

Bishop's Rome Pilgrimage Shows Our Connection to Successor of Peter

Constructive dialogue with Pope and Vatican on abuse crisis, other key issues

By PAUL WIRTH
Diocesan Communications Staff

There was a moment near the end of his pilgrimage to Rome, after a whirlwind week of discussions with Vatican officials, and after his meeting with Pope Francis, that Bishop Alfred Schlert paused for a moment of silent prayer.

Standing before the tomb of St. Peter the Apostle, in the crypt beneath St. Peter's Basilica, the Bishop prayed for the intentions of the people of the Diocese of Allentown, and for more vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life.

The opportunities to pray at Peter's tomb, and at the tomb of the apostle Paul, along with the extended meeting with the Pope, were at the heart of the Bishop's trip. It was first and foremost a pilgrimage of prayer and reflection.

Bishop Schlert travelled to Rome with his brother Bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. These periodic "ad limina" visits are required by the Vatican to bolster a Bishop's spirit, and to provide a tangible reminder of the unbroken connection from the Holy Father, as the successor of Peter, through the Bishops, to people in parishes back home.

The pilgrimage also included Masses in four Papal basilicas throughout the city, and meetings and discussions at key Vatican offices. It was on Thanksgiving Day that the Bishops met with Pope Francis (see accompanying article).

Among the highlights of the Vatican meetings, according to Bishop Schlert:

- Careful selection of seminary candidates: Vatican officials emphasized the importance of allowing only high-quality men to be ordained as priests. The Diocese of Allentown already has significantly strengthened the seminary screening process, and has added



Bishop Schlert prays at the tomb of St. Peter the Apostle at St. Peter's Basilica. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

- additional monitoring and education aimed at keeping children safe.
- Catholic Education: It is essential to ensure that all Catholic schools are faithful to the teachings of the

Church, officials stressed, in both curriculum and employment practices.

Please see PILGRIMAGE page 3 ▶▶

Two New Seminarians for the Diocese of Allentown

Two men have begun studies for the priesthood for the Diocese of Allentown this fall at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia: Kolbe Eidle of St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, Sinking Spring and Hy (James) Gia Ngô of Sacred Heart Parish, West Reading.



Kolbe Eidle



James Ngô

Please see SEMINARIANS page 5 ▶▶



Beginning 'Advent by Candlelight'

Nikki Saas, left, and Heather Lake light the candle for the First Sunday at the "Advent by Candlelight" event for women Nov. 30 at Sacred Heart Church, Palmerton. Advent is a time of preparation for the Nativity of Jesus, celebrated over four Sundays before Christmas. The first day of Advent also marks the beginning of the Church's Liturgical Year. More photos on page 5.

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Because We Are Catholic

"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. Videos of people in the series are available on the Diocesan website at www.allentowndiocese.org/bishop-blog.

On Christmas, Showing Prisoners That the Church Cares

By PAUL WIRTH
Diocesan Communications Staff

Christmas Day is a joyous time for so many throughout the world, but for those in prison, said Father Joe Corpora, it can be "a day when the regrets are deep."

That's why Father Corpora, a Holy Cross priest from Notre Dame University, will be spending some time on Christmas visiting people in Lehigh County Prison.

An Easton native who will be home with his family over the holidays, Father Corpora will go to the prison to be with anyone who wants to talk, regardless of their religion. He'll also lead songs and will be available for confession.

"Some people are very lonely on Christmas Day," he said. It's a day when many prisoners regret the crime they committed, or regret the fact that they are not able to spend Christmas with their loved ones.

Father Corpora is in campus ministry at Notre Dame, including serving as chaplain for Latino and LGBT students. He also works with the Alliance for Catholic Education, where he helps make Catholic schools available, accessible and affordable to Latino children and families.

The visit is being coordinated by Diane Varra of St. Paul Parish, Allentown, who is a member of the Diocese's prison ministry.

"It's just a simple thing," said Father Corpora of his Christmas Day plans, "to let people know that the Church cares about them."



(Photo courtesy of Barbara Johnston/University of Notre Dame)

After Years of Declining Attendance and Financial Struggles, St. Stephen Church, Port Carbon Will Close, Parish Will Merge

Because of years of financial distress and significantly declining attendance, the Diocese of Allentown will close St. Stephen Church in Port Carbon and merge the parish into St. Clare of Assisi Parish, Saint Clair.

Parishioners at both parishes were informed of the decision at Masses the weekend of Dec. 7-8. The closure and merger will occur after the Christmas season, on Sunday, Jan. 12, 2020.

Monsignor William Glosser, administrator of St. Stephen, summarized the stressed status of the parish in a report to parishioners in early October.

"Since assuming duties of parish ad-

ministrator in 2016, I have made known to the parish our serious financial situation," he wrote.

He cited "a drastic decrease in Mass attendance and collections," and the inability of the parish to make needed repairs to the building. He also noted that the parish has no money in the bank to cover a more serious repair if it were needed.

"We must be practical and honest in our looking to the future," wrote Monsignor Glosser.

After hearing the recommendation of Monsignor Glosser, and after consulting with the Diocesan Council of Priests,

Bishop Alfred Schlert issued decrees merging the parish and closing the St. Stephen building.

All sacred images, vessels, furnishings and altars will be removed and preserved for continued use by St. Clare of Assisi Parish or another Catholic parish.

In the event the former church building or former school at St. Stephen is sold, the proceeds of the sale will remain with St. Clare of Assisi Parish. The same is true for the sale of any items now in the St. Stephen building, such as stained glass windows. The Diocese of Allentown would receive no proceeds from any of these potential sales.

In his decree merging St. Stephen Parish, Bishop Schlert declared that he has "profound respect for the estimable history of the parish and the devout faithful who founded and sustained her," as well as for the clergy and religious who served those faithful.

In his remarks at St. Stephen, Monsignor Glosser welcomed parishioners to St. Clare of Assisi Parish, where he serves as pastor, and thanked them for their steadfast support and dedication during the years St. Stephen was struggling.

Diocesan Cathedral Christmas Schedule

The 2019 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. Saturdays 3:15 to 4 p.m.

Additional Advent schedule – 15 minutes before Sunday Masses.

Saturday, Dec. 21 – 3 to 4 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 23 – 4 to 5 p.m., 7 p.m. Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve, Tuesday, 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, Wednesday, Dec. 25 – 7:30, 9 and 10:30 a.m. in church.

New Year's Day Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Tuesday, Dec. 31 – 4:15 p.m. New Year's Eve Vigil Mass.

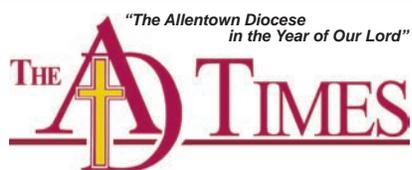
Wednesday, Jan. 1 – 8 and 10 a.m. Masses in church.

How to report abuse:

If you know of incidents of abuse in the Church or elsewhere, please report it to the State Child Line at 1-800-932-0313 or to local law enforcement. To speak to the Diocese of Allentown's Victim Assistance Coordinator, please call her direct line: 1-800-791-9209. The Diocese treats victims of clergy abuse and their families with compassion and dignity. For more information visit allentowndiocese.org/youth-protection.

Cómo denunciar un abuso:

Si conoce algún incidente de abuso en la Iglesia o en otro lugar, por favor repórtelo llamando a la línea de *State Child* al 1-800-932-0313 o a la policía local. Para hablar con el coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis de Allentown, llame a su línea directa: 1-800-791-9209. La Diócesis trata a las víctimas del abuso del clero y a sus familias con compasión y dignidad. Para obtener más información, visite la página web: allentowndiocese.org/youthprotection.



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Pilgrimage

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- Youth Protection: Vatican officials acknowledged that Bishops around the world have learned from the abuse prevention policies implemented by Bishops in the United States.
- Decline in Mass attendance: This is a troubling trend, officials said, noting that in spite of the decline, the Church in the United States remains vibrant in its activities and pastoral outreach.
- Financial concerns: Vatican officials are well aware that dioceses in Pennsylvania and New Jersey are under serious financial pressure due to compensation funds for victims of abuse, and due to the passage of “window” legislation in New Jersey and the threat of such legislation in Pennsylvania. The legislation opens a window for the filing of new lawsuits against dioceses.
- Canonization of Father Walter Ciszek: When he inquired about the status of this effort, Bishop Schlert learned that the diocesan portion of the process is complete and that Vatican officials are awaiting the documentation of a miracle.



Bishop Schlert and his brother Bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey met with the Pope on Thanksgiving Day. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

A Give-and-Take With a Down-to-Earth Pope

By PAUL WIRTH
Diocesan Communications Staff

Before Pope Francis sat down with Bishop Alfred Schlert and other Bishops in the Vatican Apostolic Library, he took care to offer them refreshments, and even pointed out the location of the nearest restrooms.

It was the Pope’s way, in his soft-spo-

ken and down-to-earth style, of putting them at ease before getting down to business in the 2½-hour meeting.

