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Altoona's Saint Mark Parish Celebrating 125 Years

By Msgr. Timothy P. Stein

In 1890, the number of Catholic Churches in the city of Altoona doubled when Bishop Richard Phelan of Pittsburgh created two new parishes to serve the burgeoning Catholic population.

One of those new parishes, Saint Mark, will kick off celebrations of their anniversary with a Mass of Thanksgiving to be celebrated by Bishop Mark L. Bartchak Sunday, April 26, at 11:00 a.m. Concelebrating will be Father Ronald Osinski, pastor, and former pastors and parochial vicars associated with the East End parish.

The anniversary Mass will be followed by a lunch at the Bavarian Hall. The Mass and lunch are the first in a series of events planned throughout the year to mark the special year in the parish's life.

Prior to 1890, Catholic life in Altoona had been centered upon Saint John Parish, established for English - speaking people in 1852, and Saint Mary Parish for the German population in 1860. Bishop Phelan's decree established Sacred Heart Parish west of Twelfth Street and Saint Mark Parish east of that line.

Parish life for the Saint Mark community began in



SAINT MARK PARISH: Saint Mark Parish in Altoona is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. The celebration of the anniversary will commence with a Mass of Thanksgiving Sunday, April 26. The traditional symbol of Saint Mark in Christian iconography is the lion, as depicted in a medallion in the dome of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

the summer of 1890 when the first pastor, Father Nicholas J. O'Reilly, acquired an old frame building at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Eleventh Street that had housed an academy for boys staffed by Franciscan Brothers from Loretto. It would serve as the parish church until the construction of the present structure at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Fourth Street was completed in the summer of 1891.

The cornerstone for Saint Mark Church was laid on July 13, 1890. The dedication of the new church took place Sunday, August 23, 1891. The **Altoona Mirror** said of the event "Last Sunday was constituted an interesting epoch of the history of Altoona. The new Saint Mark's

Catholic Church, Fourth Street and Sixth Avenue, was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God. There was a large assemblage of prelates, priests, societies and laymen, and the exercises of the occasion were interestingly solemn and impressive."

With the opening of the new church, the frame building acquired in 1890 was converted into a three room school, staffed by the Sisters of Mercy from Mount Aloysius in Crescon. In 1897 a new house was purchased as a convent for the Sisters, and construction began on a white stone school building adjacent to the church. Classes began there in the Fall of that year.

The first renovations to the

interior of the church were made between 1910 and 1913. Exterior renovations would follow in 1947, and a social hall would be constructed in the church basement in 1952.

On December 13, 1959 ground was broken for a new convent facing Sixth Avenue, next to the church. It was dedicated September 18, 1960, and is now utilized as the parish rectory.

In 1961 a capital campaign was undertaken for a major renovation of the church. The work, completed in 1962, brought the interior of the structure to its current appearance. That project was followed in 1970 with the construction of a new school and the modernization of the old

building. Declining enrollment caused the closing of the school in 1982.

Saint Mark Parish in turn became the "mother" of three more parishes formed in whole or in part from its territory.

In 1901, Holy Rosary Parish in Juniata was created from territory carved completely from that of Saint Mark Parish.

The second division took place in 1911 when territory from Saint Mark Parish became part of the new Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, established as both a territorial and ethnic - Italian Parish.

The third and final division came with the creation of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Parish in Fairview in 1927.

Catholic Charities Seeks Nominees For Awards

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown is seeking nominees for the two awards it presents annually.

The Monsignor William M. Griffin Humanitarian Award is presented to adults from throughout the eight county Diocese. The Matthew 25 Youth Humanitarian Award is given to elementary or secondary school students.

The awards will be presented at a dinner Wednesday, June 3.

The Monsignor William M. Griffin Humanitarian Award is given to persons demonstrating a significant, long - term commitment (professional or volunteer) to serving the poor, marginalized and most vulnerable within the diocesan community.

The Matthew 25 Youth Humanitarian Award is given

to up to two elementary and up to two high school students for demonstrating exceptional service to their communities, especially service to the poor and needy. This service is above and beyond required school community service hours.

Youth award winners will receive a scholarship for tuition/school/college expenses and a plaque recognizing their achievements.

All award winners will attend the June 3 dinner as a guest of Catholic Charities.

Nominations may be made by contacting Jean Johnstone, executive director of Catholic Charities at (814) 944 - 9388, or at Catholic Charities Inc., P.O. Box 1349, Altoona PA 16603 - 1349.

The deadline for nominations is Friday, April 24.



PRESIDENTS: The Society of Saint Vincent DePaul held its spring presidents meeting Saturday March 28 at Bishop Carroll Catholic High School. Ebensburg. The Society installed its new Johnstown District Council President. Pictured (left to right) are: incoming president Paul Smith, outgoing President Don Tedjeske, diocesan council president Dick Slavik and spiritual advisor Deacon Gary Gill.



SCHOOL CONFERENCE: Father David Peles, pastor, installed new members of the Society of Saint Vincent DePaul Saint Benedict Catholic School Conference. The Saint Benedict School Conference meets monthly and plans activities that will help the needy of the Johnstown area. Moderators for the SVDP Conference are teachers Mary Jo Podrasky and Myriam Cyburt.



EDUCATIONAL CONTEST WINNERS: Winners in the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Our Lady of the Alleghenies #1755, Hollidaysburg, honored the winners of the annual Education Contest Sunday, March 22 at Saint Catherine of Siena Church in Duncansville. Pictured are (left to right) First row: Ian Durbin, Abby Conrad, Allison Becker, Danielle Mueller, Amelia Partner. Second row: Edna Neely (education contest chair), Zak Dodson, Anthony Edwards, Andrew Foster, Evan Wandersee, Erin Himes and Catie Livingston.



38th Annual
Rosary March
Sunday, May 3, 2015
3:00 PM

In the Expo I Building
at the
Clearfield Fairgrounds

Guest Speaker
Rev. Marc J. Solomon
Pastor of Christ The King Parish,
Houtzdale, PA

*Join us in the outdoor
Rosary and Eucharistic
Procession.*

There will be Religious Articles,
Books, Literature, Food and
more!

*In case of inclement
weather, the Rosary March
will be moved into the
Expo I Building.*

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In The Alleghenies



HOLY FAMILY, COLVER: The Confirmation candidates from Holy Family Parish, Colver, took part in a retreat with their pastor, Father Bernard Grega, and their catechists, the Sisters of Saint Ann, on Saturday, March 14. Pictured are (left to right) First row: Sister Anna Maria Lorenzon (director of religious education), Anthony Vicini, Alexis Sokira, Kaylee Miller, Samantha Spatch, Sister Vivian Ndum. Second row: Father Grega, Edward Smith, Michael Walwro, Thomas Janosco, Adam Weiland and Benjamin Foose.



SAINT ROSE OF LIMA: Celebrating Confirmation at Saint Rose of Lima Parish, Altoona, were (left to right) First row: Benjamin Skarada, Paul Campbell, Sean Gibson, Maryssa Brandt, Sarah Donley, Michala Cooney, Mikayla Mignogna, Ariana Mrdjenovich. Second row: Father Brian Saylor (pastor), Bradley Young, Nathan Schmitt, Joshua DeGol, Zachary Bender, Drake Patel, Kyler Gonzales, Kaitlin Altiero, Victoria Surma, Alex Gburek, Bernice Shoenfelt (director of religious education). Third row: Aaron Yasulitis, John Barnes, Aaron Miller, Kevin Smith, Sarah Hartman, Shaymus Dugan, Samuel Houk and Father Carl Spishak (in residence).

Community

March For Marriage

Altoona: An interfaith group will be traveling to Washington DC Saturday, April 25 for the March For Marriage.

A bus will leave at 7:00 a.m. from the Alliance Church behind Dunkin Donuts in the former Value City building.

The cost of the trip is \$25.00 per person.

For further information about going on the bus trip, con-

tact Matt Stachmus at (814) 650 - 5578; or by e - mail at altoonafor marriage@gmail.com.

More information about the event may be found online at www.marriagemarch.org.

Healthy Community Walk

Johnstown: The Society of Saint Vincent DePaul will participate in the May 30 Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community. The Society is looking for walkers to join their efforts which will benefit the SVDP Food for

Families Johnstown program.

Food for Families in Johnstown is the distribution center for many food pantries and other agencies in Johnstown and throughout Cambria County which serve 7,200 people per month. In addition the program's Family Kitchen serves a lunch daily for all those in need serving 125 - 200 meals per day.

