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Spencer Named Principal Of Altoona Quadrant's New Regional Catholic School

By Tony DeGol

After more than 25 years of teaching and administering in schools in the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown, Elaine Spencer could certainly be considered a veteran of Catholic education. Now, she can also be regarded as a pioneer.

In December, the board of the Altoona school quadrant announced that Spencer will be principal of the new regional school scheduled to open next academic year.

It is an opportunity she is embracing.

"I'm looking forward to bringing all of the Catholic school families together," she said in an interview shortly after being named to the post. "We want to continue to offer a great quality program that includes compassion."

The announcement of the administration team for the new school is just one of many happenings as the Board continues the transition from five parish-based schools to one regional school.

In August, Bishop Mark L. Barchak accepted the Board's recommendation to close Altoona Central Catholic School,

Hollidaysburg Catholic School, Saint John the Evangelist School in Altoona, Saint Patrick School in Newry, and Saint Rose of Lima School in Altoona due to declining enrollment and rising costs to the parishes and schools.

The new regional school will include three campuses – Altoona (the current ACCS building), Hollidaysburg (the current Hollidaysburg Catholic building), and a middle school (the current Saint Rose of Lima building).

Spencer, the current Hollidaysburg Catholic School principal, will oversee the entire school, with a vice principal at each campus responsible for daily activity at her respective site.

The Board announced that Sherry Buck, Cathy Damiano, and Tabatha Griffin will serve in those roles.

"I think the four of us will work together as a team," said Spencer, who began as a teacher at Saint Patrick School in 1989. She then taught at the former Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Lourdes Schools for a number of years before taking a teaching position at Saint Rose. She has been principal of Hollidaysburg Catholic since 2005.

Buck is in the middle of her first year as principal at ACCS



PRINCIPAL AND STUDENTS: Elaine Spencer joins a group of students at Hollidaysburg Catholic School in December for a little pre - Christmas fun. Spencer, principal of Hollidaysburg Catholic School since 2005, will be principal of the new regional school scheduled to open in the Altoona quadrant next academic year.

after serving two years as co-principal.

Damiano, principal at Saint Rose of Lima since 2013, began teaching at the school in 1987.

Griffin has served as principal of Saint John the Evangelist since 2011.

"We, as a Board, are excited that Elaine, Tabatha, Sherry, and Cathy are interested in continuing their leadership roles in Catholic elementary education in the new quadrant school,"

said Kirk Kling, chair of the Altoona quadrant board. "They all have exhibited excellent educational and administrative skills, along with unwavering leadership in our parish schools. The Board and I look forward to their continued support and leadership as we move forward during this new and exciting endeavor. We look forward to success and growth in our new Catholic elementary education system."

Spencer stated that the Catholic identity of the new school will be paramount.

"We're going to stress a religious environment for the intellectual and social formation of all the students," she noted. "This environment will be where the vision and values of Jesus can be lived, experienced, and shared. This will be a Catholic faith community reflected in prayer, Liturgies, devotions, teachings, and lived experiences."

She also pointed out that despite having three campuses, the new school is, indeed, one school. This will be reinforced through observances for Catholic Schools Week, Christmas pageants, and other opportunities to highlight the school's Catholic identity. Fundraising will also be school - wide, she added, with one fundraising goal for each family.

Pre - K through fourth grade students will attend classes at the Altoona and Hollidaysburg campuses; fifth through eighth students will be housed at the middle school campus.

(Continued On Page 13.)

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In The Alleghenies



HOLIDAY CHEER: The children and young people of Saint Bartholomew Parish, Wilmore, enjoyed and spread holiday cheer on Sunday, December 20, 2015. They packed fruit baskets and delivered them to elderly parishioners, and then enjoyed cookie baking, a pizza party, a Christmas play and a visit from Santa Claus. Father Joseph Nale is pastor, and Diana Frantz is the director of religious education.



CHRISTMAS GATHERING: Bishop Mark L. Bartchak hosted his annual Christmas gathering for seminarians and prospective seminarians on Monday, December 21, 2015 at Carmel Hall at Garvey Manor and Our Lady of the Alleghenies Residence in Hollidaysburg. Pictured with the Bishop and Vocations Director are the six current Diocesan seminarians (left to right) First row: Peter Crowe, third year theology at Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe and member of Our Lady of Victory Parish in State College; Bishop Mark; and Devin Crouse, first year college at Saint Mark's Seminary College in Erie and member of Saint Catherine of Siena Parish in Mount Union. Second row: Mark Groeger, first year pre - theology at Saint Vincent Seminary and member of Saint Leo Magnus Parish in Ridgway; Michael Pleva, third year college at Saint Mark's Seminary College and member of Holy Rosary Parish in Altoona; Father Matthew Reese, Director of Vocations; Jonathan Dickson third year theology at Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and member of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Parish in Altoona; and Austin Keith, second year pre - theology at Saint Vincent Seminary and member of Saint Benedict Parish in Johnstown.



FOOD BASKETS: The Saint Vincent DePaul Society Conference at Most Holy Trinity Parish in Huntingdon distributed 180 food baskets to the poor in Huntingdon County during the Christmas season. Most of the food and gifts were donated by parishioners and by citizens of Huntingdon County. Pictured are (left to right) Sandy Bellucci, Joe Masciangelo, Dorothy Baron, Helen Wright, Susan Hochberg, Deb Lilibridge, Lisa Hershey, and Father David Arseneault (pastor).

Family Life

Valentine's Day

New Germany: The Family Life Office is sponsoring a special observance on Wednesday, February 3, in anticipation of Valentine's Day, for widows and widowers from throughout the Diocese.

Mass will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m., and all deceased spouses will be mentioned and remembered at the liturgy. Lun-

cheon will be served at noon, followed by a special musical presentation. A \$5.00 donation is suggested.

The Mass, luncheon and program will be hosted by Immaculate Conception Church, 1640 New Germany Road, Summerhill.

Reservations are required by Tuesday, January 26. Contact the Family Life Office at (814) 886 - 5551, or familylife@dioceseaj.org.



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Point Of View

“Wise Men Still Seek Him,” is a phrase taken from one of my favorite Christmas cards I received this holiday season. The five word phrase is so simple, but yet so rich and profound in meaning! Many years ago three wise men did come to the manger to pay homage to the newborn King, but the question I ask is what made them so wise? From many stories told of old these men were not the average Joe. They were well studied men who through their intense observations saw something in the heavens, so unique, so out of the ordinary, in fact quite extraordinary. They saw something they could not explain, which so intrigued them, they simply could not dismiss it. These Wise Men choose to follow the well studied Star and we know how the story ended... By following this celestial rarity, the Wise Men were led to the feet of Baby Jesus, Our Heavenly King.

Did their astrological knowledge make them so wise or was it some unknown, yearning deep in their hearts, “something” although unexplainable at the time, was calling them, beckoning them to come forth, to follow this amazing star? Although, not fully understanding the long journey they were about to make, they knew in some way deep within their very being this was a trip they just had to take.

Many times in our lives, we too hear God speaking in a very small voice about a path or journey He is beckoning us to begin.

