

'A Savior Has Been Born for You'

Bishop Schlert's Christmas Message

"When the Angels greet the shepherds, their angelic messenger announces that 'a Savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord' (Lk 2:11). This angelic announcement begins a time of great joy for the shepherds. A joy that is so great that they go in haste to see this newborn Infant King. They rejoice, for today God becomes man and blesses our fallen humanity. Today Christ comes among us — He leaps down from Heaven!

"This beautiful reality isn't just for the shepherds, it is for all of us today as well. God became flesh to come into the world to bless our fallen humanity with his glorious divinity.

"When this reality is brought to mind, we begin to think about all the discord in the world. There is war, political division, and persecution. There is heartbreak, alienation, pain, and depression. There is illness and disease. There is death. There are all these things that have the appearance that our humanity is far from blessed.

"However, our faith tells us that is not the case. A Savior has been given to us. Our Savior isn't a king who breaks into our world and changes it by force, he is a gentle Infant King that is knocking at our hearts to convert our broken humanity, deep within the recesses of our hearts. Let us open the door for our Infant King. When we do that, we will be amazed at what can happen — to us and to the world.

"Please know of my prayers for you and your families during my Masses this Christmas! In a special way, I will be offering my Christmas Masses for alienated or disaffected Catholics, that the power of the Holy Eucharist will call them back home to their family of faith."

Have a Blessed Christmas!
+Bishop Schlert



Benedict, age 2, looks at the creche with his dad, Nathan Menendez, at the Christmas Eve Mass at the Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown. (Photos by John Simitz)

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USCCB President Urges World Leaders to Pursue Dialogue, Seek Peace

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Hours after Iran launched more than a dozen ballistic missiles at two Iraqi bases Jan. 7, Archbishop Jose Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement calling for urgent prayers "that our world's leaders will pursue dialogue and seek peace."

"In the face of the escalating tensions with Iran," he said people should join him in "asking our Blessed Mother Mary, the Queen of Peace, to intercede, that Jesus Christ might strengthen the peace-

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New Design for The A.D. Times, Other Communications Improvements Coming

The Diocese of Allentown will make several improvements to communications later this month.

The goal is to make it easier for people to get news and information from the Diocese, and to spread the word about our faith.

Redesigned The A.D. Times: Beginning with the next issue, The A.D. Times will have a new design with easier-to-read text, a fresh new look and new reader-friendly treatments of such regular features as "Understanding Our Faith." The paper recently celebrated its 30th anniversary.

News website: A news and information website will provide timely information between publication dates of The A.D. Times. The site will be mobile-friendly, meaning that it will be easy to read on phones and tablets, as well as on laptops and full-sized computer screens.

Email newsletter: Subscribe to our new weekly email newsletter for the latest news from the Diocese, as well as Catholic news and information from across the nation and around the world, and feel free to invite others to do the same. Simply send an email to communications@allentowndiocese.org and we'll sign you up.

New electronic version of The A.D. Times: The electronic version of The A.D. Times, found on the Diocese website, will be easier to read and use. If you prefer to read your news on a phone, tablet or computer, this new version will allow you to easily scroll through the pages of the paper and click on an article to enlarge it and read it.

Improved content: There will be more news and information about the Catholic faith. Diocese communications will be informational, but they also will evangelize — educating the faithful about Catholic teachings, and helping reach potential new Catholics and lapsed Catholics.

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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.

Looking for New Members: The Holy Name Society

By PAUL WIRTH
Diocesan Communications Staff

Eugenio Melendez is on a mission to increase participation in the Holy Name Societies in the Diocese of Allentown.

The Holy Name Society promotes devotion and reverence to the Holy Name of God and Jesus, and helps members grow in holiness and obtain their personal salvation, said Melendez, who is president of the "Diocesan Union," which represents all parish Holy Name Societies.

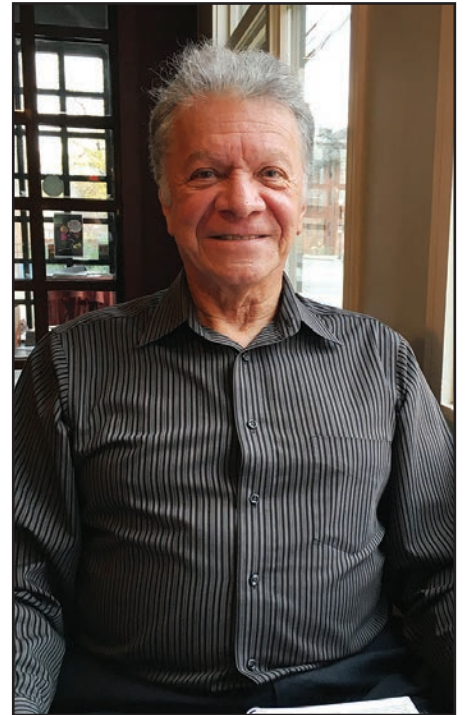
Those active in the Holy Name Society in their parishes often perform Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as a way to live out their faith.

Spiritual moderator for the Holy Name Societies in parishes of the Diocese is Father Paul Rothermel, pastor of Most Blessed Trinity Parish, Tremont.

"The Holy Name Society has a long and venerable history, all the way back to the Middle Ages," said Father Rothermel. "I would encourage the activities of this ancient and worldwide society in any Catholic parish."

At Most Blessed Trinity, members of the society are building a prayer grotto, and they also recently helped at a pig roast sponsored by the Parish Guild. These projects help members build stronger social bonds and allow them to reap the spiritual benefits that come from those bonds, said Father Rothermel.

Melendez said about 20 parishes in the Diocese have Holy Name Societies. Anyone who is interested in establishing a Holy Name Society at their parish, or anyone who wants to join the society, may contact Melendez at Capt.Mel@verizon.net.



Churches in Diocese Taking Flu Precautions

In light of the heightened cases of influenza being reported in our five-county area and the change in the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Influenza Status from "sporadic" to "widespread," Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert has directed that the Exchange of the Sign of Peace and the Reception of Holy Communion

from the Chalice be suspended.

This suspension will begin with the Vigil and Sunday Masses the weekend of Jan. 11-12, and will be in effect until further notice is given when the incidence of influenza subsides in our region.

As a pastoral provision, Bishop Schlert allows the option for the Exchange of

the Sign of Peace to be exercised for funerals or wedding Masses if the pastor/administrator deems it appropriate. The Reception of Holy Communion from the Chalice is only permitted for priests and deacons during this temporary suspension.

In those parishes where the Reception of Holy Communion is given under both forms, parishes are asked to use this as a catechetical moment to reinforce the Church's constant teaching that the entire Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ is present in the Sacred Host.

Bishop Removes Priest, Diocese Investigating Alleged Improper Behavior

Bishop Alfred Schlert has removed a diocesan priest from ministry after the priest was observed at a high school wrestling tournament taking photographs of wrestlers without their knowledge.

Monsignor Thomas Derzack, 70, pastor of St. Nicholas Parish, Walnutport, also has been barred from diocesan school events and school property.

Monsignor Derzack was seen taking photos in the gymnasium of Bethlehem Catholic High School during a wrestling tournament Dec. 27. He was not dressed in clerical attire.

Bishop Schlert removed him as a precautionary measure while the Diocese investigates. Monsignor Derzack's actions

violate diocesan standards for acceptable behavior, he said.

Using his phone, Monsignor Derzack was photographing wrestlers from behind as they were waiting to compete.

The photos were taken in a public area of the gymnasium.

A spectator at the event became suspicious, and a police officer providing security at the tournament was notified.

After being notified, the officer spoke with Monsignor Derzack, who agreed to delete the photographs and left the event. Bethlehem Police continue to investigate, and the Diocese is cooperating with their investigation.

The incident was handled in accordance

with child protection procedures put in place by the Diocese. When a vigilant adult raised a concern about suspicious behavior, it was addressed immediately, the authorities were notified, and the Bishop removed the priest from ministry.

Bishop Schlert also directed that the Diocese notify Pennsylvania ChildLine and the office of the Northampton County District Attorney.

The Diocese will investigate the allegations thoroughly, in cooperation with law enforcement. The Independent Review Board, a panel of lay experts, will then review the findings and make a recommendation to the Bishop about Monsignor Derzack's suitability for ministry.

signor Derzack's suitability for ministry.

Parishioners of St. Nicholas were informed at this weekend's Masses.

Bishop Schlert visited the parish the weekend of Jan. 4-5 to pray with, and be a pastoral presence for, the parish family. The Bishop is asking for prayers for all people who may have been affected by this situation.

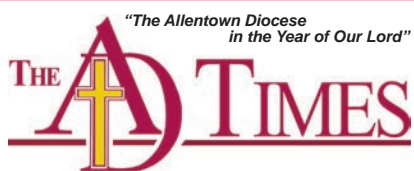
Anyone who knows of an incident of abuse, in the Church or elsewhere, should report it to the State ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313 or to local law enforcement. To speak to the Diocese of Allentown's Victim Assistance Coordinator, please call her direct line: 1-800-791-9209.