“It was clear that the Pope understands in a very detailed way the current issues in the Church in the United States,” said Bishop Schlert. This includes being well-versed in the Pennsylvania Grand Jury

Please see POPE page 4 ▶▶



Bishop Schlert, with the dome of St. Peter’s Basilica in the background, after his meeting with Pope Francis. (Photo courtesy of Diocese of Erie/AMWelsh)



Two Diocese of Allentown priests who were in Rome for other reasons also had the opportunity to meet the Pope before the Holy Father’s discussion with the Bishops. Father Richard James, above, is studying Moral Theology at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome. “When Bishop Schlert introduced us,” said Father James, “I said to the Holy Father, ‘I will pray for you.’ It was a very brief moment, but I found his availability to greet us very charitable and friendly.” Below, Father Daniel Kravatz, assistant pastor of Notre Dame Parish, Bethlehem, was in Rome on vacation. “I was impressed by the Pope’s humility and generosity in taking time to greet us all individually,” said Father Kravatz. “It certainly is a meeting I will never forget.”



Bishop Schlert is greeted by Pope Francis at the Vatican.

Free Online Non-Credit Course for Advent

The Salesian Center for Faith and Culture at DeSales University, Center Valley is offering a free online non-credit course for spiritual enrichment.

“The Season of Advent: Preparing the Way” opened Nov. 30 and will remain open until Friday, Jan. 31, 2020 to allow a slow process through the readings and videos ... work at your own pace.

To register, go to www.desales.edu/salesian and click on the free online non-credit courses link.



Next First Friday Adoration for Vocations Jan. 3

Everyone is invited to join the Diocese of Allentown Office for Vocations Promotion for First Friday Adoration, Holy Hour and Sacred Heart Devotion, every First Friday through May.

Upcoming First Friday events will be Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 6, April 3 and May 1, 7 to 8 p.m. at Holy Ghost Church, 417 Carlton Ave., Bethlehem.

Young adults, families and faithful of all ages are welcome to these monthly events for prayer and reflection.

“I believe that the young people and families in our Diocese are hungry for more time with the Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament. And several com-

mentators and leaders in our Church have spoken that where the Lord’s presence is honored, revered and adored in Eucharistic adoration, the whole Church is lifted up and strengthened,” said Father Mark Searles, director of the Office for Vocations Promotion, at the first event, Sept. 6.

“We also will pray for more laborers in the vineyard – especially to the priesthood – and for our own vocation in life.”

For more information, contact Father Searles, msearles@allentowndioocese.org, 610-437-0755, or visit www.allentowndioocese.org/vocations.

Institute for Catechesis and Formation Course

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation is offering the following course. ICF courses are meant for any adult Catholic looking to grow deeper and learn more about the faith. There are no prerequisites for these courses.

Live courses cost \$30 per course; on-

line courses \$35. Register at www.allentowndioocese.org/icf.

CAT I – The Creed

An overview of fundamental Catholic teachings based on the founding symbol of our faith. This course provides catechists with a foundation in the basic te-

nets of the Catholic Faith, and is a good starting point leading to further study. The course is highly recommended for catechists; but everyone is invited to learn more about what it means to say, I believe....

Presented online by Cassie Boccardi, Monday, Jan. 6 to Sunday, Feb. 2, 2020.

Pope

▶▶Continued from page 3

report and in the clergy abuse crisis, he said.

“I took a lot of encouragement from the Holy Father’s words,” said Bishop Schlert. “There is a great concern in Rome about the effects of the crisis, on victims, on the vast majority of clergy who are faithful and who remain holy, and on parishioners.”

The Pope gave the Bishops all the time they wanted, said Bishop Schlert, which was remarkable considering that the 83-year-old Pontiff had just returned from a seven-day trip to Thailand and Japan.

“He listened intently to the comments of every Bishop, and gave each of us a substantive response on the issues we raised,” said Bishop Schlert. He added that the Pope invited Bishops to speak from the heart, about what was on their minds, and about any questions they may have.

Bishop Schlert used his opportunity

to tell Pope Francis that despite the difficult times in our Church, there also are signs of hope. “I told him about ‘Healing Our Church,’” said the Bishop, in which the faithful met in small groups over six weeks to discuss the abuse crisis, then gathered for Eucharistic Adoration and question-and-answer sessions with the Bishop.

“There clearly still are many people who love their Church and love their priests,” Bishop Schlert told the Pope.

“Personally, the Pope is very fatherly, very paternal,” said Bishop Schlert. “He’s friendly, homey and speaks in a

transparent and colloquial way.”

A Vatican translator assisted with the meeting, which was conducted in Italian, but his services were not necessary for Bishop Schlert, who became well-versed in the language during his time in seminary in Italy.

Bishop Schlert summed up the Pope Francis meeting this way: “Especially in these difficult times, to be able to meet with the Holy Father, to receive his encouragement, to know that he is aware of our difficulties in the U.S. Church and is praying for us to overcome them, was a tremendous experience.”



STEEPLES AND STEEL

Looking back at 2019 ...

A “thank you” from Steelworkers’ Archives, South Bethlehem Historical Society, and Northampton County DCED to AD Times readers for joining us on the “Steeple and Steel” minibus tours this year. We hope you enjoyed the church, cemetery, and steel plant site tours; the open house; and the goulash luncheon.

Looking forward to 2020 ...

We hope to see AD Times readers again next year. Call 610.861.0600 or check www.steelworkersarchives.com in the spring for tour schedule.



Beginning 'Advent by Candlelight' in Palmerton



About 130 women attended this year's gathering. They process from the fellowship hall for a service and then return to the hall. At the service several women of the parish give personal reflections on the theme, this year "Angels Among Us." Also included are prayer, music and Scripture, all to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of Christmas. The parish choir participated.



The church service ends with the women singing "Silent Night" by candlelight. At left is Tricia Matsko, who brought the idea for the event from her previous parish in Michigan. Sacred Heart began opening Advent with the event in 2004.



Women gather for fellowship after the service. Each table has a hostess who decorates the table individually.



Above, young adults show the manger display on their table. From left are: front, Megan Matsko, Emma Martinez, Maddison Beahr; back, Nicole Andress, Maria Muentz, Natalie Matsko and Johanna Matsko.



Left, the past several years a Woman of the Year has been named at the event. Last year's recipient, Peg Duell, left, presents the honor to this year's Woman of the Year, Joann Kerckmar.

Additional photo on page 1

Seminarians

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Kolbe Eidle

Kolbe, 18, is the seventh child of 14 of Rob and Andrea Eidle. He was baptized at St. Ignatius and received First Holy Communion from the hands of his godfather, Father Jon Romanowski, F.S.S.P., at his first Mass in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The family was homeschooled, attended daily Mass and prayed the rosary every night. Kolbe served as an altar server and helped lead the rosary before weekend Masses.

As a teenager he attended a Franciscan LEAD, a weeklong retreat attached to Steubenville youth conferences, and his faith intensified at multiple Quo Vadis retreats he attended.

He worked at St. Ignatius as a sacristan, and director, organist and occasional cantor for the parish youth choir.

He also wrestled for Wilson High

School, was co-captain for two years and has 120 career wins.

His brother Keaton is also a seminarian for the Diocese of Allentown in Fourth College.

"Seminary has been an amazing experience and growth for me," said Kolbe.

"Being in a whole school of brothers working toward the same goal of being able to one day serve the faithful of the Church is a beautiful and encouraging experience.

"I look forward to growing closer to Our Lord through formation and God-willing using what I learn to serve and care for the people of God."

Hy (James) Gia Ngô

James, 25, was born in Saigon, Vietnam, the fourth of five children of Joseph Ngo Dinh Bo and Mary Tran Thi Oanh.

He was baptized by Father Francis Xavier Nguyen Duc Dat, O.P. in Thanh Tam (Sacred Heart) Parish, Xuan Loc Diocese, where his grandparents lived after they immigrated from the North of

Vietnam in 1954 because of the control of the communists in their hometown.

His first catechist was his grandmother, Mary Tran Thi Chieu, who prayed all day with a rosary in her hand.

He attended elementary school with Dominican sisters and Nguyen Hue public primary school; secondary school Ly Tu Trong and Vo Truong Toan; and graduated from Nguyen Train High School in 2012.

He served 10 years as an altar server and sacristan, and became a catechist and taught teenagers.

As a requirement for a missionary program, he received a degree in architecture in 2017 from the University of Architecture, Ho Chi Minh City. He then studied for a year at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan.

This past summer he had an opportunity to visit the Diocese of Allentown and lived at Sacred Heart Church, West Reading.

"In the seminary, I have opportunities to grow and develop myself in many aspects," said James.

"First of all, the prayerful environment is the greatest thing that I received from the seminary. By attending daily Mass and Liturgy of the Hours, I was able to deepen my relationship with God, be closer to him and discover many beautiful spiritual experiences.

"The seminary also is a place where I seek God through intellectual activities. For this semester, my focus is to improve my language skills to prepare for studying in the future.

"Finally, the fraternity of the community is the encouragement that is always beside and supports me to go over any challenges. After a few months of living in the seminary, I feel this place is like my second home. I believe that the seminary will be a perfect place to prepare for my priesthood in the future in human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions."

700 Men 'Standing Firm in Our Faith' at Men's Conference

By ALEXA SMITH
Director, Office of Youth,
Young Adult and Family Ministry

"We come together as brothers and are reminded that all of us need to stand firm today in faith," said Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert to 700 attendees at the Diocesan Men's Conference "Standing Firm in Our Faith," Nov. 23 at DeSales University, Center Valley.

The conference was hosted in Billera Hall for the first time this year, having outgrown its previous location in the University Center.

