

# The Catholic Register

Official Publication Of  
The Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown

Volume LXXXIX, No. 16 Published Bi - Weekly (USPS 094 - 280)

www.dioceseaj.org December 15, 2014

## Lakemont Pastor Publishes Daily Meditation Book On Priesthood

By Msgr. Timothy P. Stein

About ten years ago, Monsignor Michael A. Becker became aware of one subject missing from the plethora of daily reading and meditation books available to spiritual seekers.

"It occurred to me," he said, "that there was nothing for priests or seminarians, or for people interested in the priesthood, for each day of the year."

The pastor of Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Lakemont, Altoona, resolved to make good that lack, and this Fall saw that determination come to fruition when Liturgical Press published **A Life Of Daring Simplicity: Daily Meditations On The Priesthood**.

"I began to collect the material for the book when I concluded my sabbatical," Monsignor Becker said, "and by fits and starts it all came together."

The 384 - page book is an anthology of some of the best writings about the priesthood, drawn from a variety of sources, most especially the writings of the Popes. Each page begins with a scripture quote, moves on to a passage from a particu-

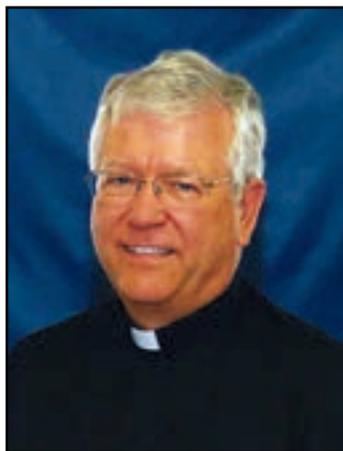
lar writer, and concludes with a short prayer/reflection/question for the reader's consideration.

"I just hope the book helps priests and seminarians - - or anyone who uses it - - to appreciate the gift of the priesthood," Monsignor Becker said. "The priesthood isn't something to be taken for granted, but should really be reflected upon and prayed about. As a priest, you can't get by just going along on 'cruise control.' You really have to reflect every day on your identity as an ordained priest."

Monsignor Becker, who teaches homiletics at Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe has worked extensively with priests and seminarians since his ordination in 1975. The book reflects his lifelong interest in priestly spirituality.

The title, he said, is drawn from Pope Saint John XXIII's book **The Journal Of A Soul**.

"Daring simplicity was certainly characteristic of John XXIII," Monsignor Becker said. "There was his great daring in summoning the Second Vatican Council, and is simplicity - - humility, in his daily lifestyle. In that sense, the title is also 'right on' with Pope Francis, who is showing great courage and

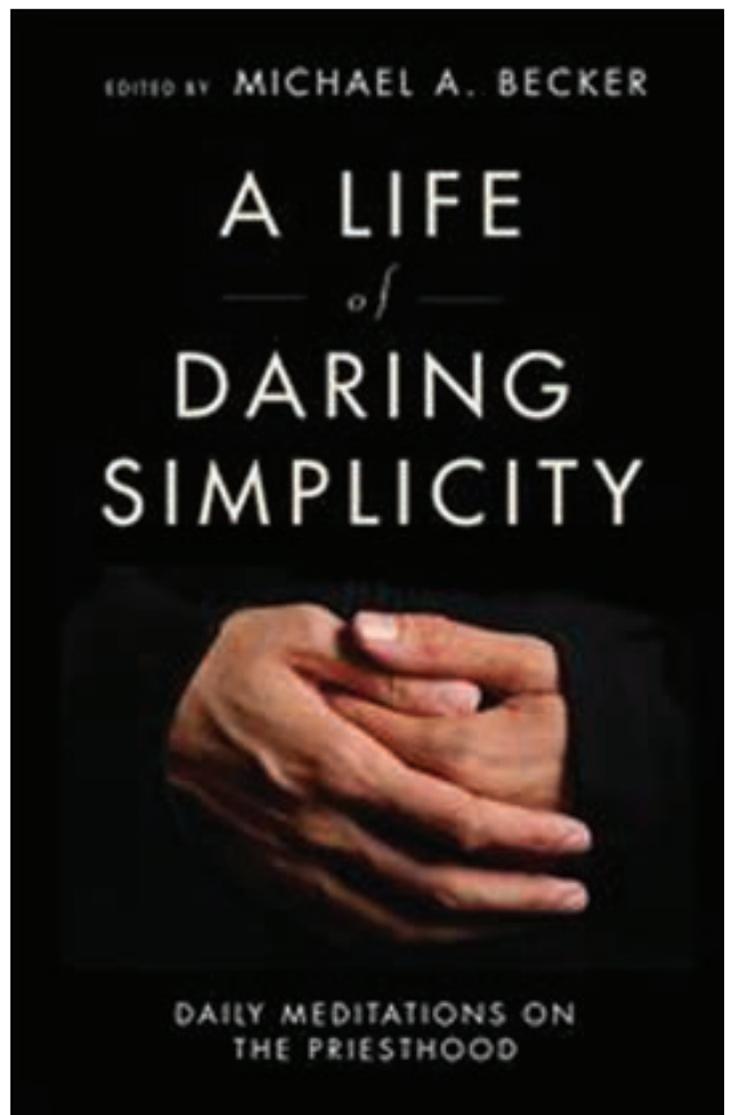


MONSIGNOR  
MICHAEL A. BECKER

daring in his call to reform the Church, and great simplicity in his manner of life."

Many of the meditations in the book are drawn from papal documents, "because they provide a wealth of material," Monsignor Becker explained.

"Pope Saint John Paul II wrote a yearly letter on the priesthood. Pope Benedict XVI called for the Year of the Priest. Even Pope John Paul I wrote about the priesthood in his short 33 days as Pope." The book also draws on statements about the priesthood Pope Francis has made up to August of this year.



Another writer frequently cited by Monsignor Becker is Jesuit Father Karl Rahner, and his book **Encounter With Silence**, which Monsignor Becker characterized as "pastoral and down to earth."

Women writers are cited too, including Catherine DeHueck Doherty, Adriennene Von

Speyer, and the Anglican spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill "who wrote a wonderful book about priesthood."

Quoting theologians, lay people, men and women, **Daring Simplicity** was ultimately a labor of love.

"I enjoyed doing it," Monsignor Becker said simply.



**THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE:** Father Robert Hall, pastor of Transfiguration Parish, East Conemaugh, initiated an annual Thanksgiving Food Drive years ago. It has evolved to include the religious education students creating “Thankful Bags” - brown paper bags decorated with pictures/drawings of the people/things for which each student thanks God. Prior to Thanksgiving, the “Thankful Bags” were displayed in the back of the Church for all to enjoy. Parishioners then selected “Thankful Bag,” filled it with groceries and returned it during the offertory of the Thanksgiving Day Mass. The collection was given to help restock the Saint Vincent DePaul Society Food Pantry. Placing “Thankful Bags” at the altar are (left to right) Nancy Turner, Megan Rosenbaum and Irene Cristoff.



**SUPPORTING SOLDIERS:** Students at Saint Patrick School, Newry, collected items, including comfort food and snacks, for the Operation S.O.S. (Support Our Soldiers), sponsored by Smith Furniture. The school’s Student Government Association sponsors the project each year.

**Music**

**Advent Concert**

**Johnstown:** An Advent of Christmas Concert will be held Saturday, December 20, at 7:00 p.m., at Saint John Gualbert Ca-

thedral, 117 Clinton Street.

The program will feature the Greater Johnstown Diocesan Festival Choir and Cathedral Catholic Academy Chorale under the direction of Cathedral music director, Evonne Yanzetich - Homway. The choral groups will be accompanied by the Hilltop Brass and Vivace Strings.

Admission is free and open to the public. A free - will offering will be taken.

