
Monday – “We – A People Who Experience Both Darkness and Light.”

Tuesday – “The Crucified Risen Christ – The Light in Our Darkness.”

Wednesday – “Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help: A Companion in Our Darkness.”

For more information: 610-867-5039, www.stannechurchbethlehem.org.

Natural Family Planning Free Seminars

Looking for a method of family planning that can be used to achieve or avoid pregnancy and follows Church teaching?

Come learn about scientific advances in gynecological health that offer far superior treatment for infertility than IVF. This seminar will discuss more viable

alternatives to birth control pills to avoid pregnancy and treat women's health problems.

A series of three seminars were being offered in November and December. The remaining seminar will be Monday, Dec. 3 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Francis Center for

Renewal, Bethlehem.

For more information, visit www.allentowndioocese.org/nfp. For questions, call 610-289-8900, ext. 2024.

SIMBANG GABI
Sponsored by FCCDA

2018
PASKO NA NAMAN

HALINA PO KAYONG LAHAT SA
St. Jane Frances de Chantal Church
4049 Hartley Avenue
Easton, PA 18045
Dec. 8 (Sat) to Dec 16 (Sun) 2018
Time: 7:30 pm
Potluck Dec 8 Sat and Dec 16 Sun
Coffee & pastry on Dec 9 to Dec 15

Filipino Community Plans ‘Simbang Gabi’ Event

The Filipino Catholic Community in the Diocese of Allentown (FCCDA) will sponsor its annual “Simbang Gabi” event in December.

“Simbang Gabi” consists of nine-day novena Masses in parish churches in celebration, preparation and anticipation for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This year's event will start Saturday, Dec. 8 and end Sunday, Dec. 16 at St.

Jane Frances de Chantal Church, 4049 Hartley Ave., Easton.

For nine days the Mass will start at 7:30 p.m., followed by fellowship after the Mass.

There will be potlucks Dec. 8 and 16; coffee and pastry Dec. 9 through 15.

For more information, e-mail yolanda.bermudez@rcn.com.

WASKO

IRON WORKS

- Iron Railings • Porch Columns
- Ornamental and Miscellaneous Iron Works
- Concrete and Clay Bird Baths
- Lawn Ornaments
- Religious Figurines

5158 SPRING MILL RD.
(ALONG RTE. 145)
WHITEHALL, PA 18052
610-597-5510
PA 034120

IDEAL HARDWOOD FLOORS

Residential & Commercial

All types of hardwood floors

- Installation • Repairs
- Sanding • Staining
- Refinishing

“Old floors made like new”

- Quality Work • Fully Insured
- Low Rates • FREE Estimates

CALL JAY
(610) 295-4110
or (610) 261-4396

St. Elizabeth Music Ministry
presents

“Invitation to a Miracle”
under the direction of Gary Stokes

Sunday, December 9, 2018
at 5 p.m.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church
618 Fullerton Avenue, Whitehall, PA

Admission is free. However, a free-will offering will be taken.

Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Celebrate ‘Samhain’

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians hosted their annual “Samhain” (Halloween) Welcoming Tea Oct. 7 at the Columbian Home, Allentown.

They savored delicious pastries and marveled over the imaginative witch hats many members created and wore, with three ladies winning prizes.

The Halloween-inspired photo booth stirred up great fun, and members tested themselves with Halloween trivia, once again learning how many Halloween traditions originated from Ireland.

Most important, they met some wonderful potential members, had a special guest from another division and enjoyed each other’s company.

LAOH enjoys fellowship, charitable works and the promotion of Irish Catholic heritage. Membership is open to all Catholics of Irish descent, by birth or marriage.

For more information, on LAOH or AOH, contact Maura O’Donnell-Roszyk at maurar1117@msn.com or Ed Barry at Edbarryaoh@aol.com.



Above, members of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians celebrate Halloween.



Left, the Best Hat Contest winners are, from left: Dianne Mascari, second place; Jean Gallagher, first; and Carole Cooney-Syzdek, third.



Praying for Month of the Holy Rosary

In commemoration of October, the Month of the Holy Rosary, the Religious Education Program students and instructors of St. Matthew the Evangelist, Minersville gather Oct. 9 to honor Mary, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, by publicly praying the rosary at the Parish Fatima Grotto.

