



Volume LXXXIX, No. 17 Published Bi - Weekly (USPS 094 - 280)

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Community

Grant Applications Sought

Altoona: Nazareth Family Foundation is now accepting grant applications for fiscal year 2015 - 2016.

Grant applications must support the mission and criteria of the Foundation, which include: meeting a critical community need; strengthening the family; demonstrating collaboration; addressing the moral and religious renewal of family life; and demonstrating a holistic approach to serving families in need.

The Foundation, established by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth with funds from the sale of the former Mercy Hospital in Altoona, has been awarding grants to programs and services in the Blair County area since 1997.

To request an application packet, call Sister Michele Collins at (814) 660 - 2259; e - mail MCollins.NFF@gmail.com; or write to Nazareth Family Foundation, 601 North Montgomery

Street, Hollidaysburg PA 16648 - 1499.

Completed applications that meet the Foundation's criteria must be received no later than February 15, 2015.

High Schools

Christmas Service Projects

Ebensburg: Students at Bishop Carroll Catholic High School were involved in a number of Christmas Season Service Projects.

On Tuesday, December 16, staff from Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown visited the school to collect gift items for families in need. Every homeroom in the school sponsored a family and purchased gift items for family members.

Wednesday, December 17, approximately 25 students visited Senior Life and Skills in Ebensburg to sing Christmas carols and visit the seniors.

Sixty students visited Cambria Care Center, the Senior Activities Center and Rebekah



COUPLES HONORED: On Sunday, November 9, Saint Anthony of Padua Parish, Windber, honored couples who celebrating their wedding anniversary in five year intervals with a Mass and brunch. In attendance were Patti and Jay Shaffer, Marge and Will Wagner, Joseph and Theresa Smith, Janet and Richard Murtha, Pat and Richard Campitell, Jean and Bob Mucciola, Deb and Tim Olson, Anna Marie and Ken Wirfel, Connie and Michael Starchok, Sharon and Mish George, Janet and Robert Chippie and celebrant Third Order Franciscan Father Rod Soha, pastor. Absent from photo were Millie and John Battiste.



GIFT CARD TREES: Members of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Altoona, Family Life Committee prepared Gift Card Christmas Trees to give to needy families in the area. The gift cards were donated by the parishioners of the Parish in the annual "Light Up A Life" program sponsored by the Family Life Committee.

Manor, all in Ebensburg, to sing Christmas carols and bring gifts to the seniors.

Higher Education

White House Summit

Cresson: Mount Aloysius College president Tom Foley was one of 140 US college presidents—four from Pennsylvania—invited to attend the second White House Summit on College Opportunity. The Summit gathered higher education leaders from around the country to consider ways to make college available to more young Americans, and to develop policies to boost graduation rates at our nation's colleges and universities. The Summit is part of the White House initiative to lead the world in college at-

tainment. The Summit featured remarks by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and President Barack Obama.

Earlier this year, Foley published an op-ed which garnered national attention. Published in the nationally read **Inside Higher Ed** and several other Pennsylvania newspapers; Foley's op-ed urged national policy makers toward greater inclusivity as they sought to create equitable comparative guidelines for the nation's colleges and universities.

This latest White House Summit focused on creating networks of colleges aimed at four major initiatives that included, helping students complete their education, investing in high school counselors as part of the

First Lady's Reach Higher initiative, creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness, and increasing the number of college graduates in STEM fields.

Prayer

Public Chapel Closed

Loretto: Beginning Monday, January 12, the public chapel at the Carmelite Monastery will be closed temporarily for repairs and renovations.

There will be no public Masses or Benediction services during this time. The monastery will continue to be open for visitors who wish to come for Holy Water, Saint Albert's Water and other religious items, or to request prayers from the Nuns.

(Continued On Page 3.)

**The Catholic Register
2015 Publication Schedule**

Deadline (Monday)	Publication (Monday)
January 5, 2015	January 12, 2015
January 19, 2015	January 26, 2015
February 2, 2015	February 9, 2015
February 16, 2015	February 23, 2015
March 2, 2015	March 9, 2015
March 16, 2015	March 23, 2015
March 30, 2015	April 6, 2015
April 13, 2015	April 20, 2015
April 27, 2015	May 4, 2015
May 11, 2015	May 18, 2015
May 25, 2015	June 1, 2015
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July 20, 2015	July 27, 2015
August 3, 2015	August 10, 2015
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September 14, 2015	September 21, 2015
September 28, 2015	October 5, 2015
October 12, 2015	October 19, 2015
October 26, 2015	November 2, 2015
November 9, 2015	November 16, 2015
November 23, 2015	November 30, 2015
December 7, 2015	December 14, 2015
December 21, 2015	December 28, 2015

All advertising and editorial copy is due by noon on deadline day.

All First Communion and Confirmation Pictures are due by July 15. No exceptions will be made to this deadline.

This schedule may be adjusted for Holy Week and Christmas.

In The Alleghenies



ANGEL TREE GIFTS: Each year at Christmas time, a special tree is decorated at the base of the "Golden Stairway" inside the central front entrance of Old Main at Mount Aloysius College, Cresson. The tree stands in front of the crèche and is festooned with Angel decorations. Each angel has the name and wishes of a community member in need. Faculty, staff and students pick these cards off of the Angel Tree as the days wind down toward semester's end and wrapped gifts magically appear in the office of the College's Campus Ministry Department. The tradition has a seamless history dating back to 1986. No one recalls who started it, but the "Angel Tree" tradition at Mount Aloysius College is surely alive and well. Pictured (left to right) arranging 145 gifts for pick up are freshman nursing student Cynthia Montoya, director of Campus Ministry Andrea Cecilli and assistant director of Campus Ministry Tommy Shireman.

(Continued From Page 2.)

The chapel, which was built in 1930, is in need of much repair to plaster ceilings, flooring, pews and woodwork as well as walls and stained glass windows. There is also much cleaning and refurbishing to be done.

The Disalced Carmelite Nuns would be most appreciative of prayers and support for the success of this project which they have entrusted to Saint Joseph.

Those wishing to make a contribution to the chapel renovation may send checks, payable to Disalced Carmelite Nuns, to Carmelite Monastery, P.O. Box 57, Loretto PA 15940.

The Monastery of Saint Therese is a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt organization. Therefore, all donations are tax deductible. The Nuns will provide a tax receipt upon request, to those making contributions to the chapel renovation project.

Retreat

New Baltimore: Father Richard B. Tomkosky, pastor of Saint John the Baptist Parish and Retreat Center will conduct an overnight weekend retreat at the parish retreat center from Friday February 6 until Sunday February 8 on the topic of the call to holiness in daily life and preparation for Lent. It will begin on Friday evening and conclude on Sunday afternoon.

Meals and lodging are included. Reservation required one week before. Space is limited. Please call (814) 733 - 2210 for cost and more information.

Pro - Life

March For Life

Loretto: Saint Francis University will hold a March for Life on Thursday, January 22, for those who cannot attend the national March for Life in Washington DC.

The event will begin with a prayer at 11:00 a.m. in front of the Immaculate Conception Chapel. The walk will then commence around the mall in the center of campus, and will conclude at approximately 11:55 a.m., for the benefit of those wishing to attend noon Mass.

For further information contact Paul Girardi, in the campus ministry department at (814) 472 - 3328.

Religious Life

Workshop For Sisters

Portage: In celebration of the Year Of Consecrated Life, the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus are holding a workshop for women religious on Saturday, January 17 at their convent at 1872 Munster Road.

The workshop will be based around the theme for the Year, "Wake Up The World!" and will feature presentations and homilies by Father Dennis J. Carbon-



Photo By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein

Solemnity Of Mary, Mother Of God; Day Of Prayer For World Justice And Peace

This Thursday, January 1, is the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. It is a holy day of obligation for the faithful in the United States. During this Christmastime, today's Mass honors and remembers Mary, the Mother of God. This is her most ancient title in Christendom. As the crèche is displayed in church, we look upon Mary who bore the incarnate Word of God. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal encourages each local church to designate particular days of prayer throughout the liturgical year. Today is a Day of Prayer in the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown for World Justice and Peace. As a new civil year begins, we gather to pray with Mary, the Mother of God, and ask God's blessings for justice and peace throughout 2015.

aro and Father Lawrence F. Kozak, priests of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

calling (814) 886 - 4223 or 505 - 2290.

The day will begin with a conference at 9:00 a.m. and will conclude with supper at 5:00 p.m. There will be three conferences, Mass, Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Chaplet of the Divine Mercy and Evening Prayer with Benediction. A free will offering is being asked, with a suggested donation of \$10.00 per Sister; no more than \$50.00 per community. Overnight accommodations will be available for those requiring them.