Maybe for some He sends a huge sign, like the Wise men’s star to lead, but more often for



Family Matters

By Amy Kanich
Wise Men Still Seek Him



CNS Photo/Heinz-Peter Bader, Reuters

Being wise, is having the courage to take the first step, while entrusting the entire journey and final destination to the Kings of Kings, Lord of Lords, heaven’s biggest and brightest Star – Our God!

many, God’s calling begins with a simple restlessness, a deep stirring within one’s heart. It becomes a yearning, an unexplainable feeling. One when reasoning sets in may not seem so wise but when the heart examines and meditates on this gentle whispering of God, it knows deep within, this is a journey of faith one absolutely needs to take.

Maybe someone’s calling is to volunteer for a ministry or

to answer a call for vocations. Others may be called to rectify a dispute with a neighbor, call a friend, or send a simple “Thinking of You” card. Callings come in every shape and size, whispers from the very heart of God Himself.

Yes, I believe the Wise Men were indeed wise! Wise because they knew that although their minds contained a wealth of earthly knowledge, they recognized their hearts yearned for so much more and because of that calling they began their journey to the King.

Being wise does not mean having all the answers to the questions one will encounter along the path or journey of their lives. Rather, it is stepping out without all of the answers and trusting in God’s providence to lead the way. Being wise is packing the bags, loading up the camels and starting off without insisting on knowing all the specifics or details of the itinerary. Being wise, is having the courage to take the first step, while entrusting the entire journey and final destination to the Kings of Kings, Lord of Lords, heaven’s biggest and brightest Star – Our God! Wise men surely still do seek Him!



Another Perspective

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein
Merciful And Righteous

The announcement of the upcoming canonization of Mother Teresa of Kolkata has been the cause of much delight among Catholics and in wider circles. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, Mother Teresa was among the best known and best loved humanitarians in the world. Her selfless dedication to the service of the poorest of the poor touched the hearts of millions. Mother Teresa embodied the mercy of God and made that mercy a reality in the lives of countless men and women. Her faith in God’s mercy, even when she felt herself to be lost in spiritual darkness, is what made her one of God’s saints.

I am equally delighted with the news that another holy woman of the 20th century will be canonized this year. Mother Elizabeth Hesselblad is not as well known to the general public as Mother Teresa was, but she too made God’s mercy come alive for those most in need of it, at a time when the world was plunged in darkness. Her faith in God’s mercy, and her witness to it, is what makes her one of God’s saints, as well.

Elizabeth Hesselblad was born a member of the Reformed Church in Sweden, in 1870. As a girl of 16, she came to the United States as a means of making money to supplement her family’s modest income. She trained as a nurse and worked in New York City. Impressed by the piety and devotion of Catholic patients and friends, she became a Catholic in 1902, and was baptized in the chapel of the Visitation Convent in Georgetown, Washington DC. With her conversion there came the conviction that she had a religious vocation - - specifically, a vocation to enter the ancient Order of the Most Holy Savior, founded by a fellow Swede, Saint Birgitta (or Bridget) and to bring new life to that order which was all but extinct, existing in only a handful of houses in Europe and Mexico, in the early 1900s.

Elizabeth was able to realize her vocation, being vested in the Bridgettine habit in 1906, and accepting her first postulants in 1911. She was also able to acquire the historic house of Saint Birgitta in Rome, today the Motherhouse of her revived Bridgettine order.

It was in that house in Rome that Mother Elizabeth proved her devotion to God’s mercy during the Second World War, when she gave refuge within the convent walls to twelve members of two Jewish families. A woman with an ecumenical, inter - religious spirit long before the Church took up those causes, Mother Elizabeth insisted that the Piperno and Sed families should live as observant Jews within the convent, following their dietary laws, keeping up the traditions of their faith, praying and worshipping according to Jewish custom. The son of one of those families, Piero Piperno said at a ceremony in the house of Saint Birgitta on January 15, 2015 “When she received us in this house, Blessed Mother Elizabeth told us that we should follow our religious traditions. It was difficult for a representative of the Church to express themselves in this way in those days. But prophets always arise and Mother Elizabeth was prophetic in anticipating what was to come. She saved our lives, but above all, in those dark times she restored dignity to our religion.”

In 2004, four years after her beatification, Mother Elizabeth was recognized as “Righteous Among The Nations” by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel. Like Saint Joseph, whom I wrote about in my last column, Mother Elizabeth was righteous because she was merciful: she stood in solidarity with those most vulnerable, and shared her heart with those most wretched. Her canonization in the Year of Mercy reminds us of the duties incumbent upon us as God’s people: to be merciful like the Father, always and in all ways, not only in times of darkness, but all the days of our lives.



CNS Photo/Leslie E. Kossoff

MARCH FOR LIFE: A group of Capitol Hill lawmakers addresses crowds of supporters during the March for Life rally on the National Mall in Washington January 22, 2015. Tens of thousands took part in the annual event.

March For Life Changes Venue, Strengthens Message

By Kurt Jensen
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The annual March for Life, set for Jan. 22, will convene in a new location in the nation's capital for the traditional mid-day rally.

Because of the ongoing refurbishment of the National Mall and strict new regulations that require temporary flooring to protect the grass, the rally has been moved from the West Front of the Capitol to the Washington Monument grounds.

"We were lucky to get that. It's going to cost us \$70,000, and it's not something we budgeted for," said Jeanne Monahan-Mancini, president of March for Life. "It's the most economical wide-open space we could afford."

Other than the venue, the event, which draws busloads of Catholic parishioners and parochial school students, is expect-

ed to remain much the same.

Held since 1974, the march marks the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, which legalized abortion.

"Pro-Life is Pro-Woman" is this year's theme.

"We know that abortion takes the life of one and wounds the life of another, so we always try to emphasize ... that there's always hope and healing for anyone who's made that sad decision, and it's very important in terms of our messaging," Monahan-Mancini told Catholic News Service.

It's also intended as a way to blunt critics, "because of the (presidential) election and a lot of the rhetoric about the false 'war on women,'" Monahan-Mancini added.

Retired Baltimore Ravens football player Matt Birk is the headline speaker at the rally and that evening's Rose Dinner. Monahan-Mancini said she expected at least a couple of Re-

publican presidential candidates to speak at the rally as well, but that any announcement would come just before the event.

The day before the march, Father Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, will lead a prayer rally at the Planned Parenthood offices in Washington. A youth rally at the Renaissance Hotel follows.

Other march-related activities include a Mass opening the overnight National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Jan. 21 and a Mass the next morning at the Basilica; a Mass and interdenominational prayer service at Constitution Hall prior to the march; and two similar events, Youth Rally and Mass for Life, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington at the Verizon Center and the D.C. Armory.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback will be honored at the Constitution Hall event for being the first governor to sign the Unborn

Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act. The legislation is under review in a state appeals court.

Two recent events loom over this year's march. Last summer, an anti-abortion organization in California, the Center for Medical Progress, released a series of secretly recorded videos that it claimed show representatives from Planned Parenthood clinics discussing the use of aborted infant parts for profit. In November, a gunman opened fire at a Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood clinic, killing three and wounding nine. The suspect, Robert Dear, was reported as telling police, "No more baby parts," in an apparent reference to the videos.

The videos are the subject of litigation in U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, where a judge will decide whether the videos should be permanently suppressed because they violate California laws about secret recordings and also contributed to clinic arsons. Excerpts of the videos remain available on YouTube.

Even in truncated form, they videos have had an effect, said Michael Ciccocioppo, executive director of Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation, a march participant.