Walkers can join 'Team Vinnie' by registering at the Highmark Walk website, Johnstown and look for Society of Saint Vincent DePaul. Those un-



SAINT BARTHOLOMEW: Saint Bartholomew Parish, Wilmore, celebrated Confirmation on Thursday, April 9. Pictured are (left to right) First row: Veronica Baroni, Eva Golden. Second row: Benjamin Herman and Lucus Hutsky.

able to take part in the walk can make a donation on the site. Donations can also be sent to SVDP Food for Families 945 Franklin Street, Johnstown PA 15905.

Higher Education

Moral Choices Lecture

Cresson: Mount Aloysius College president Tom Foley has announced that the College's Moral Choices and Honors Lecturer for Spring 2015 will be Dr. Timothy Shriver.

Dr. Timothy Shriver, author, essayist, educator, film producer, justice advocate and Chairman of the International Special Olympics, is the son of the late Sargent and Eunice Kennedy Shriver -founders of the Peace Corps, Job Corps, Head Start, and the Special Olympics. His recently published book is titled, **Fully Alive: Discovering What Really Matters**. Shriver's Mount Aloysius College lecture, scheduled for Thursday, April 23 at 7:00 p.m. will bear the same title. Dr. Shriver is the nephew of the late President John F. Kennedy.

Through his Chairmanship of Special Olympics, Dr. Shriver serves 4.4 million Special Olympics athletes and their families in 170 countries. He has helped transform Special Olympics into a movement that focuses on ac-

ceptance, inclusion, and respect for individuals with intellectual disabilities in all corners of the globe.

Shriver earned his undergraduate degree from Yale University, a Master's degree in Religion and Religious Education from The Catholic University of America, and a Doctorate in Education from the University of Connecticut. He is the recipient of numerous honors, including honorary degrees from Loyola University, New England College, Albertus Magnus College, University of Connecticut, Niagara University, University of Illinois, and Villanova University; the Medal of the City of Athens, Greece; the Order de Manuel Amador Guerrero of the Republic of Panama; the Connecticut Citizen of the Year Award; the U.S. Surgeon General's Medallion; the Lions Humanitarian Award, and the Quincy Jones Humanitarian Award.

He and his wife, Linda Potter, reside in the Washington, D.C. area with their five children.

(Continued On Page 6.)

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Point Of View

Do you believe in angels? I certainly do. In the past few days, I had the pleasure of speaking to a young man from our Diocese, who shared with me a very personal encounter with a heavenly messenger. A story of comfort and hope. A story too great to be left untold. It is with great pleasure that I share with you Kamden Kruse's written words of his encounter with a messenger from God Himself.

"These are the final stages of the life cycle...he is going to die." Those were the words I explicitly remember coming out of the neurologists mouth at the hospital while my father was on his death bed. I couldn't believe how cold she sounded when she delivered the news. It was not until that moment that I became aware of the fact I was going to lose my father. I didn't know how to react to the woman's cold-hearted words. I ran out of the room and found the nearest waiting room; I wanted to be alone. I buried my head in my hands and began crying hysterically. I never felt more lost in my entire life.

My mother, grandmother, and grandfather followed me into the waiting room. My mom made her best attempt to calm me down. I just remember repeating "This isn't fair. Why me? Why us? Why is this happening?" I was out of control.

I don't know why, but I looked over to the door from where I was sitting and I noticed a lady walking by the waiting room, we made eye contact and she continued past the door. After about a minute I heard a lady say to my mom, "Can I speak with your son?" and my mother replied "Yes. His father is dying of brain cancer." Before my



Family Matters

By Amy Kanich
I Met An Angel

mom could complete her answer the lady quickly replied "I know." At this point, I lifted my head to look at the lady. She was using forearm crutches, with a patient gown on... but she had the most compelling and beautiful eyes I have ever experienced. She smiled at me and took my hand. I have never met a more beautiful woman in my entire life. She said, "My son told me to come back and talk to you." I said, "Where is your son?" She replied "He is in Heaven. He told me there is a young boy that I needed to speak with and he was losing his father" I was speechless. She began again saying "I want you to know you are special. Everything you do in your life is going to be in honor of your dad."

At this point my Grandma chimed in saying "He has two" but before she could finish, the beautiful lady said "two daughters. I know that. They are going to make him proud also. But this young man is special." I did not know what to say. I said, "Thank you so much." She gave a simple smile and walked out of the door.

The next days as my father's time got shorter, I could not help but think of the lady I had met. Finally, a day later, I saw the woman. She was in a wheelchair now, I was so excited to talk to her. She was being pushed by two employees at the hospital and as she entered the eleva-

tor she said, "I am leaving, I am being discharged. It was a pleasure meeting you. Goodbye." I said, "Thank you. Goodbye." Two days had passed and our family was moved up two floors from where we previously were. I was laying on the pullout bed having a bad day when I looked out of the door of the hospital room. In the lobby the same lady was standing alone, it looked like she was looking for someone. I became overly excited and said "Mom! Mom! The lady! She is out there!" I jumped up from the bed, sprinted out to the lobby to find the lady....she was gone. I searched the entire floor. I was unsuccessful.

A couple of hours later, I decided I would return to the floor where I had first met the lady to see if she had returned to the hospital. I asked the employees at the desk if the lady had been put back into the hospital, or if they had any record of her at all. The people at the desk were adamant that the lady was never a patient at the hospital; they had no record of her. There is only one solution... I met an angel. Ever since the experience with this lady, I have taken on an entirely new appreciation for life. Life is a gift, make the most of what you are given! I love you Dad!

Blessings!



Another Perspective

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein
We All Shape Each Other

The morning after he won the Masters golf tournament, Jordan Spieth appeared in an interview on "CBS This Morning."

The reporter was congratulating the 21 - year - old Spieth on his calm manner and poise, and wanted to know "Who are the people and what are the forces that have shaped you?" Spieth responded by mentioning his parents, his brothers and sisters, and noted "We all shape each other," and added with a smile "at least that's how it is in Texas."

I suspect though that there is more than the statement of a proud Texan in those words. I am certain Spieth learned that lesson - - "We all shape each other" - - in his Catholic high school in Dallas. The belief that we all are responsible for one another, that we shape each other is central to our Catholic experience. We believe that we are our brother or sister's keeper. We seek to emulate the first Christian community in Jerusalem, of whom it was said in the Acts of the Apostles "The community of believers were of one heart and one mind." We are challenged by the knowledge that in a pagan world it was said of the early Christians "See how they love one another." We all shape each other; that belief is the very marrow of our bones as members of a community of believers.

At Easter, we in this local faith community had the unpleasant experience of a man bringing a loaded gun into our Cathedral in Altoona, and having that gun go off at the end of Mass. Some would say that his right to carry a gun outweighs the rights of the others seated around him to worship without the threat of a gun being fired in church. If we all shape each other, then whose right is the more important?

At my parish in Altoona, a strange incident upset many worshippers on a recent Saturday evening. A young man came striding up the center aisle during the Eucharistic Prayer, stood at the foot of the steps leading to the sanctuary, extended his arms in the form of a cross during the words of consecration, then genuflected and walked back to his seat. Some might argue that his right to express a private act of devotion was more important than the right of the rest of the congregation to worship undisturbed. If we all shape each other, then whose right is the more important?

People who put their own rights before the rights of the community must, I would guess, feel a great sense of alienation from the community. They have lost the feeling of being connected to others and the need to think first of those with whom they are sharing an experience. They are in the wrong, but so too are those who have contributed to that feeling of being cut off from the body of believers. If one of us forgets that we all shape each other, it's probably because we've all - - to some extent - - forgotten it, too.

The Holy Year of Mercy, celebrating God's compassion for His people - - God's willingness to stand in solidarity with His people - - must be a reminder to us of our need to be willing to stand with each other. We must know no strangers or aliens in our midst, but only brothers and sisters. We all shape each other, for good and for ill. Let our choice be for the good, so that no one will ever feel so alone that their presence among us becomes a threat. Let us shape each other for the good of all.

Relief Services Chief Makes Case For Catholic Education In NCEA Keynote Address

By Tom Tracy
Catholic News Service

ORLANDO, Fla. (CNS) -- The head of Catholic Relief Services made the case for Catholic education and Christian beliefs and values by retracing her own roots as a student of American missionaries in Asia through her higher education experiences as an international student in the U.S.