Registration is required by Wednesday, January 14, and may be made by contacting Mother Jacinta Miryam at sisterjacinta@gmail.com, or by

Youth

Free Throw Championship

Hollidaysburg: Star of the Sea Council 4245, will hold its Free Throw Championship on Sunday January 25, from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at St. Patrick's Gym in Newry.

Participation is free but bringing a non - perishable food item for The Saint Vincent De-Paul Society is encouraged and appreciated.

The event is open to boys and girls 7 - 14 as of January 1. participants must bring proof of age. Pre - register by calling (814) 695 - 1509 or email at dinapapt@aol.com.

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Point Of View

As my little three year old girl played gleefully around our family's nativity set, a scream of help came curdling through the house. "What's wrong?" I said running to rescue my little damsel in distress. "I lost baby Jesus," she said, as her sweet little cry soon turned to uncontrollable heaves of sadness. "It's okay, we will look for him." I tried to console her but as the minutes ticked away, her crying soon escalated into hysterics. "Please, calm down," I told her as I looked under the china cabinet and behind the sofa. "We will get your daddy and brothers to help," I added. As I called for the additions to the rescue squad, I silently wandered if we were ever going to find Him. About forty -five minutes in to the land and water search baby Jesus was rescued, found visiting Cinderella's castle with one of the boy's old ninja turtle figures, minus it's head. We all laughed! "Just like the Bible stories, Jesus is hanging out with Saints and Sinners," my husband reminds. After the happy reunion, baby Jesus was wrapped tightly and put back in the manger. I wandered in my heart, how many times we have the expectation God should be found in a certain place, acting a certain way and if not panic sets in.

I know for myself there have been times in my faith life where I felt comfortable and much satisfied knowing God was perfectly and safely wrapped inside our faith communities. I knew I would find him in church where Mass was celebrated or services being



Family Matters

By Amy Kanich
I Lost Baby Jesus!

held. I felt a sense of comfort knowing God dwelt, here in the church, among Christian people and my heart was at peace. God was there when the prayers were prayed, the songs sung and ever present among the fellowship of other believers. God was there and I knew it. I felt safe.

On the other hand, there were times in my life I would catch a glimpse of God's face outside of church, perhaps at sporting events, shopping centers and yes, even sometimes in the not so desirable places of town. Many times I would stop and do a double take, "No, that really can't be Him. He's supposed to be wrapped snuggly inside our church, "my thoughts wandered. "What is He doing out here, wandering about our town?" I would question. "He needs to remember this place can be dangerous. especially at night. Could this really be God? Wait there is no steeple, no song books and does He really know those people he is hanging with?" Panic sets in.

Many times we as Christians can have a false reassurance we know God and can find Him in our own proverbial comfort zones. One of my favorite quotes by Pope Francis, states "I would prefer a church that is

hurt and dirty from being out in the world than one that is sick from being confined within." This quote challenges me because the reality is I could go to daily Mass, pray my rosary, say novenas, give money in the collection but if my heart is not open to finding God when I walk out the doors of the church, then I still have some searching to do.

The question is simple. Are we comfortable with the fact God, is out there, wrapped in a not so pretty package? Can God really be found, in those places, we may feel are less than holy? Do we find God among the least of His people or do we stay in our church, wrapped in our own confinement, feeling secure in the prettiness of our faith? As our beautiful Christmas season unfolds, ponder the question - Did God choose to be born in a Cathedral, with beautiful stained glass windows and comfortable pews or did He chose a simple, cold and smelly manger to lay His Holy head? We know the story. God chose the perfect setting, the perfect birth place where I am almost positive the sheep smelling shepherds felt comfortable, in fact, probably right at home. Merry Christmas my friends and prayers for a Holy and Blessed New Year!



Another Perspective

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein
**United To A
'Victim Invisible'**

My apologies to you, dear readers. I was recovering from a very severe cold on deadline day; I was unable to write anything prior to deadline, so I am reprinting here a column from December 17, 2012.

The late Sister Maria Josephine D'Angelo said her 1972 design of the Mercy Cross -- the internationally recognized identifying symbol worn by the Religious Sisters of Mercy, was inspired by a poem "Victim Invisible" by Sister Miriam Gallagher R.S.M.:

*No corpus hangs upon the cross I wear,
No broken hands and feet, no thorn torn head
The ebony and ivory are bare
Of evidence that any blood was shed.
Well fed, well clothed, well shod and housed as well,
Can I invisibly the victim be,
Unless in heart and mind I daily dwell
In spirit with Him on the bitter tree!*

The Mercy Cross and Sister Miriam's poem bear witness to the statement by Mercy Foundress Venerable Catherine McAuley that "the Congregation (of Sisters of Mercy) was founded on Calvary. But remembering that "mercy" is related to the Hebrew word "hesed," referring to a God who chooses to stand in solidarity with His people, making their needs, their cares, their concerns, their own, it might also be said that the "Victim Invisible" of the Mercy Cross must also embrace another very potent symbol: the empty manger, upon which we focused during the days of Advent waiting.

The empty manger and the empty cross are symbols of the same reality: they point to a God who loves us so much that He became one of us in all things but sin, offering His life for us and inviting us to offer our lives for others. The empty manger and the empty cross are, in very truth, one and the same symbol, as is clear in Saint Paul's beautiful hymn in the Letter to the Philippians:

*Though he was in the form of God,
Jesus did not deem equality with God
something to be grasped.
Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to death,
even death on a cross.*

The empty manger and the empty cross invite us to embrace littleness, vulnerability, and humility, just as Jesus did, and to live lives of humble service in imitation of His life among us. These signs, these symbols of God's love inspire us to be as loving, as caring, as kind to our brothers and sisters as Jesus was to us. In the manger and on the cross, His arms were opened wide to embrace the world.

At Christmas, at Easter, and all the year through, in the manger and on the cross, and in all the days in-between, we are called to be Victims Invisible, united to Him, in a bond of love for Him and for all His holy people.

Vatican Letter

New Pope, New Leadership Changed Tone Of Visitation Of U.S. Sisters

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- During the process of the apostolic visitation of communities of U.S. religious women, a shift in tone took place.

The Vatican's final report on the visitation, released Dec. 16, made observations, not accusations. Instead of giving the women instructions, it made suggestions -- mostly encouraging them to continue discernment about their identity, vocations promotion and formation, fidelity to Christ and the church, community life and cooperation with the wider church, including local bishops.

The tone change was partially the result of the dialogue style those conducting onsite visits were instructed to take, and partially because the sisters decided to share their own decades of discernment and struggle with the visitors.

Mother Mary Clare Millea,

superior general of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the apostolic visitor appointed by the Vatican, told Catholic News Service Dec. 16 the biggest change she saw was in the public perception of the visitation.

"The surprise announcement (of the visitation) caught people off guard and made them guarded," she said.

But a change in the leadership of the Vatican congregation overseeing the visitation also contributed to the new tone. Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, who was named prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in 2011 -- two years after the visitation began -- told reporters Dec. 16 that he and his leadership team have decided their main approach to religious orders will be to spend time with them, visiting them -- not conducting visitations, except for very serious reasons.

"We are putting more of an accent on going to them, not to identify mistakes or judge situa-

tions, but to listen to the sufferings, see the difficulties, listen to what they are going through," the cardinal said. The congregation wants "more of the climate of a family -- I'm not saying this didn't exist before -- but we are emphasizing it more."

However, the biggest change since the visitation began in 2009 was the election of Pope Francis.

As a Jesuit and former Jesuit provincial, one who admits he made mistakes by being authoritarian as a young superior, Pope Francis knows the world of consecrated religious life from the inside. Throughout his pontificate he has used that experience to instruct, encourage and exhort religious to be courageous, joyful and prophetic, to "wake up the world."

And then there are his observations about community life, which his comments highlight as an essential -- and perhaps most challenging -- part of consecrated life.

Meeting in early November with the superiors of men's communities in Italy, the pope said, "Please, don't let the terrorism of gossip exist among you. ... If you have something against your brother, tell him to his face. Sometimes it might end in fist-cuffs," he said, causing the superiors to laugh. "That's not a problem. It's always better than the terrorism of gossip."

While tough on gossip, Pope Francis is even tougher on people breaking with the church's tradition, creating scandal or division or acting as if the Holy Spirit could lead them to ignore the hierarchy.

Responding to God's call to enter religious life means feeling, thinking and acting in communion with the church, which "generated us through baptism," he told the women's International Union of Superiors General in May 2013. Christians do not do good because of a "personal

inspiration, but in union with mission of the church and in its name."