"We are men in faith, many are fathers and husbands, which is a beautiful vocation that puts heavy responsibilities on you to be the protector, provider and defender of your families," the Bishop continued. "Let no one take away from you the importance of that."

Keynote speakers for the English track included Dr. Ralph Martin, president of Renewal Ministries; Father James Greenfield, O.S.F.S., president of DeSales University; Gus Lloyd, host of Seize the Day; and Sam Guzman, founder and editor of the Catholic Gentleman.

Presenters for the Spanish track included Dr. Ricardo Luzondo, co-founder of Renovacion Familiar Ministries; and



"Standing Firm in Our Faith," this year's Diocese of Allentown men's conference. (Photos by John Simitz)

Deacon Isidro Gonzalez, who serves in diaconal ministry at Our Lady of Mercy, Easton.

Ralph Martin

"The only way we can stand firm in our faith is by asking ourselves the ques-

tion 'Who do you say Jesus is?'" said Ralph Martin. "There are a lot of people who seem to have created Jesus in their own image."

Martin explained that Jesus cannot be separated from his teaching, and that many people want to have Jesus affirm their lifestyle rather than allowing their lives to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

"You can't know the real Jesus unless you listen to his word and are formed by his word," said Martin.

Martin emphasized that every person is called to holiness and evangelization.

"Your life won't get going as it should until you make that total surrender to Jesus," he said. "You don't drift into the Kingdom of God by going along with what everyone else is doing."

Martin shared the story of his own reversion experience. Though he was a cradle Catholic, he fell away from the faith during his youth. His return to Christ was sparked by a powerful experience on a Cursillo retreat in college, which he attended at the prompting of a friend.

"If Jesus is the Lord, the only sane response would be total surrender," said Martin. "There's only one thing that really has to happen in our lives to make them a success: coming to Jesus, being with him to the end, and letting him come back and take us to the Father's house."

Gus Lloyd

Gus Lloyd reinforced Martin's message, emphasizing the importance of prayer in the lives of the men.

"You have been called by God to be in this time in history," said Lloyd. "Our faith is under attack on so many levels, and we are called to be men of action. Number one, above all things, is to be a man of prayer."

Lloyd discussed the seeds of grace that are planted in our lives through the sacraments, and how we are able to plant seeds of grace in the lives of others that may inspire them to turn to Christ later in life.

"God is calling us to sow seeds of grace everywhere we go, indiscriminately," he said. "We can't worry about how people are going to react to the truth, and we cannot be cowardly about it."

Lloyd shared the story of his reversion experience, which led him to Christ after spending years in a lifestyle removed from the faith. He emphasized the presence of God's grace, even in one of his darkest moments where he nearly lost his daughter, and how God reached him through the circumstances of his daily life.

"God never does something without a plan," said Lloyd. "Every seed of grace in your life has a purpose."

Lloyd challenged the men to think of ways they could plant seeds of grace in the lives of others.

"You are being called to lay down your life for the faith," he continued. "It all starts on our knees, with being a man of prayer. That is where the battle will be truly won."

Sam Guzman

Sam Guzman spoke about heroism and how men are called to rise up against evil.

"We look at the world and see so much sin and darkness," he said. "A man wants to combat evil, to defend our families, to slay the dragon. It's part of who men are: we see the evil in the world and we want to do something."

Guzman discussed how heroism is a journey, and drew examples from the life of St. Peter. He explained that St. Peter was an apprentice for three years, and went through many trials during that time, but that it all started with a call.

"Every hero's journey starts with a call," he said. "No hero has an adventure at home on his couch watching Netflix — there is always a call to go out into the unknown."

Citing the moment when St. Peter dropped his net to follow Jesus, Guzman emphasized that the men will be called out of their comfort to be challenged.

"Any time we step out to answer that call, we are eventually transformed. We never come home the same," he said.

Guzman described chastity, poverty and obedience as weapons that can be used to overcome evil.

"God needs men who can be used for the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus in this world," he said. "Answer the call, endure the crucible and then carry the cross, because there is good in this world and it's worth fighting for."

Father Greenfield

In the final keynote of the day, Father

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'Listos Para la Batalla Contra el Enemigo'

Por MIGUEL PEREZ-SOTO
Especial para The A.D. Times

"Espero que a través de las siguientes semanas los asistentes continúen reflexionando sobre cómo abrirse al conocimiento de Dios y el continuar en la búsqueda de Dios en sus vidas les conduzca a promover y defender la masculinidad verdadera," afirmó el doctor Ricardo Luzondo, orador principal para la octava edición de la Conferencia Diocesana para Hombres en español titulada "Mantenerse Firmes en la Fé."

Cerca de 100 hombres se dieron cita en el centro estudiantil de la Universidad DeSales para participar de este evento diocesano que cada año cobra más relevancia tanto en asistencia como en la profundidad de los temas que se presentan. Este año la sesión en español también contó con el Diácono Isidro González, destacado en la parroquia Nuestra Señora de la Merced en Easton y quien recalzó desde la tarima que los hombres tienen la responsabilidad de asumir su rol de sacerdotes domésticos.

"El mensaje es que tomemos conciencia de que somos guerreros de fuego y que debemos estar preparados mediante la oración y el santo rosario, listos para la batalla contra el enemigo y sus artimañas," subrayó el diácono quien desde su ordenación en el 2015 ha sido parte de varios ministerios diocesanos de formación y evangelización.

La conferencia anual diocesana para hombres comenzó en el 2012 con un reducido grupo de hombres de varias parroquias. Año tras año el evento ha formado parte de la propuesta diocesana para evangelización y crecimiento espiritual. Hoy se ha convertido en una de las actividades más concurridas y en años más recientes se ha ofrecido simultáneamente en español.

Por su parte el Luzondo continuó, "Aunque mi participación fue llevar un mensaje a los hombres hispanos, pude recibir más bendiciones a través del caluroso recibimiento y del compartir a través del día por parte de los participantes. Hombres de diferentes edades y

precedencias, con diferentes historias, pero con el común denominador que es el amor por Cristo nuestro Señor," añadió Luzondo quien además es colaborador, junto a su esposa la licenciada Lucía Báez-Luzondo, de la red Católica de radio y televisión EWTN (por sus siglas en inglés) en Atlanta, Georgia.

Cargados de entusiasmo los participantes comenzaron el día con cánticos de alabanza gracias a la colaboración musical del Coro de Hombres de Santa Infancia bajo la tutela de Osvaldo Jorge. La agenda incluyó oportunidades para la adoración del Santísimo, confesión y Misa al final de las actividades.

"Llevo cinco años asistiendo a estas conferencias," indicó Héctor López, de la parroquia Santa Infancia en Bethlehem, "y cada vez que asisto me alimento de la sabiduría de otros, de sus historias y testimonios. Los últimos tres años esto se ha ofrecido en español y eso es una respuesta a mi oración. La comunidad hispana tiene hambre por la Palabra de Dios," dijo.

Por otro lado, Mike Barski, presidente del Comité Diocesano para Hombres retó a los participantes a asumir una postura fuerte en la fé para el beneficio de las generaciones futuras, "se ha corroborado que 20 por ciento de los jóvenes que siguen la fé lo hacen voluntariamente, 40 por ciento cuando mamá es la que lleva la voz cantante, pero 92 por ciento siguen en la fé cuando es papá el que dirige los caminos," dijo, y añadió, "yo los invito a que tomemos nuestra responsabilidad de padres, proveedores y protectores en serio," finalizó.

"La conferencia fue todo un éxito," expresó el diácono Ricardo Ceballos de la Catedral Santa Catalina de Siena en Allentown y quien también se desempeñó como maestro de ceremonias durante el día de la conferencia, "compartir con 100 hombres firmes en la fé fué una experiencia emocionante y confío que la asistencia el próximo año será mayor," apuntó.

La conferencia para el año que viene ya se perfila como una de gran interés para la comunidad latina y ha sido confirmada para celebrarse en la Universidad DeSales el sábado 21 de noviembre.

Conference

▶▶Continued from page 6

James Greenfield discussed seven common struggles of those striving for holiness, as well as corresponding opportunities to approach life through the lens of faith.

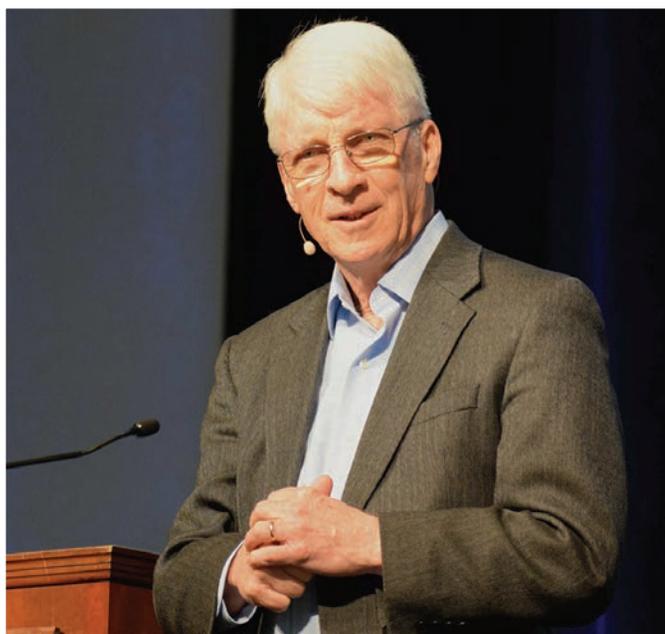
He discussed the struggle to feel God's presence in everyday life, as well as the challenge of allowing our earthly suffering to orient us toward Christ.