Speaking April 7 to some 5,000 Catholic educators in Orlando for the National Catholic Educational Association convention, Carolyn Woo, CEO and president of the U.S. bishops' overseas and relief agency, recalled her early education in Hong Kong at a school run by the Maryknoll Sisters.

"The nuns taught us not to compete with each other but to help each other and to become

friends," she said. "Today, I am in almost daily contact with my colleagues from first grade, and so in my life I have been in many competitive contexts but never felt competitive with my peers."

Woo recalled that as a young member of the Legion of Mary, she would volunteer to work with the poor in Hong Kong, and how the nuns provided them with rudimentary medical care. "I remember how difficult it was to bend down to wash, and touch and smell the feet of these individuals, but I also remember coming back from these service activities and asking, 'Why them and why not me?'"

Today's young people, she said, are not so much immoral as they are not given the adequate resources to "cultivate their moral intuitions, to think broadly about moral obligations and to have the tools to evaluate and navigate moral situations."



CNS Photo/Tom Tracy

CAROLYN WOO

She noted that one in five children live below the federal poverty line in families fraught with underemployment, homelessness, failed marriages, highly influenced by the popular media and advertising, violence, bullying, scams, child abuse, sexually transmitted disease and abandonment.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Woo served on the CRS board of directors from 2004 until 2010 and traveled to observe the agency's program in Africa and Asia, including Banda Aceh, Indonesia, soon after the Indian Ocean tsunami.

She immigrated to the United States to attend Purdue University in Indiana, where she received her bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

"In my work at CRS, I have come back full circle and now go to many places where there are no bathrooms and I understand what people have to live with," said Woo, "and that came from the (Maryknoll) sisters, and from that the sisters helped us to define ... what is the common ground in making friends with these people and about dignity of other people."

Woo said Catholic education is so important because it places a high value on the real value of young people and on

raising the next generation with Christian values.

"What happens through the many assemblies, retreats, lessons, catechism classes, youth groups, sporting events, extra-curricular outings, confessions, the Eucharist, social actions projects, fundraisers, prayer circles, academic balls and so on? Clearly Catholic education is trying to teach students about Christ and Christianity and how this belief forms values and these values inform behavior," she said.

The "mother of all questions" that Catholic education is transmitting to young people, Woo said, is: How real is God?

Young people have to see faith demonstrated through the actions of adults and church and parish life, Woo added, noting that she was a recipient of great hospitality as a foreign student at Purdue University and benefited from Catholic community

support there.

Woo also recalled the value of stopping at chapel for a few minutes of quiet time as a student. That same true hospitality undergirds Catholic values everywhere, she said.

"It's not just about academic rigor but all the different things that allow us to make God real in the lives of young people," Woo said. "Think about the big questions that your students are asking at this point."

"Our job is to help them and provide an environment for them to come to their own answers, where those answers are life-giving, that they don't rule out possibilities and hope and joy on this earth," she said, and show students not to give up ethics "thinking that in the end it is the strongest who survive and that it is OK to cheat so long as no one catches you, or to give up on marriage because of a father who walked out."



A Statement From Bishop Mark

On April 4, 2015, at the conclusion of the Easter Vigil at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona, a gun carried by an individual attending the Mass accidentally discharged inside the Cathedral. The Cathedral staff acted immediately and appropriately to address the situation. Bishop Mark L. Bartchak; Monsignor Robert Mazur, the rector of the Cathedral; and others assisted individuals who were shaken by the incident. Police and other emergency responders arrived on scene quickly.

The following is a statement from Bishop Bartchak regarding the matter.

"First and foremost, I am grateful that no one was seriously injured as a result of this incident. This matter is under investigation by law enforcement. Many people understandably have questions about what would prompt an individual to carry a gun into the Cathedral. I would like to take this opportunity to state my firm belief that guns have no place in our Cathedral or any of the other parishes in our Diocese. Our Churches must be an environment in which all feel safe to worship the Lord and celebrate our Catholic faith. Please know that I am praying for all who are affected by this incident."



Photo By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein

175th Anniversary Mass

A Mass marking the 175th anniversary of the death of the Servant of God Father Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, will be celebrated Wednesday, May 6 at 7:00 p.m. at the Basilica of Saint Michael the Archangel in Loretto.

The Mass will include a healing service and the anointing of the sick, with Third Order Regular Franciscan Father Bob Hilz as celebrant.

The Servant of God Gallitzin died May 6, 1840 after over 40 years of ministry in Loretto and throughout Western Pennsylvania. His tomb, topped by a life-size statue, stands in front of the Basilica of Saint Michael the Archangel.



BISHOP ACCEPTS AND INVITES ORDINAND: Bishop Mark L. Barthcak has invited Kevin Nester to be ordained to the permanent diaconate in an ordination ceremony to be held on Saturday, May 16 at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona. Pictured with the ordinand are Penny, his wife, and Bishop Mark. On March 22- 26 the couple made a Canonical Retreat at Saint John the Baptist Retreat Center in New Baltimore. They shared prayer and reflection with Father Richard Tomkosky, pastor. The couple are members of Most Holy Trinity Parish in Huntingdon. Their pastor is Father David J. Arseneault.

MEET TIM SHRIVER

Chairman, International Special Olympics

Join us **Thursday, April 23rd**
for two campus events
celebrating Dr. Shriver's new book -

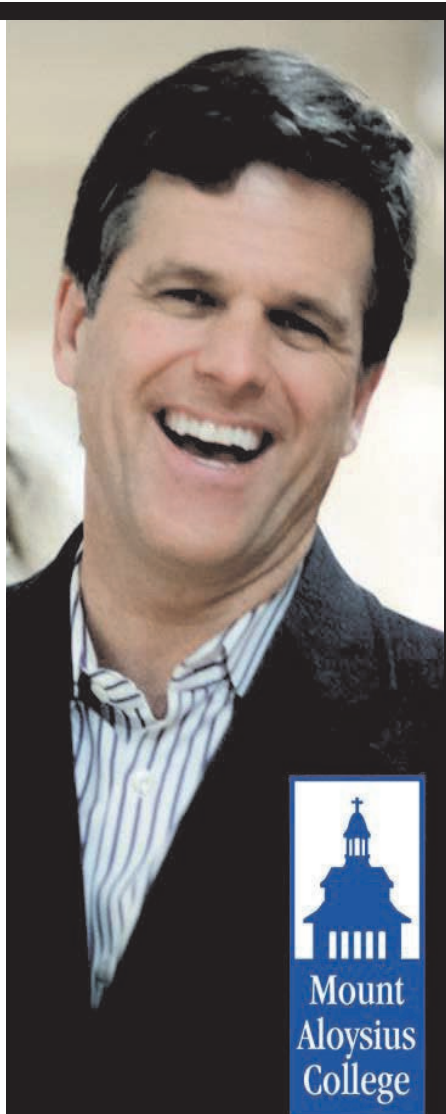
**"Fully Alive:
Discovering What Matters Most"**

Book Signing:
Noon - Cosgrave Center

Lecture:
7:00 PM - Bertschi Center

[Events are free and open to the public]

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In The Alleghenies

(Continued From Page 3.)

Prayer

Carmelite Novena

Loretto: A novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Therese, the Little Flower, offered by the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, will open Wednesday, April 22 and conclude Thursday, April 30.

Because of ongoing renovations to the public chapel and nuns' choir at Carmel, the Novena prayers will be offered in the temporary Our Lady's Chapel within the monastic enclosure.

All intentions will be remembered in the prayers of the nuns and in the special novena prayer recited after daily Mass.

Those desiring to share in the graces and blessings of these nine days of prayer and in the private prayers of the Carmelite Nuns during the novena, are requested to send their petitions to Mother Prioress, Discalced Carmelite Monastery, P. O. Box 57,

Loretto PA 15940.

During the renovation work at Carmel, Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament is being given at Queen of Peace Church in Patton on Sunday afternoons at 4:00 p.m.

Marian Retreat

New Baltimore: Father Richard B. Tomkosky, pastor of Saint John the Baptist Parish and Retreat Center will be conducting an overnight weekend retreat at the parish retreat center from Friday May 29 until Sunday May 31 on the topic of "the meaning of the St. Louis Marie de Montfort's Total Consecration to Jesus thru Mary and how Marian Devotion can deepen one's Catholic Faith."

The retreat begins Friday evening and concludes on Sunday afternoon. Meals and lodging are included.