**Prayer**

**Festival of Praise**

**Altoona:** There will be a Eucharistic Festival of Praise Monday, December 15, from 7:00 to 8:00 pm, at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

The evening of prayer will include adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with special praise and worship music led by the Cathedral Charismatic Prayer Group. Deacon John Rys will give a witness talk.

Fellowship and refreshments will follow.



Photo By Tony DeGol

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS:** Bishop Mark L. Bartchak celebrated Mass on Tuesday, November 25 at Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School in Altoona. During the Mass, the Bishop commissioned a group of students as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Pictured (left to right) are First row: Amanda Irwin, Shawntal Tomer, Hannah Carey, Clarisse Spencer, Brynee Baughman, Meghan McCall, Alyssa Trybus, and Shaelyn Rickens. Second Row: Colin Berkheimer, Anthony Livoti, Jordan Rhone, Taylor Hench, Bishop Mark, Danielle McFarland, William Guzic, Owen Wolf, and Chancellor Little.

For more information Call (814) 941 - 3832.

**Pre - Christmas Novena**

**Loretto:** The Discalced Carmelite Nuns announce their annual private novena in honor of the Infant Jesus in preparation for the Solemnity of Christmas.

The novena will begin at the Carmelite Monastery Chapel

on Tuesday, December 16 and conclude Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve.

The regular monthly private novena honoring Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Therese will take place at the same time. All intentions will be remembered in the special novena prayers offered following daily Mass.

Those desiring to share in

the graces and blessings of these nine days of prayer are requested to send their petitions to Mother Prioress, Carmelite Monastery, P.O. Box 57, Loretto PA 15940.

Every Sunday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. and every first Friday of the month, Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament is given in the public chapel at Carmel, followed by veneration of the relic of Saint Therese.

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Executive Director

# In The Alleghenies



**ACOLYTES:** Two men from the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown were installed in the ministry of acolyte by Bishop Ronald W. Gainer of Harrisburg at Saint Vincent Seminary, Latrobe, on Monday, November 24. Pictured above (second from left) is Peter Crowe, a seminarian for the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown, pictured with (left to right) Benedictine Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki, Bishop Gainer and Father Timothy Whalen, rector. Crowe is the son of Robert E. Crowe of Boalsburg and the late Susan M. Crowe. He is a 2004 graduate of State College Area High School. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Hampden Sydney College in Hampden Sydney, Virginia, in 2008. He completed the pre-theology program at Gannon University, Erie, in 2013. Pictured below (second from left) is Benedictine Brother Canice McMullen, a monk of Saint Vincent Archabbey, pictured with (left to right) Archabbot Douglas, Bishop Gainer, Benedictine Brother Miguel Gonzalez, and Father Whalen. Brother Canice is the son of Craig and Ruth McMullen of State College. He is a 2006 graduate of State College Area High School. He earned a bachelor of science degree in accounting from Pennsylvania State University in 2010.



## Correction

One of the altar servers pictured with Bishop Mark L. Bartchak in a photo appearing in the December 1 edition of **The Catholic Register** was misidentified.

The young man named as "Cody Falger" in the photo accompanying an article about a Mass for altar servers at the Basilica of Saint Michael the Archangel in Loretto was Cody Novitski.

We apologize to Cody and his family for the error.



**PILGRIMS:** Kindergarten students at Saint Patrick School, Newry, dressed as pilgrims to celebrate Thanksgiving.



Photo By Tony DeGol

**GIFT FOR CHARITY:** During Bishop Mark L. Bartchak's Tuesday, November 25 visit to Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School in Altoona, members of the Mission Club presented him with a \$1,000.00 check for a charity of his choice. The Bishop is donating the money to Catholic Charities. Pictured with the Bishop are Amanda Irwin and Jordan Rhone.



**TOY DRIVE:** Students at Saint Thomas the Apostle School in Bedford were enthusiastic participants in a diocesan - wide toy drive for the children served by the Fulton County Catholic Mission. Saint Thomas students collected enough toys and games to fill the trunk of a car. The drive is sponsored by the Diocese's Education Office.

<b>THE CATHOLIC REGISTER</b> <b>SERVING THE DIOCESE OF ALTOONA - JOHNSTOWN</b>	<b>Subscriptions: \$8.00 Parish Based</b> <b>\$18.00 Individual</b>	<b>Publisher:</b> <b>Most Reverend Bishop Mark L. Bartchak</b>
	Periodical Class Postage Paid At Altoona PA and other mailing offices. Postmaster send change of address to: 925 South Logan Boulevard (USPS 094 - 280) Member Publication Of The Catholic Press Association	<b>Editor:</b> <b>Rev. Msgr. Timothy P. Stein</b>
Published Bi - weekly at 925 South Logan Boulevard Hollidaysburg PA 16648		<b>Secretary:</b> <b>Frances M. Logrando</b>
Phone (814) 695 - 7563 FAX (814) 695 - 7517		

## Point Of View

Due to the numerous requests for this article to be re-published, I do so in honor of the many readers who encourage me in my writings. It's titled, "Where's the Line to See Jesus?"

Santa's Winter Wonderland at our nearby mall, surely is an enchanted place to visit this time of year! Not only is it the beautifully decorated trees, nestled among the delightful figures of gingerbread, and sugar topped candy canes that makes one feel like they have stepped into a child's dream but it's the excited children and their parents waiting eagerly in long lines to see Santa Claus that brings the magic of this holiday scene come to life.

Waiting in line to see Santa, good ole Saint Nick, is a treasured tradition for many families as well as my own. However, something happened last year, the very same night I took my younger kids to see Santa that forever changed my view on this beloved Christmas Tradition. What happened, you may ask? No, Santa was not rude, in fact he was quite jolly, my children did not misbehave



## Family Matters

By Amy Kanich  
**Where's The Line To See Jesus?**

(absolute angels) and not to brag but the picture of my children on Santa's lap could have been in Good House-Keeping's Christmas Edition. Our holiday experience with Santa Claus was wonderful; a memory to treasure forever but it was the song that echoed through our car on the way home that really got me. The simple, profound and true lyrics replayed over and over in my head. The song brought my faith home, as I reflected on that very same night my family probably rushed by the manger scene to get a place in line to see Santa..... Here are the lyrics...

**Where's the Line to See Jesus?**  
*Christmas time was approaching*  
*Snow was starting to fall*  
*Shoppers choosing their presents*

*People filling the mall*  
*Children waiting for Santa*  
*With excitement and glee*  
*A little boy tugged my sweater*  
*Looked up and asked me*  
*Where's the line to see Jesus?*  
*Is He here at the store?*  
*If Christmas time is His birthday*  
*why don't we see Him more?*  
*As I stood in amazement*  
*At this message profound*  
*I looked down to thank him*  
*He was no where around*  
*The little boy at the mall*  
*Might as well have had wings*  
*As the tears filled my eyes*  
*Thought I heard him sing*  
*Where's the line to see Jesus?*  
*He was born for me*  
*Santa Claus brought me presents*  
*But Christ gave His life for me*

*Song and Lyrics by Steve Haupt & Chris Loesch*

As tears flowed from my eyes, I promised myself our family will have a new mall tradition. The Kanich family will go to the mall, visit the manger first, say a prayer together and then head over to see Santa. Yes, Virginia there is a Santa Claus, but more importantly there in that simple manger, the one with no line, lays the Savior of our World! Merry Christmas!



## Another Perspective

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein  
**Finding Jesus In The Temple Of Your Heart**

One of the things I most enjoy about the beautiful, blessed Advent Season, is that for four weeks, the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary are prayed daily.

These Mysteries are full of hope and expectation - - a wonderful way to whet one's appetite for what is yet to come. A sense of holy longing fills my heart as I pray these mysteries. The sense that Christ is coming, to be born again in my heart, makes me look forward with eagerness to that day when I will see the Lord face to face. Everything seems to be cleaner, brighter, purer, in the light of that hope.