Religious superiors, Pope Francis told the women, need to ensure their members are educated in the doctrine of the church, "in love for the church and in an ecclesial spirit."

Quoting Pope Paul VI, he said, "It's an absurd dichotomy to think one can live with Jesus, but without the church, to follow Jesus outside the church, to love Jesus and not the church."

A month later, meeting with members of the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Men and Women Religious, or CLAR, he urged religious to put greater effort into dialogue with their bishops and to courageously minister to the poor without worrying they might receive a questioning letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

If the letter comes, "don't worry. Explain what you have to explain, but keep going," he told them, according to a leaked report from one of the participants.

"You are going to make mistakes; you are going to put your foot in it. That happens," he said. "I prefer a church that makes mistakes because it is doing something to one that sickens because it stays shut in."

As both a former Jesuit superior and former archbishop of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis recognizes how much effort and good will is needed to respect both religious orders' discernment of what ministries to engage in as well as a bishop's responsibilities as shepherd, teacher and leader of the local church.

In November 2013, meeting with the international men's Union of Superiors General, Pope Francis announced that he had asked the congregation

for religious to revise "Mutuae Relationes," a set of directives issued jointly with the Congregation for Bishops in 1978. The document said that religious orders are part of the local church, though with their own internal organization, and that their "right to autonomy" should never be considered as independence from the local church.

"That document was useful at the time but is now outdated," the pope told the superiors. "The charisms of the various institutes need to be respected and fostered because they are needed in dioceses," and consecrated men and women cannot be seen simply as employees.

The point is not to allow religious to set up parallel structures or have free rein in a diocese, but to allow them to offer their unique gifts to the church and the world. After all, Pope Francis insists, the church exists to bring God's love to the world and the Holy Spirit has a variety of ways to do that.

Meeting with members of the Vatican congregation for religious in late November, Pope Francis said he knows not all the news about religious life is good and the church should not "hide the areas of weakness," including "the diminished ability to attract new members, the not irrelevant number of those who leave -- this really worries me!"

At the same time, "consecrated life will not flourish as a result of brilliant vocation programs, but because the young people we meet find us attractive, because they see us as men and women who are happy," he wrote in a letter for the 2014-15 Year of Consecrated Life. Consecrated life is not about efficiency, he said, but about "the eloquence of your lives, lives which radiate the joy and beauty of living the Gospel and following Christ to the full."

Letters To The Editor

Ecumenical Approach Appreciated

Dear Monsignor Stein,

Greetings from the ACROD Chancery in Johnstown!

I want to thank you for the editorial in the recent issue of the **Register** about a married clergy and this Diocese. It was a great editorial, and we are grateful for your ecumenical approach which is drawing all of us closer. The recent meeting of the Pope and Patriarch in Istanbul is a sure sign we are making progress. Thank God!

Wishes for blessed Holydays and holidays! Let us together welcome the King of Peace!

Sincerely in Christ,
Very Reverend Protopresbyter Frank P. Miloro
Chancellor
The American Carpatho - Russian Orthodox Diocese
Of The U.S.A.
Johnstown

Pope Francis Credited With Helping U.S., Cuba Normalize Diplomatic Relations

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS)

-- Pope Francis personally appealed to President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro this year to encourage both leaders to normalize diplomatic relations, a senior Obama administration official said.

Speaking on background, the official told reporters Dec. 17 that the pope followed up the personal appeals with letters to the U.S. and Cuban leaders, encouraging them to move forward on efforts to improve relations between the two countries.

The pope's actions were part of a major diplomatic effort by the Vatican, which hosted direct talks between American and Cuban officials, the administration official said.

"That (letter) gave greater impetus and momentum for us to move forward," the administration official said.

Castro and Obama acknowledged in simultaneous addresses to their respective nations the role Pope Francis played in the talks.

Pope Francis congratulated both governments for agreeing to establish diplomatic relations "with the aim of overcoming, in the interest of the citizens of both countries, the difficulties which have marked their recent history."

In a statement released after the announcement was made simultaneously by Obama in Washington and Castro in Havana, the Vatican confirmed the pope's role in negotiations between the two countries.

The Vatican said it had invited Obama and Castro to "resolve humanitarian questions of common interest, including the situation of certain prisoners, in order to initiate a new phase in relations between the two parties."

"The Holy See will continue to assure its support for initiatives which both nations will undertake to strengthen their bilateral relations and promote the wellbeing of their respective citizens," the statement said.

The pope had appealed to both countries for the release of Alan Gross, an American contractor for the U.S. Agency for International Development, who had been held in a Cuban prison for five years. Gross was released Dec. 17, hours before Obama announced that change in U.S. policy toward Cuba.

The administration official also said that a U.S. "intelligence asset" was being released after being held for 20 years in Cuba in exchange for three members of the Cuban Five, or Miami Five as they are also known.

The official declined to



CNS Photo/L'Osservatore Romano

CUBA'S PATRONESS: A statue of Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, Cuba's patroness, is pictured during its dedication in the Vatican Gardens Aug. 28. The original statue is housed in a shrine in the town of El Cobre, in the eastern province of Santiago, Cuba. The dedication was attended by several bishops from Cuba.

identify the U.S. spy.

The men were members of a Cuban intelligence network in Miami known as "La Red Avispa," or "Wasp Network," dispatched by Cuba's then-President Fidel Castro in the early 1990s to infiltrate militant exile groups in South Florida, according to the Associated Press.

The policy changes included the lifting of restrictions on travel to Cuba; review of Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism; allowing the sale of telecommunications equipment to Cuba; lifting of embargoes on Cuban products in the U.S.; and an easing of financial restrictions.

The administration official told reporters that with the changes, the U.S. would continue to pursue efforts to promote democracy and strengthen human rights in Cuba.

"Openness is a better policy than isolation in advancing the things we care about in Cuba," the official said.

The official laid out a timeline that indicated that talks between the U.S. and Cuba took about 18 months to evolve to the point where Obama announced a change in the American position regarding its Caribbean neighbor. The officials said talks mostly took place in Canada with one meeting occurring at the Vatican.

Obama said in a noontime address that the U.S. and Cuba would begin talks to normalize relations and open an embassy in Havana for the first time in more than 50 years. Diplomatic relations between the two countries ended in 1961.

The Vatican's role in the process is linked to Obama's visit to the Vatican in March. In

a meeting with the pope, the administration official said, Cuba was "a topic of discussion that got as much attention as anything they discussed."

"President Obama has enormous respect for Pope Francis and his personal engagement is important to us," the official added.

Senior Vatican officials later received U.S. and Cuban officials together in October. The meeting gave representatives of both countries the opportunity to review details of their negotiations and formalize the exchange and transfer of the prisoners.

The administration official stressed that Gross' release was a humanitarian gesture by the Cuban government and was not tied to the prisoner exchange.

The official said the Vatican was the only government directly involved in talks between the two countries. Canada hosted meetings between the two governments during, but Canadian officials did not participate.

The Cuban Five were arrested Sept. 12, 1998 by a heavily armed FBI SWAT team. They were convicted in 2001 in Miami on charges including conspiracy to commit murder, acting as an agent of a foreign government, and other illegal activities in the United States and failure to register as foreign agents in the U.S. and other illegal activities. Each was sentenced to four life terms plus 75 years in December 2001.

They are hailed as national heroes in Cuba, according to AP.

The five appealed their convictions. A three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned their convictions in 2005, but the full court later reversed the ruling, ending the five men's bid for a new trial and reinstated the original convictions. In June 2009 the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the case.

Two were eventually released, one in October 2011 and the other in February of this year.

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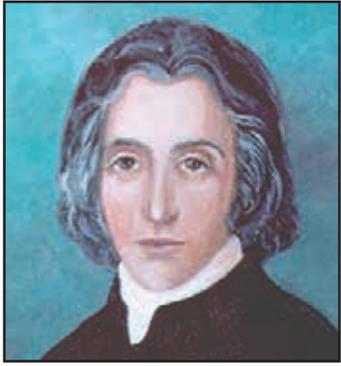
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Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin
1770 - 1840**

Priest Named 'Relatore' Of Gallitzin Cause

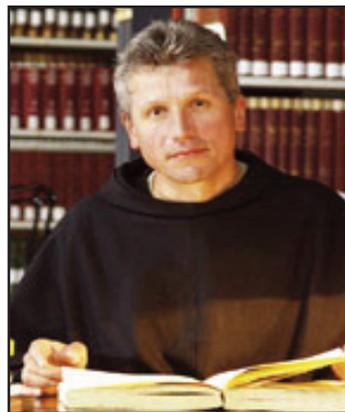
A priest of the Conventual Franciscan Friars has been named relatore for the Cause of the Servant of God Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, by the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

The appointment of Father Zdzislaw Kijas was communicated to Monsignor Michael E. Servinsky, Bishop's Delegate

for the Cause by Father Luis Escalante, the Cause's Roman postulator, in a Tuesday, December 2 e - mail message.