Reservation are required by Friday May 22. Space is limited. Call (814) 733 - 2210 for cost and more information.

Pope To Visit Three Latin American Nations

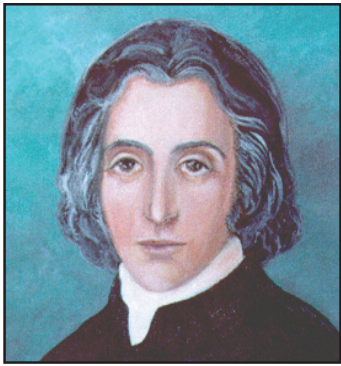
MEXICO CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis is expected to arrive July 6 in Ecuador, starting a three-country tour of his home continent, the Associated Press reported from Quito.

The trip, the pope's second to South America since being elected in March 2013, also would include stops in Bolivia and Paraguay, two fast-growing countries in recent years, but still among the poorest on the continent.

The pope is expected to spend two days in Ecuador, celebrating Mass July 7 in Quito and meeting with priests and seminarians the next day at the Our Lady of the Presentation of El Quinche shrine, 20 miles from Quito, Archbishop Luis Cabrera Herrera of Cuenca told the Associated Press.

The Italian blog *Il Sismografo*, citing local news reports, said Pope Francis would fly July 8 to La Paz, Bolivia, where he would spend six hours and celebrate Mass in the neighboring city of El Alto -- situated at an elevation of more than 13,000 feet. He would then spend July 9 in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, the country's economic hub and located at a lower elevation, then move on to Paraguay July 10.

In Paraguay, Pope Francis is expected arrive in the capital, Asuncion, and visit Caacupe, the Catholic heart of the country, July 11, *Il Sismografo* reported. The pope would return to Asuncion July 12 for a meeting with the president and politicians, the celebration of Mass and his departure for Rome.



A Prince In The Service Of The Great King

The Servant Of God
Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin
1770 - 1840

May 23 Outdoor Mass Set For Beatification Of Romero

By Edgardo Ayala
Catholic News Service

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (CNS) -- Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero will be beatified in San Salvador May 23, said Italian Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the postulator or chief promoter of the archbishop's sainthood cause.

The ceremony, which moves the murdered archbishop a step closer to sainthood, will be in Plaza Divino Salvador del Mundo. The archbishop said Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, would celebrate the Mass.

"Romero, from heaven, wants every Salvadoran to walk the path of peace and justice,"

Archbishop Paglia said March 11 at a news conference in San Salvador.

The archbishop called the beatification a gift for the world, but particularly for the people of El Salvador.

Pope Francis formally recognized Feb. 3 that the slain Salvadoran archbishop was killed "in hatred of the faith" -- and not for purely political reasons.

While Archbishop Romero's sainthood cause began in 1993, it continued for years as church officials combed through thousands of documents related to his life. The effort began moving forward under Pope Benedict XVI. In May 2007, he said: "Archbishop Romero certainly was a great witness to the faith, a man of great Christian virtue."

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**

The process advanced rapidly with the election of Pope Francis in 2013, the first Latin American pope in history. From the first moments of his papacy, he showed interest in declaring Archbishop Romero a saint.

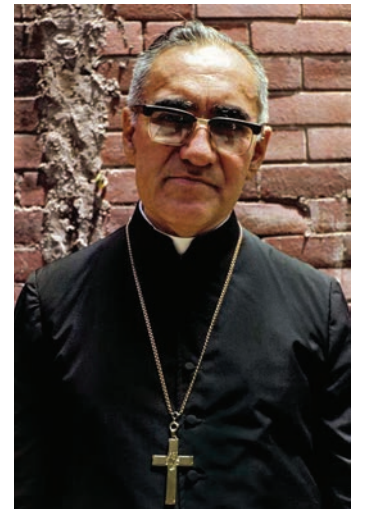
Pope Francis signed the decree recognizing Archbishop Romero as a martyr, which meant there was no need to prove a miracle for his beatification. However, a miracle is ordinarily needed for canonization as saint.

Archbishop Romero, an outspoken advocate for the poor, was shot and killed March 24, 1980, as he celebrated Mass in a hospital in San Salvador during his country's civil war. Archbishop Paglia said in early February that the two decades it took to obtain the decree were the result of "misunderstandings and preconceptions."

During Archbishop Romero's time as archbishop of San Salvador -- from 1977 to 1980 -- "kilos of letters against him arrived in Rome. The accusations were simple: He's political; he's a follower of liberation theology."

All of the complaints, Archbishop Paglia said in February, slowed the sainthood process.

However, promoters of the cause, he said, collected "a mountain of testimony just as big" to counter the accusations



CNS Photo/Octavio Duran
ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO

and to prove that Archbishop Romero heroically lived the Christian faith and was killed out of hatred for his words and actions as a Catholic pastor.

"He was killed at the altar," Archbishop Paglia said, instead of when he was an easier target at home or on the street. "Through him, they wanted to strike the church that flowed from the Second Vatican Council."

The archbishop announced the date of the beatification on the eve of the anniversary of the assassination of a close personal friend of Archbishop Romero: Jesuit Father Rutilio Grande, the first priest executed by death squads, March 12, 1977.

JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT

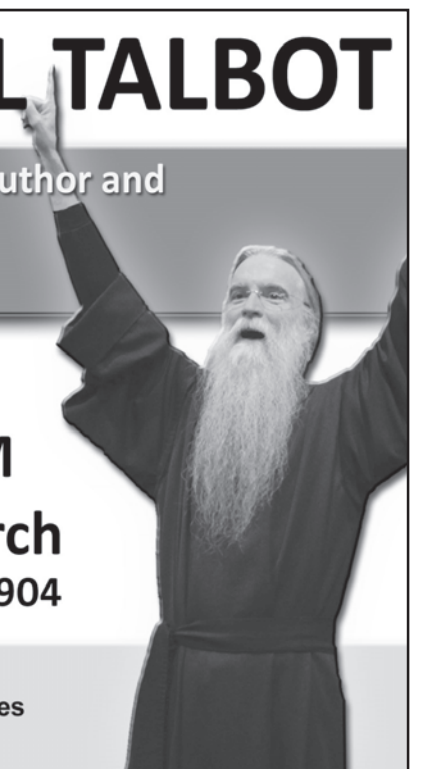
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Word of Life



The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis

Children Are Never A Mistake

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Children are never a "mistake" and no sacrifice is too great for an adult to make so that children can feel their worth, Pope Francis said.

During his weekly general audience in a chilly, but sunny St. Peter's Square April 8, the pope continued his series of talks about the family, dedicating a second catechesis to children. He described the great suffering and difficulties many children around the world experience as "a Passion."

Children are the greatest blessing God has bestowed upon men and women, he said. Yet, many children are "rejected, abandoned, robbed of their childhood and of their future," the pope noted, adding that it is "shameful" when people say it is "a mistake" to bring a child into the world.

"Please, let's not unload our faults on children," he said. "Children are never 'a mistake.'"

The hunger, poverty, fragility and ignorance of some children "are not mistakes" but "only reasons for us to love them even more, with more generosity," he said.

Pope Francis wondered aloud about the value of international declarations of human and children's rights if children are then punished for the mistakes of adults.

"All adults are responsible for children and for doing what we can to change this situation," he said.

"Every marginalized and abandoned child, who lives by begging on the street for every little thing, without schooling or healthcare, is a cry to God," he said. Their suffering is the result of a social system, created by adults, he added.

Children who are victims of such poverty often "become prey to criminals who exploit them for immoral trade and commerce or train them for war and violence," he said.

Even in rich countries, "many children live dramas that scar their lives heavily" due to family crises or inhuman living conditions, he said. They suffer the consequences of "a culture of exaggerated individual rights" and become precocious, he added. And often, they absorb the violence they are exposed to, unable to "dispose of it," and "are forced to become accustomed to degradation," the pope said.

"In every case, these are childhoods violated in body and soul," the pope said. "But none of these children is forgotten by the Father in heaven. None of their tears are lost."

The pope said many children with serious problems benefit from "extraordinary parents, ready for every sacrifice and generosity." The church must accompany these parents in their efforts, he said.

"The church places her maternal care at the service of children and their families," he added. "It brings God's blessing to the parents and children of this world, maternal tenderness, firm reprimand and strong condemnation. Brothers and sisters, think carefully: You don't mess with the lives of children."