It struck me, when considering these Mysteries, that four out of the five of them each have their own special feast day. There are liturgical celebrations for the Annunciation, for the Visitation, for the Nativity of Our Lord, and for the Presentation of the Christ Child in the Temple. But the fifth Joyful Mystery stands sadly alone: there is no special day celebrating the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. Yes, we read about that event when we celebrate Holy Family Sunday, but there is no day that marks this Mystery alone.

Maybe there is wisdom in the omission from our liturgical calendar. Searching for the Lord and finding the Lord, after all, should be the task of a whole lifetime - - not something singled out for one special day. Every day, when we wake up and put our feet to the floor, we should be setting out to find the Lord - - looking for Him in each moment as it unfolds - - seeing His face in every person who crosses our path - - finding Him in the temple of our heart.

And when we find Him, we hear the Lord Jesus addressing us with the words He spoke to Mary and Joseph: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Jesus reminds us as we look for Him, that doing the will of His Father is the task that all true seekers, all true believers, all who are looking for the Lord must dedicate themselves to. When we find the Lord, He will ask us how well we have responded to that task.

I have learned some of the greatest lessons in life from thinking about my favorite musical play and film, "The Sound of Music." Both the stage show and the movie repeated what Maria Von Trapp said was the most important lesson she learned as a postulant at Nonneburg Abbey and Salzburg: "The most important thing in life is to find out what is the will of God, and to do it wholeheartedly." That's just what Jesus tells us when we find Him in the temple. That's what His life was all about, and that's what our lives must be about, too.

Live everyday, then, as a commemoration of the Joyful Mystery of Finding the Child Jesus in the Temple. Be aware everyday that God's holy will must be the guiding star of your life. We must each be about our Father's business. Follow Jesus into the temple of your heart, and learn from Him how to be a loving son or daughter of the Father of us all.

*So you are driving alone in your car. You hear music playing and you know the lyrics so you start singing. The driver in the car next to you at the traffic light smiles!*

*I recently heard the melody of a song that we sang in grade school. And I am quite sure it was during the Christmas season, even though it's not a Christmas carol.*

*The song begins and ends with these words: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. The two simple verses of this song were written by Jill Jackson. The music was composed by her husband, Seymour Miller.*

*Jackson and Miller made the song public in the summer of 1955 at a gathering of 180 youth of various religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. The purpose of the gathering was to teach young people that peace, harmony, and brotherhood are possible even when there are differences.*

*Jill Jackson explained that peace and harmony were not always present in her life. Difficult childhood experiences including the death of her mother and 9 years of foster care contributed to doubts, despair and attempted suicide.*

*Jill said that she wrote the song after discovering what she called the "life-saving joy of God's peace and unconditional love."*

*The story of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ contains similar elements. In the Gospel of Luke (Chap. 2, verses 8-20), we hear about shepherds who under normal circumstances lived their life on the edge; "living in the fields and keeping night watch over their flocks."*

*These shepherds knew something about danger, and darkness, and the instability of their existence. It would be enough to make anyone uneasy and even afraid. Yet, they were the first to hear the Good News of the birth of the Messiah.*

*The extraordinary announcement by an angel was terrifying at first. As the angel explained why they should not be afraid, the shepherds were suddenly surrounded by a multitude of angels who were praising God and singing!*

*They were singing about peace on earth and they were singing about those on whom God's favor rests. The angels were singing about the same truth that Jill Jackson discovered; that God really does love us; that God really wishes us to have peace in our hearts and in our world.*

*The shepherds experienced that love and peace when they went in haste to Bethlehem. As St. Luke tells us, "Once they saw, they understood what had been told them concerning the child." And, they returned to their fields "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen."*

*But that's not all that occurred. St. Luke tells us that all who heard were in awe of what the shepherds reported. This extraordinary gift of peace already began to spread.*

*What is that special gift of peace? It is especially the restored friendship between God and his people. It is what Jill Jackson describes as a life giving joy that is realized when we graciously accept God's unconditional love.*

*Our world needs peace. When I recently heard the song, Let There Be Peace On Earth, it was punctuated by a news report that included incidents of murder, assault, terrorism, civil unrest, and war in numerous places around the world.*

*Our world needs harmony, brotherhood, solidarity, and friendship among all people everywhere. Our world needs God's peace; friendship with the One who is our Lord and God.*

*Jill Jackson prayed, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." The shepherds heard that message, encountered the author of that message in a stable in Bethlehem, and they shared it with others as they went along.*

*"Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." By now some of you are already singing those words. Don't worry. As the story is told, the shepherds did the same thing!*

*At Christmas and always, may you know the peace of Christ in your heart. And please, share it with others.*

*+ Mark L. Bartchak*

*The Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak  
Bishop of Altoona - Johnstown*

## Father Gallitzin's First Christmas On The Mountain

*Continuing a holiday tradition we began in 2009, we present the story of the beginning of Demetrius Gallitzin's ministry in the Allegheny Mountains of Cambria County.*

*It is an account of Christmas 1799 from the book **The Voice That Shook the Windows: A Story Of Prince - Father Gallitzin**, by Holy Cross Brother Bernard Donahoe, published in 1967 by Dujarie Press of South Bend IN, with illustrations by Carolyn Lee Jagodits.*

"This is it, my friends. Our journey is over. We'll camp here for tonight, and tomorrow we'll stake out your farms. But first, let us all kneel and say the rosary to thank Our Lady for bringing us into this beautiful land."

As he knelt to lead his little flock in prayer, Demetrius' heart was filled with gratitude and hope. The land was beautiful indeed and very fertile. His parishioners were pious and God-fearing, and he had every reason to hope that things would work out just as he had planned.

Bright and early the next day he celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving. Then everyone set to work. There were houses to be built and land to be cleared. The problem of where the money was to come from to buy land for the poor families was settled by Demetrius' mother. As soon as she heard about her son's project, she sent a large sum of money to help him with the work and promised that more would be sent periodically. Demetrius took her at her word and borrowed enormous sums of money to buy all the land around Loretto. These great tracts of land were divided and subdivided among his parishioners many times. They were to pay for it over a long period of time if they could. If they couldn't, they could pay whenever they got around to it, if ever.

By early December two log buildings began taking shape in a clearing in just about the center of all the farm land. One was to be the church until something better could be built, and the other was to be a rectory. All of the men volunteered some of their time to work on them.

One morning Father Gallitzin rode over to see how the work was coming. A giant of a man, John Weakland, was just picking up a log and putting it in place when he arrived.

"Careful there, John," called the pastor. We don't want you hurting yourself with those



logs. The nearest doctor is a couple hundred miles away."

The big man grinned. "Why, Father, this is child's play. I could take two of these logs at once without much strain, but I couldn't fit them into place too well. We'll have this chapel done by Christmas if it kills us. We all want a High Mass at Christmas, and we want it in this chapel if we can manage it."

"Well, you're certainly doing your part. I'm sure the good Lord will reward you for your labor."

The work went so fast that by Christmas the men had finished the buildings and Demetrius had moved into his new rectory. At midnight on Christmas Eve, there was not a sleeping person in the settlement. Everyone was gathered at the new log chapel for a High Mass, well sung by the little choir of men that Father Gallitzin had been able to round up. Some of the spectators, Indians and trappers in the region, were seeing a Mass for the first time, and their eyes nearly popped at the brilliant ceremony performed in the wilderness of the Allegheny Mountains. The weather was bitterly cold and the new log cabins were none too comfortable, but everyone knew that they had good reason for offering thanks to Almighty God. It was the happiest Christmas many of them ever had.