"While you were celebrating Thanksgiving, here in Italy I met for the first time with our relatore: Father Zdzislaw Kijas," wrote Father Escalante.

Father Kijas is a member of the Cracow (Poland) Province of



**FATHER ZDZISLAW
KIJAS
O.F.M. CONV.**

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.

+ + +

Kindly send information about favors granted to:

**The Cause for the Servant of God
Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin
Diocese Of Altoona - Johnstown
927 South Logan Boulevard
Hollidaysburg PA 16648**

end Prince Gallitzin was, and his significance in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.

"Father Kijas was amazed at the 19 volumes of material collected during the diocesan phase of the Cause," Father Escalante wrote.

During their meeting Father Kijas affirmed the work Father Escalante has done on the positio to date: preparing an index and indicating the general distribution of material.

Father Kijas was particularly impressed, Father Escalante noted, with the testimony of 18 witnesses interviewed during the diocesan phase regarding Father Gallitzin's reputation for sanctity. The questions posed, Father Escalante said, showed Father Kijas that the diocesan phase was not simply a pro-forma fulfillment of the requirements of canon law, but sought to truly show an understanding of the continuing importance of Father Gallitzin in the lives of the faithful.

The Cause for the Servant of God Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin was formally initiated by the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown in 2007, with Betty and Frank Seymour serving as diocesan postulators. The diocesan phase concluded October 30, 2013, with a Mass celebrated at the Basilica of Saint Michael the Archangel in Loretto. Following the Mass, Father Escalante transported three sealed boxes of documents, amounting to thousands of pages attesting to the abiding memory of Father

Gallitzin in the life of the local Church, and beyond, to Rome.

Earlier this year, on January 27, the Roman Phase of the Cause began when the documents, known as the "acta" of the Cause, were officially received and opened at the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

A further milestone in the Cause was reached this Summer, when on July 4 the Congregation issued a decree stating that the process to date was valid, with no need for clarifications.

Father Escalante welcomed the appointment of Father Kijas to serve as the relatore for Father Gallitzin's Cause.

"He is a quiet man, precise, not complicated at all," Father Escalante told Monsignor Servinsky. "He will be available at any time for me, giving assistance in the work: in person, by e-mail, by phone.

"I am very satisfied with the person that the Congresso of the Congregation gave to us," he concluded.



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the Conventual Franciscan Friars. He was named a relatore of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010.

When Father Escalante was named Roman Postulator by Bishop Mark L. Bartchak on January 23, 2013, he explained that the relatore "acts like the director of a doctoral dissertation," in helping the postulator complete a document called the "positio."

Father Escalante further explained "The positio - - a document of no more than 500 pages - - presents the work of the diocesan historical commission and theological commission. It will truly be a collaborative venture of all those who have been working on Father Gallitzin's Cause."

Father Escalante told Monsignor Servinsky that Father Kijas, in their first meeting, was very generous in sharing his time, allowing Father Escalante to explain fully who the Rever-

Word of Life



The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis
Our Lady Of Guadalupe

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Preceded by a procession of flags from the nations of the Americas and the recitation of the rosary in Spanish, Pope Francis and thousands of Catholics from across the Atlantic celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the Vatican.

The Argentina-born pope celebrated the Dec. 12 Mass to the sounds and rhythms of many of South America's indigenous peoples; the principal sung parts of the Mass were from the "Misa Criolla," composed 50 years ago by the late Ariel Ramirez. His son, Facundo Ramirez, conducted the choir that featured Patricia Sosa, a famous Argentine singer, as well as guitars and traditional instruments from the continent.

With St. Juan Diego's vision of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531, the pope said, Mary "became the great missionary who brought the Gospel to our America."

In his homily, Pope Francis prayed that Mary would "continue to accompany, assist and protect our peoples" and that she would "lead all the children who are pilgrims on this earth by the hand to an encounter with her son Jesus Christ."

"Imploring God's forgiveness and trusting in his mercy," the pope prayed that God would help the people of Latin America forge a future of hope, development and opportunity for the poor and suffering, "for the humble, for those who hunger and thirst for justice, for the compassionate, the pure of heart, peacemakers and those persecuted for the sake of Christ's name."

Mary's "Magnificat," her hymn of praise to God, he said, proclaims that God "overturns ideologies and worldly hierarchies. He raises up the humble, comes to the aid of the poor and the small, and fills with good things, blessings and hope those who trust in his mercy."

Pope Francis said the day's reading from Psalm 66, with its "plea for forgiveness and the blessing of the peoples and nations and, at the same time, its joyful praise, expresses the spiritual sense of this Eucharistic celebration" in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, "for whom devotion extends from Alaska to Patagonia."

The dark-skinned image of Our Lady of Guadalupe traditionally believed to have been miraculously impressed on Juan Diego's cloak, the pope said, proclaimed to the indigenous peoples of the Americas "the good news that all its inhabitants shared the dignity of children of God. No more would anyone be a servant, but we are all children of the same Father and brothers and sisters to each other."

Mary did not just want to visit the Americas, the pope said, the image on the cloak or "tilma" is a sign that "she wanted to remain with them."

"Through her intercession, the Christian faith began to become the greatest treasure" of the American peoples, Pope Francis said, a treasure "transmitted and demonstrated even today in the baptism of multitudes of people, in the faith, hope and charity of many, in their precious popular piety and in that ethos of the people who show that they know the dignity of the human person, in their passion for justice, in solidarity with the poor and suffering."



ONE MORE TIME: A photograph from the 1950s, reproduced in Father James Coveney's 2004 book *The Belles Of Saint Mary's*, shows the sanctuary of Saint Mary Church, Altoona, decorated for Christmas.

First, a disclaimer: I'm not a Scripture scholar. Full disclosure: I'm not a scholar.

As someone who has spent part of the past 40 years writing fiction, it's easy for me to picture people and scenes and to "eavesdrop" on what they're saying to each other.

Lately, I've been thinking about the Virgin Mary and St. Luke. You may know that tradition says Luke and Mary were close and that's why his Gospel includes some material about her that's not in the other three.

Luke mentions Joseph and Mary misplacing Jesus for a few days and then finding him in the temple. I've had a child wander from me in the grocery store, or I've wandered away from him or her, but it was only a matter of a worried minute or so before we were reunited. My little one wasn't the Son of God, the Messiah, so I didn't have that added pressure.

It seems safe to assume that Mary told the story to Luke or he wouldn't have been able to record it. It appears that Mary, born without sin and sinless all her life, um, made a mistake. She lost her child for three days. That's a long, long time to be searching. Years later, she told someone who was going to make the story public.

God bless her for sharing the story. God bless her for pointing out that even in a family without sin, mistakes can be



Your Family

By Bill Dodds
The Holy Family's Familiar Parental Foibles

Mary, in her generous humility, offers comfort to every spouse, parent, grandparent, every son or daughter, every sibling, every family member and friend who has made a mistake involving the family.

"We all make mistakes," she says to each of us. "Let me tell you one of mine."

made. A teen can assume his parents will know where he is. A dad can assume he's with his mom. A mom can assume the child is with his father, and all of them can be wrong.

Apparently, even the Holy Family wasn't "perfect" all the time, if the definition of that word means mistake-free.

I've thought of that more since my wife, Monica, died two years ago. I remember the good times, the blessed times, but also the times when I made mistakes.

I remember the actions that, unintentionally, caused her concern or pain. Even now, with grown children and as a grandparent, I still make mistakes.

Mary, in her generous humility, offers comfort to every spouse, parent, grandparent, every son or daughter, every sibling, every family member and friend who has made a mistake involving the family.

"We all make mistakes," she says to each of us. "Let me tell you one of mine."



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
**Holy Days
 Of Obligation**

Q. When are we going to do away with holy days of obligation? We no longer live in medieval times when a whole village is closed down for the day. The only people at Mass now are the true die-hards. Please encourage the bishops to put the celebrations on Sunday or take away the obligation. (Copake, New York)

A. In the Catholic world, there is considerable variation from country to country in the number of holy days of obligation (when Catholics are required to participate in the Eucharist). The Code of Canon Law in No. 1246 lists 10 of these, in addition to Sundays, but allows national conferences of bishops to reduce the number or to transfer their observance to a Sunday.

Vatican City observes all 10, while Canada keeps only two (Christmas and Jan. 1).