"Let suffering soften our hearts rather than harden our souls," said Greenfield. "Suffering is part and parcel of life, but do we allow it to help us be our best selves?"

Father Greenfield ended with a call to action, inviting his audience to become men of faith.

"Each moment of life that we live is an opportunity to fall more in love with the God who created us and who wants us to live with him forever," he said.

The day concluded with Mass celebrated by Father Adam Sedar.



Speaker Dr. Ralph Martin.



Spanish speaker Dr. Ricardo Luzondo.

More photos on the diocesan website www.allentowndiocese.org under "Latest News" on the homepage.

2020 March for Life Bus Trip Information

The 2020 March for Life in Washington, D.C., always held near the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision of 1973, which legalized most forms of abortion on demand, will be Friday, Jan. 24.

The event in recent years has drawn more than 100,000 marchers. This year's theme is "Life Empowered: Pro-Life is Pro-Woman."

The following parishes in the Diocese of Allentown are running buses.

If you are running a bus and do not see your parish name and information below, send it to adtimes@allentowndiocese.org by Monday, Jan. 6. We will repeat the list and add any new parishes in the next issue, Jan. 9.

Assumption BVM, Bethlehem (ABVM) and St. Joseph, Coopersburg – Departs ABVM 7 a.m. (arrive at 6:45 a.m.), will arrive at National Mall in Washington, D.C. 11 a.m., will not stop for lunch, please pack a bag lunch, departing at 3 p.m., will stop at food court on way home, return to ABVM around 8:30-9 p.m., \$10 per person.

Contact Lisa Temple at lisa_temple3@yahoo.com or 281-507-8912. Teens are welcome; vetted chaperones will be available; contact Lisa Temple for parental release forms.

Immaculate Conception BVM,



Douglassville (ICC) – With St. Ignatius Loyola, Sinking Spring. Mass at ICC 7 a.m., bus pickup at ICC 8 a.m./Mass at St. Ignatius 8 a.m., bus departs for St. Ignatius 8:15 a.m., bus pickup at St. Ignatius and depart for Washington 8:30 a.m., bus departs home from Union Station 5 p.m., returns to St. Ignatius 8:30 p.m., returns to ICC 9 p.m., adults \$32, youth \$16.

Contact Angela Peterson at 610-582-6993 or icc_march4life@windstream.net.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

(OLPH), Bethlehem and St. Thomas More (STM), Allentown – Bus will leave OLPH parking lot 7:30am, stop at STM to pick up other passengers and arrive back around 9 p.m., \$20 per adult, \$10 per student.

Contact Tony Saldutti at 610-533-2711 or tsaldutti99@gmail.com.

St. Columbkil, Boyertown – Preceded by Mass for the Unborn at St. Columbkil, 6:30 a.m. before boarding the bus at 7:15 a.m., return time approximately 10 p.m., \$50 for adults, \$25 for students,

also includes morning refreshments and dinner. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring a bag lunch.

Contact Candee Holzman at 484-431-2085, or <https://www.stcolumbkil.org/> or call the church office at 610-367-2371. If you cannot attend but would like to sponsor a seat for someone else to do so, financial blessings are welcome. Prayers for the unborn and for our pilgrims are also appreciated.

St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Easton – Sponsored for St. Jane by Knights of Columbus Council 345, \$10 per person, \$20 per family.

Contact Sue Stigliano at 610-253-0510.

St. Joseph, Summit Hill – Departing from Shrine of St. Therese, 1 E. Garibaldi Ave., Nesquehoning, 6 a.m., returning approximately 9:30 p.m., \$40 per person.

To register, call 570-645-2664 ext. 1. Questions can be directed to Father Allen Hoffa at frhoffasjpv@gmail.com or 570-645-2664 ext. 4.

St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield – Leaves church parking lot after 6:30 a.m. Mass, return approximately 8 p.m., \$10 per person, donations appreciated.

Contact Sue Mueller at suemueler45@gmail.com or 610-392-2957.

Death



Deacon Richard Close, Served Hospital Ministry

Deacon Richard Close, 87, of Glen Mills, died Nov. 30. Surviving are his wife of 63 years, Beatrice (Augustine) Close; a daughter, Laura (Timothy) Cole; a son, Timothy (Peggy) Close; two grandsons; three granddaughters; and three great-grandsons. He was predeceased by a daughter, Lisa Close.

Deacon Close was ordained to the permanent diaconate Oct. 12, 1982 by Bishop Joseph McShea at the Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown.

He served at St. Ann Church, Emmaus and Lehigh Valley Hospital, Pastoral Care Department, Cedar Crest, Allentown, for more than 25 years. He also served at the former Allentown State Hospital.

Mass of Christian Burial for Deacon Close was celebrated Dec. 4 at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Glen Mills, with interment at Jefferson Memorial Park, Pittsburgh.

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How to Draw Young People Back to the Faith

By ALEXA SMITH
Director, Office of Youth,
Young Adult and Family Ministry

"Today's young people are one of the most studied sociological groups ever," Marcel Lejeune began a Dec. 4 live webinar to over 40 viewers on "How to Draw Young People Back to the Faith."

Lejeune, president and founder of "Catholic Missionary Disciples," went on to explain the dramatic shifts in cultural, moral and technological factors that have come to a head at the precise moment when Millennials and Generation Z are coming of age.

"We're observing the breakdown of the family, the fulfillment of what the sexual revolution promised, the total abandonment to the license of false freedom, all in the midst of the largest technological development since the industrial revolution," he said.

"The tectonic plates that have been mildly shifting through the years are now rapidly changing for this generation."

Lejeune explained that the meteoric changes to cultural norms and expectations, combined with the Catholic Church's steadfast adherence to tradition, have resulted in a massive dying off of Christianity.

"More people are leaving the Catholic Church than have ever left before, in just a few generations," he cited.

Lejeune stated that the "Nones" – individuals who feel inclined to respond "None" when asked their religion – are the fastest growing group of people in the United States with regard to religious identity, and that this trend is especially prevalent in younger generations.

Lejeune first sought to address the question of why these young people lack faith.

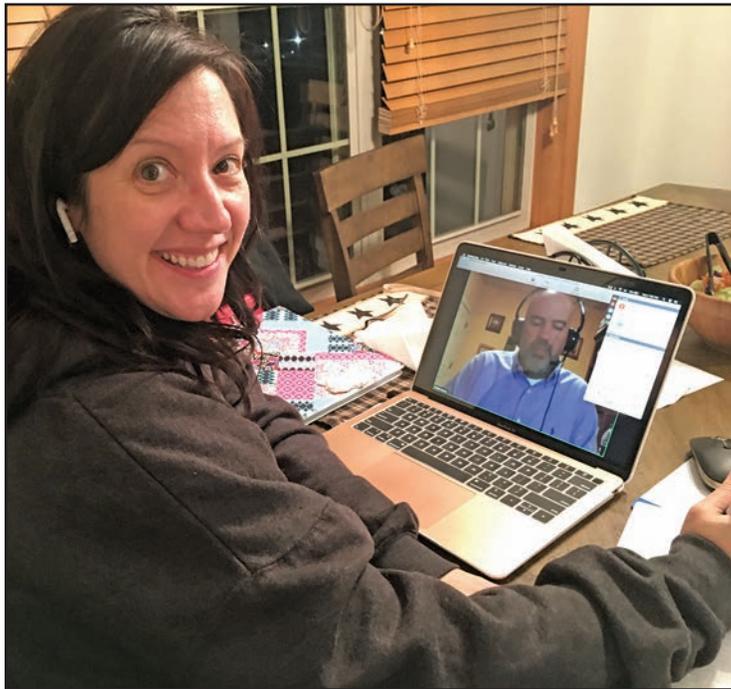
"For each person you ask that question, there is a different reason," he said. "We have to understand that there is no magic bullet that will reach all young adults, but there are some principles that can inform what we do and how we do it."

The first principle Lejeune introduced is that we must strive to aim for the heart, rather than the head, when appealing to modern young people.

"This does not mean we dumb down the Catholic faith or ignore the richness of our theological traditions," he said. "Nor does it mean avoiding difficult truths that need to be addressed."

"You cannot love what you don't know, so there are things we will have to teach. But in transforming the heart first, the deepest place in the human person, we allow the head to follow."

Lejeune said that conversion ultimate-



Josette Peckman of St. John the Baptist Parish, Pottsville watches the webinar. (Photo courtesy of Josette Peckman)



Annie Sarlo, secretary of the Diocesan Secretariat for Catholic Life and Evangelization, fields questions from viewers near the end of the webinar. (Photo by Rick Dooley)

ly starts with the "kerygma," or proclaiming the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and the salvation that comes only through him.

"The kerygma is at the very core of what it means to be a Catholic, and in large measure we have forgotten it, we have lost the ability to proclaim it correctly, and we have neglected to invite the response that it requires."

Second, Lejeune emphasized the importance of trust, and how it must be earned before a true discipleship relationship can be achieved. He discussed the importance of trust and authenticity when it comes to dealing with young people in particular.

Finally, he stressed the importance of investing meaningful time and effort into few people, rather than casting too wide a net.