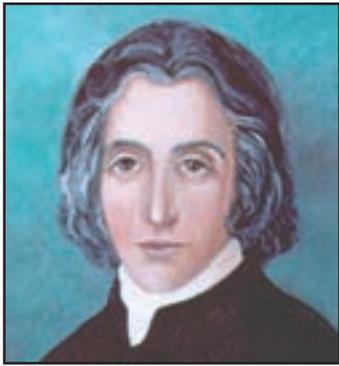
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## A Prince In The Service Of The Great King

The Servant Of God  
Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin  
1770 - 1840

## Pope Canonizes Six New Saints

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** -- Using a newly simplified rite, Pope Francis proclaimed six new saints and praised them for the love and self-giving with which they served God and built up his kingdom by serving the poor and needy.

Creating the two Indian and four Italian saints Nov. 23,

the feast of Christ the King, the pope said, "They responded with extraordinary creativity to the commandment of love of God and neighbor," dedicating themselves, "without holding back, to serving the least and assisting the destitute, sick, elderly and pilgrims."

The Mass in a St. Peter's Square still damp from an early morning rain began with the canonizations using an even briefer formula than what had

become standard with St. John Paul II. The formula had been expanded by now-retired Pope Benedict XVI in 2012.

The new rite did away with the three "petitions" used by Pope Benedict; the cardinal prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes would ask the pope three times to canonize candidates and the pope would respond by asking God to "sustain with his grace" the act of canonization and not allow the church to err in such an important matter. In response to the third petition, the pope would recite the formula for canonization.

Instead Nov. 22 Cardinal Angelo Amato, congregation prefect, requested Pope Francis canonize the six candidates and the pope responded by introducing a litany of the saints, praying that through their intercession God would "sustain with his grace the act which we now solemnly undertake."

After singing the litany, Pope Francis read the canonization formula, proclaiming the new saints:

-- Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the Indian founder of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, a Syro-Malabar Catholic order. Born in 1805, he died in 1871.

-- Euphrasia Eluvathingal, a member of the Carmelites founded by St. Chavara. She lived 1877-1952.

-- Nicholas of Longobardi, an Italian friar of the Minim order, who lived 1650-1709.

-- Giovanni Antonio Farina, an Italian bishop of Vicenza and the founder of the Teaching Sisters of St. Dorothy. He died in 1888.

-- Ludovico of Casoria, the



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

**CANONIZATION:** Pope Francis proclaims six Indian and Italian saints during a canonization Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Sunday, November 23.

19th-century Italian founder of the Grey Franciscan Friars of Charity and the Grey Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth.

-- Amato Ronconi, a 13th-century Italian lay Franciscan and founder of a hospice for the poor, which is now a home for the elderly in Rimini, Italy.

In his homily at the Mass, Pope Francis focused on the feast of Christ the King and the description in the day's first reading (Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17) of how God shepherds his people.

"These verses," the pope said, "are interwoven with verbs which show the care and love that the shepherd has for his flock: to search, to look over, to gather the dispersed, to lead into pasture, to bring to rest, to seek the lost sheep, to lead back the confused, to bandage the wounded, to heal the sick, to take care of, to pasture."

The Old Testament description is "fulfilled in Jesus Christ," he said, and those who minister in Christ's name -- the pope, the bishops and priests -- must follow his example "if do not want to become hirelings. In this re-

gard the People of God have an unerring sense for recognizing good shepherds and in distinguishing them from hirelings."

Thousands of Catholics from India traveled to the Vatican to celebrate St. Chavara and St. Eluvathingal. Pope Francis said the two Indians "remind each of us that God's love is the source and the goal and the support of all holiness, while love of neighbor is the clearest demonstration of love for the Lord."

## Prayer For Father Gallitzin's Intercession

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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# Word of Life



## The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis  
Year Of Consecrated Life

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** -- During the Year of Consecrated Life, all Catholics are called to thank God for the gifts members of religious orders have given the church and the world, to join them in prayer and find practical ways to support them and their ministries, Pope Francis said.

"Let them know the affection and the warmth which the entire Christian people feels for them," the pope said in a letter issued for the special year, which opened Nov. 30 and will close Feb. 2, 2016, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

The bulk of the pope's letter and video messages he sent for a Nov. 29 prayer vigil in Rome and the year's opening Mass the next day in St. Peter's Basilica were addressed specifically to the world's more than 900,000 Catholic religious priests, brothers, sisters and consecrated virgins.

"Leave your nests and go out to the peripheries," he told those at the vigil in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. "Live on the frontiers" where people are waiting to hear and understand the Gospel.

"Wake up the world, enlightening it with your prophetic and countercultural witness," he said in the message to those at Mass in St. Peter's the next morning.

"Being joyful," he said in the message, "being courageous" and "being men and women of communion" are the common traits of the founders of religious orders and are the key to their future.

The pope's letter for the year explained that while he was writing as pope, he was also writing as a Jesuit, "a brother who, like yourselves, is consecrated to the Lord."

Knowing the gifts and challenges of religious life from the inside, Pope Francis urged religious to "look to the past with gratitude," rediscovering the way their predecessors read "the signs of the times" and responded with creativity. However, it also involves recognizing the difficulties and inconsistencies resulting from human weakness and learning from them.

Religious are called "to live the present with passion" and "embrace the future with hope," he said, knowing that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire new responses to the needs of the church and the world and to give religious the strength to be faithful servants of God.

Countering the decline in the number of people entering religious life in the West will not be the "result of brilliant vocations programs," the pope said, but of meeting young people who are attracted by the joy they see in religious men and women.

The special mission of consecrated people in the church has not ended, he told them. "A whole world awaits us: men and women who have lost all hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, the elderly, sick and abandoned, those who are rich in the world's goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life, thirsting for the divine."



**ONE MORE TIME:** Sister Mary Ferdinand, librarian at Bishop McCort High School, Johnstown, shows business leaders materials for a Book Fair held at the school in 1963. Sister Mary Ferdinand was later known as Sister Helen Mary Nagle. A member of the Mid - Atlantic Community of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, she died, aged 101, at Mercy Center, Dallas, on Saturday, November 29.

The lucky ones are people with a vibrant faith. They may not be perfect, but they have been able to overcome many obstacles by the grace of God and find happiness despite their weaknesses. They believe in not being overcome by evil but overcoming evil with good.

Sometimes a person is born with a particular set of weaknesses such as a jealous streak, or an inferiority complex or an envious spirit that saddens the soul. These traits often lead to certain actions that bring shame and misery upon them.

But how are some people able to overcome these weaknesses? In other words, how do they get lucky? The answer is found in supernatural faith.

Faith is not a religious eccentricity. Faith is a lifesaving mechanism available to those who comprehend invisible supernatural realities. There are people who pray their way out of a thousand difficulties and all kinds of trying circumstances. They are brave and stand tall despite fears and tears. They are the lucky ones who hold on to faith.



## Spirituality For Today

By Father John Catoir  
Here's To The Faithful, Or Lucky Ones

I once did a TV interview with Joe Garagiola, a former St. Louis Cardinal baseball hero and broadcaster. We were talking about faith and I asked him, "What do you say to those who claim that Catholics make too much of Mary?" He shot back, "Father, I'm lucky, I know that if you want to get to the man, you get to the mother."

We paused to laugh, but he drove right on: "We don't say enough to praise Mary, her care and protection. The same for St. Joseph, the patron saint of families. I always pray to him to protect my family, to put his arms around us. He took care of the Holy Family didn't he? What more can you ask?"

Joe's simple faith may be a bit too naive for some, but Jesus

said that unless you become like little children, you're never going to get really lucky (or something like that).

I often spar with atheists, especially on Twitter. When I poke fun at them, a few get a bit angry and write me nasty retorts. It's part of the give and take. I love them and remind them that since they have to admit they can't prove that God does not exist, it follows that there's a possibility that he does. This means they don't know for sure.