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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Catholics Celebrate with Splendor Our Lady of Guadalupe

By WALDO ALVARADO
Pastoral Council Member
at St. Peter the Apostle Church

How many times have you seen Bishop Alfred Schlert celebrate Mass in Spanish? Can you imagine the feeling of singing the Mass hymns with a live mariachi band? What if you could attend Mass at a huge sporting arena, surrounded by thousands of people who came from nations around the world? Would you wake up at 4:30 in the morning to sing Las Mañanitas to the Mother of God?

Thousands of faithful Catholics shared this exact experience Dec 12 at the Santander Arena in Reading.

With the theme "Am I not here, I, who am your mother?" parishioners from every Spanish-speaking nation of the Americas came together to honor Mary, the mother of God, and our Lady of Guadalupe. Led by Monsignor Thomas Orsulak and the Guadalupano Committee of Reading, the event was a joyous and spiritual festivity for members of the following local churches: St. Margaret, St.



Joseph, St. Paul and St. Peter the Apostle.

The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of Mexico and Empress of

America, commemorates the first apparition of the Virgin Mary in the American continent. There were five apparitions of

Bishop Schlert celebrates Mass for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. / El obispo Schlert celebra la Misa para la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

Mary that took place on Mount Tepeyac in Mexico City in 1531. The most prominent emblem of this wonderful series of events is the tilma or cloak of Juan Diego (main visionary), where the image of Our Lady was engraved.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is undoubtedly the most popular and deep-rooted devotion in the hearts, minds and identities of Mexican Catholics. More than 20 million pilgrims visit her basilica annually in Mexico City. In 1895 Pope Leo XIII recognized her apparition and canonically crowned her image. In 2002, Pope John Paul II canonized Juan Diego, the first Amerindian to enjoy this great privilege.

In Reading the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe extended over two weeks in December. A Novena was celebrated in two parishes: St. Margaret (Dec. 4-7) and St. Joseph (Dec 8-11).

For the second year in a row, the Novena's main preacher was Father Efraín Nieves, Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, who came directly from Mexico.

The day of festivities started with the "Mañanitas" (traditional Mexican birthday song performed by a mariachi band) at 4:30 a.m., followed by Mass. The climax was the solemn Mass celebrated by Bishop Alfred Schlert, and concelebrated by seven priests and assisted by four permanent deacons.

After Mass there was a fiesta with traditional folklore dancers, Mexican food and live music. All dancers wore traditional Mexican outfits, including the Mexican Charra (broad-brimmed hat). The celebration was an all-day event that took place at the Santander Arena in downtown Reading.

Josefina Adame, has been a member of the Guadalupano Committee for 19 years and committee president for 15 years, was delighted with the level of participation and enthusiasm from families and school-aged children in this celebration.

"Monsignor Orsulak is a very welcoming and inviting pastor, he wanted to have the participation of every parish in this celebration as a way to bring together the entire catholic community of Reading," she said.

Please see GUADALUPE page 8 ▶▶

Católicos Celebran con Esplendor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Por WALDO ALVARADO
Miembro del Consejo Pastoral
en la Iglesia de San Pedro Apóstol

¿Cuántas veces has visto al obispo Alfred Schlert celebrar Misa en español? ¿Te imaginas la sensación de cantar los himnos de la Misa acompañados por una banda de mariachis? ¿Qué pasaría si pudieras asistir a Misa en una enorme arena deportiva, rodeada de miles de personas de muchos países del mundo? ¿Te levantarías a las 4:30 de la mañana para cantar Las Mañanitas a la Madre de Dios?

Miles de fieles católicos compartieron exactamente estas experiencias el pasado 12 de diciembre en el Santander Arena en la ciudad de Reading.

Con el lema "¿No estoy aquí, yo, que soy tu madre?" los feligreses de casi todas las naciones hispanohablantes de América se unieron para honrar a María, la madre de Dios y nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Dirigido por Mons. Thomas Orsulak y el Comité Guadalupano de Reading, el evento fue una festividad muy gozosa y espiritual para los miembros de las siguientes iglesias locales: Santa Margarita, San José, San Pablo y San Pedro Apóstol.

La fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, patrona de México y Emperatriz de América, conmemora la primera aparición de la Virgen María en el continente americano. Hubo cinco apariciones de María que tuvieron lugar en el Monte Tepeyac en la Ciudad de México en 1531. El emblema más destacado de esta maravillosa serie de eventos es la tilma o capa de Juan Diego (quien fue el visionario principal), donde se grabó la imagen de Nuestra Señora.

La Virgen de Guadalupe es, sin duda, la devoción más popular y arraigada en los corazones, las mentes y la identidad de los católicos mexicanos. Más de veinte millones de peregrinos visitan su basílica anualmente en la Ciudad de México. En 1895 el Papa León XIII reconoció su aparición y coronó canónicamente su imagen. En 2002, el Papa Juan Pablo II canonizó a Juan Diego, el primer amerindio en disfrutar de este gran privilegio.

En Reading la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se extendió durante dos semanas este pasado mes de diciembre. Se celebró una Novena en dos parroquias:

Santa Margarita (4-7 de diciembre) y San José (8-11 de diciembre).

Por segundo año consecutivo, el principal predicador de la Novena fue el padre Efraín Nieves, Orden Franciscana de los Frailes Menores, quien vino directamente desde México.

El gran día de las festividades comenzó con las "Mañanitas" a las 4:30 am, seguida de una Misa matutina. El clímax fue la Misa solemne precedida por el obispo Alfred Schlert y concelebrada por siete sacerdotes y cuatro diáconos permanentes.

Después de la Misa hubo una fiesta con danzas folclóricas, comida mexicana y música en vivo. Todos los danzantes vestían trajes típicos, incluida la Charra mejicana. La celebración fue un evento de todo el día que tuvo lugar en el Santander Arena en el centro de la ciudad Reading.

Josefina Adame estaba muy complacida con el nivel de participación y entusiasmo de las familias y los niños en edad escolar en esta celebración. Adame ha sido miembro del Comité Guadalupano durante 19 años y su presidenta en los últimos 15 años.

Adame declaró: "Mons. Orsulak es un pastor muy acogedor, quería contar con la participación de cada parroquia en esta celebración como una forma de reunir a toda la comunidad católica de Reading."

Mons. Orsulak, coordinador del Ministerio Hispano Berks-Carbon-Schuylkill, agradeció a todas las personas involucradas en la planificación e implementación de esta gran fiesta. Agradeció especialmente a las Hermanas Franciscanas Bernardinas, a las Hermanas Pobres de San José y a las hermanas del Inmaculado Corazón de María.

La Hermana Martha Muñoz, miembro del comité Guadalupano, declaró que esta fiesta es muy importante "para dar gloria al Señor y para el crecimiento espiritual de la comunidad eclesial."

El obispo Schlert también agradeció a todos por su participación. Usando un español "casi perfecto" dijo: "Creo que esta noche, María puede enseñarles cómo abrir completamente sus corazones a Cristo, su hijo, y como María, Uds. puedan llevar a Cristo a todos a través de su amor y servicio a los demás."



Parishioners at the start of Mass. / Feligreses al comienzo de la Misa.

How to Use Your State Tax Dollars to Help Catholic School Students

By PAUL WIRTH
Diocesan Communications Staff

If you pay state taxes (and who doesn't?), most of that money goes to fund prisons, infrastructure, public schools and welfare.

But what if you could divert a big chunk of your tax dollars to Catholic school students whose families need help paying their tuition?

By making a scholarship contribution to the Eastern Pennsylvania Scholarship Foundation, eligible donors can receive a 90% state tax credit on the money they donate.

That means the state gets only 10%, and you can direct 90% of your taxes due to the Catholic school of your choice.

Since 2015, the program has raised

about \$8 million for Catholic school scholarships in the Diocese, helping a total of about 10,000 students and their families.

"This is a way to ensure that your tax dollars make a positive impact in your own community," said John Fierro, who manages the tax credit program for the Diocese.

Under state rules, donors must meet certain eligibility requirements to take advantage of the program. The requirements, along with more information on the program, can be found at <http://spe.allentowndiocese.org>. Or call Fierro at 610-866-0581 ext. 2344.

The deadline to participate in this year's round of tax-credit scholarships is Friday, Feb. 28.



'Lunch and Learn' About Ministries with Catholic Women's Society of Giving

There's still time to join the new Catholic Women's Society of Giving, which will meet Sunday, Jan. 19 for a Mass celebrated by Bishop Alfred Schlert, followed by a "Lunch and Learn" presentation from several ministries that have applied to the society for grants.