"I haven't seen every single video from start to finish, but I've seen parts of all the videos," he said. "When you listen to these doctors sitting around eating their lunch, eating their salad, drinking their wine and talking so callously about what they do and how much they can get for these body parts, I mean it really has exposed to the nation how horrendous these things are that are going on."

Monahan-Mancini agreed that the videos are "very hard to watch." However, she finds them helpful to the pro-life effort.

"The thing with abortion is, it's very much in the dark. It's a violent kind of thing," she said. "The great gift, regardless if you agree with the (recording) approach, is bringing into the light what happens behind closed doors. It was just so clear that there was a lack of respect for these little babies. They were

just objects, objects for material gain."

As for the Colorado shooter, "That's their responsibility when people like that act in that way," Ciccocioppo said. "It's not the responsibility of the (anti-abortion) movement. This man has nothing to do with us."

"The truth is going to come out one way or the other," Father Pavone said. "The safest way to proceed for the vast majority of those involved in the march is through the peaceful, prayerful activities and legitimate avenues of government."

Nationally, support for legalized abortion remains strong. An Associated Press poll taken shortly after the Colorado incident showed support at its highest level in two years.

The poll found that 58 percent of the respondents thought abortion should be legal in most or all cases. That's an increase from 51 percent who said so at the beginning of 2015. The poll showed equal support among both Democrats and Republicans.

"I don't think that poll is fair," Monahan-Mancini said. "And I don't think it's reflective of the average American and what they think."

(Continued On Page 13.)

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Report Says Sisters' Numbers Shrinking, But Membership Is Growing More Diverse

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS)

-- A new report on U.S. women religious said that religious life is becoming not only more multiethnic but more international as well.

The report, "Understanding U.S. Catholic Sisters Today," said that of all women who entered religious life in the past 10 years, only 57 percent were white, while 17 percent were Hispanic, 16 percent were Asian, and 8 percent were black -- including both African-American women and those born in Africa.

Because of the growing numbers of foreign-born women religious, the report noted, Trinity Washington University recently received a grant to study and map the presence of international women religious in the United States and their evolving ministries in response to church and societal needs.

The report, released December 9, 2015 was commissioned by FADICA, Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, which represents about 50 philanthropic organizations.

It highlights the major findings of the latest sociological studies of U.S. women religious. The report was written by Kathleen Sprows Cummings, director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame. The findings "help illuminate present realities of U.S. women's religious life," the report said, "and point toward priorities that will help ensure a vibrant future."

Two aspects of U.S. religious life today, according to the report, have not changed: the increasing average age of women religious and their declining numbers.

"Only 9 percent of religious sisters are younger than 60;



CNS Photo/Jim West

NUNS AT PRAYER: Benedictine nuns pray in the chapel in late March 2015 at the Abbey of Saint Walburga in Virginia Dale CO. A new report on U.S. women religious said that religious life is becoming not only more multiethnic but more international as well.

more than two-thirds of women and men vowed religious are older than 65," the report said.

"Women's religious life is presently completing a fifth consecutive decade of decline," it added. "The number of U.S. sisters has decreased by 72.5 percent in the last 49 years, and while there are recent signs that the pace of decline has slowed, there is nothing suggesting that is likely to be reversed."

At the same time, "the most encouraging conclusion drawn from recent studies of U.S. Catholic sisters is that ... many U.S. Catholic women are still drawn to religious life," the report said. Research show that "while there is a great deal of concern about the future of individual communities and ministries, the majority of sisters remain optimistic about religious life," it added.

The report placed the figure of women religious in the United States today at roughly 50,000 -- about the same number as there had been in 1939, when U.S. population numbers were lower but vocations were on an upswing. Crowded novitiates

"and overflowing convents" in the mid-20th century were an "anomaly," it noted.

"Decreased contact with sisters not only reduces the number of women entering religious life, but also may make adjusting to religious life more difficult for those who do enter. Increasing sisters' contact with nonmembers should be a priority," the report said.

While those women who do join religious life are often older and better educated than those of past generations, they also bring with them student debt.

"Nine in 10 congregations with three or more serious inquiries asked at least one person to delay formal application due to educational debt, while seven in 10 congregations turned at least one person away," the report said. "Only half of those with loans at the time of application were eventually accepted. The rest were turned away."

The situation has religious orders in a double bind, according to the report.

"While congregations do

not want to turn away new members who offer vitality to a waning congregation, they must consider how much benefit a candidate brings to an institute compared to the burden of educational debt," it said.

"Religious congregations do not want candidates' guilt about burdening a congregation with student loans to dissuade them from pursuing a vocation. At the same time, the institutes do not want to make educational debt a top or even exclusive consideration in debating whether or not to accept a candidate. Yet with other financial responsibilities, such as rising health care costs that are particularly formidable for the already-aging sister population, concern regarding educational debt is an increasingly significant aspect of the discernment process."

Another potential source of worry for vocations is that "young Catholic women show a greater disaffection than males within their generational cohort. This represents a historic reversal," the report said. "In the past, women of every U.S. Christian

denomination have prayed and attended religious services more often and held more orthodox beliefs than their male counterparts."

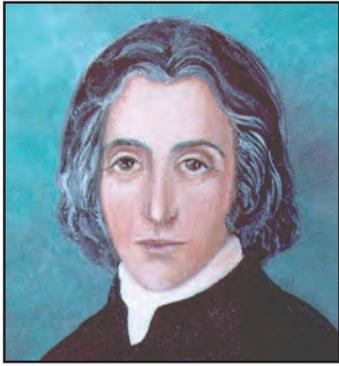
The study suggested it could be "helpful for parishes and dioceses to create more space and support for discernment to all forms of consecrated life, including emerging ones."

The 40-page report outlined 10 key themes for understanding U.S. Catholic sisters today: path to vocation; ethnicity, race and region; generations and gender; characteristics of religious life; age of entry and education; ministry; collaboration; charisma and identity; leadership; and the sisters' visibility in U.S. culture.

"From the 1840s until the late 1960s, the average Catholic woman in the United States found, through religious life, far more opportunities for education, leadership, and meaningful work within church structures than outside of them. Since the late 1960s, many of the women who would have been attracted to religious life in earlier generations are finding alternative ways to live their vocational call, both within the church and in secular society," the report said.

One item the study recommended was further research. "The most recent study of sisters' ministries in the United States was conducted in 2002 by (Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister) Anne Munley under the auspices of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious," and was just a follow-up to a 1991 report on the topic.

The study's executive summary also called for more research on sisters in the Southwest, where women religious have had a long-standing presence and where the Catholic population has increased dramatically; the reasons women give for not entering religious life; and the best practices for women's religious orders to transmit their charism to lay partners.



A Prince In The Service Of The Great King

The Servant Of God
Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin
1770 - 1840

Saints Are Humble, Not Perfect, Says Professor

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- When people think of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, they should consider everything about her, said a college professor who once volunteered with the future

saint's order, the Missionaries of Charity, in India.

"Saints are humble beings; it doesn't mean they're perfect," said Mathew Schmalz, an associate professor of religious studies at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The Vatican announced Dec. 17 that the path for Blessed

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O God, light of the faithful and shepherd of souls, who sent Servant of God Demetrius Gallitzin to serve God's people in the Allegheny Mountains, feeding your sheep by his words and forming them by his example, pour out your Spirit to sow seeds of truth in people's hearts and to awaken in them obedience to the faith.