I tell them that it would be more proper linguistically to call themselves agnostics since they just don't know. But because they are so unlucky, I try not to rub it in. I tell them to be hopeful. Why? Because God loves to forgive, and he is merciful.



## Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle  
**Disposing Of  
 Cremated Remains**

**Q.** I understand that, as Catholics, if we choose to be cremated our cremains are to be treated with dignity and must be buried or entombed. My husband and I have two family members who have asked us to arrange to have their ashes “scattered.” One is a Catholic, one is not. Does our duty to follow church teaching on this matter override the wishes of our family members (even of the non-Catholic one)? I am uncomfortable with one day having to carry out their request, but I’m unsure as to how to respond. (Staunton, Virginia)

**A.** You are correct on the church’s teaching. Although the Vatican in 1963 lifted the ban on cremation, the church specifies that cremated remains are to be treated with the same reverence as the body of a deceased person. This means that the cremains are to be placed in a worthy vessel and, following the religious services, to be buried or entombed in consecrated ground.

They are not, for example, to be kept on a mantelpiece or scattered in the deceased’s favorite park. Your duty as faithful Catholics overrides the desire of your family members. I see no philosophical justification for distinguishing between the Catholic relative and the non-Catholic. The church’s reverence for the remains of each of them is equal. (My guess is that you would also buy yourself some extra family trouble if you distinguished.)

I think this is a “teachable opportunity” for you. You should tell each of the two that, as a faithful Catholic, you would feel (in your words) “uncomfortable” carrying out their wishes and then go on to explain to them the reason for the church’s guidelines (i.e., reverence for the cremated remains).

**Q.** What is the proper way of disposing of a wedding ring that is no longer wanted? Many years ago I was married in a Catholic church, and our rings

were blessed as a part of the wedding ceremony. Some years later I was divorced, and the marriage was annulled by the Catholic Church. Since that time my wedding ring has sat in my jewelry box as I have never been sure what to do with it. Several years after the annulment, I married another woman in a Catholic ceremony, and that union remains to this day. At this point I want to clean out my jewelry box and get rid of the ring from my first wedding. What options do I have? (City of origin withheld)

**A.** Surprisingly, church law on disposing of blessed objects is not very specific. Number 1171 of the Code of Canon Law simply says that “sacred objects, which are designated for divine worship by dedication or blessing, are to be treated reverently” and are not to be used in inappropriate or profane ways.

Church custom over the years has extended that reverence to all articles blessed for devotion, even if not used in a liturgical context. The general practice when disposing of blessed articles such as rosaries, statues or medals has been to burn them or to bury them. However, if an article has been substantially damaged and can no longer be used for the religious purpose intended, it is commonly thought to have lost its blessing.

Since your ring was blessed as a sign of the lasting love between you and your first wife, I would argue that it no longer serves its original religious purpose. (The priest at a wedding ceremony prays that “these rings be a symbol of true faith in each other and always remind them of their love.”) My view is that you are free to do what you want with the ring -- perhaps donate it to a charity.

*Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.*



## For The Journey

By Effie Caldarola  
**Of Saints  
 And Missing Dentures**

A guest staying at my house recently awoke in a panic to discover he couldn’t find his bottom denture. He had come home from a speaking engagement the night before and sat down in the living room with a couple of slices of pizza to finish watching the Green Bay football game with my husband.

The pizza was bothering his denture, so he stealthily removed it and wrapped his napkin around it.

Fast-forward to the following morning and time to get ready for another speaking engagement. Lo and behold, a missing denture. There was a frantic search of the trash can, and I, fearing the worst, even looked in the dog bed to see if Sunny had found a new chew toy. No denture.

After about 10 minutes, my guest proclaimed, to enormous relief, that the problem was solved. I didn’t ask for specifics.

A Christian gentleman, he had audibly asked the Lord to aid in his search, and I laughingly said, “Joe [name changed to protect the innocent], if you were a Catholic you’d be praying to St. Anthony right now.”

He laughed, probably thinking about this bizarre Catholic practice of communicating with long-dead people.

I’m a big fan of saints. I loved Jesuit Father James Martin’s book, **My Life With The Saints**, in which he writes about saints who have most influenced his life -- some canonized, some not -- and how he prays to them.

But I’m no fan of superstition. For example, I put my foot down firmly about having upside down statues of St. Joseph planted in my yard when we sold our house, even though I’ve known clergy who’ve done it. And I really resent those little prayer cards that assure you that if you recite a certain prayer a certain number of times, you’re guaranteed to get your request.

That’s bargaining with God, and basically trying to control God. That’s not what prayer is about. But moving with the saints through our lives is a comforting and wholly Catholic idea.

Once, I had a little talk with St. Anthony about this tradition that has made him the patron saint of lost items. How, I wonder, did people get the idea that you’re waiting around to make the car keys manifest themselves? I habitually pray to St. Anthony when I lose something. So I asked if he really spends eternity listening to the pleas of panicked individuals whose wallets are missing, whose cellphones were left at the restaurant last night, or even those whose dentures are misplaced.

I thought the least I could do was give St. Anthony a little attention after I found the missing tax form or the lost check.

Prayer itself is a mystery. In essence, it is the opening of our hearts and minds to God. It is a silence in which, as the poet Mary Oliver says, “another voice may speak.” Prayer is relating to a mystery that you believe is tugging at you, desiring you, wanting to guide you. We pray to discern the will in our lives to which this mystery calls us.

That’s a long way from asking a saint to aid us in a simple task. Yet, saints are so human and so seemingly available to us, and God is so beyond our human understanding, that crying out to a saint once in a while can never be a bad thing.

After Joe proclaimed that the missing denture was found, I said, “Praise God,” and he agreed. Then I murmured, “And thanks, St. Anthony.”

John of the Cross  
 1542 - 1591  
 Feast-December 14



A doctor of the church, John is also one of its great mystics and poets. Born Juan de Yepes de Alvarez in Spain, he was raised by his mother and entered a Carmelite monastery in 1563. He was ordained in 1567. Finding the Carmelites very lax, he joined with Saint Teresa of Avila to reform the order. In 1568, he entered the first reformed house for men, taking the name John of the Cross. He encountered severe opposition, and was even imprisoned for nine months in a monastery cell, where he began writing poems. “The Dark Night of the Soul” is his most famous work. Only after his death was John recognized as co-founder of the Discalced Carmelites. He is the patron saint of mystics and poets.

# Quadrants Issue Reports To Bishop In Effort To Assure Brighter Future For Catholic Schools

By Tony DeGol

Efforts to position Catholic schools for a brighter future are taking shape in the Diocese.

Early this year, Bishop Mark L. Bartchak asked committees in the Altoona, Johnstown, Mainline (now called Prince Gallitzin), and State College (now called Northern) quadrants to look at ways to keep Catholic education available, accessible, and affordable in their respective geographic regions.

Members of the committees included pastors, educators, parents, and business and legal professionals.

For months, members of each group thoroughly examined issues such as faith formation, curriculum, technology, finances, enrollment, and physical plants.

In recent weeks, the quadrant committees finalized their work and submitted detailed recommendations to the Bishop.

Their reports are the culmination of extensive research and serious discussion.

"I am really pleased with all the hard work and effort by the quadrant committees," Bishop Mark said. "I want to thank them for their thoughtfulness and for their willingness to arrive at a consensus in this important work. I look forward to implementing the recommendations and moving ahead with these projects. This process should go a long way in making our Catholic schools available, accessible, and affordable."

Bishop Mark, an enthusiastic supporter of Catholic education, said he is optimistic about the future of our schools and the complete education they offer.

"I am grateful for all the



parents who choose to send their children to our Catholic schools, and I encourage others to do the same," he added.

While each region has its own unique circumstances, all quadrant committees are advocating for standardized accounting and tuition in their respective regions.