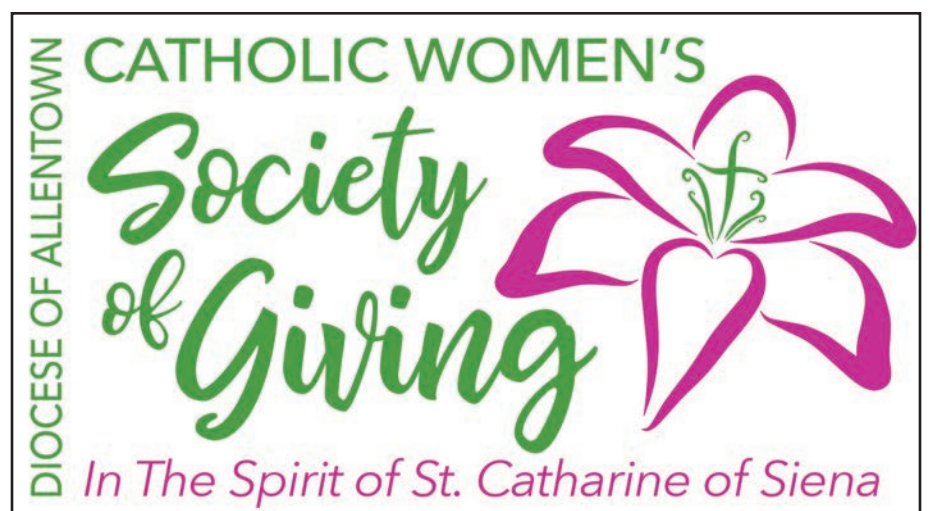
Members of the society make a donation of \$350 to join, and the funds are then distributed as grants to nonprofit service organizations endorsed by the Diocese. Members will vote on which ministries should receive the grants.

The society enables women and girls

to band together to make a positive impact on their communities. It is one example of how lay people are making a difference in the Diocese of Allentown.

The Mass will begin at 10:45 a.m. at St. Mary Church, 94 Walnut Road, Hamburg. The presentations by ministries applying for grants will take place during the luncheon.

To join the society or sign up for the Mass and luncheon, visit www.allentowndiocese.org/womensgiving or call the Office of Stewardship and Development at 1-800-831-4443.



Understanding Our Faith

The Importance of Baptism

By PAUL WIRTH
Diocesan Communications Staff

"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

With those 18 words, we Catholics become members of our Church, children of God and heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

Before starting his public ministry, Jesus went to John the Baptist to be baptized in the Jordan River. We celebrate that event on Sunday Jan. 12, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

After his resurrection, Jesus met with his disciples and commissioned them to go forth and baptize. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

Baptism is the first of the three sacraments of Christian initiation. (The other

two are Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist). Baptism removes all sin, including original sin, which is the sin we inherit at birth.

Most Catholics are baptized as infants, and converts can be baptized through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

When parents have their baby baptized, they agree to raise and educate their child in the beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith. Godparents, or sponsors, agree to be good role models for the child.

In the Baptism rite, the priest or deacon pours water over the person's head, a ritual that reminds us that Baptism cleanses us of our sins.

How important is Baptism? Quite simply, it is necessary for salvation. As Jesus said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (John 3:5).



(CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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; online courses \$35. Register at www.allentowndiocese.org/icf.

ICF 101 – Christian Anthropology

What does it mean to be human? This course will examine who God is as the One who seeks to share himself with his creation. A brief survey of salvation history will be traced to Jesus Christ, the Redeemer who saves humanity, and teaches us what it means to be a human person.

Presented online by Heather Maigur, Monday, Jan. 27 to Sunday, Feb. 23.



Refresh with a Marriage Encounter

Are you worn out from the holidays? Why not give yourselves a get-away weekend. Meals prepared. Time away from it all.

A Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend will offer you a chance to talk to and listen to that special someone who loves you.

For more information, call 610-449-1859 or visit www.wwme.org.



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 places in the Diocese of Allentown are running buses.

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 610.858.9688 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.

Pennsylvanians for Human Life – Bus stopping in Hazleton and McAdoo areas.

Contact Maryann Lawhon at 570-764-5428.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Bath – Bus leaving parish at 117 Washington St. at 7 a.m. and returning around 8:30 p.m., adults \$20, children \$10, no more than \$30 per family.

Contact Karen Brynildsen at 610-762-2122 or nanny bepop@ptd.net.

St. Ambrose, Schuylkill Haven – Bus leaving parish at 7 a.m., adults \$25, youth \$15.

Contact to register 570-385-1031.

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 frhoffasjp@gmail.com or 570-645-2664 ext. 4.

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

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

'A Savior Has Been Born for You'



Above, Bishop of Allentown Alfred Schlert celebrates the Christmas Eve Mass at the Cathedral. The Bishop offered his Christmas Masses for alienated or disaffected Catholics, that the power of the Holy Eucharist will call them back home to their family of faith.

Above right, the choir sings before the Christmas Eve Mass. The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts, and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him ... including the fact that he was born to die for us.

Right, Seminarian Philip Maas reads a passage from the time of Christ's birth.



Additional photo and story on page 1, and more photos on the diocesan website www.allentowndiocese.org under "Latest News" on the homepage.

Upcoming Issues of The A.D. Times

Publication Date	Ad Deadline	News Deadline
Jan. 23	Jan. 13	Jan. 16
Feb. 6	Jan. 27	Jan. 30
Feb. 20	Feb. 10	Feb. 13
March 5	Feb. 24	Feb. 27

Communications

►►Continued from page 1

Increased social media outreach: News and information will be shared frequently on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, with links taking the reader back to

the main news and information website. "We want to make it easy for our readers to get the news and information they want, in the format of their choice," said Matt Kerr, Secretary for External Affairs. "We'll continue to improve our communications for the people of our Diocese."

Catholic Charities Christmas Party

Children 'Hop on the Polar Express' at Chew Street Community Center

Children were invited to "Hop on the Polar Express" at Catholic Charities' 2019 Christmas Party Dec. 11 and 12 at the Chew Street Community Center, 179 W. Chew St., Allentown. Approximately 125 people attended each night.

The children infants to age 18 received a passport and had it stamped at the various stations. Once all stamped, they received a "Golden Ticket" to board the train and see Santa Claus. After visiting with Santa, each child received a gift.

Children created Christmas cards for residents of Holy Family Manor, Bethlehem and the Older Adults Program; made angel ornaments to take home; played games; sang carols; had fun with a photo booth; and enjoyed snacks of cocoa, cookies and North Pole cupcakes.

Gifts were donated by Bethlehem Catholic High School students (Key Club raised \$1,100 and purchased gifts), and wrapped by students of St. Anne School, Bethlehem and Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Bethlehem.



North Pole cupcakes.

The Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley also gave Holiday Hope Chests, which were donated from the entire Lehigh Valley community.

Members of Catholic Charities' Angel Society also participated, and volunteers, including many Diocese of Allentown employees, served as Santa's Helpers.

Allentown police officers James Stanko



Children with Christmas wishes for Santa.

and Matt Geake also helped as Santa's elves.

Catholic Charities is a nonprofit social service agency caring for needy people in Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton and Schuylkill counties, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Among its services are feeding the hungry, helping veterans in danger of becoming homeless, counseling



Displaying a finished ornament and a card.

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

families and students, caring for the elderly, and offering service for pregnant women in need of support.

For more information, call 610-435-1541 or visit www.allentowndiocese.org and click on "Catholic Charities" at the top.

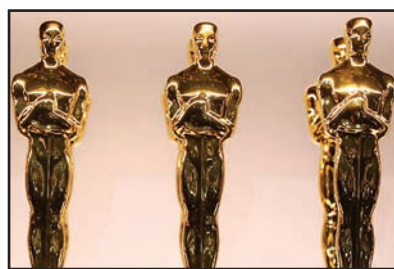
Holy Family School 'A Night at the Oscars'



Holy Family, Nazareth parishioners and Holy Family School parents Mr. and Mrs. Robert Favocci walk the red carpet at the school's Second Annual Gala Nov. 9 at the parish center with the theme "A Night at the Oscars." All proceeds benefit Holy Family School. (Photos by Christa Michelle Photography)



Getting into the Oscars theme are Missionary of the Sacred Heart Fathers Frank Natale and Robert Alex Anthony, assistant pastors of Holy Family Parish. The evening included cocktail hour, dinner, dancing, live auction and casino games.



The Gala Committee shares a moment before the doors open, from left: front, Debra Kopp, Julie Mertus, Melanie Olsen; back, Rita Hart, Marjorie Joseph, Heather Horvath, Ann Marie Banko and Adela Katkic.

National Centre for Padre Pio to Hold 'Right to Life' Day

The National Centre for Padre Pio in Barto will hold a "Right to Life" day Saturday, Jan. 25 to coincide with the March for Life on Friday, Jan. 24.

The center will be hosting members of the St. Gianna Beretta Molla Society out of Warminster. There will be a talk on her life, as well as relics of St. Gianna available for public veneration.

The schedule of the day will be as follows: At 10 a.m., a Rosary for Life will be prayed, with meditations for each

mystery, followed by a talk and testimony from the St. Gianna Society.

At 11 a.m. the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be celebrated by Father Michael Shea from the Miraculous Medal Shrine in Philadelphia. Father Shea is a 2005 Life Achievement Award recipient of Right to Life of Michigan.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place at the conclusion of Mass, followed by prayers to St. Pio and St. Gianna, and the veneration of relics of both

saints.