May the Gospel continue to be preached and the Sacraments bring power and grace to the faithful. By the example of this man of faith, Demetrius Gallitzin, may your people advance in the path of salvation and love.

Confident of your faithfulness to us, we humbly ask you, our God, to grant us the favor of (name your intention).

May Christ's saving work continue to the end of the ages, and may we feel a more urgent call to work for the salvation of every creature. We pray this, as did your priest Demetrius Gallitzin, through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

+ + +

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living Christian life to its fullest."

When he was a junior in college, he studied in India and spent some time volunteering with the Missionaries of Charity.

Over the years he heard stories about the order's founder, who was not just a diminutive woman religious but a tough woman who was "demanding of herself and those around her."

This didn't lessen his opinion of Blessed Teresa; he said it proved how she was able to do the work she did.

But what made the future saint even more real to Schmalz

that she was more complicated than people might think.

Schmalz had a brief encounter with Blessed Teresa when he volunteered at a homeless shelter in New York near a Missionaries of Charity home. He was invited to meet her in one of her visits to U.S. homes run by her order.

The tiny woman placed rosaries in the hands of those greeting her. For some reason, she walked past Schmalz, but then turned around and placed a black plastic, rosary in his hands and told him: "Jesus through Mary."

That moment has stayed with him for years.

He described it this spring in an article for the **Boston Globe's** Catholic news website, Crux, noting that at the time of his meeting with her he was "in limbo, struggling to figure out what to do" with his life.

"Mother Teresa was an emblem of strength. I felt that strength in her hands: They were rough hands, compact, weathered, powerful. Jesus through Mary -- the certainness of that faith, the straightness of that path."

"For all her heroism and controversy, Mother Teresa stands in -- and intercedes -- for all us in our own inevitable and very human contradictions. She was humble and willful, wise and naive, steadfast and opportunistic, tough and vulnerable. She had boundless faith, but experienced boundless darkness," he wrote.

"It's wonderful the church is honoring her," he told CNS.



CNS Photo

BLESSED TERESA OF KOLKATA

Teresa's canonization can now move forward with the approval of a miracle attributed to her intercession. The founder of the Missionaries of Charity, who died in 1997 and was beatified in 2003, was labeled the "saint of the gutters" for her work with the poor and dying in Kolkata and around the world.

Schmalz told Catholic News Service in a Dec. 18 telephone interview said that when he was growing up, Mother Teresa was "held up as an example of someone with incredible faith

was the 2007 publication of her letters: **Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light**, which reveals her decades-long struggles with disbelief. "If I ever become a saint," she wrote in one letter, "I will surely be one of 'darkness.'"

The letters, written to spiritual advisers, reveal a dark night of the soul that Schmalz said only shows how "God transforms our humanity."

These letters, which he had his students read to understand Blessed Teresa's legacy, reveal



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Word of Life



The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis
Learn From Baby Jesus

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The Christmas season is a time to learn from baby Jesus to let go of selfishness and be humble and giving as he is, Pope Francis said.

In fact, people should take the little figurine of Jesus from their Nativity scene and kiss it, "and tell Jesus, 'I want to humble like you, humble like God,'" the pope said Dec. 30 during his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square.

The pope dedicated his catechesis to the importance of contemplating baby Jesus. The Christmas season offers a timely occasion for this reflection, since many people customarily set up a Nativity scene at home, he said.

Pope Francis said the figure of the holy infant in his simple crib invites people to adore the child Jesus and to contemplate the mystery of the incarnation as a revelation of God's saving love.

"In order to grow in the faith, we need to reflect more often on baby Jesus," who came into the world in such a humble way "for us," he said.

"This is a great mystery: God is humble. We, who are proud, full of vanity, who think we're a big deal, yet we're nothing. He is great, he is humble and he became a child. This is a true mystery. God is humble. This is beautiful," the pope said.

While the New Testament offers few accounts of Jesus' infancy and early childhood, the pope said people can still learn a lot by looking at the children in the world.

"We discover, most of all, that children want our attention. They have to be at the center of attention -- because they're proud? No. Because they need to feel protected," he said.

"We, too, have to put Jesus at the center of our lives and realize, even if it seems paradoxical, that we have a responsibility to protect him.

"He wants to be in our arms, he wants to be looked after and be able to fix his gaze onto ours," he said.

Just as being affectionate to a child can make him or her smile, people can "make baby Jesus smile by demonstrating our love and our joy because he is among us."

"His smile is a sign of that love that gives us assurances of being loved," the pope said.

Children also show that when it's playtime, adults have to let go of their own mindset and enter into the world of that child, the pope said. "We have to understand what he likes and not be self-centered and make him do what we like. It's a lesson for us."

"Before Jesus, we are called to let go of our pretension of autonomy -- and this is the heart of the problem, you know, our pretense of autonomy -- in order to embrace instead the true form of freedom, which consists of recognizing whom we have before us and serving him," he said.

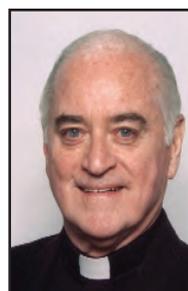
"He, the child, is the son of God who comes to save us. He came among us to show us the face of the father so full of love and mercy. So hold the baby Jesus tight in our arms and let us put ourselves at his service. He is the source of love and serenity."



ONE MORE TIME: Holy Name Parish, Ebensburg, was founded as Saint Patrick Parish in 1816. Pictured is the second church, built in 1850. A third church, with the title "Holy Name," was built in 1869 and served the parish until the present church was built in 1968. Along with two other bicentennial parishes, Saint Patrick in Newry and Saint Thomas the Apostle in Bedford, Holy Name is an official diocesan pilgrimage site for the Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

When you begin to think about the new adventures you'll embark on during this New Year, try to make Jesus Christ the centerpiece. To accomplish this, I'd like to share some thoughts with you.

Cardinal John Henry Newman comes to mind. Cardinal Newman was born in England, and became an Episcopal priest in 1825. In 1841, Newman began having doubts about the Anglican Church, and eventually resigned his post. In 1845, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church and was ordained by the Catholic Church in 1847. He died in 1890 and was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010. Cardinal Newman wrote the following prayer. It is one of various versions. But it is a beautiful expression of his total dependence on Jesus. Perhaps it will inspire you in making some New Year's resolutions, as it did for me.



Spirituality For Today

By Father John Catoir
Inspiration For The New Year

"Teach me, my Lord, to be sweet and gentle in all the events of life -- in disappointments, in the thoughtlessness of others, in the insincerity of those whom I trusted, in the unfaithfulness of those on whom I relied.

"Let me put myself aside to think of the happiness of others, to hide my little pains and heartaches, so that I may be the only one to suffer from them.

"Teach me to profit by the suffering that comes across my path. Let me so use it that it may mellow me, not harden and embitter me; that it may make me patient, not irritable; that it may

make me broad in my forgiveness, not haughty and overbearing.

"May no one be less good for having come within my influence, no one less pure, less kind, less noble for having been a fellow traveler in our journey toward Eternal Life.

"As I go my rounds from one distraction to another, let me whisper from time to time a word of love to Thee.

"May my life be spent in the supernatural full of power for good, strong in its purpose of sanctity. Amen."