Another priority is a coordinated curriculum among the elementary schools with a seamless transition into the Catholic high schools.

The committees also want governing boards to oversee each quadrant.

The following are reports from each quadrant.

## ALTOONA QUADRANT

Following the recommendation of the Regional Catholic School System Paradigm approved by Bishop Mark and the Education Office of the Diocese a plan will be recommended for the Altoona Quadrant.

The importance of our Catholic school experience

to our local and faith communities is unparalleled. Our Catholic School System is one of the most visible and meaningful endeavors that actively endorses our faith commitment.

## Objectives to be Accomplished

The purpose of the plan is to ensure the sustainability of a quality Catholic school experience in a safe, efficient, professionally superior learning environment, guided by prudent financial principles. This educational model highlights mission and a move to "best practices." The mission of providing an empowered educational program for all students both Catholic and non-Catholic is critical to increasing enrollment. Affordability, availability and access should be the hallmarks of the Catholic school experience. It is the intended outcomes associated with this model that will make the Catholic education experience the "preferred" choice for families. Catholic schools are one of our most

visible, active and expensive missions. Long term sustainability of our schools is critical to this committee. The proposed objectives of the plan will:

- Maximize a value based Catholic educational experience with significant emphasis on the faith formation experience.
- Strengthen the Catholic elementary school experience, especially sixth, seventh and eighth grade levels in a manner that is beneficial to curriculum and high school readiness.
- Seek to coordinate and align the curriculum of Catholic elementary and Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School.
- Promote an educational environment of excellence for students of all faiths that maximizes student engagement and learning. Ensure a vibrant academic and co-curricular experience of distinction.
- Ensure mission and educational stewardship

through financial sustainability.

- Maximize the operational efficiency in the Altoona region that promotes cooperative savings.

## Factors That Are Being Considered

A variety of internal and external conditions have created a need for planning in Altoona. Continued financial viability and sustainability of the current elementary program requires immediate attention. Compelling factors requiring action are:

- Decreased demographics in our area
- Significant enrollment deficits in most schools mimicking national trends.
- Unused classroom space.
- Improved utilization of faculty, administration, and staff personnel.
- A lack of a coordinated centralized curriculum.
- A need for improved operational efficiencies.
- Physical and building limitations as well as deferred maintenance.
- A non-sustainable financial model.

## Intended Outcomes

- Quality academic programs between and among the elementary schools with an expanded program on the middle school level to permit a seamless transition to Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High.
- Maximization of student achievement using and analyzing standardized test results.
- Better use of resources.

(Continued On Page 11.)



(Continued From Page 10.)

- Properties selected to meet current usage capacities as well as anticipated growth.
- Implementation of standardized software and accounting practices with standardized financial reporting so that a Regional Board will have better oversight and better transparency for all stakeholders.
- Financial planning to determine the best method to fund school costs for parents, parishes and the Diocese.

**Implementation**

The scope and scale of this project is significant. To maximize enrollment and retention of current and prospective students, this model should be implemented for the 2015-16 school year. The announcement and marketing of this plan is scheduled to begin in January 2015.

**JOHNSTOWN QUADRANT**

More than 200 years ago, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton established the first Catholic parochial school in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Her legacy moves forward as Johnstown area Catholic school administrators, pastors, and dedicated community leaders unify their efforts and vision to excel today and tomorrow.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops appeals to all Catholics to ensure that Catholic elementary and secondary schools are available, accessible, and affordable to all. After a year of preliminary study, Bishop Mark Bartchak and the Diocesan Office of Education initiated a regional approach for Catholic elementary and secondary education. Four groupings – quadrants – will evaluate the Catholic educational experience across the Diocese.

Locally, the Johnstown Catholic School Quadrant Committee embraced its mission to ensure that faith formation and outstanding academic education remains available, accessible, and affordable. The Johnstown Quadrant working group is comprised of representation from the following area schools:

- Bishop McCort Catholic High School, Johnstown
- Cathedral Catholic Academy, Johnstown
- Our Mother of Sorrows School, Johnstown
- Saint Andrew School, Johnstown
- Saint Benedict School, Johnstown
- Saint Peter School, Somerset

Committee members are seeking to ensure the sustainability of quality Catholic education in safe, efficient and professionally-sound learning environments - guided by prudent financial principles. Their analysis of local economic trends, school infrastructures, school budgets, enrollment projections, curricular offerings and current collaborations has produced a robust perspective. Using these findings, they will build cohesively upon the school communities' unified strengths.

To act effectively as they move to include parishioners, parents, teachers and students in building a regional system, the committee has contracted the experienced consultants of McKissick Associates for study services.

This Harrisburg-based group brings more than sixty years of community-based approach to planning and design and it is quite evident that McKissick's multi-disciplinary team of consultants matches well with the spirit and vision of the Johnstown quadrant committee. McKissick will work with quadrant educators on current educational trends such as small-group collaboration, advanced curriculum, hands-on learning and multi-

media advancement as they plan the future unified vision.

Beginning in the first half of 2015, McKissick and the Johnstown quadrant committee will engage in multiple activities including data retrieval, educator and student interviews, and "town hall" meetings with a goal of completing the local study in six months. Following the completion of this analysis the unified Johnstown Catholic School System will use the 2015-2016 academic year for preparations moving towards a launch of the future vision in July 2016.

Moving forward, the Catholic education of the Johnstown Quadrant will cultivate an atmosphere of enthusiasm, purpose and excitement through 21st century learning while retaining a learning foundation with solid values

**PRINCE GALLITZIN QUADRANT**

From the Bishop's office, through the pastors/parishes, to our parishioners in particular and to the public at large, make it known that the mission of our Catholic schools is, in part, to assist in the evangelization of the world. The committee members en-

courage our Catholic families to embrace a Catholic school education as "the preferred option" for their children.

**Finance Committee**

- Standardize the Mainline School Accounting
- Standardize the Tuitions but take several years to do this
- Do strategic Marketing
- Hire a Development Director
- Create a Diocesan Catholic Schools Assessment to take the place of the current parish subsidy system and to be levied against all parishes in the Prince Gallitzin Quadrant for funding the elementary schools. Centralize the collection of these funds.

**Curriculum Committee**

- Standardize Curriculum between the schools
- Improve the continuity of curriculum between the elementary schools and Bishop Carroll Catholic High School
- Develop the curriculum containing the elements of STREAM (science, technology, religion, engineering, arts and mathematics).

(Continued On Page 12.)





(Continued From Page 11.)

#### **Pastoral Committee**

- Facilitate greater continuity, support, and connections among the Catholic elementary, high school and individual parishes. Create opportunities, encourage attendance, and invite pastors to be actively and visibly involved in both the elementary and high schools on a regular basis.

- Direct some of the Education Evangelization Assessment (EEA) monies toward the elementary schools.

- Hold families accountable – Catholic school families, from the time of initial enrollment in the Catholic school system, must be informed of their obligation to participate in the life of the Church as stewards of their parish both financially and

spiritually. Families practicing their faith is of utmost importance. If families of children enrolled in the Catholic school are not participating in the life of their parish, they forfeit all financial support from their parish and will be required to pay the non-parishioner school rate. Pastors, families and schools must sign the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **Education Regional Board**

- Create an education regional board to manage the vision for Catholic elementary schools in the quadrant

#### **NORTHERN QUADRANT**

##### **Alignment Committee**

- Collaborate to standardize the K-8 curricula that will horizontally and vertically align the curricula between our elementary schools and

St. Joseph's Catholic Academy.

- Establish a faith-formation program that enables students who are enrolled in our Catholic elementary and secondary schools to pursue sacramental preparation within the context of our K-12 curricula.

- Establish an annual gathering for the Northern Quadrant that will provide administrators and faculty with the opportunity to develop a sense of teamwork and community.