The United States has kept six holy days of obligation: the feast of Mary, Mother of God

(Jan. 1); Ascension Thursday (40 days after Easter); the Assumption of Our Lady (Aug. 15); All Saints' Day (Nov. 1); the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8); and Christmas (Dec. 25.)

The U.S. Conference of Bishops of the United States decided to maintain the traditional six holy days. Later, in 1999, ecclesiastical provinces of the country were permitted to transfer the observance of the feast of the Ascension to the following Sunday, and most of the United States has done that.

The most confusing aspect, I believe, was the determination of the U.S. bishops' conference that whenever Jan. 1, Aug. 15 or Nov. 1 falls on a Saturday or a Monday, the obligation to attend Mass is removed. As a pastor, I confess that each time this happens I feel the need to review the regulation and explain it in our parish bulletin, because neither our parishioners nor I can seem to keep it straight.

Regretfully, I acknowledge your contention that Mass atten-

dance is low on some of these holy days. In the fourth century, St. John Chrysostom lamented in a homily that "many people celebrate the holy days and know their names; but of their history, meaning and origin, they know nothing." If we are to maintain the six holy days of obligation for the United States, we probably need to do a better job explaining their meaning and their importance.

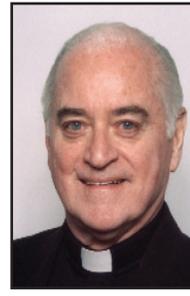
Q. If I recall correctly from grade school (60 years ago), the poor souls in purgatory cannot pray for themselves, but they are able to pray for those still in the world. I have been asked on a number of occasions to say a few words at a funeral in honor of the deceased. Each time, I am moved to close my reflection with, "Pray for us, (name of the deceased), now and at the hour of our death." Am I off-base? (Wauwatosa, Wisconsin)

A. Whether the souls in purgatory can, by their prayers, help those still on earth is an unsettled question in Catholic theology and a matter on which renowned theologians have differed. Thomas Aquinas held quite definitively that the poor souls could not help us, while Robert Bellarmine and Alphonsus Liguori believed that they could.

The section in The Catechism of the Catholic Church that deals with purgatory (No. 1030-1032) makes no mention of the holy souls praying for us, and at no point does the liturgy of the church invoke their help.

But we cannot exclude that possibility; it could be that praying for the living is part of their purification in readying themselves for the holiness of heaven. So, I see no harm in asking for their prayers. If they are in purgatory, they might be able to pray for us; if they are already in heaven, they certainly can.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.



Spirituality For Today

By Father John Catoir
**Let God Guide
 Your Resolutions For Life**

I don't know about you, but year after year I find myself breaking my New Year's resolutions. Having said that, I readily admit that as we approach New Year's, we need focus. This is a good time to get serious about our future happiness. Am I on the right track or not?

To test yourself, you might find it helpful to stop and think about what God wants you to do for him. Surely you must realize that your happiness for all eternity is linked to that question.

We usually think quite a lot about New Year's resolutions, but I don't think it's helpful to stress much about them. We tend to break them a few weeks after Jan. 1 and then drift back to our normal lives. I prefer to put the emphasis where it belongs: on God. What does he want?

Here's the heart of it. When you love others, you try to please them, isn't that true? Pleasing God is simple when you think about it. Everything in Scripture tells us that God is pleased when we invite him into our lives and then strive to do his will. He wants us to accept his love and share it with others. It all comes down to the art of pleasing God by becoming spiritually altruistic.

Are you spiritually altruistic? God wants us to love one another. Do you see yourself as a loving person? God wants us to help one another. Do you strive to help others? God wants us to teach one another. Do you teach spiritual values by good example? God wants us to forgive one another. Do you harbor anger or resentment? God wants us to comfort one another. Do you have compassion for those who suffer?

As you can see, we've moved away from the topic of your happiness. Or have we? Clarifying the definition of happiness is precisely the point. Self-centered people are usually grasping, egotistical, dominating, obnoxious and unhappy. They moan and complain, even when they have much more than the average person.

God wants you to be happy. He knows that egotism is exactly the wrong way to achieve happiness. It usually breeds misery. That's why he commands you to love your neighbor. It's not a suggestion; it's not a plea. It's a command. God's will is deadly serious. Your eternal happiness depends on it, but so do your self-respect, your joy and your happiness in this life.

Knowing that God wants you to be happy and that he actually teaches you the way to achieve it can be a life-changing experience. It has been known to alter people's entire direction in life.

Am I serious about not making any New Year's resolutions for 2015? Yes and no. If you feel more comfortable with a specific goal, then God bless you. My hope is to convince you to be open to the whispering of the Holy Spirit so that all year long you will have the holy desire to surrender to the urgings of the Holy Spirit as they come along. These urgings are called graces.

Be assured that your good intentions are duly noted in heaven, but try to let God be the one who reminds you of them.

May the Lord be your strength and your joy.

Elizabeth Ann
 Seton
 1774 - 1821
 Feast - January 4



The first American-born Saint was a married mother of five. Following the death of her husband in 1803, Elizabeth became a Catholic and formed a community of women in Maryland. She spent her life helping the poor and the sick and dedicated her years as a religious sister to education. She established the Sisters of Charity in the United States. They are considered founders of the parochial school system. Elizabeth Ann Seton was canonized in 1975. A shrine in her name is located in Emmitsburg, Maryland.



Photo By Brad Young

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP CELEBRATION: The Bishop Guilfoyle football team jumps for joy as the final seconds tick off the clock during its legendary win against Clairton, 19-18. The Class A title game was played on Friday, December 12 at Hershey Park Stadium. The Marauders beat the vaunted WPIAL power that has been to the title game six times in the past seven years.

Guilfoyle Marauders Are State Football Champions

(Continued From Page 16.)

“The team carried that spirit out onto the field and finished the game with a win. That was a great moment for us,” remarked the coach.

According to Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School principal, Joan Donnelly, that gesture by Berger personifies the conscience of the entire Marauder community. “I hear positive comments about our students, and it’s flattering, but they’re like that in school and out. It’s the way they are and that’s the beauty of it,” she said. Donnelly said they don’t have a school persona and a public persona. That’s the way they are all of the time.

She continued that the se-

niors this year are leaders and role models and they’ve been that way since they began high school. “They’ve been great role models for the underclassmen, and I have watched them grow,” she stated.

Mike Cacciotti, assistant principal and athletic director, said that Jeremy Burkett, Portage Athletic director, commended the sportsmanship the Marauders displayed after their playoff game at Altoona Mansion Park. He appreciates that and added, “They’re kids, and they make mistakes like we all do. But they’re a great bunch of students and fun to be around.”

The senior captains of the team, Andrew Berger, Brandon Chadborn and Sam McCloskey were just freshmen when Coach

Wheeler met with the team for the first time. Being hired just months before the first game he didn’t have a lot of time with kids that first year. The three agreed that the coaching staff gave the team a different feeling, and they liked what Coach Wheeler had to say. Transitions are tough, but they said he adapted to the Bishop Guilfoyle community.

“This coaching staff had a different mind set with them,” McCloskey said. “Our goal every year is to win a state championship,” said Chadborn, “but about half way through this season, we really began to believe we could go the whole way.”

Berger said the team worked hard in the off - season lifting weights and doing car-

dio work at 6:00 a.m. during the summer. “We never had to wonder who would show up for the workouts,” Berger said. “We all made the workouts. Nobody had to be called. We had great turn-outs the entire year.”

In his first year, Coach Wheeler’s team finished with one win and eight losses. But, by the following season they finished 9 - 3; followed by a 10 - 3 season and a loss in the District 6A Championship Game last year. McCloskey said it was tough walking away after losing that game but it firmed their resolve. “We all felt we left something on the table.”

“As freshmen the kids adopted a mission to succeed,” Coach Wheeler recalls. “For kids to be that focused and

maintain that focus speaks to their character.”

The coach and his family are members of Saint Monica Parish in Chest Springs. He and his wife Kelly have three children. Hayley is 13, Kamryn 10, and Justin 5.

Coach Wheeler said he and his staff laid out a plan at the start and told the team this is what we feel we need to do to win. They bought into what he was asking from them, and they bought in completely.

(Continued On Page 11.)



Photo By Brad Young

DREAM REALIZED: Junior Aaron Yasulitis (left) and Senior Matt Gormley share a moment after the game as the joy of realizing their state title dreams becomes a reality with the 19 - 18 win over Clairton of the WPIAL.

staff was huge,” Wheeler added. “We got a guy with NFL experience.” Geishauer served previously as a strength coach for the Buffalo Bills and Duquesne University.