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Hyphenated Names

Q. My question centers around a Catholic couple, now divorced, who are having a strong disagreement as to what should be the last name of their two children. The father is adamant that the children's surname should remain the same (i.e., his own), while the mother has filed court papers to have the children's last name be changed to a hyphenated one (i.e., her own maiden name followed by the father's last name).

My question is whether the Catholic Church would be opposed to their having a hyphenated last name. Does the church have a fixed position on this? (Alexandria, Virginia)

A. I am not aware of any church teaching on the use of hyphenated last names, nor do I believe that one exists. The question of what name a woman will use after marriage, it seems to me, is cultural rather than religious.

In some places in Latin America, for example, it is cus-

tomary for a married woman to retain her family's name as well as that of her husband. Even in other cultures in Western Europe, it has not been unusual for a married woman to keep her family's name, particularly when that name would be more recognized in the area where they intend to live.

Interestingly, research in America shows that, from the mid-1970s onward, there was a rise in the number of college-educated women keeping their surname. In the 1990s however, that trend slowed, and subsequent studies show that women in the United States are largely choosing to take their spouse's last name.

In the case to which you refer, it is unfortunate that the choice of the children's last name has created such acrimony, since that can only hurt the children. Perhaps the couple should see a counselor about working out a solution more amicably. (Also, I do not know the ages of the children, but if they have

reached the age of reason, they probably should be consulted on this, since they will be the carriers of whatever name is chosen.)

Q. I know that Pope Francis has spoken against big retail corporations, as contributing to economic injustice in the world. I am currently employed by a national pet supply corporation, which, as far as I know, tries to do good things -- pay it forward and help both people and animals.

In my job, I do feel that I have lots of opportunities to be the face and hands of Jesus for my customers. But the pope's remarks now have me concerned. It may be that I don't fully understand the wrongs that this (or any) corporation might be committing on a larger level.

Do you think that employees of big box stores have a duty to quit their jobs and try to find different, smaller-scale employers? What would Pope Francis recommend to someone in my position? (Waynesboro, Virginia)

A. It is true that Pope Francis has regularly spoken out in defense of the poor and against unbridled capitalism. In particular, in a talk in Bolivia in July of 2015, he challenged a world economic system that "has imposed the mentality of profit at any price, with no concern for social exclusion" and said that poor countries should not be reduced to being providers of raw material and cheap labor for developed nations.

In 2013, in "Evangelii Gaudium" (in No. 56), the pope had lamented the enormous gap between the haves and the have-nots, saying that "this imbalance is the result of ideologies that defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace."

That does not equate, though, to the condemnation of every large-scale corporation, and each one must be evaluated separately. Since most of us have neither the time nor the talent to do this, it helps to rely on organizations which regularly screen large companies for the ethics of their business and employment practices.



For The Journey

By Effie Caldarola
Year Of Mercy Offers
An Opportunity To Grow

January can be a drag, a real letdown.

The remaining Christmas cookies are stale crumbs and the tree, once so respected, has been ingloriously dragged out of the house to be recycled into mulch. One by one, the Christmas lights in the neighborhood have gone out, as if some festive power grid is failing, and night seems a little darker.

After the Epiphany, even the liturgical excitement has waned and we slip rather disconsolately into that oh-so-well-named "ordinary time."

For me, the first lines of Christina Rossetti's beautiful Christmas poem are more appropriate for the grim days of January than December's dazzle: "In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone."

But the new year heralds good things as well and provides opportunity for growth. It brings with it a sense of order re-established. My house never looks cleaner and less cluttered than the day I vacuum up the departed tree's last needles.

January invites us to dig deeper into the mystery we have just commemorated. Leaving the eggnog and the parties behind, we ask ourselves just what the Incarnation really means in our lives. That's a hard question. Its best answer must be found in prayer.

One of my favorite lines from the Advent readings is from Micah 5:4, "He shall be peace." The early prophet was not saying Israel's future king would bring peace or foster peace. No, much deeper, much more encompassing than that. He will be peace.

It reminds you of what Jesus said. "I am the way, and the truth and the life." I'm not merely showing you the way, spelling out for you the truth. I am the way.

This can only mean, for us, that we must engage in relationship with Jesus. We aren't just called to do good in this world, but to grow with him who is good, he who is the image of the invisible God. This is a call we cannot neglect.

Put yourself in the mind of a Jewish person at the time of Christ. Your faith has taught you that a Messiah will appear someday, to save the people of God from their grievous suffering. All of the prophets point to a future king in David's line. If the Gallup Poll existed back in Jesus' day, the average Jewish person would probably have described for the pollster this Messiah in terms of military might and power.

At the time of Christ's birth, Judah and Galilee, the towns of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and even Jerusalem, were all under the crushing heel of the boot of the Roman Empire. If you dreamed of liberation from this mighty force, you probably saw it in terms of revolution, the kind of revolution you imagined your savior would bring.

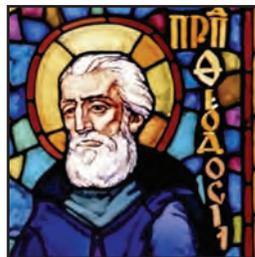
Could you have visualized your salvation coming in the form of a baby born to the poor? Worse, a man who would eventually be killed in the most ignominious execution the times would allow? How can this be our Messiah?

In some ways, those questions still haunt us. Why does our world still suffer so? Where is our salvation? Why didn't Jesus change everything?

And moreover, if Jesus surprised his people, how often does he come to us and we fail to see him because we have preconceived ideas of who he is?

Let January be your classroom, Jesus your teacher. Ask him these questions. Take up the challenge of the Year of Mercy and ask Jesus how you can merge yourself into his mind, how he can change everything for you.

Theodosius the
Cenobiarch
423 - 529
Feast - January 11



Born in Cappadocia and inspired by Abraham, Theodosius went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After leading a church community near Bethlehem, he moved to a mountain cave, which he and his numerous disciples soon outgrew. So he built a large monastery with infirmaries for the sick, aged and mentally ill; churches for four different national groups; and a rule that included manual labor. It became a model in Palestine. Theodosius was appointed abbot general of all cenobia, or monastic communities, and battled the Monophysite heresy. He endured an imperial banishment, and when he died at 105 was buried in his mountain cave, which by tradition had been the Magi's lodging.

'People's Pastoral' Letter Shares Struggles, Hopes, Dreams Of Appalachians

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Everyone has a story.

A new pastoral letter emerging from the hollows, farms, mountain communities and urban enclaves of Appalachia is giving everyday people a chance to teach anew their stories in their journey to overcome the social injustice that they find deeply entrenched in the region.

Titled "The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories that Shape Us," the document comes from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia and reflects the dreams, desires and disappointments of Appalachians at a time when

the region's plight is often overlooked.

Organizers describe the document as a "people's pastoral" that gives voice to those who are rarely heard above deeply partisan political debates.

Michael Iafrate, chair of the committee's board and the document's primary author, said the letter showcases the teaching authority -- what he called the "magisterium" -- of the people.

Iafrate and the others involved in preparing the document over the last three years explained that they moved forward with the project out of a sense of urgency because people felt that the issues they face daily were not being actively or forcefully addressed by the Catholic Church.