"Jesus, who had to save every person for all of time, in all places, spent 75 percent of his time with 12 men," he said. "How much of your time in ministry is spent investing in a few people? In many places, the majority of ministry is spent in administration, working with large groups, or running classes and events."

"Jesus went deep and narrow, not wide and shallow," he said. "But that deep and narrow investment multiplied so effectively that the world was changed in just a few generations."

Referencing a theme from Sherry Weddell's "Forming Intentional Disciples," Lejeune made the point that "God

has no grandchildren."

"Your parents' faith will not get you to heaven," he explained. "Each of us needs to choose to follow Jesus and be a member of his Church for ourselves."

However, he said, we are not creating enough opportunities for young people today to choose this for their lives. To do this, we first need to invite young people into conversation about their faith.

"Start with big, meaningful questions that will get to the heart of what is going on with someone," he suggested. "A lot of people have rejected a false God and a false Catholic Church that do not reflect the true Jesus and the true Church."

"Our questions show that we care about the person," he said.

After asking questions, we must listen,

assess and respond.

"Never accept a label in place of a story," warned Lejeune. "Someone might say they are an atheist, or that they are 'spiritual but not religious,' but these labels can carry different meanings for different people."

"Don't fill in the gaps when you don't know where somebody is. The labels mean very little until you hear the person's story."

In the end, Lejeune stressed that becoming a disciple of Jesus is a choice each of us must face.

"You cannot accidentally become a disciple of Jesus," he said. "Each of us must decide in an act of faith to drop our nets and follow."

Next Webinar on Defending Your Faith

The next installment of the Winter Webinar Series will be Wednesday, Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. Trent Horn will discuss "The Beginner's Guide to Defending Your Faith."



Horn

Horn will show viewers that you don't need all the right answers – you

just need the right questions and the right attitudes to share the Catholic Faith with anyone.

A webinar is a live, virtual event hosted online. You can access the webinar from anywhere using your mobile device, computer or tablet/iPad.

For more information and to register, visit www.allentowndiocese.org/webinars. Once you are registered, you will receive instructions on how to connect. For these webinars, you do not need a camera.

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Confirmation Candidates Look Ahead to Sacrament 'With Great Power'

Over 150 Confirmation candidates from eight Lehigh Valley parishes attended a Confirmation retreat facilitated by NET Ministries Nov. 16 at Allentown Central Catholic High School. The event was sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry.

NET, which stands for National Evangelization Team, is a ministry organization that sends college-aged missionaries across the country to facilitate retreats for youth in grades 6-12. Since its inception in 1981, NET Ministries has led over 34,000 retreats and ministered to more than 2 million young people.

Attending parishes were: Holy Trinity, Whitehall; St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Whitehall; St. Francis of Assisi, Allentown; St. John the Baptist, Whitehall; St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield; Annunciation BVM (St. Mary), Catasauqua; St. Peter, Coplay; and St. Ursula, Fountain Hill.

"The Gospel is an action, not just something you read," said NET missionary Mark Johnson as students gathered for the opening session. "The Gospel means 'go,' so we go all over the country to spread the Gospel."

The theme of the retreat was "With Great Power," designed to highlight the grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon recipients of the Sacrament of Confirmation as they become adult members of the Catholic Church.

Talks on the retreat were given by various members of the NET team, and attendees were broken into small groups to reflect on topics being discussed throughout the day.

"Confirmation leaves an indelible mark on our souls," said NET missionary Lorren Postl during the main pre-

sentation. "That means it is permanent and never goes away – but it requires a response."

She went on to discuss the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, ultimately enabling the apostles to go out and spread the word of God.

"At Confirmation, we receive grace from God to be strong witnesses for Christ in the world," she explained. "Be open to allowing the Holy Spirit to work in your heart."

NET missionary Monica Schaefer shared a testimony about her own experience receiving Confirmation. Growing up in a devout Catholic home, Schaefer had been excited about receiving the sacrament, but was disappointed when she didn't feel changed afterward.

"It's not a one-time choice," she reflected. "I have to keep saying yes every day."

The retreat concluded with a Holy Hour led by Father Mark Searles, chaplain of Allentown Central Catholic. During Adoration, NET missionaries prayed individually with each of the retreat attendees in their small groups.

Adam Baker, NET team leader, gave a final reflection as Confirmation candidates prayed before the Blessed Sacrament. Drawing students' attention to a nearby crucifix, he reflected on Christ's passion.

"That is a radical love that requires a response," he said. "Prayer is where you make your response, either to get closer or to stay where you are."

For more information on Confirmation rallies offered by the Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry, email Alexa Smith at asmith@allentowndiocese.org.



Confirmation candidates participate in small group discussion.



More than 150 Confirmation candidates and their DREs listen to talks presented by NET Missionaries.



Above, NET team leader Adam Baker speaks about the Sacrament of Confirmation.



Right, NET team member Monica Schaefer leads the group in song.

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St. Thomas More Clinches CYO Volleyball Tournament Title

Justice Ortiz, Holy Guardian Angels (HGA), Reading, serves the ball during the Diocesan Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Volleyball Tournament at Allentown Central Catholic High School. (Photos by Ed Koskey)



Elizabeth Trump, left, player for St. Thomas More, and Julia Rosenberger, right, HGA, watch as Olivia Jones, HGA, looks to hit the ball over the net.



More photos on the diocesan website www.allentowndiocese.org under "Latest News" on the homepage.



Nativity Girls' Volleyball Places as State Runner-Up

Coaches and players of the Green Wave volleyball team of Nativity BVM High School, Pottsville receive their medals and trophy after placing as state runner-up in the championship match for the 2019 PIAA Class A match. The team faced Northern Cambria High School Nov. 16 at Cumberland Valley High School, Mechanicsburg. It went through "five set losses to Marian High School, Tamaqua in past years and last season's loss to Berlin in the state semifinals to truly value and appreciate what it means to be where we are today," said coach Jenn Daubert and the team in a message thanking supporters. "Our girls have always played with heart, and against Northern Cambria, we came out with everything we had and left it all out on the floor, especially in the third set. The little girls who we were who picked up a volleyball because of the love of the game are so very proud of how far we have come and the players we are today."

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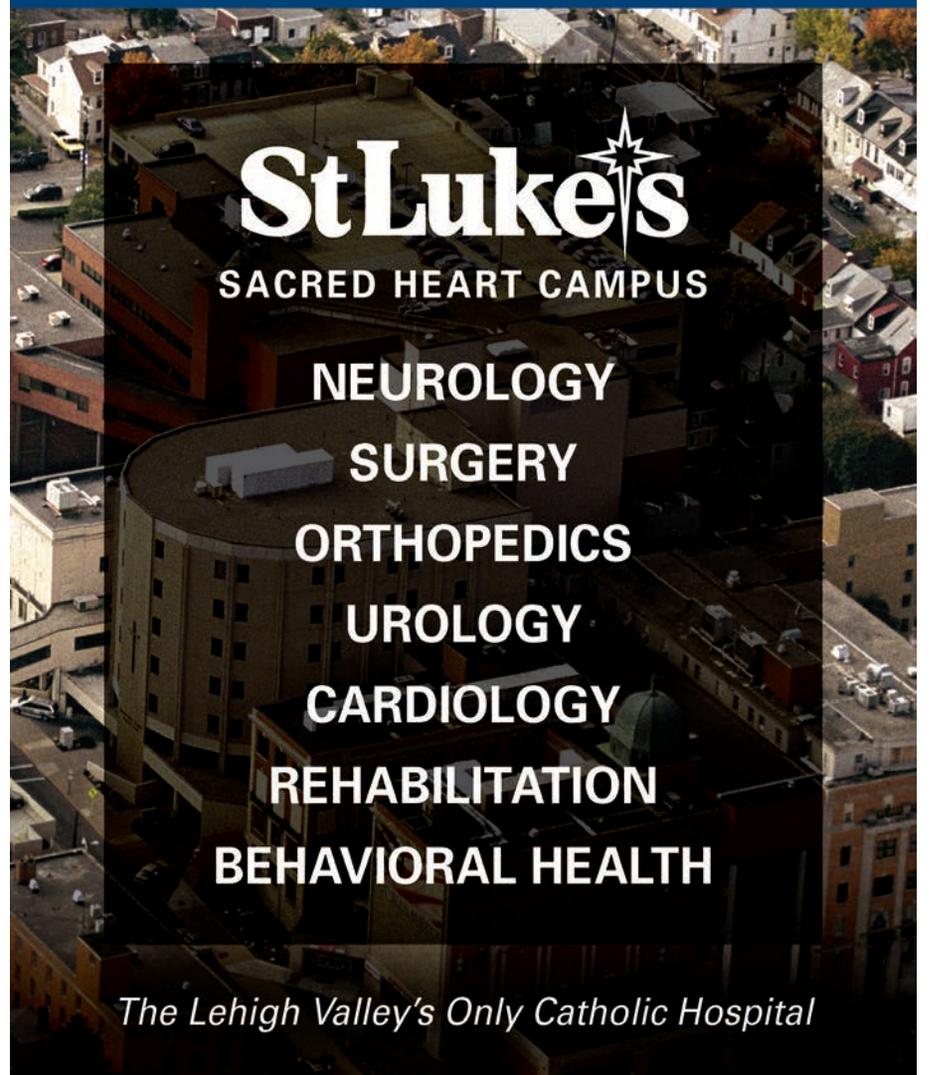
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Precious Lives Are at Stake

Usually during this time of year there is a palpable longing for peace on earth and good will to all. However, we cannot simply wish peace and goodwill to all, we need to pray for it and work toward it.