For anyone who cannot be present but wishes to join in prayer, the center will live-stream videos of the Rosary, talks and Mass via its Facebook page. (It is not necessary to have a Facebook account to view the center's content; you can visit the page by entering www.Facebook.com/PadrePioInc in your internet browser.)

Group pilgrimages to the center for

the "Right to Life" event or anytime may be booked by calling the center's offices at 610-845-3000 during normal business hours, Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The center is located at 111 Barto Road in Barto. Its complete calendar of events can be found on the center's website at www.PadrePio.org on and Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/PadrePioInc.

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.

Thursday, Jan. 9

Wine and Cheese Bereavement Gathering, St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield, parish center, 6:30 p.m., time to talk and share with others our “new normal” and discuss the holidays, RSVP 610-395-2876.

Wednesday, Jan. 15

Serra Club of Allentown, St. Thomas More, Allentown, 6:45 p.m. rosary in chapel, 7 p.m. Mass, 7:30 p.m. light refreshments and speaker in Disciples Room.

Sunday, Jan. 19

Knights of Columbus Breakfast, St. Ignatius Loyola, Sinking Spring, school hall, 8 a.m.-noon, adults \$8, children 6-12 \$4, under 6 free.

Community Breakfast, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Bath and Knights of Columbus Council 14464, church basement, 7-11 a.m., adults \$9, children \$4, under 6 free, monthly special potato pancakes.

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.

Friday, Feb. 7

“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 March 6, April 3 and May 1, msearles@allentowndiocese.org, 610-437-0755, www.allentowndiocese.org/vocations.

Saturday, Feb. 22

“Holy Hour for Vocations,” St. John the Baptist, Pottsville, Carbon-Schuylkill Serra Club, hosted with chaplain Father David Loeper, 9-10 a.m., continental breakfast.

Retreats

Monday, Jan. 20

“A Church Renewed,” St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, 6 p.m., \$30, register by Monday, Jan. 13, www.stfrancisretreathouse.org, 610-258-3053, ext. 10.

Thursday, Jan. 23

“Francis and the Incarnation,” St. Francis Center for

Renewal, Bethlehem, 6:45-9 p.m., \$25, 610-867-8890.

Friday, Jan. 24 – Sunday, Jan. 26

“Weekend Directed Retreat,” Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, mleonowitz@jesuitcenter.org, www.jesuitcenter.org/directedretreats_bylength.

Saturday, Feb. 15

“Tis a Gift to be Simple ... Tis a Gift to be Free,” St. Francis Center for Renewal, Bethlehem, 6:45-9 p.m., \$25, 610-867-8890.

Monday, Feb. 24

“A Baptismal Spirituality for Lent,” St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, 6 p.m., \$30, register by Monday, Feb. 17, www.stfrancisretreathouse.org, 610-258-3053, ext. 10.

Wednesday, Feb. 26

“Rend Your Hearts.” Ash Wednesday day of prayer, Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, mleonowitz@jesuitcenter.org, www.jesuitcenter.org/AshWednesdayDayofPrayer.

Friday, March 6 – Sunday, March 8

“Lenten Weekend Directed Retreat,” Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, mleonowitz@jesuitcenter.org, www.jesuitcenter.org/directedretreats_bylength.

Monday, March 23

“Learning to Trust God: From Control to Trust,” St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, 6 p.m., \$30, register by Monday, March 16, www.stfrancisretreathouse.org, 610-258-3053, ext. 10.

Saturday, March 28

“Lenten Day of Prayer on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.,” Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, Wernersville, mleonowitz@jesuitcenter.org, www.jesuitcenter.org/LentenDayPrayer.

Monday, April 27

“Remembering and Celebrating the Spirit in the Church,” St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, 6 p.m., \$30, register by Monday, April 20, www.stfrancisretreathouse.org, 610-258-3053, ext. 10.

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., 610-987-8851.

Thursdays

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

Thursdays, Jan. 9; Feb. 13; April 30; and Wednesday, May 13

Bingo, Knights of Columbus Council 4397, St. Thomas More, Allentown, Family Center, doors open 5:30 p.m., 610-391-8991.

Friday, March 20 – Sunday March 22

“Tricky Tray Weekend and International Food Celebration,” Home and School Association, Holy Family, Nazareth, parish center, Friday 5-8 p.m. with Lenten food and kid’s candy bingo, Saturday 2-8 p.m. (food 4-8 p.m.), Sunday 8 a.m.-1 p.m. breakfast with Easter bunny, trickytrayhfhsa@gmail.com.

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

Friday, Jan. 24

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

5.

Tuesday, March 24

St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Hellertown, Seniors to “Queen Esther” Sight and Sound Theatre and Hershey Farms, Lancaster, \$115, 610-360-3738.

Tuesday, May 12

St. Joseph, Limeport, to “Queen Esther” Sight and Sound Theatre, Lancaster, \$113, 610-797-6240.

Wednesday, May 13 – Thursday, May 14

St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield to Dover Downs Hotel and Casino, Dover, Del., \$165, 610-392-2957, suemuel45@gmail.com.

Friday, June 12 – Sunday, June 14

St. Joseph, Limeport, Prime Time to Elkins, W.Va., Railroad Adventure, \$550, tomandleslyeduri@aol.com, 610-967-4464.

Wednesday, June 17

St. Thomas More, Allentown, Prime Time to “Buddy Holly Show,” Mount Airy Casino, Mount Pocono, \$74, 610-791-1758, dfef60@msn.com.

Wednesday, July 8

St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield to Resorts Casino, Atlantic City, N.J., \$55, 610-392-2957, suemuel45@gmail.com.

Thursday, July 16

St. Thomas More, Allentown, Prime Time to Atlantic City, N.J., \$35, 610-791-1758, dfef60@msn.com.

St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield, “Shake Rattle and Roll,” Silver Birches, Hawley, \$82, 610-392-2957, suemuel45@gmail.com.

Thursday, Aug. 20

St. Thomas More, Allentown, Prime Time to Hollywood Casino, Grantville, \$25, 610-791-1758, dfef60@msn.com.

Previously announced

Tuesday, Jan. 21

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

Wednesday, March 25

St. Francis of Assisi, Allentown to “Queen Esther,” Sight and Sound Theater, Lancaster, \$113, 610-433-6102, sepler@stfrancisallentown.org.

Wednesday, April 1

St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield to “Esther,” Sight and Sound Theater, Lancaster, \$115, 610-392-2957, suemuel45@gmail.com.

Wednesday, April 15

St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield to Mount Airy Casino, Mount Pocono and “Bill Haley Jr. Rock Around the Clock,” \$80, suemuel45@gmail.com, 610-392-2957.

Thursday, April 23

St. Thomas More, Allentown, Prime Time to Hollywood Casino, \$25, 610-791-1758, dfef60@msn.com.

Thursday, April 30 – Sunday, May 3

St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield to “Parade of Nations” and “Virginia International Tattoo Military Show,” Norfolk, Virginia, \$569, suemuel45@gmail.com, 610-392-2957.

Wednesday, May 6 – Thursday, May 7

St. Thomas More, Allentown, Prime Time to Dover Casino/Harrah’s, Dover, Delaware, \$145, 610-791-1758 or dfef60@msn.com.

Monday, May 11 – Monday, May 18

St. Teresa of Calcutta, Mahanoy City, cruise to Hamilton and St. George, Bermuda, 570-280-7002.

Thursday, May 14

Holy Trinity, Whitehall, Seniors in Action to “I Left My Dignity in My Other Purse,” Hunterdon Hills Playhouse, \$85, 610-262-6058.

Tuesday, May 19

St. Thomas More, Allentown to “Queen Esther,” Sight and Sound Theater, Lancaster, \$100, 610-791-1758, dfef60@msn.com.

Guadalupe

►Continued from page 3

Monsignor Orsulak, coordinator of the Berks-Carbon-Schuylkill Hispanic Ministry, thanked everyone involved in the planning and execution of this great feast. He gave special thanks to the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, the Poor Sisters of St. Joseph, and the Sisters, Servants of the

Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Sister Martha Muñoz, a leading member of the Guadalupano committee, stated that this feast is very important “to glorify the Lord and for the spiritual growth of the ecclesial community.”

Bishop Schlert also thanked everybody for their participation. Using his “almost perfect” Spanish, he said, “I think that tonight, Maria can teach you how to open your hearts fully to Christ, her son – and like Maria, you all can take Christ to everyone through your love and service to others.”



The mariachi band plays. / La banda de mariachis toca.



Praying at the shrine for Our Lady of Guadalupe. / Orando en el santuario por Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

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



FIRST FRIDAY

Adoration, Holy Hour & Sacred Heart Devotion



Next First Friday Adoration for Vocations Feb. 7

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 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@allentowndiocese.org, 610-437-0755, or visit www.allentowndiocese.org/vocations.



Next Webinar a Guide to Defending Your Faith

“The Beginner’s Guide to Defending Your Faith” will be the topic of the next installment of the Winter Webinar Series, Wednesday, Jan. 29 at 7 p.m.

Trent Horn, an adjunct professor of apologetics at Holy Apostles College and staff apologist for Catholic Answers, where he specializes in teaching Catholics to graciously and



Horn

persuasively engage those who disagree with them, will lead the webinar.