He concluded by inviting his listeners to imagine a society that bases itself on the principle that "no sacrifice on the part of adults would be considered too costly or too great, anything so as to avoid that a child thinks they are a mistake, that they have no value and that they are abandoned to the wounds of life and to the arrogance of men."

"How beautiful such a society would be," the pope said.



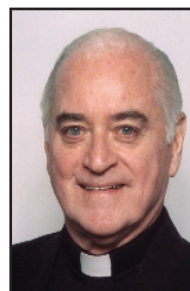
ONE MORE TIME: A 1977 history of Saint Joseph Parish, Johnstown, featured this photo of Sister Lucy Boxler, a Franciscan Sister of Millvale who entered the convent from the parish, with popular entertainer, Liberace. Liberace became a friend of the Franciscan Sisters when he was treated at their Saint Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh.

Most people never think of themselves as great, but if you think about it, you are quite extraordinary. For instance, from the beginning when you were very little, you won a race against a lot of contenders in the struggle to see who would reach your mother's womb first.

What an amazing beginning! It shows you were great right from the start. Granted, everyone around can say the same thing, but enjoy the moment.

After that, you not only successfully managed to endure the trials of childhood with all its ups and downs, but you kept your spiritual balance right up to your teen years.

Then, you may have hit a wall of emotional upheavals with growing pains and authority issues -- all of which began to cloud the horizon. You may have felt knocked down a peg and started to doubt yourself. This doubt may have left you feeling inferior and vulnerable.



Spirituality For Today

By Father John Catoir
The Greatness Of Being You

But you were not to be denied. You fought your way back and entered the adult world with enthusiasm, perhaps a bit bruised, but buoyed nevertheless.

The scars of doubt were there, but they no longer overpowered you. Freed from this teenage angst, you gradually matured in your clarity and self-acceptance. As you grew in self-respect, you began to realize more and more what an extraordinary person you are.

This confidence and perseverance brought you to the place you are today. You have earned the badge of honor we call self-

realization, or at least you're close to it.

That's why you must never doubt your worthiness. Doubt will only blind you to the truth that you are incredibly made and a miracle to behold. You must never say the cup is half-empty. No, no. You must say the cup is full and overflowing with grace and goodness.

Your faith will protect you from the mediocre thinkers and pessimistic naysayers who try to put down giants like yourself.

(Continued On Page 9.)



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Will Smokers Go To Heaven?

Q. During the 1970s, at least in our part of the country, there were many priests who smoked cigarettes or cigars. Yet some of them were effective in their ministry and obviously loved God greatly. When they die, as some of them already have, can they still go to heaven? Does Jesus' admonition, "Nothing that goes into a man can harm him, but only that which comes out of him -- avarice, greed, etc." apply here? (Bridgewater, New Jersey)

A. I'm confident that the priests of the 1970s who smoked tobacco products are probably in heaven -- certainly, those of them who, as you say, "were effective in their ministry and loved God greatly."

At that time, evidence of the long-term health hazards of smoking was only starting to be assembled. As recently as 1997, the Catechism of the Catholic Church said in No. 2290 that the virtue of temperance cautions against excess and therefore for-

bids "the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco or medicine" -- the clear implication being that smoking was not an intrinsic moral evil.

Today, though, there might well be a stricter moral calculus as information grows about the risks of tobacco use. The World Health Organization says, for example, that every 6.5 seconds someone dies from tobacco-related causes.

Such scientific documentation is making inroads on the ethical judgments of the Catholic Church -- as seen in a 2004 article in the scholarly Jesuit review *La Civiltà Cattolica* which, while stopping short of branding smoking as per se sinful, declared that smokers cannot damage their health and that of others "without moral responsibility." (Significant here is that articles in *La Civiltà Cattolica* are prescreened for doctrinal orthodoxy by the Vatican Secretariat of State.)

As for the quote you mention from Matthew 15:11 (the New American Bible has it

as, "It is not what enters one's mouth that defiles that person; but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one"), that passage does not exculpate smokers. Its context was a comment by Jesus on Jewish dietary laws, and it has nothing to do with ingesting products that are medically harmful.

Q. Why can't penitents have the option of confessing their sins either face to face or in a traditional confessional? Since some find it uncomfortable to sit directly in front of the priest and be identified, why do some churches force that method? (City of origin withheld)

A. Catholic penitents do, in fact, have the right to anonymity in confession if they so desire. The Code of Canon Law says (in No. 964.2): "The conference of bishops is to establish norms regarding the confessional; it is to take care, however, that there are always confessionals with a fixed grate between the penitent and the confessor in an open place so that the faithful who wish to can use them freely."

Spirituality For Today

(Continued From Page 8.)

You are among the great ones because you know how to rejoice in the knowledge of God's love. Your greatness is in the realm of the supernatural. It is not based on feelings.

Do not let your emotions tell you differently. You are a favored child of God. Feelings are not facts. Unchallenged feelings lead to sadness and doubt.

Be assured that your particular set of life skills are based on the revelations of Jesus Christ. He is the one who called you a child of God.

The best thing about reaching this glorious level of self-transcendence is that it gives you the right to say, along with our blessed Mother: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior."

How great is that?



Your Family

By Bill Dodds
Accompanying Others
In A Time Of Pain

In late 2012, when we knew my wife, Monica, had only a short time to live because of uterine cancer, people began asking me if I planned on writing a book about widowhood and grief after she passed away.

I told them no, explaining that I didn't know enough about those topics. It was about a year after her death that I realized I had been through a crash introductory course on the subjects. I still had a lot to learn, but I did know a thing or two.

Then a moment came when I heard television commentators discussing an upcoming recorded interview with actor Liam Neeson. As you may remember, his wife Natasha Richardson died of a traumatic brain injury in 2009. In 2014, he was promoting his latest movie and when asked about her, he described how grief still impacted his life.

The commentators seemed startled. My immediate thought was, "Well, duh." That was quickly followed by the realization that his words would have surprised me only a few short years ago. Of course Neeson was still deeply affected.

That was when it dawned on me that I didn't want to write a book about widowhood and grief for those who are experiencing it themselves, but I came up with a book that would help friends and family members get a glimpse of what those early days, months and years of grief can be like.

Fiction seemed the best way of doing that in a way that was more inviting, and less intimidating, to the reader. The result was a novel titled **Mildred Nudge: A Widower's Tale**, published on the second anniversary of Monica's death.

It has been gratifying that some who have read it tell me they have a deeper appreciation of what a parent or grandparent went through. What a friend or family member is going through. There's a newfound sympathy and understanding.

At the same time, I now better realize how little I know about so many other tremendous hardships people go through: the death of a child, marriage that ends in divorce, the loss of a job that results in the loss of a home, drug addiction, chronic illness or pain. The list is long and varied.

I want to stay "blissfully ignorant," but I also want to be better at sympathizing and offering support.

That's one way of looking at a recurring theme in Pope Francis' messages to all of us: Look around, become more aware of others who are hurting. Find ways to walk with them and talk with them. Simply, and not so simply, be with them in times of sorrow.

Fidelis of
Sigmaringen
1577 - 1622
Feast - April 24



Born in Sigmaringen (Germany), Mark Roy studied philosophy and law at the University of Freiburg in Breisgau. After tutoring young aristocrats and traveling Europe with them, he began practicing law in Alsace, where he quickly became "the poor person's lawyer." But, disillusioned over other lawyers' behavior, he gave up the law to follow a vocation in religious life. As an ordained Capuchin named Fidelis, he was renowned for his holiness, preaching and leadership. He was superior at several houses before being invited to eastern Switzerland to call Protestants back to Catholicism. This mission, complicated by the politics of the time and hatred of the Catholic Habsburgs, became increasingly dangerous and led to his murder by opponents. He was canonized in 1746.

Being 'Priest For A Day' Is Wish Come True For Ailing Missouri Boy

By Dave Luecking
Catholic News Service

ST. LOUIS (CNS) -- Make-A-Wish requests often involve meeting athletes, attending sporting events or traveling to amusement parks or beaches.

When it came time for 11-year-old Brett Haubrich of St. Mark School in Affton to make his wish, he not only listed none of those things but had no request at all.

"He didn't want anything," explained his mother, Eileen. "They had to keep asking him, 'What would you like to do? Do you want to meet anybody? What do you want to be when you grow up?'"

The answer to the last question became part of his wish -- what Make-A-Wish calls "wish enhancement" to complement the main wish. Turns out he wants to be a priest, a doctor or an engineer, in that order.