It's for this reason that I ask you to please remember the 4,000 Americans who were brutally killed yesterday, the 10,000 more who were exposed to chemical attacks and are expected to die within the next few days and the countless numbers of Americans who were forced into confinement.

It was not covered in the news media. This threat to peace and humanity didn't occur in Iraq or Afghanistan. Instead, it happened on our own soil. It wasn't terrorists. Instead, it was done by people claiming to provide health care. In fact, this tragedy has been going on every day for years.

The brutal deaths are the result of abortion. The Morning After Pill, or Plan B, initiates chemical attacks to create a hostile environment for the child in the womb. In vitro-fertilization creates multiple children and confines them in freezers or discards them like waste.

Human life begins at the moment of conception; a fertilized egg (zygote) has 46 chromosomes that distinguish the child as being different from the body of the mother.

Scientists have discovered the various stages of life in the womb: from the moment of conception to 5 days, the fertilized egg, also known as a zygote, travels through the fallopian tube to the uterus. From day 5-10, the cells continue to multiply and form what scientists call a blastocyst. The fertilized egg isn't considered an embryo until about 10 days after conception.

Scientists acknowledge that the fertilized egg will not grow to become a tree or a dog, but instead will grow to be an adult human. The area where scientists struggle is when the child becomes a person; when the soul enters the child.

To come to the aid of science, consider the amazing wonder of the Incarnation of our Lord. When the Virgin Mary learned from the angel Gabriel that she would conceive by the Holy Spirit, she went in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was six months pregnant. The journey would have taken 2-5 days.

The Christ child wouldn't have even been considered an embryo, but "when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:41-43).

Not only did Elizabeth recognize Mary as being pregnant at just 5 days, but she also knew that baby zygote Jesus was the Lord.

Unfortunately, too many people are ignorant like King Herod who felt threatened by a child. In the Gospel of Matthew 2:16-18 we hear how he ordered the massacre of the Holy Innocents, whose feast we celebrate on Dec. 28. Due to his actions, countless children were killed, mothers mourned and even King Herod suffered because he failed to encounter the love of the Christ child.

We hear how that pain and suffering endures: "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more" (Matthew 2:18).

Violence does not bring about peace; for God "takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Nor does simply wishing good will to others bring about peace; for "if a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?" (James 2:15-16).

Precious lives are at stake. If we desire true peace, who is Christ Jesus, then we are called to pray for peace and work toward it. St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary continually sought God's Will but also acted on it so that together they welcomed, nourished, taught and prepared the way for the Christ child, Life Himself. Therefore, we too are to prepare the way, teach the truth and care for all human life.

Pray to the Lord of life. Pray for the Church, that she may continue to present a powerful and consistent message of the truth. Pray for our politicians that they may be enlightened by the truth and enact legislation protecting all human life from conception to natural death.

Pray for health care workers to truly care for women and their children. Pray for the youth that they may embrace chastity. Pray to consider if you are being called to adopt a child. Pray for pro-life organizations that help women choose life, like Mary's Shelter.

Pray for the men and women who participated in abortions, that they may repent and heal through the Sacrament of Penance and through retreats like Rachel's Vineyard. Pray for the unborn children who died, that they may enter the embrace of our Lord.

Prepare the way by thanking your mom for the gift of life. She had to go through a battle for nine months to give birth, and then the battles of love continued throughout your life. Express love to your children and

By Father Michael Mullins,
pastor of St. Paul, Allentown.



let them know how precious their life is to you.

Guide your loved ones to grow in faith and the practice of their faith, especially participating in Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation so that they may have eternal life.

Prepare the way by developing a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary who gave birth and raised the Christ child. Prepare the way by helping other mothers to recognize the gift of their children; offer clothes or toys that are out of disuse; offer to watch their children so they can go on date night with their spouse.

Prepare the way by considering being a foster parent or adopting a child. Prepare the way by volunteering or donating to a pregnancy support agency like Mary's Shelter. Prepare the way by understanding where legislators stand on the issues and voting for pro-life candidates.

Teach the truth by instructing your children about sex and love before they learn the false and distorted views from their friends or the internet. Teach your children the importance of chastity, and to respect the body and souls of others. Teach your children the importance of the Holy Eucharist, the gift of eternal life. Teach your children the sacredness of every human person and how to love one another.

Care for all human life from the moment of conception to natural death. Care for your family and protect them from danger. Care for all children and protect them from abuse by participating in Protecting God's Children workshop to know the warning signs.

Care for those who have gone astray by welcoming them back to Church. Care for those who are lonely and have been abandoned by society, especially the elderly, the infirm or prisoners, by visiting them. Care for the homeless by volunteering at soup kitchens or temporary shelters like Family Promise.

Care for all, because God revealed the greatest and most compassionate care to us sinners when he sent his only Son into the cold, dark world to bring us to eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." (John 3:16).

May God's peace be with you and all our brothers and sisters during the season and always.

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.

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or request an Application Form at the Parish Office.

'Children's Coat Giveaway' at St. Francis, Allentown



Above, Mary Ann Pitcher helps children select coats and other items at the "Children's Coat Giveaway" Nov. 9 at St. Francis of Assisi, Allentown. About 300 children's coats and the same amount of other clothing items (sweatshirts, hats, scarves, etc.) were available free for children in the local community. (Photos by John Simitz)

Above right, Volunteer Doris Marsicano finds hats and gloves for some of the children. The Outreach Committee of St. Francis collects used and new coats from parishioners of St. Francis and of Holy Trinity, Whitehall for at least two months prior to the giveaway, advertising in the bulletins and local newspapers.

Right, volunteers – from left, Isabel Koch, Phyllis Johnson and Barbara Quigney – pack up coats for some visitors. The Outreach Committee has sponsored the coat giveaway on the second Saturday of November for the past 10 years. Next year they will be giving to adults, too.

Left, Julio Pena, 2 years old, takes a rest, holding some brother and sister coats.



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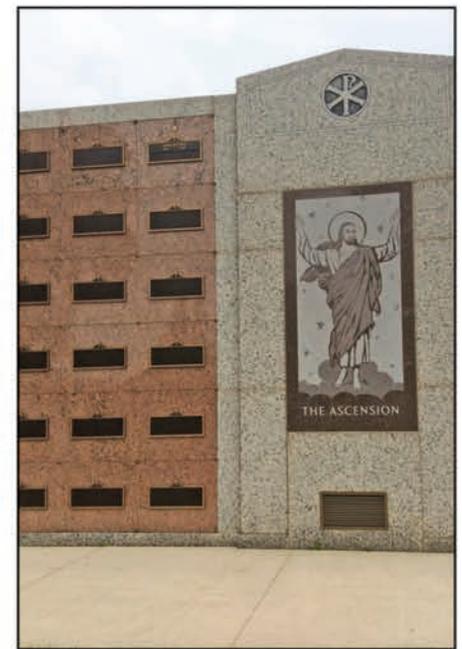
Holy Savior Cemetery
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Medicine and a Sense of the Sacred

“Making Sense Out of Bioethics” is a column by Father Dr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk that runs monthly in The A.D. Times. He earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, and serves as director of education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, www.ncbcenter.org.

As clergy, we touch upon very holy realities when we baptize, consecrate the Eucharist, give absolution to sinners or anoint the sick. These special moments engage divine grace in deep and important ways in the lives of those to whom we minister.

In the midst of these sacred realities, we remain nonetheless, very human and fallible instruments. I remember one time when a bishop contritely divulged in my presence that during the consecration that morning all he could think about was a good cup of hot coffee.

We clergy need to attend carefully to the graced realities we regularly handle lest we end up squandering or losing our sense of the sacred. The old adage reminds us: familiarity breeds contempt.

An elderly priest and professor in Rome used to urge us as seminarians: “Seek the grace to celebrate each Holy Mass as if it were your first Mass, your last Mass and your only Mass.”

Similar challenges exist in the world of medicine. Physicians who work with frail and vulnerable human beings every day must be attentive when it comes to the sacredness of their subjects and their profession.

One of the lesser-known lines from the famous Hippocratic Oath has always intrigued me: “In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art.”

Doctors face a range of unique temptations that the oath enumerates; it counsels them to swear off “all mischief and in particular of sexual relations with both female and male [patients]” as well as all abortions and acts of euthanasia. To engage in any of these activities is to lose one’s way, forswearing the sacredness of the medical profession’s calling.

Yet some doctors, not unlike some priests and bishops, end up losing touch with this “sacred dimension.”

An article in the Irish Times, written by a physician in the run-up to the 2018 abortion referendum in Ireland, exemplified this loss and profanation of medicine’s sacredness.

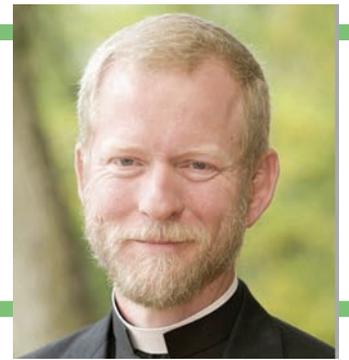
After a routine 20-week ultrasound of her third pregnancy, Dr. Caroline McCarthy described her sadness at learning that her baby “had no kidneys and as a result there was no amniotic fluid. His lungs could not develop properly without the fluid, but he wouldn’t need his lungs or his kidneys until after birth, so the pregnancy would probably carry to term.”