He will show 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 these webinars, you do not need a camera. The event will not be recorded or rebroadcast.

For more information and to register, visit www.allentowndiocese.org/webinars. Once you are registered, you will receive instructions on how to connect.

Death

Religious Sister

Sister Joan Christine Tobin (formerly Sister Joseph Christi), 85, a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 52 years, died Dec. 27 in Assisi House, Aston.

Sister Joan served in healthcare as a

nurse and as a family counselor and chaplain.

During her 10 years in the Diocese of Allentown, she ministered at St. Joseph Hospital in Reading. She also served 16 years in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and in Maryland and Delaware.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Jan. 3 at Assisi House, with burial in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery in Aston.

El Girasol

I hope this story warms your heart on what most likely for you is a cold, winter day.

I tend to do my annual spiritual retreat during the summer. And such was the case this past summer. I retreated to a monastery in New Mexico.

Before I started the retreat, I visited the city of Santa Fe. "Santa fe" means "holy faith" in Spanish, and I thought it only proper to start my week of spiritual exercises there.

I decided to visit one of the many art museums, as the city is a mecca for artists and art lovers alike. So I perused the galleries of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum.

Georgia O'Keeffe was an artist who lived to almost 100 years. She started in New York City painting skyscrapers and cityscapes, and ended up

in New Mexico painting hills and deserts.

O'Keeffe often painted animal bones dried by the desert sun. She became quite interested in them. Another subject was that of sunflowers.

I passed through the gift shop on the way to the exit and spotted a box of cards of sunflowers she had painted.

Being that a friend's daughter painted a nice sunflower on canvas for her high school art project which hangs in her kitchen, I thought I would get the box and send the young lady a card for her birthday. I also wanted to apologize to another friend so I thought it would be nice to do so with a card with a sunflower on the cover.

When I got home to Reading and the parish, a funeral notice awaited me on my bulletin board. A wife and mother with three teen-aged children. I visited the family – as is my custom – before the funeral and heard from them that their mother loved sunflowers.

They actually did not have to tell me that. Upon the walls of their home hung photos and paintings of sunflowers. Pottery and knick-knacks of the large seed-bearing, yellow flowers filled shelves and rested on cabinets.



By Monsignor Thomas Orsulak, pastor of St. Peter the Apostle, Reading, and regional priest coordinator of Hispanic ministry for Berks, Carbon and Schuylkill deaneries.



In her last few days the woman used to sit in her front yard between two large sunflowers. It was not hard for me to select a springboard for her funeral homily.

Spanish speakers call the sunflower a "girasol," which means "the sun turns." A looser translation with a little imagination is "turns toward the sun."

As the sun tracks across the sky each day, an immature sunflower follows it, facing it all the while. I was told that even when it is cloudy, the sunflower knows where the sun is behind the clouds and will turn toward it.

A mature sunflower faces east. Is that not the direction from which our Lord is to return in majesty and splendor? (See Mt 24:26 among other passages.)

Shouldn't we be like the sunflower? Always facing the One who gives us energy, light and life. Turning toward him who gives us hope even when we cannot see over the horizon or what awaits us with the dawning of a new day?

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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Young Adult Book Club Plans for 2020

"Lehigh Valley Inklings," a book club for young adult Catholics in their 20s and 30s, meets once a month to explore a classic through the lens of Catholicism.

Save these dates for Inklings meetings in 2020. This year we'll be exploring coffee shops and cafes all around the Lehigh Valley as we rediscover classic works of literature and deepen our faith through discussion and fellowship.

We start each meeting with a synopsis of the book, so even if you don't have time to read it, feel free to join us.

Follow the group on Facebook and Instagram @lehighvalleyinklings.

Contact: lehighvalleyinklings@gmail.com.

Friday, Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. at Barnes and Noble, 2960 Center Valley Pkwy, Ste 742, Center Valley – Starting the new year off with a discussion of "The Great Divorce" by C.S. Lewis.

Saturday, Feb. 29 at 11 a.m. at Jumbars, 1342 Chelsea Ave Unit 1, Bethlehem – Join us for a bookish Leap Day lunch, reading "The World's First Love: Mary Mother of God" by Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

Friday, March 27 at 7 p.m. at Hamil-

ton Crossings Whole Foods Cafe, Allentown – March's reading will be a Sherlock Holmes classic, "The Hound of the Baskervilles" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Friday, April 24 at 7 p.m. at Tilghman Street Panera – Grab a coffee and pastry or dinner at Panera and join us for an April discussion of the short novel "Anthem" by Ayn Rand.

Saturday, May 30 at 11 a.m. at Baked in Emmaus – "Humanae Vitae" by Pope Paul VI.

Saturday, June 27 at 11 a.m. at Quadrant Book Mart in Easton – "Utopia" by St. Thomas More.

Saturday, July 25 at 11 a.m. at Pressed

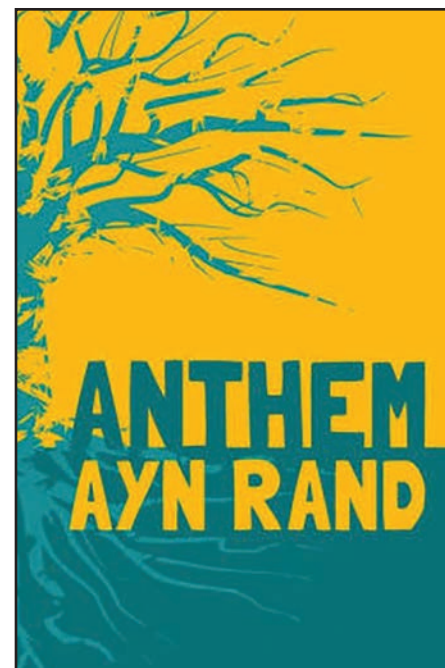
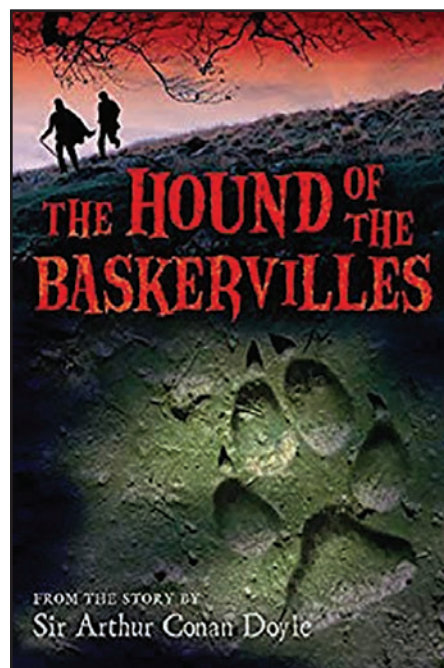
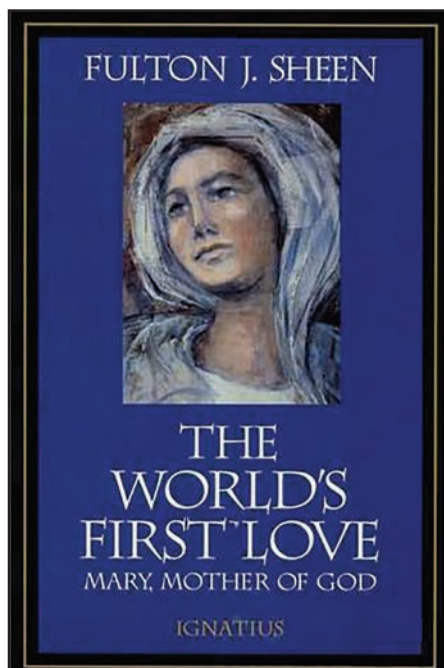
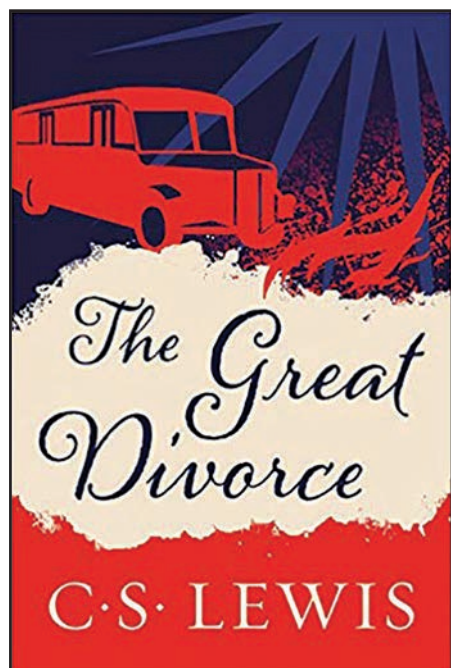
Coffee and Books in Pottsville – "With God in Russia" by Father Walter Ciszek.

Friday, Aug. 28 at 7 p.m. at Longacres in Bally – "The River" by Flannery O'Connor.

Saturday, Sept. 26 at 11 a.m. at Lit Coffee Shop in Bethlehem – "Diary of St. Faustina: Divine Mercy in My Soul."