Berks County Joins ‘Rosary Coast to Coast’

By GIA MYERS

An estimated 60 Catholics gathered in Birdsboro on an unseasonably warm day to join the international Rosary rally “Rosary Coast to Coast” – a call to God through the powerful intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary to heal our country and return it to holiness.

Simultaneously people gathered at various locations in 57 nations around the world to participate in this event.

The Birdsboro gathering Oct. 7 included parishioners of Immaculate Conception BVM Church in Douglassville, plus other local Catholics. The event was held at the parish’s former church building at 640 E. Main St., now home of Our Lady’s Missionaries of the Eucharist (OLME).

Participants gathered on the front lawn, around the Our Lady of Fatima shrine.

Prior to the start of the rosary at 4 p.m., participants were greeted by Sister Joan Noreen, founder of OLME.

She brought a reliquary containing three Fatima relics for participants to

venerate: first-class relics of Sts. Jacinta and Francisco Marto, and a second-class relic of the tree where the Virgin Mary appeared to them.

The Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary were led by Father Peter Stryker of the Fathers of Mercy; along with Deacon Paul Hiryak and Deacon Charles Giordano, both of Immaculate Conception BVM.

Final blessing was given by Monsignor John McCann, pastor of Immaculate Conception BVM.

At the conclusion, one woman felt so moved by the event, she spontaneously addressed the crowd from the steps, saying she felt so inspired watching an American flag in the surrounding neighborhood billow in the breeze as everyone prayed. “I just had to share,” she said.

Women prepare to pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.



An estimated 60 people join “Rosary Coast to Coast” in Birdsboro on an unseasonably warm October afternoon.



Beach to Basilica: 'Sand Nativity' Brings Unique Style to Vatican

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – From the beach town of New Smyrna, Florida, just a stone's throw away from Daytona Beach, Rich Varano never imagined his unique talent of sculpting sand would take him to the heart of Christianity.

Varano is the artistic director of the "Sand Nativity," a massive 52-foot-wide sculpture made of sand imported from Jesolo, an Italian seaside resort town roughly 40 miles north of Venice. It will be the centerpiece of the Vatican's annual Nativity scene on display in St. Peter's Square.

"What does it mean for me to be here? I think, quite understandably, it's the greatest honor there is" and certainly the biggest client he's ever had, Varano told Catholic News Service Nov. 21.

The American artist and three other sculptors were charged with creating the intricate sculpture, which, along with a 42-foot-tall red spruce tree donated by the Diocese of Concordia-Pordenone in the northern Italian region of Veneto, was to be unveiled at the Vatican's annual tree lighting ceremony Dec. 7.

Bas-relief sand sculptures, like the one to be featured in St. Peter's Square, are a tradition in Jesolo, which, since 1998, has been the home of an annual sand sculpture festival. Varano is an accomplished sand sculptor with over 40 years' experience and has organized various international sand sculpture festivals, including the annual event in Jesolo.

Yet, his artistic journey in sand sculpting began many years before his artistry would hit the sands of the Venetian resort town and, subsequently, the cobblestone square in front of St. Peter's Basilica.

"I've been sculpting sand since I was 6 years old," Varano told CNS. "My father was an amateur and the beach where I grew up had good sand."

Varano began as an amateur, too, "until I discovered that people would pay for it in my late 20s. And within a year, sand sculpting was the only thing I've been doing professionally ever since."

The process of creating the sculptures, however, is more than just molding and shaping sand. Unlike the sand castles vacationers often see disintegrate from a single touch or the occasional passing wave, sand sculptures are made du-



A worker sculpts an angel on a Nativity scene made entirely of sand in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Nov. 26. The 52-foot wide sculpture is made of sand from Jesolo, an Italian seaside town near Venice. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

rable enough to even withstand light rain through a process of compression.

The sand, which was delivered from Jesolo to St. Peter's Square in massive trucks, is mixed with water and compressed into layers of blocks stacked on top of one another.

Varano said that this process allows for the sculpture to last "indefinitely as long as it wants to be left on display." The "Sand Nativity" scene and tree will remain in St. Peter's Square until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 13.

"It's like a tiered cake going upward and when you get to the top, you're finished," Varano told CNS. "Then it can be sculpted immediately; it's suitable to carve right away."

Unlike sculpting harder materials like marble, which artists can work on at any given part, sand sculpting begins from the top. The artists must ensure their artwork

is finished before continuing downward.

"You don't carve something below first because if you try to go above, it affects what's below. So, it's a process, like a scanning, from the top down to finish."