**THE TELLING TAKES US HOME:
TAKING OUR PLACE IN THE STORIES THAT SHAPE US**
A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia

CNS Photo

'PEOPLE'S PASTORAL': This is the cover of "The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories that Shape Us," a new pastoral letter from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia. The document reflects the dreams, desires and disappointments of Appalachians at a time when the region's plight is often overlooked.

"Somebody came up with the term 'people's pastoral' as a symbolic phrase for what we wanted the new pastoral to be. With or without the bishops' signatures, we pressed on with the pastoral," Iafrate told Catholic News Service.

"It's that the authority is coming from elsewhere, that all the people of God need to listen to the voices of people, whether laypeople or clergy or bishops. That's another kind of authority that we all need to attend to," he said.

"Also, if the bishops were not really in a place to generate reflection on social justice or to speak out that this would be a way of inviting them to those conversations."

(Continued On Page 11.)

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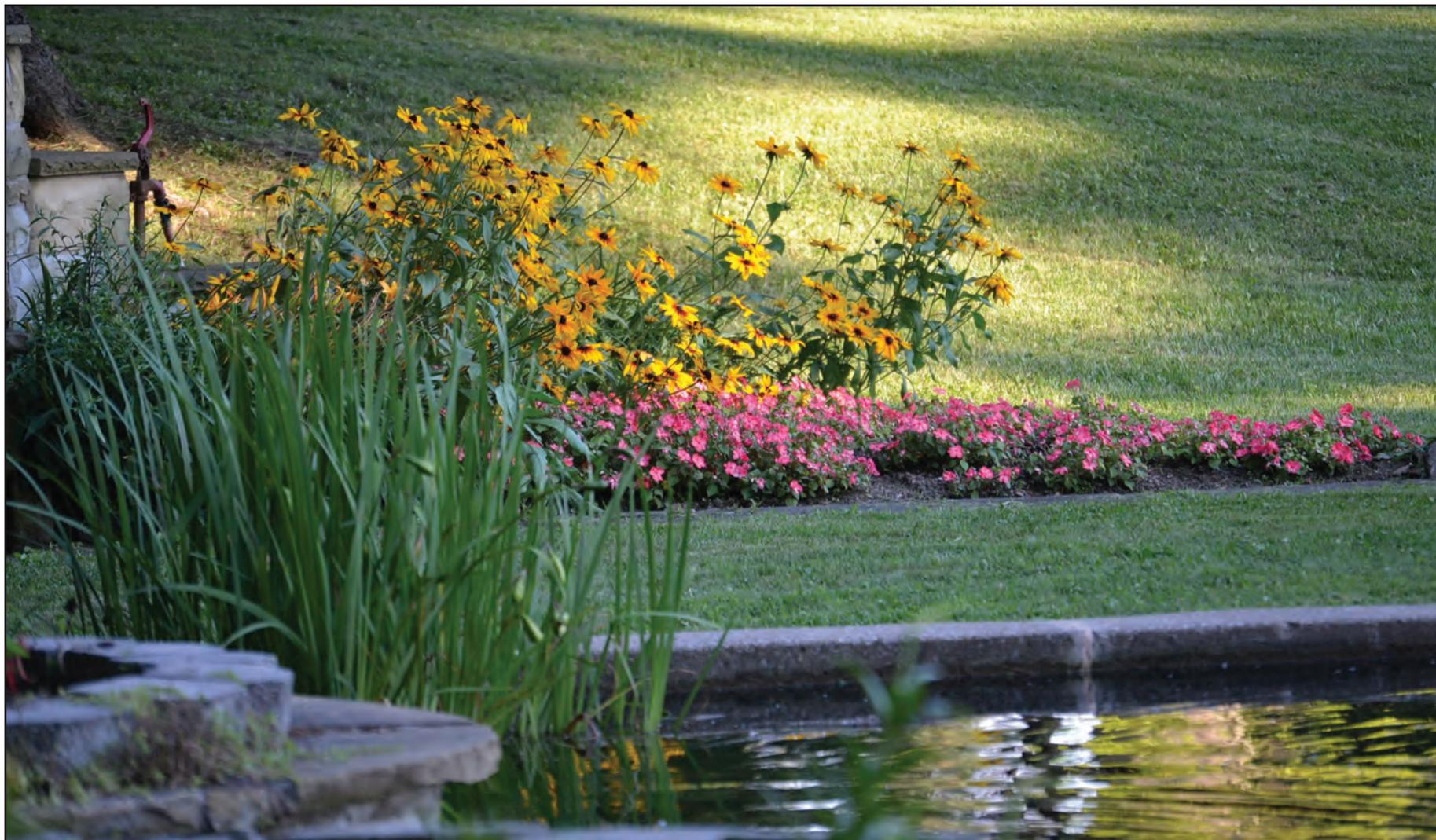


Photo By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein

APPALACHIAN BEAUTY: The natural beauty of the Appalachian countryside is captured in a file photo from the Shrine of Our Lady of the Alleghenies in Loretto.

(Continued From Page 10.)

The issuance of a new document addressing the needs and concerns of a region whose stunning landscapes and rich biodiversity belie the immense social and economic ills confronting so many Appalachians continues a once-every-20-year pattern that began in 1975.

The bishops of Appalachia promulgated “This Land Is Home to Me: A Pastoral Letter on the Poverty and Powerlessness in Appalachia” 40 years ago. That was followed by “At Home in the Web of Life: A Pastoral Message on Sustainable Communities in Appalachia” in 1995. Both pastoral letters challenged local communities and wider society to address poverty, unemployment, environmental exploitation by coal mining and logging firms, substance abuse, the lack of access to health care and the low quality of education that keeps people mired in uncertainty.

“By calling it the people’s pastoral, it had to come from the people because there were the only ones who could illustrate would could be included,” said Sister Jackie Hanrahan, a member of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame and a consultant on the project.

“It was very important to the people at the Catholic Committee of Appalachia that they wanted every voice possible to be heard, those most at the margins, those who are voiceless and really have no voice,” explained Sister Beth Davies, a member of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame who served as a consultant to the drafting committee.

A new pastoral letter emerging from the hollows, farms, mountain communities and urban enclaves of Appalachia is giving everyday people a chance to teach anew their stories in their journey to overcome the social injustice that they find deeply entrenched in the region.

The voices included homeless people, Latinos and African-Americans, Christians, non-Christians and people with no religion, coal miners suffering from black lung disease and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

“We’re talking to each other. We’re listening. The dialogue piece,” said Sister Jackie, director of the Appalachian Faith and Ecology Center in Norton, Virginia.

Sister Beth and Sister Jackie told CNS the pastoral reflects the call of Pope Francis for members of the Catholic Church to be in touch with people who experience everyday struggles, pains, joys and celebrations.

“The three pastoral letters are so in sync with Pope Francis, when he talks about wisdom coming from listening, listening with the heart. That’s what we’re trying to do here,” said Sister Beth, director of the Addiction Education Center in Pennington Gap, Virginia.

“With this one, people are becoming more engaged because they are really saying, ‘You really want to hear what I’m saying. My story is important,’” she added.

The new document continues the almost poetic narrative style established in the first two pastorals. It urges people to recall the teachings of Jesus and how they apply to today’s social challenges. It cites the words of Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI and St. John Paul II and their call to respond to the needs of forgotten people as well as the importance of protecting the earth.