So, on Holy Thursday, at the invitation of St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, Brett

took his place beside the altar at Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis as "Priest for a Day."

Brett, a sixth-grader who was diagnosed with a brain tumor last summer, served two Masses -- the chrim Mass and the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper -- and held the book for Archbishop Carlson for prayers after the homilies. At the evening Mass, he joined 11 seminarians whose feet were washed by Archbishop Carlson and his parents brought up the offertory gifts.

He also joined Archbishop Carlson for two meals; a luncheon with archdiocesan priests and deacons after the chrim Mass and a dinner with seminarians at the archbishop's residence before the evening Mass.

Best of all, he wore a collar provided by a seminarian from Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in Shrewsbury.

When asked about his favorite part of the day, Brett was unequivocal in his answer.

"The whole thing," he said as he waited for his dad, Conrad, near the Cathedral Basilica sanctuary with his mom and older sister Olivia after the chrim Mass. "It was really neat for them to let me do this stuff."

And cool, too -- a term he used often in describing the day.

"Just a really cool experience," he told the **St. Louis Review**, the archdiocesan newspaper.

His actual wish is cool, too.

"Eating mangoes on a beach," his mother said. That trip will come later.

Brett's interim "Priest for a Day" request didn't surprise his family.

"For years, he has loved the Mass and been religious," said his mom. "He has such a good heart. He's a very caring boy."

Brett is the second oldest of Eileen and Conrad's four children. He has served at his school church and at his parish, St. Martin of Tours in Lemay, which is visible from the back door of his house only a short walk away.

He likes the smell of incense, enjoys confession and likes "Communion, and the songs, too."

Communion -- the Eucharist, the living presence of Jesus Christ -- stands out. "I like receiving the body and the blood" of Christ, he said, simply.

When Brett and his family told several priests about his desire to be a priest for a day, they offered several options. He could shadow a priest for a day, spend the night at a rectory with his dad or serve Saturday morning Mass at the cathedral.

When Father Nick Smith, master of ceremonies at the cathedral, was asked if Brett could serve at a Mass his initial response was "no way," followed quickly by "we can do way better than that."

Sure enough, they did.

Father Smith suggested that Brett serve the two Masses on Holy Thursday -- the chrim Mass, which is for priests, and that night's Mass, "which is always about the Eucharist." Archbishop Carlson, who was with the priest when he got the request, immediately joined in with other ideas for the day -- having Brett attend the seminarians' dinner and participate in foot washing.

Father Smith prepared an



CNS Photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review

PRIEST VESTS 'PRIEST FOR A DAY': Father Nicholas Smith helps Brett Haubrich, a sixth - grader at St. Mark School in Affton, Mo., who was diagnosed with a brain tumor last summer, with his vestments before Mass on Holy Thursday, April 2, at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. At the invitation of St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, Brett took his place beside the altar at the cathedral as "Priest for a Day."



CNS Photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review

ARCHBISHOP WASHES BOY'S FEET: St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson washes the feet of Brett Haubrich, a sixth-grader at St. Mark School in Affton, Mo., who was diagnosed with a brain tumor last summer, during Mass on Holy Thursday, April 2, at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis.

itinerary and delivered it in person to Brett along with a letter signed by Archbishop Carlson asking for Brett's help at the Masses.

"I handed it to him, and when he got to the first line, 'I'm making you a priest for a day,' his eyes got as big as half-dollars," Father Smith said.

Brett admitted to being a little nervous heading into Holy Thursday, but the events went

off like clockwork. Wearing the collar, Brett processed down the center aisle with priests, deacons and seminarians at the chrim Mass -- at which Archbishop Carlson blessed the oils to be used throughout the archdiocese for sacraments for the next year -- and took his spot near the altar.

He performed flawlessly.

Or as Archbishop Carlson put it: "He did pretty well."

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Iowa Teen, Suffering From Cancer, Meets Pope At Vatican, Receives A Blessing, As Wish Is Fulfilled

By Renee Webb
Catholic News Service

LE MARS, Iowa (CNS) -- A young parishioner in the Diocese of Sioux City recently had the chance to meet Pope Francis.

The circumstances of that meeting make it all the more powerful and unique.

Kylie Hayworth, a parishioner at All Saints Parish in Le Mars, chose to visit the pope as her wish through the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The 19-year-old has terminal brain cancer.

"When the pope first walked up to us, I blanked out and forgot his name for a second," Kylie said. "It was exciting."

Pope Francis March 4 placed his hands on her head and prayed over her. He also blessed her rosaries.

Kylie's mother, Linda Hayworth, said Pope Francis was like anyone else you would meet on the street -- very kind and loving.

"He wanted us to pray for him after I asked him to pray for our family as we were having a hard time dealing with the news of Kylie's time left on earth quoted by the doctors," Linda told **The Catholic Globe**, newspaper of the Sioux City Diocese. "I asked him to wave to my other daughter, Haley and my husband, Kyle, up near the podium where the pope gave his speech. He did!"

She mentioned Pope Francis asked them several times to keep him in their prayers.

After meeting the pope, Kylie told the family how nice he was.

Make-A-Wish had lined up a tour guide to take the Hayworths to the Vatican.

"I can say that St. Peter's Square, meeting the pope, the zoo and the Vatican were the highlights of the trip," said Linda. They had planned to go to a museum but it was a three-hour wait, so they skipped it and took a walk. "We found our way

to the zoo -- had so much fun there."

This trip would not have been possible without Make-A-Wish, stressed Linda. The organization put the trip together within three months.

"We also had the help of Father Kevin Richter (pastor at All Saints Parish) and Father Shane Deman to make this trip a success," she noted.

The Hayworths credited Father Richter with making several phone calls to help line things up. He had made the contact with Father Deman, a Sioux City diocesan priest, who is studying in Rome.

"I am very happy for Kylie and her family to have had this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Father Richter said.

Father Deman explained he met the family upon their arrival in Rome and got them settled into their hotel, but it was the Make-A-Wish Foundation that handled the request for papal audience tickets. He also met up with them later in the week for lunch and a bit of touring in the city.

"I'm thrilled that Kylie got a chance to meet the Holy Father," the priest said. "It is certainly a great sign of her faith that she wanted to use her one wish to meet the successor of Peter and receive a blessing from him. Kylie seemed to thoroughly enjoy her week in Rome and absorbed everything she could. I was blessed to be able to share in her enthusiasm and am impressed by her courage and strong faith."

Two years ago this March, an MRI confirmed Kylie had medulloblastoma, cancer at the base of the brain. Complications followed surgery to remove the tumor and Kylie developed posterior fossa syndrome, which can result in problems with speech and language, motor skills, and mood changes. Since that time, she has had five more surgeries.

Since her diagnosis, Kylie's mantra has been Philippians 4:13 -- "I can do all things



CNS Photo/L'Osservatore Romano

IOWA TEEN BLESSED BY POPE: Pope Francis blesses Kylie Hayworth of Le Mars, Iowa, March 4 in Saint Peter's Square at the Vatican. The 19-year-old parishioner of All Saints Parish has terminal brain cancer. The trip was arranged through the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

through Christ who strengthens me."

Kylie goes to physical, occupational and speech therapy

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every week for the side effects of her brain surgeries. She has paralysis on the left side of her face and had to have her left eyelid partially sewn shut as she can't blink.


"She still, to this day, has a good attitude and tries her hardest without complaining," Linda said.

She noted they are going to try one "last resort" chemo, but added the first round was extremely difficult for Kylie.


"We are hoping for a miracle or cure to come," Linda added, "We all will have trials and challenges, just know that God is with you even if you don't feel it. We have had a lot of support from people all over -- thoughts, prayers, donations, and so on. We thank everyone for that."



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CNS Photo/Cristian Gennari

POPE PROCESSES THROUGH MAIN DOOR OF SAINT PETER'S BASILICA: Pope Francis processes through the main door of Saint Peter's Basilica prior to first vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday at the Vatican Saturday, April 11. Before celebrating vespers, the Pope released a 9,300-word document officially proclaiming the 2015-2016 extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

Pope Proclaims Extraordinary Holy Year Of Mercy

(Continued From Page 16.)

"How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God," he wrote. "May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the kingdom of God is already present in our midst."

Nothing in the church's preaching or witness, he said, can be lacking in mercy.