Another important aspect, he added, is the composition of the sand, which needs to hold enough moisture to allow it to be sculpted and subsequently "stay in its shape and dry like a mud pie in the sun."

"Really, the only difference that separates us as professionals and people that play on the beach doing it is that we understand the basics of why sand sticks or, more importantly, why it doesn't stick," Varano explained.

Of the 20 artists he works with creating sand sculptures at the annual Jesolo Sand Festival, Varano selected three of his top sculptors not just for their talent, but also "for their ability to work well together, (which) is kind of critical."

"This piece is over 700 tons but, with 15 days, it still needs to be done in a way that everyone can work productively and stay out of each other's way and help each other," he said. "So, this team is very well versed in that; they're used to working with each other, not just here in Italy, but around the world. So, it's a good fit."

Varano and his team have created sand Nativity scenes for the past 17 years in Jesolo, which allowed them to flesh out different more elaborate pieces that told various stories, such as "a day in the life in Bethlehem" and ending with the "crescendo piece" of Christ's birth.

However, the sand art piece in St. Peter's Square will feature the "basic, iconic and traditional scene" complete with "the angel with Jesus, Joseph and Mary and then the three kings on one side, the (shepherd) and the sheep on the other side and, of course, the donkey and the ox."

CDC Report Shows Continued Decline in U.S. Abortion Rate

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The archbishop who chairs the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities cheered news that the abortion rate in the United States continues to shrink, as does the number of abortions overall.

"I am gratified that the number of abortions in the United States continues to decline," said Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, in a Nov. 26 statement. "The reduction in the number of abortions is due to many factors, from declining rates of sexual activity, especially among teens, to pro-life legislative gains."

According to a report issued Nov. 21 by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, the drop in both abortions overall and the abortion

rate has declined each year for a decade.

The CDC said the abortion rate in 2015 – the last year for which statistics are available – is at 11.8 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44. The rate has dropped eight of the past nine years since 2006's rate of 15.9; the rate of 15.6 held steady in 2008.

"The efforts of the staff and volunteers at crisis pregnancy centers, as well as pro-life educational efforts, are to be commended," Archbishop Naumann said in his statement.

The overall number of abortions also continued to slide. The 2015 number of reported abortions was 638,169, about one-fourth less than the 852,385 reported in 2006. It is down 2 percent from 2014's figure of 652,639.

"At the same time, we cannot be content with hundreds of thousands of abortions occurring annually in our nation," Archbishop Naumann added.

Over the past decade, the ratio of abortions to live births has trended downward. The ratio rose slightly from 2007 to 2008, and held steady in 2010 based on 2009's figures, but has declined from 2006's 233 abortions per 1,000 live births to 2015's 188 abortions per 1,000 live births.

The number of legal abortions in the United States peaked in the 1980s before beginning a slow but steady decline, interrupted only by the slight rise in, or holding steady of, numbers in the late 2000s.

The CDC's numbers are not complete. They do not include California, Florida,

Maryland, New Hampshire and Wyoming because they either "did not report, did not report by age, or did not meet reporting standards," the CDC said.

The abortion rate is highest for women in their 20s. Women ages 20-24 had an abortion rate of 19.9, and women ages 25-29 had an abortion rate of 17.9 per 1,000 women in their age group. Together, they accounted for close to 60 percent of all abortions.

White women had an abortion rate close to one-fourth that of black women. White women accounted for an abortion rate of 6.8, while black women had an abortion rate of 25.1. The CDC report, though, noted that abortion rates, ratios and numbers have gone down among all racial and ethnic groups.

Pope changes date of World Day of Migrants and Refugees to September

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – At the request of various bishops' conferences, Pope Francis has changed the date of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees to the last Sunday of September.

While the 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees was celebrated Jan. 14, in 2019 it will be celebrated Sept. 29,

also the feast of the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

Greg Burke, head of the Vatican press office, said in a communique that "as usual, the text of the Holy Father's message will be released some months before" the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

The day, which was instituted in 1914 by Pope Pius X, had most recently been celebrated in January each year, usually the second Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Catholic Church in the United States celebrates National Migration Week around the Epiphany. For 2019,

National Migration Week was to be Jan. 6-12.

Bishops' conferences around the world celebrate a Migrant and Refugee Week different times of year. For example, in August in Australia and in September in Chile and Argentina.