Sections also call upon individual bishops, priests and others working in the church to follow the lead of Pope Francis by enthusiastically taking up the charge of justice for the poor and marginalized.

With the pastoral published online and hard copies due out Jan. 1, members of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia hope that the document will inspire parishioners, pastors, women religious and bishops to eagerly take up the call for justice.

“It’s to encourage people to see,” Sister Jackie said, “that where the inclusivity of the Gospel is denied in my presence, I will make a response.”

“*The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories that Shape Us*” is available online at www.ccappal.org/thetellingtakesushome2015.pdf. Printed copies can be ordered through the Catholic Committee of Appalachia website, www.ccappal.org.

Mercy Enlightens Past Year, Gives Hope For New Year, Says Pope Francis

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The gift of mercy is a light that helps Christians reflect on the past year and radiates hope at the start of the new year, Pope Francis said.

While retracing the events of 2015 may recall moments of both joy and sorrow, it also offers a moment to understand the presence of God who “renews and sustains with his help,” Pope Francis said during an evening prayer service in St. Peter’s Basilica on New Year’s Eve.

The prayer service included eucharistic adoration and Benediction, as well as the singing of the “Te Deum,” a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God, for the closing year.

The “Te Deum,” he said, is the church’s way of giving thanks and recognizing the loving presence of God throughout history.

“With this hymn, we look back at the history of salvation where, through God’s mysterious plan, the various events of our life in this past year find” their place and meaning, the pope said.

Although the past year may bring both happy and painful memories, he said, it also challenges Christians to ponder on whether world events occurred according to God’s will or through people’s plans, which are “often loaded with private interests, an unquenchable thirst for power and gratuitous violence.”

The pope said Christians must interpret the signs given by God to truly see his merciful love. Even though the year was marred by violence and the suffering of people fleeing for better living conditions, there were also gestures of goodness, love and solidarity, even if they are not covered by the news.

“Good things,” he said, “never make the news.”

“These signs of love cannot and should not be obscured by the strength of evil,” the pope said. “Good always triumphs, even if in some moments it may seem weaker and hidden.”

Addressing those present as the bishop of Rome, the pope called on Romans to move beyond the present difficulties. The city has faced challenging moments as public services such as transportation and maintenance have deteriorated. In October, Ignazio Marino resigned as mayor following accusations that personal expenses were covered through city funds.

Pope Francis encouraged the people of Rome, saying that the commitment of recuperating the fundamental values of service, honesty and solidarity, can “overcome the serious uncertainties that have dominated this year ... symptoms of a poor sense of dedication to the common good.”

Recalling the Marian icon known as “Salus Populi Romani” (health of the Roman people), the pope invoked Mary’s intercession so that the people of Rome may become “privileged interpreters of faith, hospitality, brotherhood and peace.”

Despite the 40-degree temperature -- cold for Rome -- Pope Francis visited and prayed before the Nativity scene in St. Peter’s Square. He also spent time greeting the crowds gathered, wishing them all a “Happy New Year.”



CNS Photos/Paul Haring

NEW YEAR’S EVE: On New Year’s Eve, Thursday, December 31, 2015, Pope Francis visited the Nativity Scene in Saint Peter’s Square at the Vatican, and greeted the crowd of pilgrims.



March

(Continued From Page 5.)

Reversing the landmark Supreme Court decision remains the long-term goal of the march. But organizers told CNS they prefer to focus on changing the nationwide conversation.

"I think we have a much loftier goal, and that's to change the hearts and minds of Americans. That no woman, in her right mind, would ever choose abortion. Because we really have a deprived culture when any woman thinks that's an empowering act," Monahan-Manzini said.

Ciccocioppo said the challenge to the pro-life movement in its quest to overturn *Roe v. Wade* is "that the court is still stacked against us."

"But we're in this for the long haul. This is going to be going on for as long as it takes," he said.

"First of all, to recognize the humanity of the unborn child in law," he continued. "But also, another focus of the march is obviously to help get the truth out there about how abortion harms women physically, emotionally and mentally, and kills living human beings, so we can get the hearts and minds of the culture to really accept the fact that this is killing of little human beings, citizens of our country."

Spencer

(Continued From Page 1.)

The new school will feature an enhanced, uniform elementary curriculum and a STREAM curriculum (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, the Arts, and Math) for middle school students.

Pre-registration for the new school has yielded higher than expected numbers, the Diocese has reported, and many families from outside of the Catholic school system have also expressed interest.

"I'm looking forward to being involved at the very beginning, and I think people will want to belong to our family because our program will be so strong," Spencer said.



CNS Photo./Paul Haring

WOMAN PASSES THROUGH HOLY DOOR: A woman becomes emotional as she passes through the Holy Door of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major after its opening by Pope Francis in Rome, January 1. The Holy Doors of Rome's four major basilicas are now open.

God's Mercy Knows No Limits, Frees People From Despair, Says Pope

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- God's ability to forgive "knows no limits" as his mercy frees people from bitterness and despair, Pope Francis said.

"The church's forgiveness must be every bit as broad as that offered by Jesus on the cross and by Mary at his feet. There is no other way," he said after opening the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Mary Major Jan. 1, the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and the World Day of Prayer for Peace.

On the first day of the new year, Pope Francis opened the last holy door in Rome as part of the extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

"The door we have opened is, in fact, a Door of Mercy,"

he said in his homily, referring to the Roman basilica's large bronze doors depicting Mary presenting her resurrected son, Jesus.

"Those who cross its threshold are called to enter into the merciful love of the father with complete trust and freedom from fear; they can leave this basilica knowing with certainty that Mary is ever at their side," especially during times of trouble and sorrow, he said.

At the church dedicated to Mary and on her feast day as Mother of God, the pope explained how Mary is the mother of mercy because she bore "the very face of divine mercy," the son of God "made incarnate for our salvation."

"Mary is an icon of how the church must offer forgiveness to those who seek it. The mother of forgiveness teaches the church

that the forgiveness granted on Golgotha knows no limits. Neither the law with its quibbles, nor the wisdom of this world with its distinctions, can hold it back," he said.

Mary offers the world Jesus, who in turn, offers that forgiveness which "renews life, enables us once more to do God's will and fills us with true happiness," the pope said.

"The power of forgiveness is the true antidote to the sadness caused by resentment and vengeance," which do nothing but "trouble the mind and wound the heart, robbing it of rest and peace."

After the Mass, the pope symbolically opened another door, this time the large iron gates in front of a smaller chapel housing a Marian icon he is particularly devoted to -- the "Salus

Populi Romani" (health of the Roman people).

A deacon told the congregation to pray together with the Holy Father and ask Mary "to take us by the hand and lead us to the Lord Jesus." After the pope pushed open the gates, he brought up a small floral arrangement of white lilies to the altar and prayed in silence before the icon.

Earlier in the day, the pope further marked the World Day of Peace in his noon Angelus address, when he said peace must not only be cultivated but also conquered in a spiritual fight being waged by war and indifference.

(Continued On Page 15.)

Now Showing

‘Concussion’ Is Uplifting Story Of Doctor’s Struggle

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Neither the National Football League nor the Federal Bureau of Investigation comes off particularly well in the fact-based drama “Concussion” (Columbia).

But the film’s central figure, the Nigerian-born coroner Dr. Bennet Omalu (Will Smith), certainly does.