Pope Francis asked that all dioceses around the world designate a "Door of Mercy" at their cathedral or another spe-

cial church or shrine, and that every diocese implement the "24 Hours for the Lord" initiative on the Friday and Saturday before the fourth week of Lent. In Rome the last two years, the pope has opened the celebration with a penance service in St. Peter's Basilica and churches around the city were open for the next 24 hours for confessions and eucharistic adoration.

The pope said he will designate and send out "Missionaries of Mercy" to preach about mercy; they will be given special authority, he said, "to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See." Under church law, those

sins involve: a man who directly participated in an abortion and later wants to enter the priesthood; priests who have broken the seal of confession; priests who have offered sacramental absolution to their own sexual partners; desecrating the Eucharist; and making an attempt on the life of the pope. Usually, the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court, handles those cases.

And he urged all Catholics to spend more time practicing what traditionally have been called the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works are: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, cloth-

ing the naked, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned, giving drink to the thirsty and burying the dead. The spiritual works are: converting sinners, instructing the ignorant, comforting the doubtful, comforting the sorrowful, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving injuries and praying for the living and dead.

The date the pope chose to open the year -- Dec. 8 -- is the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Both dates, he wrote, are related to the Year of Mercy.

Mercy, he said, is "the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to a hope of being loved forever despite our sins." That bridge was made concrete when God chose Mary to be the mother of his son.

The Year of Mercy, Pope Francis wrote, is also a way to keep the Second Vatican Council alive.

(Continued On Page 13.)



CNS Photo/Cristian Gennari

POPE PRESENTS HOLY YEAR DOCUMENT: Pope Francis presents a document officially proclaiming the 2015-2016 extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy to a cardinal in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Saturday, April 11. The Pope handed copies of the document to the archpriests of the major basilicas of Rome and to Vatican officials representing Catholics around the world.

(Continued From Page 12.)

"The walls which too long had made the church a kind of fortress were torn down and the time had come to proclaim the Gospel in a new way," he said. The council recognized "a responsibility to be a living sign of the Father's love in the world."

The life and action of the church, he said, "is authentic and credible only when she becomes a convincing herald of mercy," a mercy that "knows no bounds and extends to everyone without exception."

While some people try to argue that mercy, even God's mercy, is limited by the demands of justice, Pope Francis said mercy and justice are "two dimensions of a single reality that unfolds progressively until it culminates in the fullness of love."

Preaching mercy, he said, is not the same as ignoring sin or withholding correction. Instead, mercy invites repentance and conversion and ensures the sinner that once God forgives a sin, he forgets it.

The pope addressed direct appeals in the document to members of the mafia and other criminal organizations as well as to officials and others involved

in corruption. "For their own good, I beg them to change their lives," he wrote. "I ask them this in the name of the Son of God who, though rejecting sin, never rejected the sinner."

"Violence inflicted for the sake of amassing riches soaked in blood makes one neither powerful nor immortal," he continued. "Everyone, sooner or later, will be subject to God's judgment, from which no one can escape."

At the same time, Pope Francis wrote, many of those who insist first on God's justice are like the Pharisees who thought they could save themselves by following the letter of the law, but ended up simply placing "burdens on the shoulders of others and undermined the Father's mercy."

"God's justice is his mercy," the pope said. "Mercy is not opposed to justice, but rather expresses God's way of reaching out to the sinner, offering him a new chance to look at himself, convert and believe."

Recognizing that they have been treated with mercy by God, he said, Christians are obliged to treat others with mercy. In fact, the Gospel says that Christians

will be judged by the mercy they show others.

"At times how hard it seems to forgive," he said. "And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully."

Pope Francis also noted that God's mercy is an important



CNS Photo/Cristian Gennari

POPE PREACHES AT VESPERS: Pope Francis preaches at first Vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday at Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Saturday, April 11.

theme in Judaism and Islam, and he urged efforts during the Year of Mercy to increase inter-

religious dialogue and mutual understanding with followers of both faiths.

St. John Paul II Memorial Bust

Donations are being accepted to bring this beautiful bronze bust of the beloved Pope to John Paul II Manor in Cresson.

Dedication is scheduled for Oct. 22, 2015, The Feast of Pope John Paul II.

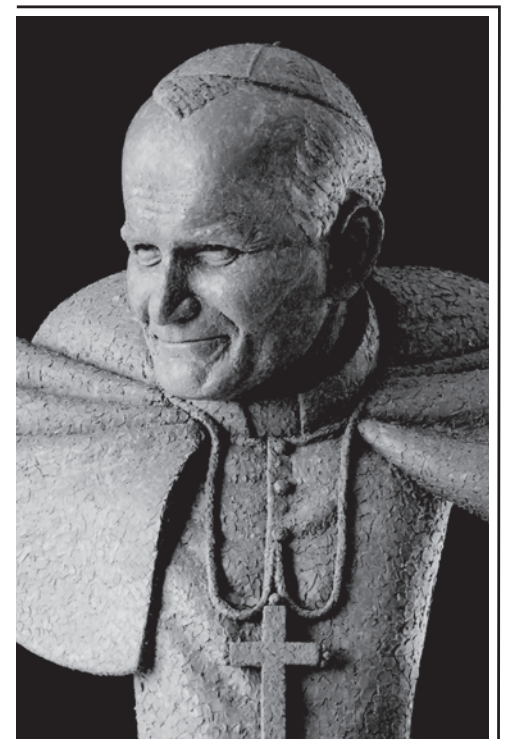
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Now Showing

‘Longest Ride,’ A Soap Opera Long On Sentiment

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Though it's likely to prove a crowd pleaser, the romantic drama "The Longest Ride" (Fox) amounts to little more than a sentimental soap opera.

Reliant on contrived methods of dramatization, director George Tillman Jr.'s adaptation of Catholic author Nicholas Sparks' novel also includes late plot developments that send an ambiguous signal about marital fidelity.

Amid lush rural scenery and

a glorification of contemporary cowboy culture such as might be featured in a pickup truck commercial, Wake Forest University senior Sophia (Britt Robertson) falls for professional bull rider Luke (Scott Eastwood). Shy Sophia has only to witness Luke's cattle-subduing stamina during what is literally her first time at the rodeo for love to start bucking her world.

The ride home from Sophia and Luke's initial get-together takes an unusual turn when they stop to rescue 90-year-old Ira (Alan Alda) from the roadside wreckage of his car, thereby saving his life. At Ira's feebly

voiced behest, Sophia also retrieves a wicker box that turns out to contain a series of letters young Ira (Jack Huston) wrote to the girl of his dreams, Ruth (Oona Chaplin).

What better way to pass Ira's stint in the hospital than for Sophia to read these epistles aloud to him? Screenwriter Craig Bolotin can certainly think of none, so we get Ira's back story.

Ruth was a vibrant Jewish refugee from Nazi-occupied Vienna whose exile in Greensboro, North Carolina, was softened by her budding relationship with Ira. But Ira's battlefield heroism during World War II shortly after the two became engaged led to a problem that threatened their impending marriage.

When she's not providing Ira with the opportunity to narrate his saga, Sophia agonizes over the barriers that seem to obstruct her own path to happiness. These include the fact that she's soon to depart the Tar Heel State for far-off New York City where she's landed a prestigious internship at an art gallery -- but whither her beau, alas, will not be following.

The device of using Ira's letters to Ruth to tell their story has a fatal flaw: Unlike the audience, after all, Ruth would presumably not have needed Ira's elaborate written explanations to understand events she herself had just experienced. On the other hand, touches of humor do keep things moving along.

Circumstances between Ira and Ruth take a turn that can be read either as undercutting or supporting nuptial faithfulness. Though the outcome is a morally positive one, steps along the way to it suggest that wedding vows can legitimately be set aside if they seriously impede a spouse's self-fulfillment.

The film contains brief combat violence, a few scenes of non-graphic premarital sexual activity, partial nudity, instances of profanity and a smattering of crude language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.



CNS Photo/Fox

THE LONGEST RIDE: Britt Robertson and Scott Eastwood star in a scene from the movie "The Longest Ride." The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Reliant on contrived methods of dramatization, director George Tillman Jr.'s adaptation of Catholic author Nicholas Sparks' novel also includes late plot developments that send an ambiguous signal about marital fidelity.

Coming Up On 'Proclaim!'

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

April 26 -- First Holy Communion candidates Zachary Novak and Andrea Chislow from Saint Demetrius Parish in Gallitzin share their anticipation for receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus for the first time.

May 2 -- In celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life, Sister Mary Joseph Calore of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Cresson talks about her vocation and her religious community.