Friday, Oct. 30 at 7 p.m. at Hamilton Crossings Whole Foods Café – "The Phantom of the Opera" by Gaston Leroux.

Saturday, Nov. 21 at 11 a.m. at Uptown Espresso Bar in Kutztown – "A Handful of Dust" by Evelyn Waugh.



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Left, Ferrous and FeFe with the Joseph family. Marjorie Joseph is president of the Home and School Association, which organized the event.

Above, the whole school community at the Fun Run.

Fun Run at Holy Family School, Nazareth

Students from pre-K to eighth grade, and some teachers, participated in the 2019 Fun Run of Holy Family School,

Nazareth Oct. 11.

They were joined by the marching

band and cheerleaders of Notre Dame High School, Easton; the leopard mascot of Lafayette College, Easton; and Ferrous and FeFe, mascots of the Iron Pigs baseball team, Allentown.

To raise money for the event, each student sold at least 10 raffle tickets. As of the day of the Fun Run, the school had raised \$27,250.

Immaculate Conception Academy Adds Economics

Immaculate Conception Academy, Douglassville's middle school students from Berks County spent a day recently at the Vanguard training center in Chester County, learning about financial responsibility.

Throughout the school year, ICA students have been participating in a program called "My Classroom Economy" designed by Vanguard employee volunteers.

The program is described as "a [program] that enables any educator to teach

children financial responsibility through fun, experiential learning. It's a simple classroom economic system based on the idea that students need to earn school 'dollars' so that they can rent their own desks. By bringing real-world scenarios into the classroom, students see the impact of their decisions to save, spend, and budget."

The field trip added a full day of financial, professional, technical and personal development courses.



Mass Commemorates Cemetery Sunday

Left, Mass is celebrated Oct. 26 at Holy Saviour Cemetery, Bethlehem in commemoration of Cemetery Sunday (Nov. 3 this year), the traditional day to visit the graves at the cemetery. Holy Saviour is one of two Diocese of Allentown cemeteries. The other is Resurrection Cemetery, Allentown. The Catholic cemetery represents the continuation, even in death, of the harmony and spiritual alliance that makes us all Catholics of one great family, thereby constituting it in an actual family plot, crypt or niche for cremated human remains.

Above, pictured at the mausoleum is Monsignor William Bayer, diocesan director of cemeteries, center, who celebrated the Mass. Among the participants were Sir Eugenio Melendez, KCHS, left, and Sir Robert Miller, KHS, members of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. For more information, visit www.allentowndiocesecemeteries.org.

Courage and EnCourage Groups

Persons with same-sex attraction have always been with us. There is now formal outreach from the Catholic Church in the way of support groups and information for such persons. The Diocese of Allentown conducts Courage group meetings monthly for those dealing with this issue.

Does a member of your family have same-sex attraction? Are you having difficulty dealing with the issue? Encourage is a ministry of the Catholic Church giving faithful witness to Catholic teaching with compassion. Group meetings are held monthly in the Diocese of Allentown.

For more information on Courage and EnCourage: 610-334-9147 or www.couragerc.org.



All Saints Day at St. Elizabeth Regional School

Second-graders at St. Elizabeth Regional School, Whitehall dressed as their favorite saints in honor of the Feast Day of All Saints Nov. 1. The children worked hard with their parents researching information about their saints and designing their costumes (which doubled as their trick-or-treat costumes). Along with their teacher Susan Bergan, they prepared and performed a presentation for the entire school and parents in the afternoon.

If You Have Moved

If you have moved, or the mailing label on your copy of The A.D. Times is incorrect, e-mail adtimes@allentowndiocese.org; call 610-871-5200, ext. 2264; or mail your mailing label along with your new address information and parish to: The A.D. Times, P.O. Box F, Allentown PA 18105-1538.



Feeding the Hungry at St. Elizabeth of Hungary

Parishioners of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Whitehall gather after hosting a community meal at the parish. They are part of an ecumenical organization, the Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative, which also includes St. Peter, Coplay and Holy Trinity, Whitehall. Meals are provided to the community free of charge to feed families and others who are hungering for friendships and hearty meals. Two dinners are provided each month – the first Sunday and third Tuesday from 4 to 6:30 p.m. It is an effort reach out and help make a difference in our communities. Pictured are, from left: front, Mary Spieker, Skya Gou, Jessica Wang, Kaitlynn Wied and Erika Wied; back, Cindy Keglovits, Maryann Lake, Deb Schuster, Nancy Hendrickson, Larry Weiss and Carol Vasquez.



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Veinte 20

Por DIÁCONO JOSÉ SANTOS

Cada amanecer trae buenas noticias, se renueva la esperanza de un día con novedades, el deseo a lo positivo, de lo bueno, algo mejor, todos queremos el progreso para avanzar a una vida mejor. Todo esto es posible, si Jesucristo está al frente de nuestros propósitos y guardamos los mandamientos como Él nos ha mandado.

Damos la bienvenida a un año particular, tiene un significado especial, cuando vemos las cosas visibles de este mundo con claridad decimos: 20/20. Saquemos pues buenas conclusiones, y aprovechemos al máximo este año de tantas bendiciones de parte de nuestro Padre Dios, quien está más que dispuesto a derramar toda su riqueza sobre su pueblo obediente.

“Jesús se dirigió otra vez a la gente, diciendo: Yo soy la luz del mundo; el que me sigue, tendrá la luz que le da vida, y nunca estará en la oscuridad” (Jn 8, 12). El sol sale cada día para iluminar todo y a todos sin distinción, a buenos y a malos,



lo bello y lo no tan bello. La generosidad del Creador nos muestra, cuanto nos ama Dios, con un amor sin condición.

Cuando Jesús dijo: Yo soy la luz del mundo, está invitándonos a seguirle, amarle e imitarle para vivir una vida feliz en su presencia. Quien sigue a Jesús y guarda sus mandamientos, es transparente, sincero, verdaderamente auténtico, no tiene nada que esconder, vive para servir, incluso su trabajo se convierte para sus discípulos en un servicio con o sin recompensa.

Me encanta el pasaje bíblico de la transfiguración de Jesús: “Jesús subió a un cerro a orar, acompañado de Pedro, Santiago y Juan. Mientras oraba, el aspecto de su cara cambió, y su ropa se volvió muy blanca y brillante; y aparecieron dos hombres conversando con él.

Eran Moisés y Elías, que estaban rodeados de un resplandor glorioso y hablaban de la partida de Jesús de este mundo, que iba a tener lugar en Jerusalén.

“Aunque Pedro y sus compañeros tenían mucho sueño, permanecieron despiertos, y vieron la gloria de Jesús y a los dos hombres que estaban con él. Cuando aquellos hombres se separaban ya de Jesús, Pedro le dijo: Maestro, ¡qué bien que estemos aquí! Vamos a hacer tres chozas: una para ti, otra para Moisés y otra para Elías. Pero Pedro no sabía lo que decía.

“Mientras hablaba, una nube se posó sobre ellos, y al verse dentro de la nube tuvieron miedo. Entonces de la nube salió una voz, que dijo: ‘Este es mi Hijo, mi elegido: escúchenlo.’ Cuando se escuchó esa voz, Jesús quedó solo. Pero ellos

mantuvieron esto en secreto y en aquel tiempo a nadie dijeron nada de lo que habían visto” (Lc 9, 28-36).

Mi alma siente un gran deseo de vivir de esta manera: Estar en la presencia del Padre Dios, ver a Jesús rodeado de su gloria junto a estos dos personajes Moisés y Elías, ambos hombres de Dios, y ambos subieron al cielo en cuerpo y alma, las escrituras dan testimonios de su subida al cielo. La confirmación de que están en el cielo en cuerpo y alma es este pasaje que acabamos de leer.

Señor Dios Todopoderoso, te ruego que en este año 2020, tu Luz Santísima inunde, ilumine el corazón de cada hombre, de cada mujer, de cada joven de cada niño; para que ya no vivamos más en tinieblas, necesitamos tu presencia, tu auxilio.

Jesús, tu dijiste: “sin mi ustedes no pueden hacer nada” es cierto, Señor mío, no podemos hacer el bien sin ti. Danos tu sabiduría, derrama tu gracia para que todos los días vivamos felices en tu Paz, esto te lo pedimos con humildad para toda la humanidad, bajo la unción del Espíritu Santo y por intercesión de la Santísima Virgen María y de todos los ángeles y santos. Amén.



Salute to Veterans at St. Francis Academy

St. Francis Academy, Bally students sing “America the Beautiful” as the school honors veterans on Veterans Day with a brief ceremony and lunch. Student council members, carrying flags, led the veterans to the school cafeteria, then honored the veterans with a short speech, prayer, song and recognizing each veteran present by announcing their name and giving them an American flag pin.



Thomas Geiges and Joseph Frattone have lunch with their children/grandchildren, Virginia and Nicholas Geiges during the Veterans Day salute.