She was told she had two options: “Carry my baby to term and he would either be born dead or die shortly after birth, or travel to the UK to end the pregnancy.”

After a few days spent in a haze of panic and tears, McCarthy and her husband Michael took a flight out of Ireland to undergo a “compassionate induction” of labor at Liverpool Women’s Hospital. The terminology brought to

Making Sense Out of Bioethics

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk



mind an astute observation a friend had once made: “Beware of any medical procedure with the word ‘compassion’ in its name; it often conceals wrongdoing.”

When the hospital clerk arrived to get their informed consent signature, the procedure listed on the form was “feticide termination of pregnancy.” Feticide is a medical term referring to the killing of a human, in this case during an early stage of development – “fetal homicide.”

After McCarthy’s labor was induced, a large-gauge needle (termed a “catheter” in the article) was used for the feticide; it passed through her abdomen and uterus into her baby’s heart, and potassium chloride was injected to stop its beating.

Shortly thereafter, her stillborn son was delivered: “I saw his perfect little face for the first time. I felt that same post-birth relief and elation as I had after the birth of my other two children. The midwife wrapped him in a towel and I held him close. I felt at complete peace with my decision and just sat holding and staring at my beautiful son. In the morning, the midwife helped us

dress John. We spent the day holding and looking at him and taking photographs.”

It’s hard to miss the jolting unseemliness of the family’s taking photos of their dead child whose life they had just ended. McCarthy’s actions cannot be squared with her vocation as a mother or with her sacred calling as a physician to “do no harm.”

That sacred calling translates into helping all those born with birth defects or afflicted by disease, without ever imposing death penalties onto them. Ahead of all others, physicians are tasked with grasping this key truth.

Hippocrates possessed unusual wisdom and foresight to codify these real dangers for the soul of the medical professional millennia ago.

As we witness an unprecedented collapse of the sense of the sacred within the world of the healing arts today, we must assiduously pray for those who have turned their backs on that ancient and time-tested oath, and vigorously support those fighting to uphold its tenets within medicine’s hallowed hallways.



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Miércoles 22 de Enero, 2020

Hora: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Iniciando con la Misa en la Iglesia

Presentador: Alex Hernández

Tema: Desafíos y Oportunidades de las Redes Sociales

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Sunday Scripture

Sunday, Dec. 22

Fourth Sunday of Advent

First Reading
Responsorial Psalm
Second Reading
Gospel

Isaiah 7:10-14
Psalms 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24

Sunday, Dec. 29

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

First Reading
Responsorial Psalm
Second Reading
Gospel

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Psalms 128:1-2, 3, 4-5
Colossians 3:12-21
Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Sunday, Jan. 5

The Epiphany of the Lord

First Reading
Responsorial Psalm
Second Reading
Gospel

Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12

Recommended to Your Prayers by Pope Francis

Apostleship of Prayer Intention for January

Prayer intention for evangelization – Promotion of World Peace

We pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world.

The monthly intentions are also available on video, with a reflection or download the app at www.apostleshipofprayer.org.

Prayers for Priests, Deacons, Vocations

Please kindly remember in your prayers all of the living and deceased priests and deacons of our Diocese. Please also pray for our seminarians and for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Prayer for the Perseverance of Vocations

O God, you have constituted your only-begotten Son supreme and eternal priest for the glory of your majesty and the salvation of mankind: grant that those whom he has chosen ministers and dispensers of his mysteries may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received. We ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Serran Prayer for Vocations

O God, who wills not the death of a sinner but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, St. Joseph her spouse, St. Junipero Serra and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your Church, fellow laborers with Christ, to spend and consume themselves for souls through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Deaths

Religious Sisters

Sister Dorothy Columber, 90, a Missionary Sister of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, died Nov. 16 at Sacred Heart Villa, Reading.

Born in Fullerton, she was the daughter of the late Emery and Angela (Derda) Columber and made her first profession of vows May 31, 1954.

In the Diocese of Allentown she served at Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown. She

also served at Sacred Heart Hospital, Norristown in the medical records department, and in pastoral ministry at St. Mary's Hospital, Athens, Georgia, until her retirement in 1999.

Surviving are many nieces and nephews. In addition to her parents, Sister was predeceased by seven brothers and two sisters.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Nov. 23 in the chapel of Sacred Heart Villa, followed by burial in the convent cemetery.

Sister Regina Lanahan, 87, (formerly Sister William Mary), a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 64 years, died Nov. 27 in Assisi House, Aston.

She ministered primarily in nursing/

healthcare and administration. Over the years Sister Regina received numerous awards for her work in the healthcare field.

Her work in the Diocese of Allentown included serving for seven years as director of nursing at St. Joseph Hospital, Reading.

She also served in the Diocese of Harrisburg; the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware; and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Additional ministry included serving as provincial for the congregation for seven years in the former Southern Province within the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Maryland.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Dec. 5 at Assisi House, Aston, with burial in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery, Aston.

Sister Kathryn Miller, 98, (formerly Sister Lillian Francis), a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 79 years, died Dec. 3 in Assisi House, Aston.

Sister Kathryn ministered primarily in elementary education and spent a number of years in congregational ministry on both provincial and congregational leadership teams.

In the Diocese of Allentown she taught at St. John the Baptist School, Whitehall.

She also served in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia; and the Diocese of Trenton and Metuchen in New Jersey.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Dec. 11 at Assisi House, Aston, with burial in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery, Aston.

First Friday for Homeschool Families

Homeschool families of the Diocese of Allentown are invited to a First Fri-

day gathering on Thursday, Jan. 2 at St. Ignatius Loyola Church, 2700 E. Albans Drive, Reading.

Mass will be celebrated at 6 p.m. by Father Kevin Bobbin, chaplain to the Homeschool Community, followed by adoration and confessions until 7 p.m.,

then an informal social.

Please join us for this opportunity to meet each other as we come together for prayer and fellowship.

For questions, contact Father Bobbin, 610-866-0791 ext. 332 or kbobbin@allentowndiocese.org.

Berks County Traditional Latin Mass Community

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Reconciliation at Noon
Social after mass

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Calendar

Editor's note: E-mail, fax or mail Church-affiliated items for the Calendar page (Calendar, Retreats, Socials, Festivals, Bazaars, Trips) to: email, adtimes@allentowndiocese.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@allentowndiocese.org or call 610-871-5200, ext. 2264.

Saturday, Dec. 28

Mass of the Holy Innocents, Tridentine Mass, St. Stephen of Hungary, 510 W. Union St., Allentown, 7 p.m.; veneration of relics of St. Gianna, patron saint of mothers, unborn children and physicians; child's blanket blessing, bring your child's or another's blanket to be blessed tonight; followed by Respect-Life Reception; 267-261-2122 or bsalantri@gmail.com.

Tuesday, Dec. 31

New Year's Eve Eucharistic Adoration, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Easton, after 7 p.m. Mass until midnight, ending with benediction.

Thursday, Jan. 2

Homeschool Families First Friday Gathering, St. Ignatius Loyola, 2700 St. Albans Drive, Reading, 6 p.m., Mass celebrated by Father Kevin Bobbin, followed by adoration and confessions until 7 p.m., and informal social, 610-866-0791 ext. 332 or kbobbin@allentowndiocese.org.

Friday, Jan. 3

"Catholic Questions and Answers," Dunkin' Donuts, Pottsville, First Fridays evangelization effort by Monsignor Edward O'Connor and Father Barnabas Shayo of St. Patrick Church, Pottsville, 6 p.m., 570-622-1802.

Eucharistic Adoration, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Easton, after 8:15 a.m. Mass until 10 p.m. with benediction, Divine Mercy Chaplet 3 p.m., rosary 7:30 for more vocations to priesthood and religious life.

Diocese of Allentown Office for Vocations Promotion, First Friday Adoration, Holy Hour and Sacred

Heart Devotion, every First Friday through May, Holy Ghost, Bethlehem, 417 Carlton Ave., Bethlehem, 7-8 p.m., also Feb. 7, March 6, April 3 and May 1, msearles@allentowndiocese.org, 610-437-0755, www.allentowndiocese.org/vocations.

Sunday, Jan. 5

"Catholic Spirituality, Lives of the Saints and the Sunday Gospel," adult education series begins, Assumption BVM, Bethlehem, Finnegan Room, 8:30-9:50 a.m., 610-867-7424 ext. 12, ldurback@gmail.com.

Spaghetti Dinner, St. Patrick, 319 Mahantongo St., Pottsville, parish center, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., adults \$8, children \$3.50, 570-622-1802, www.stpatrickpottsville.org.

Monday, Jan. 6 and Wednesday, Jan. 8

"The Gospel of Matthew," Bible study group begins, Assumption BVM, Bethlehem, Finnegan Room, 10-11:30 a.m., 610-867-7424, ext. 12, ldurback@gmail.com.

Tuesday, Jan. 7

Eucharistic Adoration, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Easton, after 8:15 a.m. Mass ending at 9 p.m. with benediction, Divine Mercy chaplet 3 p.m., Miraculous Medal Novena 7 p.m., Rosary 7:30 for more vocations to priesthood and religious life, every Tuesday.