Given that Omalu’s generally admirable character is portrayed as being shaped, more than anything else, by his devout

Catholic faith, believing moviegoers will find much to enjoy in this uplifting profile.

Omalu gained fame -- and initially stirred controversy -- as a result of his discovery that repeated jolts to the brain, such as those sustained on the gridiron, can cause a degenerative disease called chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE. The then Pittsburgh-based pathologist, an expert in neurological forensics, came to this conclusion after studying the body of Steelers’ Hall of Fame center Mike Webster (David Morse).

Webster had suffered a mysterious mental and emo-



CNS Photo/Columbia Pictures

CONCUSSION: Will Smith stars in a scene from the movie “Concussion.” The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

tional decline before his untimely death of a heart attack at age 50. As “Concussion” shows us, a number of the League’s other veterans found themselves caught in a similar downward spiral. For some, the disintegration ended in suicide.

Together with his celebrated and supportive boss, Cyril Wecht (Albert Brooks), Omalu publishes his findings. They win him the backing of the Steelers’ former team physician, Julian Bailes (Alec Baldwin). But they also draw fierce opposition from the NFL whose in-house medical staff -- led by the team doctor of the New York Jets, Elliot Pellman (Paul Reiser) -- schemes to vilify the outsider and discredit his research.

The perils of taking on an institution that, as Wecht puts it, “owns a day of the week, the same day the church used to own,” are amply illustrated. As depicted here, they culminate in Wecht’s arrest by the FBI on charges that were ultimately dismissed -- and that the screenplay clearly implies were trumped up in the first place.

Since Wecht’s indictment could compromise Omalu’s employment situation, and therefore his immigration status, things begin to look grim for the avidly patriotic would-be American. He finds a source of moral support, however, in the person of fellow immigrant Prema Mutiso (Gugu Mbatha-Raw).

At the urging of his priest, solitary Omalu has given this newcomer -- a Kenyan native -- shelter as a boarder in his apartment. As the clergyman no doubt foresaw, she enlivens Omalu’s moribund social life; as he may not have expected, she also wins Omalu’s heart.

Earnest and idealistic, but leavened with humor, writer-director Peter Landesman’s picture -- adapted from the 2009 GQ magazine article “Game Brain” by Jeanne Marie Laskas -- has strong appeal for grown viewers.

Recommendation for a younger audience is hindered,

however, by the fact that Omalu’s Christian morals do not extend to the bedroom. At his unspoken invitation, Prema joins him there well before there’s any question of her meeting him at the altar.

Additionally, the script throws up some salty language. Although not excessive, these wayward words serves to reinforce the idea that patrons would do well to approach “Concussion” armed with a sound helmet of maturity.

The film contains gory medical images, a premarital situation, about a half-dozen uses of profanity, a couple of rough terms and occasional crude language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Coming Up On ‘Proclaim!’

Upcoming guests on “Keeping The Faith,” Bishop Mark L. Bartchak’s segment of “Proclaim!” will include:

January 17 - - Elaine Spencer, recently - appointed principal of the new regional school in the Altoona Quadrant, looks ahead to the opportunities the school will offer.

January 24 - - In celebration of the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., Diane Campagna, a member of Saint Aloysius Parish in Cresson, talks about local efforts to promote a culture of life.

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May They Rest In Peace



Charles J. Dadey

Charles J. Dadey, 95, of Johnstown, died Tuesday, December 29, 2015, at Memorial Medical Center. He was the father of Father Neil Dadey, pastor of Our Lady of Victory Parish in State College and Dean of the Northern Deanery.

He was born November 4, 1920, in Johnstown, the son of the late Rudolph and Anna Dadey, and was the last surviving member of his immediate family.

He was preceded in death by parents; loving wife, Ruth; son, Mark; sisters, Matilda, Ann, Velma and Helen; and brothers, Albert, William, Rudolph and Ralph.

Surviving are his children Scott Dadey, and wife, Michelle, Downingtown; Eric Dadey, and wife, Debbie, Sevierville TN; Father Neil, State College; and Theresa M. Dadey, Johnstown; grandchildren, Adam, Ryan, Evan, Nathan, Becky and Alex; sisters - in - law, Marie Mraz and Carol Gregory; and brother - in - law, James Dunn.

He was a member of Saint John Gualbert Cathedral, where he performed many duties as an usher, and was a former member of Holy Name Society. He served in the Army during World War II. Former employee of Kolb's Bakery and Gautier Steel Mill and he retired from **The Tribune-Democrat** after 35 years of service as a printer.

The funeral Mass for Charles J. Dadey was celebrated Monday, January 4 at Saint John Gualbert Cathedral, Johnstown, with his son, Father Neil Dadey as celebrant. Committal was at Saint John Gualbert Cemetery.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

POPE WALKS IN PROCESSION: Pope Francis walks in procession after celebrating Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, Friday, January 1 at Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

Mercy

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Christians are called at the beginning of the new year to open their hearts and "reawaken the attention to one's neighbor, to those who are closest," he said.

"War is not the only enemy of peace, but also indifference, which makes us think only of ourselves and creates barriers, suspicions, fears and closures.

These are the enemies of peace," the pope said.

Recalling the church's celebration of the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the pope asked for her intercession so that the faithful may imitate her in guarding and meditating on all that happens in their hearts.

Mary "preserves the joys and loosens the knots of our lives, taking them to the Lord," he said.

The pope also celebrated Mass in St. Peter's Basilica in

the morning to mark the Marian feast day.

God is present in human history, he said, despite signs and events that "tend to make us think instead that he is absent."

"Sometimes we ask ourselves how it is possible that human injustice persists unabated, and that the arrogance of the powerful continues to demean the weak, relegating them to the most squalid outskirts of our world," he said.

"How can the fullness of time have come when we are witnessing hordes of men, women and children fleeing war, hunger and persecution, ready to risk their lives simply to encounter respect for their fundamental rights?"

Pope Francis went on to say that notwithstanding those events, the "swollen torrent" of misery is powerless "before the ocean of mercy which floods our world." The grace of Christ "brings our hope of salvation to fulfillment" and gives Christians the strength to build a more "just and fraternal world."

"Where philosophical reason and political negotiation cannot arrive, there the power of faith, which brings the grace of Christ's Gospel, can arrive, opening ever new pathways to reason and to negotiation," he said.

(Contributing to this story were Carol Glatz and Junno Arocho Esteves.)



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Register Sponsoring Pilgrimage To Rome For Mother Teresa's Canonization



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Thousands of people filled Saint Peter's Square at the Vatican on Sunday, April 27, 2014, when Pope Francis presided at the canonization of Saint John XXIII and Saint John Paul II.

Pilgrims from the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown will have the chance to experience all of the solemnity of a canonization Mass if they join **The Catholic Register** for a Holy Year Of Mercy pilgrimage to Rome, which will include attendance at the Sunday, September 4 canonization of Mother Teresa of Kalkota.

This is the first - ever pilgrimage sponsored by **The Catholic Register**, giving readers the opportunity not only to gain the Holy Year Indulgences at the Papal Basilicas at the Vatican and in the city of Rome, but to visit Italian cities including Florence; Siena - - home of Saint Catherine; and Assisi - - the birthplace of Saint Francis and of Saint Clare.

Further details of the Monday, August 29 - Wednesday, September 7 pilgrimage will be announced in an upcoming issue of **The Catholic Register**.

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