St. Anne School Helps Missionary Childhood Association

St. Anne School, Bethlehem presents a check for \$400 to Holly Benner, second from left, who is a St. Anne parishioner as well as the national coordinator of the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA). Also pictured are, from left: Father Giuseppe Esposito, assistant pastor of St. Anne Parish; and St. Anne School eight grade student mission representatives Sami Ayache and Hannah Nguyen. The funds were raised through weekly mission collections. Children throughout the school continue to bring funds to deposit into their classroom mission cans. MCA encourages children to be aware of the needs of children living in mission dioceses throughout the world, and to support them spiritually and sacrificially.



Immaculate Conception Mathlete Champs

The Mathlete team of Immaculate Conception Academy, Douglassville won first place in the Berks Catholic Fall Mathlete Competition. From left are R.J. Petras, Luke Hennessey, Caitlyn Bailey, Charlotte Dolena, Sarah Gatz and middle school math teacher Jessica Bailey.



St. Anne School Students Welcome Former NASA Astronaut

St. Anne School, Bethlehem hosted former NASA Astronaut Terry Hart Nov. 7 for a presentation to the students in keeping with the school's year-long "Space Exploration" theme.

Each year the school selects an annual theme to promote a sense of community, fun, enrichment to the school curriculum and as a kick-off to early re-registration activities.

"Our annual theme engages the students in a common interest with fun activities, and supports the annual re-registration space race with contests and class prizes," said Principal Karen Bentz.

"Most important, our faculty creates dynamic curriculum projects and programs using the annual theme. This year we have a St. Anne School rocket display on our first floor, and the school is decorated using Space Exploration themes. St. Anne School was thrilled to welcome Terry Hart to our school."

He presented a fascinating first-hand look, including video from inside his own Space Shuttle mission, space flight in general, the history of aviation and the future of the U.S. Space Program.

Hart is a former NASA astronaut, U.S. Air Force fighter pilot and was aboard the STS 41-C Challenger, NASA's 11th Space Shuttle mission, launched from Kennedy Space Center on April 6, 1984. The Challenger crew were the first astronauts to repair a satellite from the shuttle. Hart is now on the faculty of Lehigh University, Bethlehem in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Mechanics.

Sunday Scripture

Sunday, Jan. 12
The Baptism of the Lord

First Reading
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Responsorial Psalm
Psalms 29:1-4, 3, 9-10
Second Reading
Acts 10:34-38
Gospel
Matthew 3:13-17

Sunday, Jan. 19
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading
Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
Responsorial Psalm
Psalms 40:2, 4, 7-10
Second Reading
1 Corinthians 1:1-3
Gospel
John 1:29-34

Recommended to Your Prayers by Pope Francis

Apostleship of Prayer Intention for February

Universal prayer intention – Listen to the Migrants' Cries

We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

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.

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ALL FAITHS WELCOME



Faith Is About Worshipping God, Not Oneself, Pope Says on Epiphany

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Worshipping the Lord as the Three Kings did involves making a journey “from the greatest form of bondage: slavery to oneself,” Pope Francis said on the feast of the Epiphany.

To worship like the Magi did is “to bring gold to the Lord and to tell him that nothing is more precious than he is. To offer him incense and to tell him that only in union with him can our lives rise up to heaven. To present him with myrrh, balm for the bruised and wounded, and to promise him that we will aid our marginalized and suffering neighbors in whom he himself is present,” the pope said.

Pope Francis celebrated the feast day Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica Jan. 6.

In accordance with an ancient tradition, after the proclamation of the Gospel on Epiphany, a deacon chanted the announcement of the date of Easter 2020 (April 12) and the dates of other feasts on the church calendar that are calculated according to the date of Easter.

In St. Peter’s Basilica, as Pope Francis looked on, Deacon Anthony Klein of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, chanted the announcement in Latin. Klein is studying for the priesthood at Rome’s Pontifical North American College.

In his homily at the Mass, the pope focused on the importance of worshipping the Lord, bowing down in adoration of him and putting him before all other concerns, because the Christian life “is a journey toward the Lord, not toward ourselves.”

In the Gospel, he said, Herod worshipped only himself and wanted to rid himself of the child Jesus. “What does this teach us? That when we do not worship God, we end up worshipping ourselves.”

People can use religion to affirm themselves and their own abilities, the pope said. “This is a grave risk: We use



Pope Francis reverences a figurine of the baby Jesus at the start of a Mass marking the feast of the Epiphany in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Jan. 6. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

God instead of serving him. How many times have we confused the interests of the Gospel with our own? How many times have we cloaked in religiosity the things we find convenient?”

In the Gospel story of the Three Kings, the high priests and scribes know all the prophecies about the birth of the Messiah, yet they do not join the Magi in going to Bethlehem to worship the newborn king, the pope noted.

They offer another lesson to Christians, he said. “In the Christian life, it is not enough to be knowledgeable; unless we step out of ourselves, unless we encounter others and worship, we cannot know God.”

“Theology and pastoral effectiveness

mean little or nothing unless we bend the knee, unless we kneel down like the Magi, who were not only knowledgeable about planning a journey, but also capable of setting out and bowing down in worship,” he said.

“Faith is not simply a set of fine doctrines, but a relationship with a living person whom we are called to love,” the pope said. “It is in encountering Jesus face to face that we come to see him as he is.”

“Through worship, we discover that the Christian life is a love story with God,” he said.

At the beginning of a new year, Pope Francis said, Christians should rediscover the importance of kneeling down to wor-

ship Jesus, of speaking with him, bringing their lives to him, allowing him to console them.

“Worship means discovering that, to pray, it is enough to say: ‘My Lord and my God,’ and to let ourselves be pervaded by his tender love,” the pope said.

“Worship means concentrating on what is essential: ridding ourselves of useless things and addictions that anesthetize the heart and confound the mind,” he said. “In worship, we learn to reject what should not be worshipped: the god of money, the god of consumerism, the god of pleasure, the god of success, the god of self.”

Worshipping God also means “recognizing that we are all brothers and sisters before the mystery of a love that bridges every distance,” he said. “Worship means being silent in the presence of the divine Word and learning to use words that do not wound but console.”

Like the Magi, he said, Christians discover the meaning of their life’s journey in worshipping the Lord and it brings them great joy.

After Mass, with thousands of people gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis noted how the Magi did not stay in Bethlehem but returned home “by another way.”

The phrase, he said, can be read symbolically as an affirmation that the Wise Men were changed by their encounter with Jesus and sent back to their normal lives to live in a new way and share their experience.

As with the Three Kings, the pope said, “the experience of God does not block us, but frees us; it does not imprison us, but puts us back on our way, returning us to the usual places of our existence. The places are the same but, after the encounter with Christ, we are not the same as before.”

Recent Film Ratings (January 2020)

NEW YORK (CNS) – Here is a list of recent films that Catholic News Service has rated on the basis of moral suitability.

The first symbol after each title is the Catholic News Service classification. The second symbol is the rating of the Motion Picture Association.

CNS classifications: A-I -- general patronage; A-II – adults and adolescents; A-III – adults; L – limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling; O – morally offensive.

MPA ratings: G – general audiences. All ages admitted; PG – parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children; PG-13 – parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13; R – restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; NC-17 – no one 17 and under admitted.

A
The Addams Family, A-II (PG)
Arctic Dogs, A-II (PG)

B
A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood, A-II (PG)
Black and Blue, A-III (R)
Black Christmas, A-III (PG-13)
Bombshell, L (R)
By the Grace of God, L (no rating)

C
Cats, A-II (PG)
Charlie’s Angels, A-III (PG-13)
Countdown, A-III (PG-13)
The Current War: Director’s Cut, A-III (PG-13)

D
Dark Waters, A-III (PG-13)
The Divine Plan, A-II (no rating)
Doctor Sleep, L (R)

E
El Chicano, L (R)
Emanuel, A-II (no rating)

F
Ford v Ferrari, A-III (PG-13)
Frozen II, A-II (PG)

G
Gemini Man, L (PG-13)
The Goldfinch, A-III (R)
The Good Liar, A-III (R)
Good Time, L (R)

H
Harriet, A-III (PG-13)
A Hidden Life, A-II (PG-13)

I
The Irishman, L (R)

J
Jexi, O (R)
Joker, L (R)
Jumanji: The Next Level, A-III (PG-13)
Just Mercy, A-III (PG-13)

K
Knives Out, A-III (PG-13)

L
Late Night, A-III (R)
Little Women, A-II (PG)
Love and Mercy: Faustina, A-II (no rating)
Lucy in the Sky, A-III (R)



Al Pacino and Robert De Niro in a scene from the movie “The Irishman.” The Catholic News Service classification is L – limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R – restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian. (CNS photo/Netflix)

M
Maleficent: Mistress of Evil, A-II (PG)
Midway, A-III (PG-13)
Motherless Brooklyn, A-III (R)

N
No Greater Love, A-III (no rating)

P
Penguins, A-I (PG)
Playing With Fire, A-II (PG)
Playmobil: The Movie, A-II (PG)

Q
Queen and Slim, O (R)

R
Race 3, A-III (no rating)

Richard Jewell, A-III (R)

S
Spies in Disguise, A-II (PG)
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker, A-III (PG-13)

T
Terminator: Dark Fate, A-III (R)
21 Bridges, L (R)
The Two Popes, A-III (PG-13)

U
Uncut Gems, O (R)

Z
Zombieland: Double Tap, O (R)

In Brief

'No end in sight'

CANBERRA, Australia (CNS) – Saying that “there is no end in sight to the horror which confronts us,” Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, said the bishops have implemented a national response to months of wildfires.