Wednesday, Jan. 8

"The Gospel of Matthew," Bible study group begins, St. Paul, Allentown, rectory basement, 6:30-8 p.m., ldurback@gmail.com.

Wednesday, Jan. 22

"Challenges and Opportunities of Social Networks," presenter Alex Hernandez, Sacred Heart Church, Allentown, regional meeting of Men of the Kingdom, begins with Mass, 7-8:30 p.m., Office of Hispanic Affairs, 610-289-8900 ext. 2038.

Saturday, Jan. 25

"Polar Plunge," Marian High School, Tamaqua, at Mauch Chunk Lake, Jim Thorpe, registration \$35, 10-11:30 a.m., plunge at noon, 610-704-8037.

Saturday, Jan. 25 – Sunday, Jan. 26

Annual Catholic Relief Services Collection.

Wednesday, Jan. 29

"The Beginner's Guide to Defending Your Faith," speaker Trent Horn, second in Winter Webinar Series

from Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry, 7 p.m., access from anywhere using your mobile device, computer or tablet/iPad, free, register www.allentowndiocese.org/webinars.

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@allentowndiocese.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

2020

Tuesday, Jan. 21

St. Francis of Assisi, Allentown, Outreach Committee to Mohegan Sun, Wilkes-Barre, \$25, 610-515-5975 or 610-433-6102.

Friday, Jan. 24

Buses to March for Life, Washington, D.C., see page 7.

Thursday, April 23

St. Thomas More, Allentown, Prime Time to Hollywood Casino, \$25, 610-791-1758, dfe60@msn.com.

Wednesday, May 6 – Thursday, May 7

St. Thomas More, Allentown, Prime Time to Dover Casino/Harrah's, Dover, Delaware, \$145, 610-791-1758 or dfe60@msn.com.

Tuesday, May 19

St. Thomas More, Allentown to "Queen Esther," Sight and Sound Theater, Lancaster, \$100, 610-791-1758, dfe60@msn.com.

Tuesday, Oct. 6 – Thursday, Oct. 15

St. Ann, Emmaus to "In the Footsteps of Jesus" (Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Cana, Emmaus), \$3,495, 610-965-2460, ecoyle@allentowndiocese.org.

Polish Dozynki Harvest Celebration at SS. Peter and Paul, Allentown

Parishioners of SS. Peter and Paul Polish Roman Catholic Church, who are also members of Polish National Alliance (PNA) Council 171, celebrated a traditional Dozynki Polish Harvest Festival.

The annual Dozynki celebrates the successful harvest from the previous year and offers appreciation for all the crops provided by God and gathered by farmers.

The day began with a noon harvest procession and Mass. The assembly, consisting of parishioners, wore traditional attire while carrying an assortment of harvest goods, including grains, fruits, bread, wine and several wieniec (decorated Polish wreaths) to symbolize the abundance of the harvest and representing gratitude from the people it helps nourish.

Three celebrants presided: Father David Kozak, Father Wladyslaw (Ladislaus) Dudek; and Father Leo Malec (Maletz).

Father Kozak thanked Jozef Janik, Krystyna Janik, Antoinette Sharetzsky, Christine Thompson, Agnieszka Niemirka, Anne Lippencott, Ewa Halata and all others involved in helping to organize and decorate for the beautiful event at the church.

Immediately after the Mass, a harvest feast was held down the road at the Polish American Citizens Society.

The feast included a pig roast, pierogi and kapusta, along with many varieties of sweet desserts (Polish placeks). Traditional Polish music was played.

The festival paid tribute to the generous harvest, offered thanks to God, while following an authentic Polish-style ritual.

"Spending the day together with friends and family while enjoying plenty of food, drink, music and genuine happiness will not soon be forgotten by those who shared in the day," said Jozef Janik.



Pope Blesses Nativity Scene Statues, Calls Them Signs of God's Love

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis blessed hundreds of figurines of the baby Jesus – ranging from tiny plastic figures to life-sized statues – and encouraged children to make sure they have Nativity scenes at home.

After reciting the Angelus prayer Dec. 15, the third Sunday of Advent, Pope Francis did the traditional blessing of the “bambinelli,” or statues of the infant Jesus, for children to put in mangers at home, at school and in their parishes.

“Raise the statues up,” the pope told the children. “I bless them from my heart.”

Pope Francis then quoted from his new apostolic letter on the meaning and importance of the creche: “The Nativity scene is like a living Gospel.... As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of the God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. We come to realize that so great is his love for us that he became one of us, so that we in turn might be-

come one with him.”

In his main Angelus address, Pope Francis spoke about the importance of answering the Advent call to conversion in preparation for Christmas.

“We are called to recognize the face God chose to assume in Jesus Christ, humble and merciful,” he said.

“Advent is a time of grace,” the pope said. “It tells us it’s not enough to believe in God; it’s necessary to purify our faith each day.”

The Advent journey is about preparing “to welcome not a character from a fable, but the God who calls us, gets us involved and who makes us choose,” he said. “The Baby lying in the manger has the face of our neediest brothers and sisters,” who deserve the care of the Christian community.

Nativity scenes were also on the pope’s mind Dec. 16 when he met members of Italy’s Catholic Action section for 11- to 13-year-olds for his annual exchange of Christmas greetings with them.



Pilgrims hold up figurines of the Christ Child as Pope Francis leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Dec 15, 2019. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

In Brief

Pope lifts secrecy obligation

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis has abolished the obligation of secrecy for those who report having been sexually abused by a priest and for those who testify in a church trial or process having to do with clerical sexual abuse.

“The person who files the report, the person who alleges to have been harmed and the witnesses shall not be bound by any obligation of silence with regard to matters involving the case,” the pope ordered in a new “Instruction on the Confidentiality of Legal Proceedings,” published Dec. 17.

In an accompanying note, Bishop Juan Ignacio Arrieta, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, said the change regarding the “pontifical secret” has nothing to do with the seal of the Sacrament of Confession.

“The absolute obligation to observe the sacramental seal,” he said, “is an obligation imposed on the priest by reason of the position he holds in administering the sacrament of confession and not even the penitent can free him of it.”

The instruction was published by the Vatican along with changes to the already-updated “Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela” (“Safeguarding the Sanctity of the Sacraments”), the 2001 document issued by St. John Paul II outlining procedures for the investigation and trial of any member of the clergy accused of sexually abusing a child or vulnerable adult or accused of acquiring, possessing or distributing child pornography.

Catholic sermons are shorter

WASHINGTON (CNS) – If experience can’t prove it, data scraping will: Catholic sermons are shorter than their Protestant counterparts.

According to an analysis of 50,000 sermons -- Catholics commonly refer to theirs as homilies -- the Pew Research Center determined that the median Catholic sermon is 14 minutes long.

The next shortest are mainline Protestant sermons, at 25 minutes. Evangelical Christian sermons are nearly three times as long as Catholic sermons at 39 minutes. But the longest median sermons belong to churches in the African American Protestant tradition, clocking in at 54 minutes, nearly four times as long as their Catholic counterparts.

Pew made its analysis by conducting data scraping, a technique in which a computer program extracts data from



The Christmas tree sparkles after a lighting ceremony in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Dec. 5. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

human-readable output coming from another program. Pew found its trove of sermons and homilies either posted on church websites or on YouTube.

Pope marks 50 years as priest

ROME (CNS) -- As part of the celebrations for his 50th anniversary of priesthood, Pope Francis chose to personally present a multi-volume collection of writings by his longtime spiritual director, the late Jesuit Father Miguel Angel Fiorito.

In addition to presenting the Spanish-language collection, “Escritos” (“Writings”), at a conference at the Jesuit headquarters Dec. 13, Pope Francis wrote an introduction to it, saying the publication is “a consolation for those of us who, for many years, were nourished by his teachings. These writings will be a great good for the whole church.”

But he started the celebrations much earlier in the day, inviting cardinals living in Rome to join him in the chapel of his

residence for morning Mass. The Vatican did not release the text of a homily or photographs, but the Vatican newspaper printed the greetings of Cardinal Angelo Sodano, dean of the College of Cardinals.

“On this happy occasion of your 50th anniversary of priesthood, in the name of all my brother cardinals, I wish you all the best with the deepest thanks for your generous daily service to the holy church of God,” the cardinal said.

People’s hearts yearn for God

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Christmas season is a time to reflect on what life is all about, Pope Francis told an international group of performers.

“The time before Christmas calls us to ask ourselves, ‘What is it that I am waiting for in my life? What is the great desire of my heart?’ You too, with your songs, help awaken or reawaken this healthy human ‘yearning’ in the hearts of many people,” he said.

The pope met Dec. 13 with the group

of singers, songwriters, musicians and conductors the day before they were to perform in the Vatican’s Paul VI hall for a benefit concert to help protect the Amazon and support indigenous communities there.

The lineup was scheduled to include: Lionel Richie, the U.S. Grammy Award-winning singer and songwriter; Susan Boyle, who was a 2009 finalist on “Britain’s Got Talent”; and Bonnie Tyler, whose songs “It’s a Heartache” and “Total Eclipse of the Heart” are among the best-selling singles of all time.

The Charleston Gospel Choir and several Italian performers were also part of the lineup for the 2019 “Christmas Concert in the Vatican,” sponsored by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education.

The pope told the performers and concert organizers that God is the author of the “yearning” people feel in their heart, “and he comes to meet us by this route.”