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Sunday Mass Telecast
Live from Saint John Gualbert Cathedral
Downtown Johnstown
11 a.m. - Noon WWCP - TV FOX Channel 8

Proclaim!
10:30 a.m.

A half - hour of local Church news and features

May They Rest In Peace



Sister Marion Vavreck O.P.

Dominican Sister Marion Vavreck, died Friday, April 3, at UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital, Dubuque, Iowa. She was 92. Her religious name was Sister Assisium. The funeral Mass was held in the Gathering Place at Sinsinawa, April 8, 2015, followed by burial in the Motherhouse Cemetery.

Formerly known as Sister Assisium, Sister Marion made her first religious profession as a Sinsinawa Dominican Aug. 5, 1943, and her final profession Aug. 5, 1946. She taught for 31 years; served as principal for 11 years and assistant principal for 17 years; and ministered with the congregation's Southwest Province sisters for four years.

In the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown, Sister Marion served as assistant principal at Lock Haven Catholic School, Lock Haven, 1991 - 2005 and 2006 - 2007.

Sister Marion was born March 19, 1923, in Minneapolis, the daughter of the late Andrew and Anna (Stahura) Vavreck. She was preceded in death by six sisters and six brothers, and is survived by two sisters.

The funeral Mass for Sister Marion Vavreck was celebrated Wednesday, April 8 in the Gathering Place Chapel at Sinsinawa WI. Committal was in the Motherhouse Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Sinsinawa Dominicans, 585 County Road Z, Sinsinawa, WI, 53824 - 9701 or online at www.sinsinawa.org by clicking on "Donate Now," then "Honor and Memorial Gift."

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

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



**Sister Marian Piskurich
A.S.C.**

Sister Marian Piskurich, an Adorer of the Blood of Christ, died on Good Friday, April 3, at Saint Anne's Retirement Community in Columbia. She was 89 and had been an Adorer since entering in 1955.

She was born Helen Marie Piskurich on October 28, 1925, in Johnstown, and was the 11th child in her blended family. Her parents, Stephen Piskurich and Anna Pavicic, married after losing their first spouse. They were members of St. Rochus Croatian Church.

Helen Marie entered the Adorers of the Blood of Christ on January 31, 1955 at Saint Joseph Convent, Columbia, Pa., and became a novice on August 12, 1955, receiving the name Marian. She professed first vows on August 12, 1956 and final vows on August 15, 1961.

She graduated from Johnstown Secondary School in 1945 and earned additional high school credits at Saint Joseph Academy, Columbia, while concurrently studying at the Precious Blood Teacher Training Institute there. At Youngstown (Ohio) State University, she earned her bachelor's degree in art education. She earned a master's degree in art education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Sister Marian taught for 35 years at schools in Georgia, North and South Carolina, Illinois, New York, Maryland, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

In 1992, Sister Marian retired from teaching and served as chauffeur at St. Anne's Retirement Community. She fully

retired in 1998 to Saint Joseph Convent and began living ministry in later life, dedicating her time to prayer, art, and helping in many ways around the house. She moved to Saint Anne's Retirement Community, Annunciata Hall, in 2008, where she remained until she required more skilled care in 2012. She lived in the skilled care unit of Saint Anne's until her death.

Two portraits Sister Marian painted, one of Maria De Mattias, foundress of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, and another of the Sisters in Niles, Ohio, walking to church in the pre-dawn, had prominent places at Saint Joseph Convent. When Marian Hall was dedicated in 1965 as the new dormitory for boarding students at the Adorers' Saint Joseph Academy, Sister Marian created the Stations of the Cross for the chapel. Today, they grace the chapel at De Mattias Residence, the Columbia Center.

Sister Marian was preceded in death by her parents and siblings. She is survived by many nephews and nieces.

The funeral Mass for Sister Marian Piskurich A.S.C. was celebrated Thursday, April 9 in the chapel at Saint Anne's Retirement Community. Committal was in the convent cemetery.



Deacon John E. Rys

Deacon John E. Rys of Altoona, died Wednesday, April 8 at UPMC Altoona, after a brief illness. He was 68, and was serving in diaconal ministry at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

He was born December 11, 1946 in Johnstown, the son

of the late Adam V. and Helen (Porowski) Rys. He married the former Linda M. Bracken on June 5, 1971, in Conemaugh.

He is survived by his wife; two sons: William A. of Alexandria VA, and Jason P. and wife, Emma, of Allison Park; two granddaughters: Audrey and Lydia; and a brother - in - law and sister - in - law, Pat and Donna Kimble of Tipton.

He was preceded in death by a brother, James.

A 1964 graduate of Bishop McCort Catholic High School, Johnstown, Deacon Rys attended Saint Francis University, Loretto, and graduated from the School of Radiology at Conemaugh Hospital, Johnstown. He retired in 2010 as an administrator in radiology and technology from Altoona Hospital.

Deacon Rys was ordained to the permanent diaconate by Bishop Joseph V. Adamec at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament on May 27, 2000. He was then assigned to diaconal ministry at Saint Mark Parish, Altoona, and campus ministry at Penn State Altoona. He had served at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament since 2001.

The funeral Mass for Deacon John E. Rys was celebrated Saturday, April 11 at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. Committal was at Calvary Cemetery, Altoona.

Memorial donations may be made to Catholic Charities, 1300 12th Avenue, Altoona PA 16601.

Sister Joachim Ryan R.S.M.

Sister Joachim Ryan, a member of the Mid - Atlantic Community of the Sisters of Mercy, died Friday, April 10, at Mercy Center, Dallas. She was 87.

She was born November 24, 1927 in Saint Augustine, the daughter of the late Bernard and Grace (Adams) Ryan.

She was preceded in death by three brothers: Raymond, James and infant Joseph. Surviving are nieces and nephews, including Raymond Ryan and wife Sandy, of Saint Augustine; Patricia Ryan of Bessemer, and Pamela Ryan of Dysart.

Sister Joachim was a graduate of Patton High School. She entered the Sisters of Mercy at Dallas on September 8, 1946, and made first profession of vows on March 12, 1950.

She received a bachelor's degree from Misericordia University, Dallas, and a master's degree from The Catholic University of America, Washington DC.

Sister Joachim taught in the schools of the Dioceses of Altoona - Johnstown, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, and Brooklyn NY. From 1966 to 1973 she was a supervisor of schools in the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown. After teaching for 10 years at Saint Mary's School in Lancaster she became involved in healing ministry, volunteering at the former Mercy Medical Center in Johnstown, which transitioned to the Conemaugh Health System. In 2008 she retired to Mercy Center and participated in the ministry of prayer and presence.

The funeral Mass for Sister Joachim Ryan R.S.M. was celebrated Tuesday, April 14 in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament at Mercy Center, Dallas. Committal was in the Sisters Cemetery on the campus of Mount Aloysius College, Cresson.



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Lord, for your faithful people, life is changed, not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death, we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.

Pope: Year Of Mercy A Time To Heal, Help, Forgive



By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Mercy is what makes God perfect and all-powerful, Pope Francis said in his document officially proclaiming the 2015-2016 extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

"If God limited himself to only justice, he would cease to be God, and would instead be like human beings who ask merely that the law be respected," the pope wrote in "Misericordiae Vultus," ("The Face of Mercy"), which is the "bull of indiction" calling a Holy Year to begin Dec. 8.

Standing in front of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica April 11, Pope Francis handed copies of the document to the archpriests of the major basilicas of Rome and to Vatican officials representing Catholics around the world.

Portions of the 9,300-word proclamation were read aloud before Pope Francis and his aides processed into St. Peter's Basilica to celebrate the first vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday.

In his homily at vespers, the pope said he proclaimed the

Year of Mercy because "it is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation."

The boundless nature of God's mercy -- his willingness always to forgive anything -- has been a constant subject of Pope Francis' preaching and is explained in detail in the document, which outlines some of the specific projects the pope has in mind for the year.

The Old Testament stories of how God repeatedly offered mercy to his unfaithful people and the New Testament stories of Jesus' compassion, healing and mercy demonstrate, the pope said, that "the mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality through which he reveals his love," just like mothers and fathers love their children.

(Continued On Page 12.)

CNS Photo/Cristian Gennari

POPE PROCLAIMS HOLY YEAR OF MERCY: Pope Francis holds his crozier during first vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Saturday, April 11. Before celebrating vespers, the Pope released a 9,300-word document officially proclaiming the 2015 - 2016 extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

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