The bishops have set up a national network, connecting people affected by the fires with “people who can help with tasks such as preparing meals, clearing properties, rebuilding communities, as well as pastoral and counseling support.” They are collaborating with other religious agencies and their institutes and will take up a special collection the last weekend in January, when Australia Day is celebrated.

Archbishop Coleridge said people who do not want to wait to donate to their parish collections can donate to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, known in Australia as Vinnies.

The bishops' conference also set up a special page, www.catholic.org.au/bushfires, with a button for donation to the Vinnies, as well as resources such as prayers of intercession, prayers for those affected, and statements on the fire from other organizations.

“We have all seen the apocalyptic images, even if we are not in the areas most affected,” the archbishop said. “Lives have been lost, homes and towns have been destroyed, smoke has shrouded large swathes of our country.

“The efforts of firefighters have been heroic. The resilience of the communities affected has been extraordinary.”

At least 24 people have died in the fires, which began in August and now are in four states. CNN reported Jan. 7 that more than 2,000 homes in New South Wales alone have been destroyed.

Puerto Rico earthquakes

WASHINGTON (CNS) – At least one person has died and one Catholic Church was destroyed by the latest of a series of earthquakes to rock Puerto Rico. A magnitude 6.4 quake shook people awake at 4:24 a.m. local time Jan. 7, less than 24 hours after a magnitude 5.8 temblor shook the island in the predawn hours of Jan. 6. Aftershocks ranging in magnitude from 3.8 to 6 were felt throughout the island following the early morning temblor, reported the U.S. Geological Survey.

The continuous shaking has taken a psychological toll, said Father Enrique Camacho, executive director of Caritas of Puerto Rico, which is affiliated with Catholic Charities USA.

“Right now we are helping the people with emotional support,” Father Cama-



Charlotte O'Dwyer, daughter of Rural Fire Service volunteer Andrew O'Dwyer, with her mother, Melissa, receives her father's service medal from RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons during his funeral Mass at Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church in Sydney Jan. 7, 2020. Andrew O'Dwyer, a member of the Horsley Park Rural Fire Brigade in Sydney, died Dec. 19 when the truck he was traveling in rolled off the road after a tree fell in the town of Buxton. (CNS photo/Dean Lewins, AAP via Reuters)

cho told Catholic News Service Jan. 7. “What we fear is that we continue having these earthquakes. If we have bigger ones, the damage is going to be very, very, very bad.”

China rules target churches

SIEM REAP, Cambodia (CNS) – The Chinese government has targeted unregistered Catholic and Protestant churches with a new expansion of rules and regulations governing religious organizations. It will institute another raft of laws covering 41 religion-related topics Feb. 1, two years after the implementation of another set of restrictive laws for religious groups in the country.

“The goal is to have all religious organizations brought into the open, registered in one way or another and thus end the duality of ‘official’ religious organizations and ‘underground’ (or unregistered), which in China means the government knows about them but (previously) let them be,” Francesco Sisci, a senior researcher at Beijing's Renmin University, told Catholic News Service.

Observers have noted that, if widely implemented, Article 34 of the Chinese Communist Party paper – published in late December – would apply direct pressure on unregistered churches.

Leaders march against hate

BROOKLYN, N.Y. (CNS) – Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York and Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn joined

about 25,000 New Yorkers who took to the streets for a Jan. 5 “Solidarity March” in protest of anti-Semitism.

“When there's an attack on you, there's an attack on all of us,” Cardinal Dolan said in remarks at the rally in Brooklyn after participants had crossed the Brooklyn Bridge. The march, which made its way from Lower Manhattan to Cadman Plaza in Downtown Brooklyn, brought together Jewish and non-Jewish residents, along with a host of local leaders, under the banner of “No Hate, No Fear.”

The march was organized by the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee and the interdenominational New York Board of Rabbis.

Bishop from 19 countries

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis will travel to the southern Italian seaport city of Bari in late February to close a meeting of bishops from countries bordering the Mediterranean, the Vatican confirmed. Publishing a list of the pope's liturgies in January and February, the Vatican said he would celebrate Mass in Bari Feb. 23 at the end of the “encounter for reflection and spirituality, ‘Mediterranean, Frontier of Peace.’”

Sponsored by the Italian bishops' conference, the encounter Feb. 19-23 is expected to bring together more than 50 bishops from 19 Mediterranean nations in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

Faith is worshipping God

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Worshipping the Lord as the Three Kings did involves making a journey “from the greatest form of bondage: slavery to oneself,” Pope Francis said on the feast of the Epiphany.

To worship like the Magi did is “to bring gold to the Lord and to tell him that nothing is more precious than he is. To offer him incense and to tell him that only in union with him can our lives rise up to heaven. To present him with myrrh, balm for the bruised and wounded, and to promise him that we will aid our marginalized and suffering neighbors in whom he himself is present,” the pope said. Pope Francis celebrated the feast day Mass in St. Peter's Basilica Jan. 6.

In his homily, the pope focused on the importance of worshipping the Lord, bowing down in adoration of him and putting him before all other concerns, because the Christian life “is a journey toward the Lord, not toward ourselves.” In the Gospel, he said, Herod worshipped only himself and wanted to rid himself of the child Jesus. “What does this teach us? That when we do not worship God, we end up worshipping ourselves.”

'The truest human right'

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Health care professionals always must “promote the dignity and life of each person and reject any compromise in the direction of euthanasia, assisted suicide or suppression of life, even in the case of terminal illness,” Pope Francis said.

“Life is sacred and belongs to God,” the pope said, “hence it is inviolable, and no one can claim the right to dispose of it freely.” Pope Francis addressed health care professionals in his annual message for the celebration of World Day of the Sick, which is marked Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The text of the message was released Jan. 3 by the Vatican. To people suffering from illness in body or mind, the pope offered words of hope and encouragement, assuring them of Jesus' closeness and his promise to alleviate their burdens. “Jesus does not make demands of those who endure situations of frailty, suffering and weakness, but offers his mercy and his comforting presence,” the pope said.

March borrows page from suffragists

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The March for Life, the annual march in Washington to protest legalized abortion in the United States, is tying itself in 2020 to the women's suffrage movement for the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. The theme of the march is “Life Empowers: Pro-Life Is Pro-Woman.”

TV Program Notes Include March for Life Coverage

NEW YORK (CNS) – Here are some television program notes for the weeks of Jan. 12 and 19 with their TV Parental Guidelines ratings if available. They have not been reviewed and therefore are not necessarily recommended by Catholic News Service.

Sunday, Jan. 12, 3:30-5:30 a.m. EST (EWTN) “Solemn Mass for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.” Pope Francis celebrates Mass with the sacrament of

Baptism, live from the Sistine Chapel. The liturgy will be rerun noon-2 p.m. EST (TV-G – general audience).

Wednesday, Jan. 15, 9:30-11 p.m. EST (EWTN) “Fatal Flaws: Legalizing Assisted Death.” Filmmaker Kevin Dunn delves into the real-life consequences of legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide (TV-Y – all children).

Saturday, Jan. 18, 8-10 p.m. EST (EWTN) “Pro-Life Mass From Los An-

geles.” A requiem Mass for the unborn (TV-G – general audience).

Tuesday, Jan. 21, 9-10 p.m. EST (PBS) “Bombing Auschwitz.” This episode of the series “Secrets of the Dead” considers whether an Allied attack on Auschwitz would have stopped future atrocities (TV-PG – parental guidance suggested).

Thursday, Jan. 23, 5:30-7 p.m. EST (EWTN) “Opening Mass of the National Prayer Vigil.” Opening liturgy of the an-

nual prayer vigil for the March for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. (TV-G – general audience).

Friday, Jan. 24, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. EST (EWTN) “March for Life.” Live and complete coverage of the most important pro-life event of the year: the annual March for Life in Washington. (TV-G – general audience).

Dialogue

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makers, comfort the suffering, and protect the innocent and all those in harm's way, especially the men and women in

our military and diplomatic service.”

Iran's missile launch was said to be in retaliation for Washington's targeted killing of Iran's top militia commander, Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, in Baghdad Jan. 3. The missiles hit the al-Asad airbase, which houses U.S. troops, and American and coalition forces in the northern Iraqi

town of Irbil, in areas not heavily populated.

During his general audience Jan. 8, Pope Francis also addressed the current situation in Iraq, offering “a warm welcome to the Arab-speaking pilgrims, especially those from Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and the Middle East.”

“In the saddest moments of our lives, in the most distressing moments and of trial, we must not be afraid and be bold as Paul was, because God watches over us, he is always close to us. May the Lord bless you all and always protect you from the evil one,” he said.