- Collaborate with the Diocese to identify and purchase educational software in order to contain costs and optimize professional development programming.

##### **Enrollment, Marketing, and Communication Committee**

- Create a centralized marketing and development

position to oversee related activities for all schools in the Quadrant. Create and execute a 12-24 month marketing plan for Catholic education in the Quadrant.

- Coordinate and promote Development opportunities for donors to support Catholic education.

- Create an internal communications plan that celebrates the role of priests and parish communities in Catholic education.

- Remove barriers to communication and create tools for better collaboration.

##### **Finance Committee**

- Coordinate tuition between the schools.

- Create a uniform financial reporting system and structure.

- Pool finances and costs from the schools on certain items/projects, such

as marketing, technology, or development that can easily be duplicated.

- Coordinate a financial structure and incentive program to encourage a parish to send students to Catholic schools.

- Create an ongoing committee to help the Diocese with specific structure and financial modeling.

##### **Regional Board Roles and Responsibilities Committee**

- Create a regional board that would act as advisory to Catholic education in the Northern Quadrant.

- Migrate governance of Catholic schools to parishioners/local stakeholders. Transfer governance of Catholic schools from the priest/parish. Priests remain major stakeholders, as spiritual leaders in Catholic education.

# Spend Time Before Christmas In Silence And Service, Pope Suggests On Mary's Feast Day

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

**ROME (CNS)** -- In the heart of Rome's high-end shopping district, sparkling with Christmas lights and shiny baubles in the windows of famous designers, Pope Francis prayed that people would spend time in silence and in service as they prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception Dec. 8, Pope Francis prayed for Mary's intercession so that, "in us, your children, grace also will prevail over pride, and we can become merciful like our heavenly Father is merciful."

Before laying a basket of cream-colored roses at the foot of a statue of the Immaculate Conception near Rome's Spanish Steps, Pope Francis recited a special prayer he composed for the occasion.

The feast is a major Rome holiday, and with brilliant blue skies replacing days of gray and rain, thousands of people lined the streets near the Spanish Steps to catch a glimpse of the pope and pray with him for Mary's assistance.

Pope Francis said Mary being conceived without sin should give all Christians hope and strength "in the daily battle that we must conduct against the threats of evil," because her immaculate conception is proof that evil does not have power over love.

"In this struggle we are not alone, we are not orphans," he said, because Jesus gave his mother to be our mother.

"Today we invoke her maternal protection on us, our families, this city and the world," the pope said, praying that God would "free humanity from every spiritual and material slavery."

"In this time that leads up to the feast of Jesus' birth, teach us how to go against the current," Pope Francis prayed to Mary.



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

**POPE BLESSES WREATH:** Pope Francis blesses a wreath while praying at a statue of Mary overlooking the Spanish Steps in Rome Monday, December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

**"In this time that leads up to the feast of Jesus' birth, teach us how to go against the current," Pope Francis prayed to Mary. Teach people how to be unencumbered, "to give ourselves, to listen, to be silent, to not focus on ourselves, but to leave space for the beauty of God, the source of true joy."**

Teach people how to be unencumbered, "to give ourselves, to listen, to be silent, to not focus on ourselves, but to leave space for the beauty of God, the source of true joy."

In a small blue Ford Focus, the pope was driven to the Spanish Steps' neighborhood after first stopping for a private prayer at the Basilica of St. Mary Major.

Earlier in the day, with thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis led the recitation of the Angelus, a Marian prayer.

Commenting on the feast

day's Gospel reading -- Luke's story of the annunciation to Mary that she would be Jesus' mother -- the pope said it was important that Mary did not respond, "I will do what you say," but "May it be done unto me."

"The attitude of Mary of Nazareth," he said, "shows us that being comes before doing, and that we must let God do in order to be truly as he wants us to be. He will accomplish marvels in us."

"We, too, are asked to listen to God, who speaks to us and accept his will," the pope said. "According to Gospel logic,

nothing is more effective and fruitful than listening and accepting the word of the Lord."

The pope also said the Gospel story shows how Mary "is receptive, but not passive." She agrees to God's will, receives the power of the Holy Spirit and gives "flesh and blood" to the son of God.

And while Mary was conceived without sin -- a special and unique privilege -- "we, too, always have been 'blessed,' that is loved, and therefore 'chosen before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him,'" as the

day's reading from Ephesians said.

Recognizing how blessed they are, the pope said, Christians must be filled with gratitude and ready to share their blessings with others.

"If everything has been given to us, everything must be given again," he said. "How? By letting the Holy Spirit make us a gift for others."

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to let the Holy Spirit make them "instruments of welcoming, instruments of reconciliation, instruments of forgiveness."

# Now Showing

## 'Penguins' A Spirited Animated Adventure, Right On Time For Holiday Season

By John Mulderig  
Catholic News Service

**NEW YORK (CNS)** -- The holiday season turns out to be the time for the "Penguins of Madagascar" (Fox) to come to the fore -- and into their own.

These supporting characters from previous movies in the franchise that began with 2005's "Madagascar" take center stage in a spirited animated adventure calculated to please kids and leave parents' minds at ease.

Comic possibilities drive the freewheeling plot of directors Eric Darnell and Simon J. Smith's family-friendly lark, with enjoyable silly results. But solid values are also present from the start.

Thus the film's opening scene finds a trio of friends -- take-charge Skipper (voice of Tom McGrath), analytical Kowalski (voiced by Chris Miller) and blundering Rico (voice of Conrad Vernon) -- bucking the conformity and indifference of their peers to save an endangered egg.



CNS Photo/DreamWorks Animation

**PENGUINS OF MADAGASCAR:** Agent Classified, the leader of the North Wind, is featured in a scene from the movie "Penguins of Madagascar." The Catholic News Service classification is A-I -- general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

The object of their concern -- which can be read as at least implicitly pro-life -- soon emerges from his shell in the endearing form of Private (voice of Christopher Knights), an eager-to-please fledgling whom the pals immediately adopt as their younger brother.

Having designating themselves a do-it-yourself family, the now-complete quartet familiar from earlier outings also decides they have what it takes to be avian spies. As it turns out, they'll need all the undercover skills they can muster since they're being targeted by a villainous octopus named Dave (voice of John Malkovich), whose alter ego -- assumed at will -- is a mad scientist known as Dr. Octavius Brine.

Dave thirsts for revenge on the penguins because their irresistible cuteness in human eyes has enabled them to replace him, time and again, as the most pop-

ular resident of this zoo or that aquarium. To wreak his revenge, Dave has developed a serum that will turn the whole species into disfigured mutants whose freakish appearance will repel the very people who used to cherish them.

Dave's nefarious activities have drawn the attention of The North Wind, a team of self-appointed secret agents who come to the rescue of animals in need. Led by a wolf known only -- due to a punning miscommunication -- as Classified (voiced by Benedict Cumberbatch), they intervene to save the penguins. But ego and pointless rivalry soon

have the two groups working at cross purposes.

"Penguins of Madagascar" instills lessons about the negative effects of harboring a grudge and yearning to return evil for evil. The script also emphasizes the positive results of loyalty, teamwork and cooperation.

The film contains a handful of mild scatological jokes and insults. The Catholic News Service classification is A-I -- general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

## Coming Up On 'Proclaim!'

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

**December 21** - - Jeff Maucieri, principal of Saint Benedict School in Carrolltown, and two of his students talk about a special Christmas outreach project involving Catholic elementary school students throughout the Diocese.

**December 28** - - On this Holy Family Sunday, Bishop Mark talks with the Shearer family of Our Lady of Victory Parish in State College about the importance of family.

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## May They Rest In Peace



**Sister Christine Mary Keefe O.Carm.**

Sister Christine Mary Keefe, of the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm died Tuesday, November 25 at Garvey Manor, Hollidaysburg. She was 83.