The team embodies Success with Honor” off the field, too, with Berger, Chadbourn and McCloskey, along with Ian Luther, Matt Gormley, Anthony Livoti, and Owen Wolf going beyond school requirements and volunteering at Blair Senior Services. Next year Chadbourn will take his talents to Villanova University; McCloskey to Lehigh University; and Berger continues to weigh his college options.

It’s been an exciting ride for the Bishop Guilfoyle community. After their win in Hershey the team was escorted to the school by local fire and police vehicles. Wheeler said it was a lot of fun. People were coming out of buildings to congratulate them along the way and there were so many people at the school.

He said the team and staff want to share the win with the entire community and they are making plans to visit the local parochial schools, among other places.

According to Donnelly plans are being developed to hold an official celebration in the near future.

Coach Wheeler remarked that he is so proud of the team as young adults. Before each game Father Raymond Crosser celebrated Mass for the team and they prayed the rosary.

“All of this football stuff is great and it has been a big part of my life,” Coach Wheeler said.

“But, I try to get across to them this is just a small part of who they are and there is a bigger picture unfolding before them.

“When I hear other people speaking about some of the nice things they do to help other people I know they will be successful in life.

“I want these kids to become good adults and good role models, and that’s what’s important,” Coach Wheeler said.

(Continued From Page 10.)

He said a lot of credit for the team’s transition to winning rests on the shoulders of his great staff. It includes: James Poldiak, offensive coordinator; Bret Geishauer, defensive coordinator; and assistant coaches Pat Irwin, Joe Thomas, Jordan Plunkett, Pat Leamer, A. J. Anderson, Brad Kanuch, and Mark Baughman.

The first thing Coach Wheeler did was to implement a weight program and he found an experienced strength coach in Geishauer. “Getting him on the



Photo By Brad Young

TRIUMPH: Anthony Livotti, flanked by his teammates, holds the state championship trophy for all of the Marauder fans to enjoy.

Vatican Report Calls U.S. Women Religious To Continued Dialogue, Discernment

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- A massive, detailed Vatican-ordered investigation of U.S. communities of women religious ended with a call to the women themselves to continue discerning how best to live the Gospel in fidelity to their orders' founding ideals while facing steeply declining numbers and a rapidly aging membership.

Although initially seen by many religious and lay Catholics as a punitive measure, the apostolic visitation concluded with the publication Dec. 16 of a 5,000-word final report summarizing the problems and challenges the women themselves see in their communities and thanking them for their service to the church and to society, especially the poor.

The visitation process, carried out between 2009 and 2012 with detailed questionnaires and on-site visits, mainly by other women religious, "sought to convey the caring support of the church in respectful, sister-to-sister dialogue," says the final report by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The process attempted to help the Vatican "and the sisters themselves to be more cognizant of their current situation and challenges in order to formulate realistic, effective plans for the future," said the report, signed by Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, prefect of the congregation for religious, and Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo, secretary.

In summarizing the results, the congregation called for special attention in several areas, including: formation programs for new members; the personal, liturgical and common prayer life of members; ensuring their spiritual practices and ministries are fully in harmony with church teaching "about God, creation, the Incarnation and redemption"

in Christ; strengthening community life, especially for members living on their own or with just one other sister; living their vow of poverty while wisely administering financial resources; and strengthening communion within the church, especially with the bishops and Vatican officials.

The Vatican, the report says, "is well aware that the apostolic visitation was met with apprehension and suspicion by some women religious. This resulted in a refusal, on the part of some institutes, to collaborate fully in the process."

"While the lack of full cooperation was a painful disappointment for us," the congregation writes, "we use this present opportunity to invite all religious institutes to accept our willingness to engage in respectful and fruitful dialogue with them."

"A number of sisters conveyed to the apostolic visitor a desire for greater recognition and support of the contribution of women religious to the church on the part of its pastors," the report says. "They noted the ongoing need for honest dialogue with bishops and clergy as a means of clarifying their role in the church and strengthening their witness and effectiveness as women faithful to the church's teaching and mission."

In addition, it says, "some spoke of their perception of not having enough input into pastoral decisions which affect them or about which they have considerable experience and expertise."

The current Year of Consecrated Life, the congregation says, should be "a graced opportunity for all of us within the church -- religious, clergy and laity -- to take those steps toward forgiveness and reconciliation, which will offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion to all."

The former prefect of the congregation, Cardinal Franc Rode, ordered the visitation in 2008, saying its aim would be to study the community, prayer



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

APOSTOLIC VISITOR: Mother Mary Clare Millea, superior general of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, speaks during a Tuesday, December 16 Vatican press conference for release of the final report of a Vatican-ordered investigation of U.S. communities of women religious. Mother Millea was the Vatican-appointed director of the visitation. The 5,000 word report summarizes problems and challenges the women see in their communities and thanks them for their service. The visitation was carried out between 2009 and 2012.

and apostolic life of the orders to learn why the number of religious women in the United States had declined so sharply since the 1960s.

Almost a year into the study, Cardinal Rode told Vatican Radio that the investigation was a response to concerns -- including some expressed by an unnamed "important representative of the U.S. church" -- regarding "some irregularities or omissions in American religious life. Most of all, you could say, it involves a certain secular mentality that has spread in these religious families and, perhaps, also a certain 'feminist' spirit."

As the process began, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, which represents about 80 percent of U.S. women religious, questioned what its officials considered a lack of full disclosure about what motivated the visitation.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's investigation of the LCWR, begun in 2008, was a separate process; in 2011, the congregation ordered a reform of the organization, saying "the current doctrinal and pastoral situation of LCWR is

grave and a matter of serious concern, also given the influence the LCWR exercises on religious congregations in other parts of the world."

At a news conference presenting the report Dec. 16, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life invited both the president of the LCWR and the chairwoman of the smaller U.S. Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious to address the media. They were joined by Mother Mary Clare Millea, superior general of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the apostolic visitor appointed by the Vatican.

The congregation's final report says that while apostolic visits are "a normal instrument of governance" designed to "assist the group in question to improve the way in which it carries out its mission in the life of the church," the visitation of U.S. women religious "was unprecedented" in many ways.

"It involved 341 religious institutes of both diocesan and pontifical right, to which approximately 50,000 women religious throughout the United

States belong," the report says. Only communities of cloistered nuns were excluded.

While not news, the report presents striking statistics: "Today, the median age of apostolic women religious in the United States is in the mid- to late-70s. The current number of approximately 50,000 apostolic women religious is a decline of about 125,000 since the mid-1960s, when the numbers of religious in the United States had reached their peak."

"It is important to note, however, that the very large numbers of religious in the 1960s was a relatively short-term phenomenon that was not typical of the experience of religious life through most of the nation's history," the report says. "The steady growth in the number of women religious peaked dramatically from the late 1940s through the early 1960s, after which it began to decline as many of the sisters who had entered during the peak years left religious life, the remaining sisters aged and considerably fewer women joined religious institutes."

Citing a wide variety of founding principles, ministries and community sizes, the congregation's final report notes an overall trend of "aging and diminishment" in the number of members.

Most religious communities, it says, "are expending considerable spiritual and material energies in the area of vocation promotion," but many of them are obtaining results "not commensurate with the expectations and efforts."

(Continued On Page 13.)



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

LEADERS: Sister Sharon Holland, president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, speaks as Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, chair of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, listens during a Tuesday, December 16 Vatican press conference for release of the final report of a Vatican-ordered investigation of U.S. communities of women religious.

Though Painful At Times, Visitation Was Positive, Speakers Say

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The apostolic visitation of U.S. communities of religious

Report

(Continued From Page 12.)

"Vocation and formation personnel interviewed noted that candidates often desire the experience of living in formative communities, and many wish to be externally recognizable as consecrated women," it says, in an apparent reference to the wearing of traditional habits. "This is a particular challenge in institutes whose current lifestyle does not emphasize these aspects of religious life."

The congregation's report does not make specific recommendations other than urging the entire church "to offer fervent prayer for religious vocations" and to ask religious communities to ensure they provide "a solid, theological, human, cultural, spiritual and pastoral preparation" for religious life.

women, though initially met with some resistance, ended up promoting a greater sense of unity in the church and helped the women become more aware of how God is working in their lives, said the prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

"May the self-assessment and dialogue sparked by the apostolic visitation continue to bear abundant fruit for the revitalization and strengthening of religious institutes in fidelity to Christ, to the Church and to their founding charisms," said Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, the prefect, at a Dec. 16 news conference at the Vatican.

The apostolic visitation, carried out between 2009 and 2012, concluded with the publication of a final report summarizing the problems and challenges the apostolic visitors and the women themselves see in their communities.

Joining Cardinal Braz de Aviz for the presentation of the report were: Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo, congregation secretary; Mother Mary Clare Millea, superior general of the Apostles of the Sacred

Heart of Jesus and the apostolic visitor appointed by the Vatican; Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, superior general of the Sisters of Life and chairperson of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious; and Sister Sharon Holland, vice president of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

The sisters attended Pope Francis' private Mass that morning and spoke to him briefly afterward. Mother Clare said the pope thanked her for fulfilling the "long and arduous task." She asked the pope if he had a message for the U.S. sisters and he responded, "Please tell them I send my blessings to them all."

Mother Clare, speaking to Catholic News Service, said one thing she kept in mind during the visitation was the experience of her order's founder, Mother Clelia Merloni. Because of "internal conflicts and jealousies," she was denounced to the Vatican. "She was subjected to an apostolic visitation, removed from office and lived outside the congregation for 12 years." Now "we are very close to her beatification," Mother Clare said.

Her suffering "very deeply touched my approach to the visitation," she said, "knowing the sacredness of every sister, the sacredness of every congregation, so I could not treat them with anything but total respect."

In addition to the 5,000-word final report, Cardinal Braz de Aviz said, "individual reports will be sent to those institutes which hosted an onsite visitation and to those institutes whose individual reports indicated areas of concern -- because there are some of those, too."

Archbishop Rodriguez told reporters that the Vatican would not publish the individual reports out of respect for the communities involved.

Mother Millea, who said she initially was "overwhelmed" by the "enormous task" of conducting the visitation, told reporters, "I now understand as never before how enriched and blessed the church in the United States is because of the myriad experiences and gifts of its cur-



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

PREFECT: Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, speaks during the December 16 Vatican press conference.

rent 50,000 women religious and the multitudes of dedicated women who have preceded us."

Her voice breaking with emotion, Mother Millea thanked the congregation leaders "for hearing our voices, our concerns and our goodwill, and for responding to us with sensitivity, respect and clarity. Your message to us today shows that you do understand our ongoing struggle to faithfully serve the church in challenging times, despite our shortcomings and limitations."

Sister Holland told reporters that the expressed purpose of the visitation when it began -- "to look into the quality of life of religious women in the United States" -- "was troubling. Some congregations reported that their elder sisters felt that their whole lives had been judged and found wanting."

However, she said, the final report is "affirmative and realistic," reflecting the vast range of experiences of U.S. communities of women religious and the complex social, religious and economic factors that have contributed to the declining number of sisters in the United States, their financial difficulties and their struggles to discern how best to organize their ministries as well as their community life.

Responding to a question, she said she worries about those sisters who are still angry that the visitation took place, but they need someone to listen to them. "It is not healthy to remain angry," she said. "Sometimes when we are fearful and

feel powerless, we externalize that in anger."

The report noted that "the current number of approximately 50,000 apostolic women religious is a decline of about 125,000 since the mid-1960s." And, it said, while all the orders have invested time and money in vocations promotion, most have not seen an increase in membership.

"However," Sister Holland said, "the report goes on to recognize that the vocational peak of the 1960s was unusual, and not a norm to which we can return. Rather, the focus is on providing the formation needed for today's candidates who often are highly qualified professionally, but lacking in theological formation."

Mother Agnes told reporters that while communities whose superiors belong to the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious share many traits with those belonging to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, their average age is much younger and membership continues to grow.

The call the new members "have experienced interiorly is to separate themselves" from the world "in order to serve it with and from the heart of Christ," she said. "They want to be externally recognizable as tender mothers in the church -- so they can be found and approached at any moment, in any circumstance, with confidence, by the poor and needy who are often hidden on the margins of society or in the darkness of fear."

Now Showing

Up To Date 'Annie' Exuberant Adaptation Of Broadway Classic

By Joseph McAleer
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- The you-know-what will come out tomorrow, bet your bottom dollar, in "Annie" (Columbia). It's an exuberant adaptation of the 1977 Broadway musical -- which previously became a 1982 film -- about the little orphan with big dreams.

All of the hummable songs,

and a few new ones, are showcased in lavish production numbers, including the aforementioned "Tomorrow" and "It's the Hard-Knock Life."

Purists may quibble at radical departures from the original story, based on the comic strip by Harold Gray, but no matter. "Annie" remains a fun and wholesome movie for all ages with positive messages about love, family and forgiveness.

Director Will Gluck, who co-wrote the screenplay with



CNS Photo/Barry Wetcher, Sony Pictures Entertainment

ANNIE: Quvenzhané Wallis stars in a scene with Sandy the dog from the movie "Annie." The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

Aline Brosh McKenna, presents a thoroughly modern Annie (Quvenzhané Wallis). Gone is the 1930s Depression-era setting, the cameo by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and even the star's signature curly red hair.

Instead, we're plunged into the hurly-burly of present-day Manhattan. Annie, no longer an orphan but a foster child, lives with four other girls in the home of Miss Hannigan (Cameron Diaz).

As a temporary guardian, Miss Hannigan remains a wicked, drunken mess. But this time, she is at least offered a shot at redemption.

Annie is spunky and street-smart. Every week she sits outside the Domani (get it?) Restaurant, hoping for a glimpse of her real parents, who had their first date there.

"We all have families somewhere," Annie reassures her friends, never losing hope in a miracle.

Her guardian angel arrives in an unlikely form: Oliver "Daddy" Warbucks, who in this version has morphed into Will Stacks (Jamie Foxx). The gruff billionaire owner of a cellphone company, Stacks has lofty ambitions of running for mayor. But first, his assistant, Grace (Rose

"Annie" remains a fun and wholesome movie for all ages with positive messages about love, family and forgiveness.

Byrne), and wily campaign adviser, Guy (Bobby Cannavale), think Stacks needs to soften his image.

What better way than to become a foster parent?

With her dog, Sandy (this time, named after the hurricane), in tow, wide-eyed Annie moves into Stacks' to-die-for high-rise apartment. The fun begins as she casts a spell on her new benefactor, and vice versa.

Filmed on location, "Annie" is a picturesque valentine to the Big Apple, which has never looked better. As their kids sing along, keen-eyed parents will spot a number of nods to the original source material, such as the name of the band in one key scene: The Leaping Lizards.

The film contains a couple of crass terms and fleeting mature references. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. 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:

January 4 - - In celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life, Bishop Mark talks with Mercy Sister Giuseppe DaBella about her many years of service to the Church.

January 11 - - Catholic young adults David and Allison Arbuckle discuss their faith and the role of young adults in the Church.

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A half - hour of local Church news and features

May They Rest In Peace



**Father Silvan Rouse
C.P.**

Passionist Father Silvan Rouse, founder of the former Saint Mary House of Greater Solitude in Bedford, died Saturday, October 25 at Immaculate Conception Monastery, Jamaica NY. He was 92.

He was born January 18, 1922, the son of the late Martin Francis and Mary Catherine (Howley) Rouse. He was a 1939 graduate of Most Holy Rosary High School, Syracuse NY, and attended Holy Cross Preparatory Seminary, Dunkirk NY from 1939 - 1941.

Father Silvan made his profession on August 15, 1942 at Saint Paul of the Cross Monastery in Pittsburgh, and was ordained a priest May 4, 1949 by the late Bishop Thomas M. O'Leary of Springfield MA. Father Silvan then went on for advanced studies in sacred theology and spirituality in Rome, before returning to the United States in 1952.

Father Silvan taught theology and served in community leadership posts in a number of Passionist monasteries from 1952 - 1968.

In 1968 he was a founder of the Passionist House of Solitude in Birmingham AL; in 1972 that community transferred to Saint Mary House of Greater Solitude in Bedford. The community has now dispersed.

Surviving are four nieces.

The funeral Mass for Father Silvan Rouse C.P. was cel-

ebrated Wednesday, October 29 at Saint Ann Basilica, Scranton. Committal was in the Saint Ann Monastery Cemetery.

A memorial Mass for Father Silvan was celebrated Saturday, December 6 at Saint John the Evangelist Church in Lakemont, Altoona, by Bishop - Emeritus Joseph V. Adamec. Father Anthony Petracca was homilist.

Sister Marylyn Harding I.H.M.

Sister Marylyn Harding, of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary died Saturday, December 13, at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton. She was 99.

She was born November 30, 1915, in West Pittston, the daughter of the late John and Ellen (Earley) Harding. She entered the IHM Congregation on September 8, 1933, and made her temporary profession of vows on April 30, 1936, and her final profession of vows on August 1, 1939.

Sister Marylyn served locally at Immaculate Conception School in Lock Haven, from 1948 to 1949.

Sister also served as a nursing assistant at the Marian Convent in Scranton, from 1982 to 2002 and as a volunteer at the IHM Center in Scranton, PA, from 2002 to 2006.

From 2006 until the time of her death, Sister Marylyn was a prayer minister at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton.

She received a bachelor of arts degree in education from Marywood College, Scranton and a master of arts degree in Latin and Greek at The Catholic University of America, Washington DC.

She was preceded in death by two brothers, John and James; and four sisters, Gertrude Ross, Dorothy Lynch, Helen Wynne, and Agnes McDermott. She is survived by and nieces and nephews; and the members of the IHM Congregation.

The funeral Mass for Sister Marylyn Harding I.H.M. was celebrated Wednesday, December 17, at Our Lady of Peace Residence. Committal was at Saint Catherine Cemetery, Moscow.

Memorial contributions may be made to support the retired IHM Sisters c/o the IHM Sisters Retirement Fund, IHM Center, 2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509.

Sister Inez Mary Beckel S.C.

Sister of Charity Inez Mary Beckel, age 102, died at Caritas Christi, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, in Greensburg, on Thursday, December 18.

A native of Altoona, Sister Inez Mary entered the congregation of the Sisters of Charity on September 8, 1932, from Saint Leo Parish.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Francis and Stella (Vaught) Beckel, three brothers, Edwin, Norman, Walter, and two sisters, Regina and Sister Stella Marie S.C.; she is survived by nieces and nephews.

Sister Inez Mary earned a bachelor's degree in piano, a master's degree in music education from Duquesne University, and was a certified librarian. Sister Inez Mary taught elementary school students in the Dioceses of Altoona - Johnstown, Pittsburgh, Tucson and the Archdiocese of Washington. After her retirement from the classroom, she volunteered her services at Seton Hill University as a librarian and as sacristan.

The funeral Mass for Sister Inez Mary Beckel S.C. Was celebrated Monday, December 22 in the Chapel of the Assumption at Caritas Christi. Committal was in the Sisters' Cemetery at Seton Hill.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Sisters of Charity, De Paul Center, 144 DePaul Center Road, Greensburg, PA 15601.

Father Emil Reconich T.O.R.

Father Emil Resconich, 91, of the Third Order Regular Franciscan Friars of the Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, died Thursday, December 18, at Saint Francis Friary at Mount Assisi, Loretto.

He was born October 17, 1923 in Portage and given the

name Carl at his Baptism at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Portage. He was the son of the late Carl and Mary (Patney) Resconich. He was a graduate of Portage High School in 1942. After high school graduation, he attended Drexel Institute, Philadelphia, PA.

Father Emil entered the Third Order Regular on October 1, 1945 at Mount Assisi Friary, Loretto. On June 30, 1947, he entered Sacred Heart Novitiate and pronounced his temporary vows on June 30, 1948, and his solemn vows on July 1, 1951.

Father Emil was ordained to the priesthood by the late Bishop Richard T. Guilfoyle of the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown, at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Altoona on May 22, 1954.

Father Emil received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from Saint Francis College (University), Loretto in May, 1950. He completed his Theology studies at Saint Francis Seminary, Loretto in 1954. Father Emil received his Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN in 1959. He did one year of post-doctoral study at the University of California at Berkeley, CA in 1959. He received a Master of Arts degree in Art from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana in 1975.

Father Emil ministered primarily in education. His teaching began in Philadelphia at Roman Catholic High School. He taught science at Franciscan University of Steubenville,



Steubenville, OH for two years. In July, 1962, Fr. Emil was assigned to Saint Francis University, where he was Professor of Biology for 38 years. In August 2001, he was assigned to Saint Francis Friary, Mount Assisi, where he served in the ministry of prayer.

Surviving is a brother, Dr. Sam Resconich and a sister, Dorothy Resconich, both of Portage and nieces and nephews and his Franciscan brothers. He was preceded in death by his brother, George.

The funeral Mass for Father Emil Resconich T.O.R. was celebrated on Monday, December 22 at Saint Francis Friary at Mount Assisi, Loretto with Very Rev. Richard L. Davis, T.O.R., Minister Provincial, as principal celebrant. Committal was in the Franciscan Friars Cemetery, on the campus of Saint Francis University.

Memorial contributions may be made to support retired T.O.R. Friars, c/o T.O.R. Saint Francis Friary, P.O. Box 137, Loretto, PA 15940.

Argentine Cardinal

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Argentine Cardinal Jorge Maria Mejia, an expert at the Second Vatican Council, a longtime leader of Catholic-Jewish dialogue and the former Vatican archivist, died in Rome Dec. 8 at the age of 91.

Pope Francis, who had visited his compatriot in the hospital just two days after being elected in March 2013, said he and Cardinal Mejia enjoyed a "long friendship."

The pope also had visited the cardinal Nov. 16, stopping at a Rome clinic after a brief trip out to the papal villas at Castel Gandolfo.

Serving as the Vatican's chief archivist and librarian from 1998 until his retirement in 2003 was the last of a broad range of Vatican posts Cardinal Mejia held after spending 27 years teaching Old Testament, biblical archaeology, Hebrew and biblical Greek at the Catholic University of Argentina in Buenos Aires



STATE CHAMPIONS: Members of the Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School, Altoona, Pennsylvania State Class A Football Championship team, includes (left to right) First row: Luke Wills, Mike Berish, David Pleva, Nick Leamer, AJ Labriola, Charles Patterson, Josh Yasulitis, Mark Conrad, Daniel Ramsey, Patrick Donoughe, AJ Ferrell, Dominic Georgiana. Second row: Kenny Brumbaugh, Chancellor Little, Luke Frederick, Nathan Callahan, David Luther, Josh Trybus, Evan Chadbourne, Kyle Green, Noah Trexler, Nate Friedenberger, Patryk Donnelly, Damian Runk. Third Row; Jordan Plunkett (assistant coach), Andrew Irwin, Matt Yahner, Same Keating, Dakota Leamer, Zack Coyer, Josh DeGol, Jack Barnes, Aaron Yasulitis, Bryan Kozak, Nathan Hagg, Sean Donoughe, Lucas Brockmeyer. Fourth row: James Poldiak, Pat Irwin and Pat Leamer (assistant coaches), Justin Wheeler (head coach), Ian Luther, DJ Kitt, Sam McCloskey (captain), Nick Miller, Owen Wolf, Andrew Berger, Anthony Livoti, Eric Price, Brandon Chadbourne, Matt Gormley, Father Raymond Crosser (chaplain), Bret Geishouser and Brad Kanuch (assistant coaches) and Mary Kowalski (trainer). Not pictured are assistant coaches AJ Anderson and Joe Thomas, and Shuqi Bob Zhang.

‘Success With Honor’ Defines Winning Attitude Of State Champions Guilfoyle Marauder Football Squad

By Bruce A. Tomaselli

With their 19 - 18 victory over Clairton in the Pennsylvania State Class A Football Championship Game on Friday, December 12 in Hershey, a group of young people became instant legends at Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School, Altoona.

But, every football question posed to their head coach, ended with his feelings of pride for a group of young people, who Head Coach Justin Wheeler says

“play bigger off the field than between the goal posts.”

Coach Wheeler said it was important to him and his staff that the young team he inherited, buy into “Success with Honor.”

“We’ve worked hard to establish that here at Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School,” he said.

Success with Honor is a theme established by legendary Coach Joe Paterno at Penn State University. Coach Wheeler spent four years playing for the legend. He said he’s learned from some great people. “I like to think I’m a combination of

all of those coaches I’ve played under along the way. I want to teach young people how to win the right way,” Wheeler said in a telephone interview.

They also learned from their spiritual and inspirational leader, Jordan McClure, a seventh grade student and honorary captain. Physically challenged, McClure has led with his determination and desire.

“The kids love him,” said Coach Wheeler, “and they have learned from him. He’s a very mature young man. He’s a great kid and always has a smile on his face.” He is also a testament

to the character and unselfishness that define the team, and school in general.

“McClure led the team onto the field for the championship game in Hershey,” Coach Wheeler said. “Because of PIAA rules only four representatives from each team were allowed onto the field for the coin toss prior to start the game. This meant McClure, who accompanied the captains of the team onto the field before each of the previous games, would not be able to do so.”

In a remarkable gesture of unselfishness, Andrew Berger,

an All - State lineman playing in the biggest game of his life, deferred to McClure who made his way to midfield for the coin toss to begin the game.

It wasn’t McClure’s last contribution to the win. “It was a tough, emotional, and physical game,” recalled Coach Wheeler. “I could see the boys were exhausted heading into the fourth quarter. I brought McClure into the huddle and I told the guys, I know you’re tired, but here’s a kid that would give anything to be out on that field with you.

(Continued On Page 10.)

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