She was born in Washington, DC, January 24, 1931, the daughter of the late Charles Thomas and Margaret Keefe. She was preceded in death by a sister, Ellen Mary. Surviving are cousins and friends, and her Carmelite Sisters.

Sister Christine Mary entered the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm on February 2, 1953. Educated as a Registered Nurse and as a Nursing Home Administrator, she served the congregation's ministry faithfully in various roles in several facilities with her community in Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire, Illinois and Ohio. She had been in ministry at Garvey Manor, Hollidaysburg since 1998, most recently as the receptionist at Our Lady of the Alleghenies Residence.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Christine Mary Keefe O.Carm was celebrated on Thursday, December 4 in Saint Joseph Chapel at Garvey Manor, at 10:30 a.m., concelebrated by Monsignor Robert Saly, Monsignor Paul Panza and resident priests. Committal was at Queen of Car-

mel Cemetery at Saint Teresa's Motherhouse, Germantown NY.

Memorials may be directed to the Garvey Manor Benevolent Care Fund, 1037 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg PA, 16648.



**Sister Helen Mary Nagle R.S.M.**

Sister Helen Mary Nagle, formerly known as Sister Mary Ferdinand, a member of the Mid-Atlantic Community of the Sisters of Mercy, died Saturday, November 29, at Mercy Center Dallas. She was 101 - years - old.

Sister Helen Mary was born March 19, 1913, in Pitcairn, the daughter of the late Ferdinand and Mary (Strohmier) Nagle.

She graduated from Mount Aloysius Academy in Cresson and received her bachelor's degree from Misericordia University, Dallas. Her postgraduate work in library science was at Western University in Missouri and her postgraduate work in administration was at Marquette University, Milwaukee WI.

Sister Helen Mary entered the Sisters of Mercy February 2, 1931, and professed her vows September 16, 1933.

She taught in the dioceses of Altoona - Johnstown, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Scranton. Sister Helen Mary served as the director of library services at Misericordia University, Bishop McCort Catholic High School in Johnstown and Saint Francis Seminary in Loretto, and was a consultant for the David Glosser Library in Johnstown. She also served as the administrative assistant at Valley Pike Manor in Johnstown. Sister Helen Mary came to Mercy Center shortly after her 100th birthday and was an active member of the prayer community at Mercy Center.

Sister Helen Mary is survived by her sisters, Connie Kressher, Mechanicsburg, and Theresa Nagle, Cresson; her brothers, Maryknoll Father Ger-

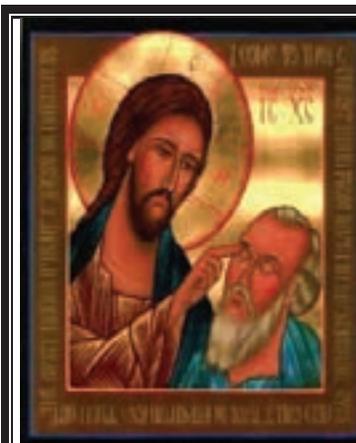
**May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.**

ald J. Nagle, Maryknoll, N.Y., and Robert Nagle, Saint Augustine; and the Sisters of Mercy. She was preceded in death by her sisters, Josephine, and Mercy Sister Mary Aloysia; and her brother, Joseph.

The funeral Mass for Sister Helen Mary Nagle R.S.M. was celebrated Tuesday, De-

ember 2 in the chapel at Mercy Center, Dallas. Committal was held Wednesday, December 3 in the Sisters' Cemetery at Mount Aloysius College, Cresson.

Memorial contributions in memory of Sister Helen Mary may be made to the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Center, Dallas PA, 18612.



## Eucharistic Festival of Praise

*A Night of Adoration, Praise and Worship!*

**Monday  
December 15, 2014  
7:00 to 8:00 pm**

**CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**  
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# Marriage Encounter Helped Couple Strengthen A 'Darn Good Relationship'

By Bruce A. Tomaselli

It seemed as though it was only yesterday as Jeff and Kelly Beyer recalled the first time they met. Turning toward each other their eyes glowed as they remembered that camping trip.

They were teenagers then, but Jeff said he fell in love at first sight. "The first time I met Kelly I just knew deep down she was the girl for me," Jeff recalled. "I felt the same way," smiled Kelly at the remembrance.

Their love is strong as is their thirteen - year marriage. They have bumps in the road just like every couple, but with an opportunity to strengthen their already solid marriage, they attended a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend (WWME).

Members of Immaculate Conception Parish in New Germany, Jeff and Kelly said the weekend was a wonderful experience and it went way too fast.

Marriage Encounter is not a program for those whose marriages are in crisis. For those marriages the Family Life Office sponsors a weekend called Retrouvaille, said Rick and Evie Wess, one of the presenting team couples for WWME. Marriage Encounter is designed

as a weekend to strengthen relationships. It teaches couples to communicate more intimately with each other in order to deepen and enrich their relationships.

WWME is a faith - based program sponsored by the Catholic Church and the Family Life Office, but is open to all couples enjoying a solid relationship. The Altoona - Johnstown Diocese will sponsor a two - day retreat Marriage Encounter weekend on January 24 and 25, 2015 at the Sacred Heart Spirituality Center on Munster Road near Portage. In addition, on February 27, 28 and March 1, 2015, an overnight retreat will be held at the Atherton Hotel in State College.

In a somewhat unique situation, Jeff is a stay - at - home dad, and Kelly works as a pharmacist. "I worked 12 years for the Department of Corrections, but three years ago when God sent us our twins, Joshua and Matthew, we made the decision," explained Jeff. They are both happy with the arrangement and feel it's very important to have a parent at home, although they realize it's not always possible in these economic times.

Kelly said when the twins came she said, "We can do this," and it has been wonderful." Jeff says they make a good team and

that's what makes it work. They also are the parents of Katie, 11, Grace, 9, and Jeffrey, 7.

They really didn't know what to expect with their first Marriage Encounter Weekend, but were encouraged by the Wesses to give it a try at a weekend in Greensburg. The Beyers said they had been trying for awhile to work a weekend into their schedule.

"It wasn't exactly what we expected," Jeff recalled, "but it was wonderful and went way too fast." The weekend helped them strengthen their bond on a more spiritual and emotional level.

They laughed when they talked about how they had to explain to their parents, family and friends that their marriage was solid and the weekend was only a means to augment their already good relationship. People assume there must be something wrong with a marriage if you are taking a special weekend together at a retreat, they said. They laughed and said they had to reassure everybody that things were okay. Jeff and Kelly said they've always had a "darn good relationship. The weekend gave us a chance to distance ourselves from our very busy lives and reconnect and make our marriage stronger."



THE JEFF AND KELLY BEYER FAMILY

The weekend reminded them how blessed they are to have such wonderful spouses, children, and family. "As we drove away from the retreat we had this feeling, a kind of euphoria, that nothing could be wrong as long as our family was fine," Kelly remembers them thinking.

According to Jeff, the retreat emphasized two things. "We learned that our feelings are not right or wrong, they are just our feelings, and it's okay to feel that way. We also learned how to better communicate those feelings to each other so we understand each other."

As a presenting team the Wesses appreciate the value of Worldwide Encounter Weekends to marriages. "These week-

ends give people the tools to help their marriages grow," Rick said.

"It enables better communication, the ability for people to understand themselves, and to learn the value of themselves." Rick and Evie are also members of Immaculate Conception Parish.

Jeff, who also teaches religious education, and Kelly say their marriage is on solid ground and WWME helped to reinforce it. Their marriage hits bumps in the road just like all marriages do from time to time. Marriage is an evolving process.

"We recommend this to anyone," the pair said. "We've already encouraged other couples to attend a weekend. It's a wonderful weekend."

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Official Publication of the  
Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown