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Diocese Will Encourage Parish - Based Observance Of Extraordinary Holy Year Of Mercy

By Bruce A. Tomaselli

If there ever was a time in our history to renew our focus on "Mercy" certainly it would be now.

Pope Francis proclaimed an Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy beginning formally on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 2015 and culminating on the Feast of Christ the King on November 20, 2016.

"Mercy," said Pope Francis, "is the beating heart of the Gospel."

The Altoona - Johnstown Diocese has a variety of special events and observances planned to celebrate throughout the year, but it's very important that each individual parish celebrate "Mercy" in ways that meet the spiritual and temporal needs of their communities.

"On the diocesan level we have no official opening or closing," said Jeanne Thompson, a member of the Diocesan Committee for the Year of Mercy. "We have diocesan observances planned throughout the year, but the emphasis is on local parishes to celebrate and practice mercy in their parishes and communities."



Thompson is the coordinator of Christian Initiation and assistant coordinator for Sacramental Preparation.

The Mercy Committee feels the best way to celebrate Mercy and Love throughout the eight counties of the Diocese is to focus on the Spiritual and Corporal works of mercy.

Corporal Works of Mercy:

- To feed the hungry;
- To give drink to the thirsty;
- To clothe the naked;
- To harbour the harbourless
- To visit the sick;
- To ransom the captive;
- To bury the dead.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy:

- To instruct the ignorant;
- To counsel the doubtful;
- To admonish sinners;
- To bear wrongs patiently;
- To forgive offenses willingly;
- To comfort the afflicted;
- To pray for the living and the dead.

Thompson continued that activities such as collections of food for the poor, aid to the needy, or visiting a nursing home are examples of Mercy observances. "It's an opportunity for each faith community to assess and meet the needs of

their particular faith communities," she explained.

She said the Mercy Committee is developing a list of recommendations as to how each parish can celebrate The Year of Mercy. "Each parish will receive a brochure that will list events and opportunities that will help them live out the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Secretary for Communication Tony DeGol, added, "Part of the committee's role is to provide parishes with ideas as to how they might celebrate and observe The Year of Mercy."

Pope Francis has placed a serious emphasis on this year - long observance; so much so that he has designated it a Jubilee or Extraordinary Year that typically occurs only every 25 years with a very few exceptions. He sees a great need for such an observance. One of the main focuses of a Holy Year is forgiveness.

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ROSARY PROJECT: Religious Education students at Holy Name Parish, Ebensburg, spent October, the month of the Holy Rosary, in learning about this popular prayer form. Pictured above are third grade students (left to right) McKayla Clapper, Tyler Wilson, Abigail Sheehan, Dominic Kuntz, James Passanita, Grady Snyder, Lucius Grimes, Alaina Sheehan, Abbygail McMullen, Devin Krumenacker. Morgan Eppley was absent. Pictured below are fourth grade students (left to right) Front Row: Maggie McCullough, Luke Bogus, Emma Crimmins, Matt Kirsch, Taylor Ream. Second row Reese Eckenrode, Summer Koss, Kaden Nelson, Madelyn Brunatti David Schweitzer. Third row: Noah Vivian, Dominic Micco, Brandon Baker, Ally Kudlawiec and Tyler Cinko.



Adult Enrichment

Praying With Icons

Johnstown: Icons are not simply art; they are a way into contemplative prayer, and are therefore one way to let God speak to us. They are doorways into stillness, into closeness with God. If we sit with them long enough, we too can enter into the stillness - into communion.

And if we listen to them closely enough, with our hearts, we just may discern the voice of God.

When we speak of icons as a medium for “gazing into heaven”, we refer to their value as much more than religious art. Instead, icons serve as a very real means for connecting us with God and His love.

This 6 week course “Praying with Icons” focuses on Festival Icons (the major events in the life of Christ and the Theotokos) and the Sacred Scripture that speaks to us through the sacred images.

Start the New Year by joining Deacon Michael Russo



Photo By Tony DeGol

ECUMENICAL GATHERING: Caring for our common home was the topic of an ecumenical gathering on Thursday, November 12 at Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Lakemont, Altoona. Sponsored by the Ecumenical Conference of Greater Altoona, the program highlighted the recent encyclical of Pope Francis, **Laudato Si’**, which focuses on care for the environment. In his keynote address, Bishop Mark L. Bartchak gave an overview of the papal document, and leaders of various faith communities offered their responses in light of their own faith traditions. Taking part in the event were (left to right): Monsignor Michael Becker, pastor of Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Diocesan Ecumenical Minister, and moderator for the gathering; Michael Allision, Unified Buddhist Church; Reverend Anthony Roerber, Saint Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church, Johnstown; Rabbi Audrey Korotkin, Temple Beth Israel, Altoona; Bishop Mark; Reverend K. Joy Kaufman, General Presbyter of the Huntingdon Presbytery; and Bishop Michael Rhyne, Bishop of the Allegheny Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



PATRIOTIC ROSARY: The Altoona - Johnstown Courts of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas sponsored the 4th annual Patriotic Rosary and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament on Saturday, October 31. The event was held at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona. Pictured (left to right) are: Judge Daniel Milliron, Judge Timothy Sullivan, County Register and Recorder, Mary Ann Bennis, Bishop Mark L. Bartchak, State Representative Judy Ward, Mayor Matthew Pacifico, Pat Gildrea, and Commissioner Terry Tomassetti. Absent from the photos is District Attorney Richard Consiglio. Bishop Mark presided along with elected officials, representatives from the courts across the Diocese, and the Knights of Columbus.

Wednesday mornings from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., beginning Wednesday, January 13. Classes will be held at Saint Patrick School, 625 Park Avenue.

For more information contact the Office of Adult Enrichment and Lay Ecclesial Ministry,

625 Park Avenue, Johnstown, PA 15902. Telephone: (814) 361 - 2000. Email: mheinze@dioceseaj.org.

Visit Us Online at: www.dioceseaj.org/lay-ecclesial-ministry

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In The Alleghenies



Bishop's Appointments

Effective Friday, November 27

REVEREND BRIAN L. WARCHOLA, appointed to Parochial Vicar at Saint Benedict Parish in Johnstown, under the pastorate of the Reverend David S. Peles, and Chaplain at Bishop McCort Catholic High School.

REVEREND MATTHEW B. BAUM, appointed to Administrator at Immaculate Conception Parish in Dudley and Saint Stephen Parish in McConnellsburg. Father Baum will also provide sacramental coverage to Juniata College and the State Correctional Institution in Huntingdon.

REVEREND JOSEPH C. NALE, appointed Pastor of Most Holy Trinity Parish in South Fork and Saint Bartholomew Parish in Wilmore. Father Nale will also serve as Chaplain at Bishop Carroll Catholic High School in Ebensburg.

REVEREND SEAN K. CODE, appointed to Catholic Chaplain at Conemaugh Health System, Johnstown, with Residence at Saint John Gualbert Cathedral in Johnstown.

REVEREND ARON M. MAGHSOUDI, appointed Administrator at Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish in Central City and assistant Sacramental Minister at the State Correctional Institution in Laurel Highlands.

REVEREND JOHN M. GIBBONS, appointed Chaplain at the State Correctional Institution at Benner Township, continuing as Administrator at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Philipsburg and Sacramental Minister at the State Correctional Institution in Rockview.

REVEREND MATTHEW A. REESE, appointed Pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Williamsburg, continuing as Diocesan Director of Vocations.

DEACON JACK E. ORLANDI, appointed Chaplain of the State Correctional Institution in Benner Township, continuing in Diaconal Service at Good Shepherd Parish in State College, under the pastorate of the Reverend Charles M. Amershek

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Women Religious

Days Of Reflection

Portage: The Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus are offering three days of reflection, prayer, and recreation at the Sacred Heart Center at 1872 Munster Road.

The event will be held on December 28, 29 and 30 and all women religious are invited to enjoy one, two or three days.

Interested Sisters should e-mail Mother Jacinta at sisterjacinta@gmail.com, or call (814) 505 - 2290.



An Advent Prayer

Lord God,
I sense Your power, Your might
and I stand in awe, painfully aware
of how poor and weak I am before You.

As I begin this Advent journey,
teach me to turn to You in my fear and sorrow.
I don't want to keep making
my heart hard against You,
turning a deaf ear to Your invitation.

Only You can help me to soften,
to be like the clay in Your gentle potter's hands.

Amen.



SCHOLARSHIPS: Bridge Educational Foundation announced Thursday, November 12, scholarships totaling \$42,400 to Centre County families through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Scholarship Program. RBC Capital Markets, Malady & Wooten, and Waste Management donated the scholarships to students attending Saint John the Evangelist School in Bellefonte, Centre County Christian School, Bellefonte Playschool, Belleville Mennonite School, Our Lady of Victory School, Saint Joseph's Catholic Academy and Mifflin County Christian School. Pictured are (left to right) First row: Cecilia Stanton, Eric Clark, Anna Dello Stritto, Henry St. Amant, Jignesh Save, Julia Weisner, Dominic Capperella. Second row: Starla Fogelman, Valerie Reed, Malissa Martin, Erika Young, Lori Proper. Third row: Kristina Tice, Pastor Andy Morgan, Pastor Rick Gilbaugh, State Representative Kerry Benninghoff, State Senator Jake Corman, Jim Tricolti, Father George Jakopac and an unidentified Bellefonte Playschool parent and children.

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Point Of View

The turkey is finished, the pie is eaten, the dishes washed and the Black Friday ads are highlighted! Bring on the holidays the secular world clamors!

With a cup of Cappuccino in hand and a purse full of coupons, finalized plans to meet my sister for our annual Black Friday excursion takes center stage. A day filled with fun, contagious laughter and great bargains. A day to negotiate crowds of enthusiastic shoppers and a day of giddy exhaustion. A day to eat lunch at 2:00 a.m. with a group of tired friends and a day to load up every inch of the car with presents, mirroring the sight of Santa's sleigh.

But, Black Friday is also a day that still perplexes me for not a Black Friday goes by without my mind consistently questioning – “Why am I really doing this?” You see, I love Black Friday and I despise Black Friday all at the same time. I love this crazy day because my sister and I have a great time shopping for bargains together but I also dislike this maddening day because deep in my heart, I know how easily it can lure someone, including myself, into the secularism of Christmas, something I vowed to be very careful about this year.

So why do I go? Honestly, if I stop and really ponder my motives, I really don't go to get the best bargain, for I have my Christmas shopping almost completed. I don't go to purposefully be consumed by a materialistic society, for I think I have a good handle on perspective. I go simply because I love.



Family Matters

By Amy Kanich
Motives To Love

I love my sister. I love spending time with her and it is the love for her that helps me keep this secular tradition in perspective. A good question to ask ourselves as Christians living in a secular world is what is the motive for why we are doing the very things we do to prepare for Christmas? Do we have selfish or consumeristic motives or are we choosing to participate in activities that point to a deeper desire to love? Are our motives simply to get it all done, go through the motions or do we do what we do because our hearts are moved to love?

I share with you a reflection on preparing for the Christmas Season as adapted from one of the most popular scriptures on love.

1 Corinthians 13 - A Christmas Version.

- If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

- If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

- If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

- If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

- Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

- Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails. Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust, but giving the gift of love will endure. (Author Sharon Jaynes: Reprinted with Permission from Appleseeds.org)

Blessings!



Another Perspective

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein
The Year Of 'Hesed'

One of the most important moments in my spiritual development took place when I was in a scripture study group at the Newman Center at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in the late 1970s. Our discussion centered around the word, “hesed,” which, it was explained, was the Hebrew equivalent of our English word “mercy.”

At that point, I thought I knew all there was to know about mercy. I had been born in Mercy Hospital in Johnstown. My beloved Great – Aunt Elsie was a Sister of Mercy, Sister Mary Bernard - a respected former mistress of postulants and Mother Superior, who served as principal of several parochial schools in our Diocese. Sister Mary Bernard introduced me to the story of Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, a 19th century Irish heiress who gave her entire fortune away in order to minister to the poor. I thought of being merciful as being a Lord or Lady Bountiful, dutifully doling token gifts to those less fortunate. But when I was introduced to the concept of “hesed,” I was introduced to a whole new way of thinking about mercy, and how mercy must be the guiding principal in the life of a Christian.

Hesed implies much more than being bountiful and charitable. Hesed means standing in solidarity with others, taking their cares and concerns upon your shoulders, entering into the totality of their experience - - making their joys and their sorrows your own. Hesed means standing shoulder to shoulder with someone else, never abandoning or forsaking them. Hesed means a commitment to sharing all that you have and all that you are with people who can never be viewed as strangers or aliens, but always and only as brothers and sisters, friends. Hesed is a way of life and a way of love. Hesed is how God loves us. Hesed is the sort of love that impelled Jesus to forsake His place in heaven, and to come to earth to share our life in all things but sin. Hesed is the very merciful love which prompted Jesus to accept His death on the cross (Philippians 2:6 – 11).

Scripture tells us that God is rich in mercy, and that God's mercy endures forever. What an amazingly overwhelmingly powerful thought! God has made a commitment to us, and He will not go back on that commitment. He will stay faithful and true to us forever! His commitment to us challenges us to go and do the same.

This new understanding of mercy - - mercy as “hesed” - - brought me to a new understanding of the life and work of Mother Catherine McAuley. Far from being a detached and serene Lady Bountiful, I saw her as someone who made a radical choice to give not only her wealth, but her very self to the poorest of the poor, identifying with them, becoming one with them, holding nothing back that she was able to offer. This was the sort of love, too, that prompted the life and work of Saint Katherine Drexel, the Philadelphia – born heiress who also gave away a fortune, and gave away herself, in her quest to stand in solidarity with others.

For me, the Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy will be the Holy Year of Hesed, an opportunity to try to practice this love God has shown me and shown you, by works of compassion and deeds of solidarity that make it clear to those I meet that I stand with them, not above them or apart from them. It will be a time to reflect on the good example of merciful love - - “hesed love” - - shown by Pope Francis, who has made mercy the theme of his pontificate.

But above all, this Holy Year of Mercy, this Year of God's Hesed, will be an opportunity to give ever – increasing thanks and praise to God for the boundless, merciful, eternal love that binds Him to me, and to you, forever.



CNS Photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic

BIBLE STUDY: A young woman studies the Bible at St. Mary of Celle Parish in Berwyn, Ill., in this 2009 file photo. Pope Francis has repeatedly encouraged the faithful to carry a pocket-sized Bible and to read several verses a day.

‘Dei Verbum’ At 50: Where Have All The Bibles Gone?

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Fifty years ago, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (“Dei Verbum”) urged the faithful to nourish their faith by reading the Bible, putting an end to centuries of seeing direct access to the Scriptures as something reserved to the clergy.

Stating that “easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful,” the document stressed that frequent Bible reading allows the faithful another connection to “the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ.”

Today, Pope Francis repeatedly asks the faithful to carry a pocket-sized Gospel or Bible and to read several verses a day. The pope even had free copies of a pocket-sized edition of the Gospels given to the faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square at

a number of his Sunday Angelus addresses.

“Take this Gospel; carry it with you, to read it often, every day,” he said in March. “Carry it in your purse, in your pocket, but read it often. A verse, a passage every day. The word of God is a light for our path.”

The Bible is considered the best-selling book of all time with an estimated 5 billion copies sold and with versions in close to 350 different languages. However, a question remains: With so many Bibles available worldwide, why are there still Christians with limited knowledge or access to the word of God?

In short, where have all the Bibles gone?

The Biblical Center of Africa and Madagascar hosted a conference Nov. 10-14 in Rwanda to reflect on “Dei Verbum,” and participants agreed it placed “the Bible at the center of Christian spirituality.”

Access to Scripture is no simple task in Africa, a continent known for its linguistic diversity with an estimated 2,000 languages. Conference participants committed themselves to two goals: finalizing the translation of the Bible in local languages and continuing to work so “that the faithful may have access to the word of God.”

But “Dei Verbum” also is relevant in areas where access to the word of God is not as challenging as in Africa.

For Maronite Father Pierre Najem of Beirut, Lebanon, physical access to Scripture for the faithful does not pose a significant challenge.

“The access to the intelligence of the Holy Scripture is the problem, and we are trying to deal with it through preaching, through a lot of activities in order to help our people, especially young people, to have access to the understanding of the Scripture and to understanding

the tradition,” Father Najem told Catholic News Service by telephone Nov. 16.

As Middle East regional coordinator of the Catholic Biblical Federation, Father Najem believes that “Dei Verbum” still has an important message, especially in a country as culturally and religiously diverse as Lebanon.

While traditional religious devotions are prominent in the Middle East, the birthplace of the three monotheistic religions, Father Najem says there are still communities not accustomed to reading the Bible often.

“We are a religious people, but we need to help our people be more acquainted with the Scripture,” he said. “That’s why we are working more on the pastoral level to reach the people.”

The Assembly of the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon has inaugurated a “Biblical Week,” Father Najem said, and the Catholic Biblical Federation organizes a regional conference every two years as well as annual weeklong meetings to help Lebanese parishioners understand Scripture.

The Holy Year of Mercy, which begins Dec. 8, also presents an opportunity to help the faithful understand God’s love through studying Scripture, the priest said. When Pope Francis announced the jubilee, he emphasized the need “to live in the light of the word of the Lord” with mercy at its center.

Cardinal Gerhard Muller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, echoed the pope’s words, saying that the teachings of “Dei Verbum” shed a light on divine revelation as a direct link between God and humanity.

This connection “teaches us above all that divine mercy is not only found in some isolated act of forgiveness of our sins but places us in the most intimate communication with God himself,” Cardinal Muller said Nov. 19 during a conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of “Dei Verbum” at Rome’s Pontifical Gregorian University.

The revelation of God’s love, mercy and plan for humanity through sacred Scripture, the cardinal said, helps to unite

Christians, while false interpretations or misunderstandings divide them.

“When we enter into the history of revelation, when we meet with members of the body of Jesus Christ, the word of God creates an internal unity, a communion between God and us. And we clearly know that no man, no philosophy, not even an elaborate and well-thought out ideology can save us,” Cardinal Muller told CNS.

“It is God who saves mankind and not mankind who saves God,” he said.

For the faithful to understand the Bible and faithfully interpret God’s word, Cardinal Muller offered a simple piece of advice: “I recommend reading or having a Bible with scientific commentaries for this introduction (into Scripture), because all these texts come from a very different time, a very different culture than our own. One needs explanations in order to understand it.”



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U.S. Bishops Endorse Three Sainthood Causes

By Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) -- The U.S. bishops Nov. 17 endorsed the sainthood causes of a Spanish missionary regarded as a mystic who served in the American Southwest, a Native American and his companions who were martyred in colonial Florida, and a Pennsylvania native who in 1974 became the first quadriplegic priest to be ordained for the Catholic Church.

The bishops' action came in a voice vote at the end of a canonically required consultation that took place the second day of their bishops' annual fall general

assembly in Baltimore. Their endorsement was needed for the causes to move forward.

The three sainthood candidates are Father Aloysius Ellacuria, a Claretian Missionary priest; Antonia Cuipa and more than 80 companions; and Augustinian Father William Atkinson.

Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez presented the cause of Father Ellacuria, a 20th-century priest from the Basque region of Spain whose ministry was primarily in Los Angeles, San Diego and Phoenix. The priest, who died in 1981, founded a religious congregation named the Missionaries of Perpetual Adoration, later referred to as the Missionaries of Fatima, reflecting his devo-

tion to the message of Our Lady of Fatima.

He was known for spending long periods of time visiting and consoling the sick and dying and also is described as having an extraordinary gift for attracting vocations.

In presenting the cause of Father Atkinson, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia said his is a "beautiful" story and his cause "would be a source of encouragement for people with this kind of disability (and) reminds us of the great generosity of his family and his religious community -- as they were all called to holiness" in their care for him.

Young Atkinson was an Augustinian novice when he broke

his spine in a tobogganing accident that left him a quadriplegic and seemingly ended his dream to become a priest. But eight years later Pope Paul VI granted permission for him to be ordained.

Archbishop Chaput said Father Atkinson went on to teach in Catholic schools in the Philadelphia Archdiocese. He died in 2006 at age 60.

Regarding the Cuipa and his companions, Bishop Gregory L. Parkes of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida, told the bishops the group should be viewed as "martyrs of evangelization who gave their lives to share and live the Gospel in colonial Florida.

He said the group includes men, women and nine children;

61 are Native Americans, like Cuipa.

An Apalachee Indian converted by Franciscans, Cuipa lived at the San Luis Mission in present-day Tallahassee. He and the others were martyred between 1549 and 1706. Cuipa was studying for the priesthood when he was seized by another Indian band, nailed to a cross and set afire in 1704. Witnesses said Cuipa had a vision of Mary while he was dying.

Choosing a Native American as "the lead martyr reflects not only the sacrifice and success of the missionaries, but will also highlight the many Native Americans -- over 1,000 -- killed for the faith whose names are lost in history."

Mother Teresa Could Be Canonized Next Year

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The Vatican calendar for the Year of Mercy deliberately set aside Sept. 4, 2016, as a possible date for the canonization of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, if her sainthood cause is concluded by then.

The canonization would be celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square at the end of a three-day pilgrimage of people who, like Blessed Teresa was, are engaged in corporal works of mercy.

"Sept. 4 is a hypothesis or plan within the calendar for the jubilee year," Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, told Catholic News Service Nov. 19.

The Italian news agency AGI reported Nov. 18 that a panel of physicians convoked by the Congregation for Saints' Causes agreed there was no medical or natural explanation for the recovery of a Brazilian man suffering from multiple brain tumors. His healing after prayers for the intercession of Blessed Teresa was submitted as

the miracle needed for her canonization.

Father Lombardi urged caution, however. "The process is still underway and official communications will be given at the appropriate time."

Members of the Congregation for Saints' Causes still must review the physicians' report on the healing. If the members have no further questions, Pope Francis would be asked to issue a decree recognizing the healing as a miracle worked by God through the intercession of Mother Teresa.

With the decree, the pope would survey the world's cardinals and set a date for a consistory of cardinals who live in or could come to Rome for the occasion. They would be asked to recommend the pope canonize Blessed Teresa; if the pope agrees, he would set the date for the ceremony.

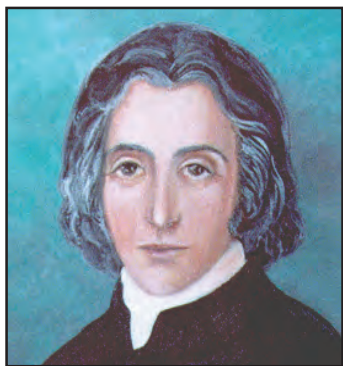
AGI had reported the likely date of the canonization would be Sept. 5 -- Mother Teresa's feast day and the anniversary of her death. However, Sept. 5 is a Monday in 2016 and Father Lombardi said the canonization would not take place on a Monday.



CNS Photo/Arturo Mari, L'Osservatore Romano

POPE TOURS MOTHER'S HOME: Mother Teresa accompanies Pope John Paul II as he visits people at the Home For the Dying in Kolkata, India, in 1986. Caregiver to the poor and sick, Blessed Mother Teresa, who died in 1997, was beatified by the Polish pontiff in 2003.

The Vatican calendar for the Year of Mercy deliberately set aside September 4, 2016, as a possible date for the canonization of Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, if her sainthood cause is concluded by then.



A Prince In The Service Of The Great King

The Servant Of God
Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin
1770 - 1840

Wichita Bishop Brings Report On War-Hero Priest To Vatican

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- A week after the 65th anniversary of Father Emil J. Kapaun's capture in North Korea, the bishop of Wichita, Kansas, formally presented a report on the Army chaplain's life, virtues and

fame of holiness to the Congregation for Saints' Causes.

Bishop Carl A. Kemme of Wichita and a small delegation from the diocese met Nov. 9 with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the congregation, and other officials to hand over the 1,066 report known as a "positio."

During the Korean War, Father Kapaun, a priest of the

Wichita diocese, and other members of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, were captured by Chinese troops in North Korea Nov. 2, 1950. The priest died in a North Korean prison camp May 23, 1951.

President Barack Obama presented the Medal of Honor posthumously to the war-hero priest in a White House ceremony in 2013, but the men who were imprisoned with Father Kapaun and the faithful of the Diocese of Wichita had been honoring him long before that.

"Since the day his fellow prisoners of war in the Korean Conflict (1950-1953) were liberated after their long and cruel incarceration, during which Father Kapaun was instrumental in providing to his fellow soldiers unparalleled pastoral care, word of his saintly virtue has been spreading and continues to our day," said a letter Bishop Kemme wrote and delivered to Cardinal Amato.

"I'm very honored and humbled to be part of this moment," Bishop Kemme said after handing over the "positio," which is based on a long diocesan investigation of Father Kapaun's life, writings and eyewitness testimony, including with prisoners who survived the camp.

Andrea Ambrosi, the postulator or promoter of the cause, said it took 12-13 months to write the volume, which should go to a team of Vatican historians for review in April.

Archbishop Marcello Bartolucci, secretary of the congregation, told Bishop Kemme and his delegation that if the



CNS Photo/Courtesy U.S. Army Medic Raymond Skeeahan

WAR - HERO PRIEST: U.S. Army chaplain Father Emil Joseph Kapaun, who died May 23, 1951, in a North Korean prisoner of war camp, is pictured celebrating Mass from the hood of a jeep October 7, 1950, in South Korea. He was captured about a month later.

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**



CNS Photo/Cindy Wooden

REPORT: Bishop Carl A. Kemme of Wichita, Kan., holds a 1,066-page report on the life and holiness of Father Emil J. Kapaun that he formally delivered Monday, November 9 to the Congregation for Saints' Causes at the Vatican.

During the Korean War, Father Kapaun, a priest of the Wichita diocese, and other members of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, were captured by Chinese troops in North Korea Nov. 2, 1950. The priest died in a North Korean prison camp May 23, 1951.

historians have no questions and believe the biography and the information about the circumstances of Father Kapaun's death are complete, the report would go to a commission of theologians.

Under normal circumstances, Archbishop Bartolucci said, the theologians would not get to the report for at least 10 years, but since Father Kapaun is the first sainthood candidate from the Wichita diocese, it gets precedence. He is hoping to get the report on the commission's calendar for late 2017.

"While you are waiting -- a year or two -- you can work on the miracle," the archbishop told the bishop.

In fact, Bishop Kemme told him, the diocese already has identified and is working on the documentation for two healings. One of them could be the miracle needed for Father Kapaun's beatification.

A special novena for the beatification of Father Kapaun began November 2, the 65th anniversary of his capture at the Battle of Unsan, and ended on Veterans Day, November 11.

Word of Life



The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis
Priests Cannot Forget Their Roots

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Priests are not "mushrooms" that magically sprout at ordination, but they have a history, a community and a family that both they and their superiors must keep in mind, Pope Francis said.

"On the day of their ordination, I always say to the new priests: 'Do not forget where you came from; from the flock. Do not forget your mother and your grandmother,'" the pope said Nov. 20. "This means that you cannot be a priest believing that you were created in a laboratory. No, it begins in the family with the tradition of the faith and all the experiences of the family."

The pope addressed a group of priests and bishops who were participating in a conference sponsored by the Congregation for Clergy to mark the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's decrees on priestly formation and on the priestly ministry and life.

While the seeds planted in the church by the two decrees have grown, the pope said there is "still work to be done" and that proper formation of those who wish to enter the priesthood "must be promoted and cared for" in the seminary.

"A priest's path to holiness begins in the seminary," the pope said.

Priests are not "'mushrooms' that suddenly sprout in the cathedral on the day of ordination," the pope said, which is why it is essential for priests and seminary staff to keep in mind the path that leads to a vocation, especially family life.

Recalling a young Jesuit priest who contemplated leaving the priesthood, the pope said he advised him to speak to his mother.

When he came back, Pope Francis said, "his mother had given him two spiritual slaps. She put him in his place and he went forward because he returned to his roots. That is why it is important to not cut the roots from which you came."

Priests, the pope continued, also must be mindful of their duty to serve others and remember that "our own sanctification is closely linked to that of the people." He also stressed that priests must learn to rejoice and not become rigid authoritarians with the flock entrusted to them.

"I tell you sincerely: I am afraid of rigid (priests). I am afraid," the pope said. "Rigid priests, keep them far away, they bite! The words of St. Ambrose come to mind: 'Where there is mercy, there is the spirit of God. Where there is rigidity, there are only his ministers.' And a minister without the Lord becomes rigid. This is a danger for the people of God. Be pastors, not officials."

Pope Francis also encouraged them to be merciful in administering the sacrament of reconciliation, as well as reminding them that apostolic zeal often means they will not have a "private moment" to themselves.

Speaking off-the-cuff, the pope addressed the bishops present, telling them that they must be close to their priests and must always attend to their needs with fatherly care. If their episcopal duties keep them from meeting with a priest, Pope Francis urged them to "at least, take down his number and call him."

A bishop must spend more time in his diocese and less time traveling, the pope said. "If you don't feel like remaining in a diocese, then resign."



ONE MORE TIME: Assisted by parishioner Pete Mirto, Father Joseph O'Toole, pastor, broke ground for Saint Clement Church in Johnstown on December 16, 1956. About 200 people were in attendance. The parish had been created by decree of Bishop Richard T. Guilfoyle on June 29, 1956. Property at the corner of Goucher Street and Lindberg Avenue was purchased for the new parish.

As a priest for over 55 years, I've heard a lot of confessions. It's one of the joys of the priesthood to bring peace to the souls who come to us for relief. Some people seek the help of psychiatrists or psychologists to help them quiet their feelings of guilt and worry. Jesus gave us absolution and a sense of humor to take care of this problem.

One thing that can help us deal with feelings of guilt and worry is the art of living in the present moment. I once attended a meeting where we had to dispense with the reading of the minutes out of respect for someone who said he was religiously required to not think about the past or the future. A pretty extreme position, I admit. But isn't it essentially a good idea?

Living in the present moment is an ideal not easily attained. The present moment is the only place where we can find peace and joy. The past is a memory. The future is unknown and unpredictable. If you live in the past, you drag things into the present moment, which might disturb your peace.

The same is true for the future. Many people worry about things that will never happen.



Spirituality For Today

By Father John Catoir
Don't Let The Past Drag You Down

Isn't it better, therefore, to eliminate needless worry about the future?

Here is the basic truth: Happiness is not a destination or a memory. It is the joy we experience in the here and now. Granted, we enjoy remembering the happy times of the past but not the dark corners. Regretting past mistakes is only good for stimulating atonement. Confess and be done with it.

Memory fades and so do the happy moments we once enjoyed. The only place we are really able to be happy is in the present moment.

Two things are worth striving for in this connection. The first is a clean conscience. Guilt can poison your life with unnecessary misery. Strive to put things in order. Believe in God's forgiveness. Go to confession

and renew your good intentions. Pray to persevere in believing that God is love.

Also, reject fear. This involves a commitment to control fearful thoughts. If you control your thoughts, dreadful feelings will soon evaporate. Every apprehension about the future gives birth to fear. Close it down right away.

As you gradually reduce needless fear and guilt, you will have cleared the present moment from quite a bit of garbage. Worry will dissipate.

The struggle of daily life can be eased by clearing your mind the minute you begin to be afraid. Stop fear and you will automatically enhance your capacity for joy. Joy is a choice, and it's yours for the asking. Joy is the reward of your faith in God's love.



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle Abbreviating The Gospel; Holy Year Indulgences

Q. Are priests allowed to edit the scriptural readings at Mass? Recently our priest, when reading a Gospel about marriage, cut off the verses that say, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

I can understand that the priest might feel uncomfortable, thinking that this passage could offend some of those who hear it, but aren't priests supposed to read the Scriptures as they are? Sometimes we need to hear direct teaching, even if it offends us. (Indiana)

A. Priests are sometimes given the option, in the official guidelines of the church, to use shorter forms of the liturgical readings. But the priest in question was not empowered to do what he did. Generally, when a choice is offered, it is meant to keep the congregation's interest by shortening what would otherwise be an overly long passage

-- not to avoid verses that might be controversial or challenging.

By exception, though, on the 21st Sunday of Ordinary Time of Year B (Aug. 23, 2015), the reader was allowed to skip the part of Ephesians that included the verse, "As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything." The reason is that Paul made that observation in a much different cultural context that, thankfully, no longer applies.

By contrast, the earlier passage you mention in Mark's Gospel (about divorce) reflects Jesus' statement of an enduring theological truth.

Q. I understand that during the upcoming papal-declared year, we can seek plenary indulgences for the dead. Naturally, as I age, I have more and more friends who have died. What a wonderful thing if I could include them in this. Is it possible to gain multiple plenary indulgences for the deceased and, if

so, how do I accomplish this? (Hull, Massachusetts)

A. Pope Francis has declared an extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy that begins on Dec. 8, 2015, and closes on Nov. 20, 2016. A holy year is also known as a jubilee year.

Among the privileges granted to the faithful during this Holy Year of Mercy is the opportunity to gain a plenary indulgence, which is the remission of all of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven. This indulgence can also be applied to the deceased -- to whom, in the words of Pope Francis, "we are bound ... by the witness of faith and charity that they have left us."

In the past, indulgences during a holy year normally required a pilgrimage to Rome and a visit to one of the papal basilicas, but for the upcoming Holy Year of Mercy, the pope has determined that a visit to a diocesan cathedral or designated local church will suffice, together with the reception of the sacrament of penance and Communion, as well as a profession of faith and prayers for the intention of the pope.

(Pope Francis has taken care to extend the privilege to those who are precluded from visiting one of the designated churches, e.g., those who are homebound or incarcerated.)

A unique element this time is that the pope has also granted the jubilee indulgence to those who perform the traditional spiritual and corporal works of mercy (sheltering the homeless, for example, or comforting the sorrowful.)

As to your question about "multiple" beneficiaries, the jubilee indulgence may be obtained only once a day. (A single sacramental confession suffices for several plenary indulgences, but receiving Communion and praying for the intentions of the pope are required for each indulgence.)

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



For The Journey

By Effie Caldarola Gratitude Is A Spiritual Practice

Like many families, during the holidays we try to focus on thankfulness by asking each guest at a festive meal to express that for which they are most thankful.

Surprising how tongue-tied a roomful of noisy siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins suddenly becomes when given this task. Sometimes, one kid comes up with a winning response -- "I'm thankful for my family," -- and the sentiment becomes repeated by every child at the table until I want to scream, "Can't you guys think of anything original?"

But, since we also focus on not screaming during the holidays, I can only hope that this unanimous sense of thankfulness for relatives will temper the political and football rivalries that may pop up during the course of the meal.

Gratitude is supposed to be a key to our spiritual lives. So why is it that sometimes it feels so rote? How can this "thank you" to God -- which the mystic Meister Eckhart said was so important it could be our only prayer -- become so routine?

Recently, in an effort to reduce the population of our overcrowded prisons, the federal government released 6,000 nonviolent offenders who had been given mandatory sentences.

I listened to one of these newly released prisoners being interviewed in late October on National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition Saturday." He provided a lesson in gratitude that seemed worthy of a saint.

In the early 1990s, Michael Fitzgerald Wilson was given a sentence of life without the possibility of parole for a first-time, nonviolent drug offense. During this time, the nation was responding to the drug crisis by mandatory sentencing, and prisons were filling so rapidly that soon the U.S. imprisoned more of its population than any nation in the world.

The presiding judge felt the sentence was harsh, but the law forced his hand. Although no drugs were found in his home, Wilson was charged with distributing crack cocaine. A bad thing -- but so bad that we should throw away the key and with it his life?

Wilson left behind a 3-year-old son who is now 26. Throughout his imprisonment, Wilson tried to maintain a relationship with his son that endures to this day.

Now freed, is he angry? "No," he says.

Instead, he thanks God for his freedom, and he's thankful for many things. He even says, in a voice slurred by a stroke he suffered in prison, "I thank God for ... even the people who had testified against me."

You can sense his inner peace. Gratitude seems to wash away the wasted years of youth and health, the injustice that would leave a lesser man bitter.

How does one arrive at such a place of spiritual grace? Does grace bring us to gratitude? Perhaps a practice of gratitude helps us to see and accept grace.

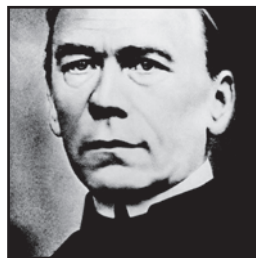
St. Ignatius of Loyola taught that we should see God in all things. That's an invitation to learn gratitude. Because in the normal course of a day or a year or a lifetime, things happen for which we may not express gratitude.

It's one thing to see God when you get what you want; it's quite another to thank God for his presence when you suffer things you didn't choose.

So when bad things happen, we must ask, where is God in this? And that place where God is, in the midst of struggle and darkness, is that for which we are grateful.

Gratitude is a spiritual practice. All the theology and the doctrine and the sophistry in the world don't tell me as much about grace as Michael Fitzgerald Wilson told me in his simple litany of gratitude.

Blessed Adolf Kolping 1813 - 1865 Feast - December 4



As a shepherd and shoe - factory worker, Adolf experienced poverty and social upheaval in 19th - century Germany. He worked 12 - hour days, studied at night, and graduated from high school at 24. After priestly ordination in Cologne in 1845, he began his industrial mission preaching the dignity of both the worker and the work. This soon led to "Kolping Families," which stressed the Christian response to work and family for workers living in hostels. The movement spread beyond the Rhine Valley to the United States, Argentina, Australia and India, and today has 420,000 members. When Pope John Paul II beatified Adolf in 1991, he called him "the precursor of the great social encyclicals."

Year Of Mercy Will Give Faithful Opportunity To Unite In Prayer, Be Of Service, Extend Forgiveness

(Continued From Page 1.)

Pope Francis said, "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 tenderness of God. 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," he said this past March in making the proclamation.

The Diocesan events include observances such as the Light Is On on February 11, 2016. It is a one - night opportunity for reconciliation to be held in all parishes.

There is a Weekend of Service planned for April 22, 23 & 24, 2016. All parishes, religious education programs, schools, and colleges are asked to administer service projects to benefit those in their local area.

Persons will be able to receive a Plenary Indulgence by visiting three parishes that are celebrating their bicentennial year from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on the following six Sundays:

- June 12 & 26, 2016;
- July 10 & 24, 2016;
- August 14 & 28

Those parishes are Saint Thomas the Apostle in Bedford; Saint Patrick Parish in Newry; and Holy Name Parish in Ebensburg.

To gain the indulgence persons must receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion within eight days.

The committee is looking forward to the biannual Catholic Life Day of Prayer to be held on October 22, 2016 at Mount Aloysius College in Cresson.

"Every parish will have the opportunity to give witness to the various acts of mercy in their faith community," Thompson said. "I think it will a great time to share and interact with each other. In addition, we

have planned a very good guest speaker, Mercy Sister Janet Ruffing." Sister Janet is a professor in the Practice of Spirituality and Ministerial leadership at Yale University.

Another big event is on November 16, 2016 when the Diocese will sponsor a pilgrimage to Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC.

Days of Prayer will be hosted in various parishes, where area faith communities will gather for fellowship and to reflect on the Spiritual Works of Mercy. "It will be a time of interaction and faith sharing, either on a personal level or in small groups," Thompson explained. "They will be informal gatherings experienced in a relaxed setting."

Pope Francis has made it clear that this is also a time when we enable families and individuals to return to their Catholic faith. There will be Holy Hours planned throughout the Diocese with the hope that it will serve as a spiritual welcoming bridge.

In addition, Bishop Mark L. Bartchak has asked Catholic School and religious education students to submit artwork that depicts the Year of Mercy. The contest is currently ongoing. They've also been asked to produce videos of service that illustrate acts of mercy.

"The Pope has encouraged Catholics from around the world to engage in mercy and love each day," reminded DeGol.

Through the Pope's own example he has "set the tone and demonstrated the love and mercy of God," said Thompson. "This Year of Mercy is the perfect time for all of us to follow the example of Pope Francis.

"The goal is that each person feels a re - connection to God in their own faith life. We need to be instruments of God's mercy and love every day, and especially this year."



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

HOLY DOOR: The Holy Door is pictured at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome Thursday, November 19. The Holy Doors of Rome's four papal basilicas will be opened during the Holy Year of Mercy, which begins Tuesday, December 8.

Tear Down This Wall: Holy Year Calls For Barriers To Come Down

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- For a spiritual leader who denounces a world divided by walls, a church shuttered by cliques and hearts hardened to compassion, opening wide the Holy Door for the Year of Mercy will be a significant and symbolic moment for Pope Francis.

In Catholic tradition, the Holy Door represents the passage to salvation -- the path to a new and eternal life, which was opened to humanity by Jesus.

It also symbolizes an entryway to God's mercy -- the ultimate and supreme act by which he comes to meet people. Mercy is "the bridge that connects God and humanity, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness," the pope wrote in "Misericordiae Vultus" ("The Face of Mercy"), instituting the Holy Year of Mercy.

Doors have always had a special meaning for the Catholic Church, according to the late-Cardinal Virgilio Noe, the former archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica.

"The door of a church marks the divide between the sacred and profane, separating the church's interior from the outside world. It is the boundary defining welcome and exclusion," he wrote in the book, "The Holy Door in St. Peter's" in 1999.

The door is also a symbol of Mary -- the mother, the dwelling of the Lord -- and she, too, always has open arms and is ready to welcome the children of God home. Pope Francis was scheduled to open the door Dec. 8, the feast of Mary's immaculate conception.

But the door especially represents Christ himself -- the one and only way to eternal life. As Jesus said, according to the

Gospel of John (10:9), "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture."

The Holy Year traditionally begins with the opening of the Holy Door to represent a renewed opportunity to encounter or grow closer to Jesus, who calls everyone to redemption.

Jesus knocks on everyone's door; he yearns to accompany and nourish everyone. "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, then I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me," the Book of Revelation quotes him as saying.

But doors are also narrow, Cardinal Noe wrote, and people must stoop with humility and "be brought down to size by conversion" in order to be "fit" for eternal life.

That is why passing through a Holy Door is part of a longer process of sacrifice and conversion required for receiving an indulgence granted during a Holy Year. A plenary indulgence, the remission of temporal punishment due to sin, is offered for pilgrims who also fulfill certain other conditions: reception of the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist, visits and prayers for the intention of the pope and performing simple acts such as visiting the sick.

This spiritual process of encounter and conversion is made tangible in the elaborate rituals developed over time for the opening of the Holy Door.

The symbolic ceremony of opening a Holy Door came more than a century after the first Holy Year was proclaimed in 1300.

Pope Martin V, in 1423, opened the Holy Door in the Basilica of St. John Lateran for the first time for a jubilee. Next, Pope Alexander VI called for all four Holy Doors in Rome to be opened at Christmas in 1499 for the Jubilee of 1500.

Starting in the 16th century, the ceremony to open the door

in St. Peter's Basilica included the pope reciting verses from the Psalms and striking the wall covering the Holy Door with a silver hammer three times.

Masons completed the task of dismantling the brick and mortared wall, which represents the difficulty and great effort required to overcome the barrier of sin and to open the path to holiness.

Some have found meaning in the fact that Jesus had five wounds and St. Peter's Basilica has five doors. Opening the Holy Door recalls the piercing of Jesus' side from which poured forth blood and water, the source of regeneration for humanity. The Holy Door of St. Peter's, in fact, is decorated with 16 bronze panels depicting the story of Jesus, in his mercy, seeking his lost sheep.

The symbolism of the hammer in the hands of the pope represents the power and jurisdiction God gives him to cast away the stones of sin, chink open hardened hearts and break down walls separating humanity from God.

The removal of the wall also conjures up pulling away the stone that sealed the tomb of Lazarus, whom Jesus resurrected from the dead.

For the closing of the door at the end of the Holy Year, the traditional rite included the pope blessing and spreading the mortar with a special trowel and setting three bricks for the start of a new wall -- a symbol of the spiritual rebuilding of the Lord's house as well as the ever-present human temptation to put up new barriers against God with sin.

While there have been some changes to those ceremonies over time, the Holy Door is always a reminder that because of God's mercy, any obstacles can always be removed, and the door to hope and forgiveness is always there waiting.



CNS Photo/Catholic Press Photo

HOLY YEAR PILGRIMS: Pilgrims pass through the Holy Door in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in this June 2000 file photo. Pope Francis will open the Holy Door in Saint Peter's Tuesday, December 8 during a Mass marking the opening of the Holy Year of Mercy. In the photo below, Saint John Paul II is seen kneeling at the Holy Door after he opened it on December 24, 1999.



CNS Photo/Reuters

Faith Leaders Say Refugees From Syria, Elsewhere, Require Compassion And Acceptance

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- A Boston cardinal and the Maryland Catholic Conference were among hundreds of faith leaders who called for compassion in addressing the world refugee crisis and stressed the importance of developing a national immigration policy based on humanitarian need.

Acknowledging that the times are “dangerous” and that “enhanced security procedures are needed,” Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley in a statement Nov. 19 cautioned that in developing an immigration policy, “decisions concerning the specific measure taken require careful deliberation.”

The Maryland Catholic Conference, which includes the Baltimore and Washington archdioceses and the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware, in a statement Nov. 18 called on the country to welcome “those feeling persecution in other countries, including refugees seeking asylum from Syria.”

The statements came as lawmakers in Congress and governors opposed measures to resettle Syrian refugees in response to a string of extremist attacks in Paris Nov. 13 that left



CNS Photo/Georgi Licovski, EPA

BOY COMFORTS FATHER: A boy touches his crying father during a Thursday, November 19 protest by angry migrants from Pakistan and Morocco who blocked a section of the Greece-Macedonia border after Macedonia began granting entry only to refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

130 people dead and hundreds more injured.

Republicans in the House of Representatives Nov. 19 won a veto-proof majority, 289-137, on a bill blocking Syrian and Iraqi refugees from entering the U.S. The bill’s status in the Senate was uncertain, however. In addition, governors in at least 30 states have called for an end to Syrian resettlement until security concerns can be addressed.

Elsewhere, Louisiana State Police provided security at diocesan offices after a female caller threatened people in the the resettlement program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The threat came as Catholic Charities staffers handled calls from people concerned that the agency was resettling Syrians, said Carol Spruell, Catholic Charities com-

munications coordinator.

“They investigated the call and found the person who did it and had a chat,” Spruell told Catholic News Service Nov. 20. “They took it seriously as they would with any threat like that. It was unfortunate that it happened.”

No charges were expected in the incident, Spruell said.

She added that the agency had received complaints about its resettlement efforts initially after the attacks in Paris but that by Nov. 19 “the tide really turned in that the calls of support are outnumbering the ones who were critical of our work.”

Cardinal O’Malley said that proposals that “simply exclude Syrian refugees as such lack the balance and humanitarian perspective needed at this time.” Christian and Muslim Syrians,

he noted, have been fleeing their homeland for months only to be “set adrift in a chaotic world, unprepared to provide for their safety or honor their humanity.”

“The barbaric attacks in Paris, which demand a strong response and require policies that as best possible prevent recurrence, should not be used to efface the memory of Syrians and others from the Middle East and Africa who are desperately in need of shelter, support and safety,” the cardinal’s statement said.

The Maryland Catholic Conference said it was prepared to offer assistance in partnership with Catholic Relief Services to Syrian and Iraqi families fleeing oppression and brutality carried out by the Islamic State.

“We urge all Marylanders to consider their plight with an

open heart, and to learn more about the multiple layers of interviews and security checks these refugees must undergo in order to resettle in our country,” the statement said.

The statement included a link -- bit.ly/1kLl5gK -- to documents compiled by Human Rights First and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants detailing the procedures undertaken by the federal government before refugees are admitted.

The statements followed comments from the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration, who said Nov. 17 that he was disturbed by calls from federal and state officials for an end to the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the U.S.

(Continued On Page 13.)



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REFUGEES ARRIVE: A man holds a child as refugees arrive at a transit camp in Idomeni, Greece, on the border of Macedonia October 19. Thousands of refugees are arriving into Greece from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries and then traveling further into Europe.

(Continued From Page 12.)

“These refugees are fleeing terror themselves -- violence like we have witnessed in Paris,” said Seattle Auxiliary Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, committee chairman. “They are extreme vulnerable families, women and children who are fleeing for their lives. We cannot and should not blame them for the actions of a terrorist organization.”

The U.S. must remain a “welcoming home to people of all religions who are fleeing violence,” the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd said in a statement submitted Nov. 19 to Senate and House hearings on homeland and border security.

The statement urged Congress to avoid “knee-jerk reactions that politicize” the Paris in-

cidents and to “reject misplaced blame that crates an atmosphere of fear and to stand in solidarity with Syrian refugees who are themselves the victim of ISIS.”

“Keeping Syrian refugees out of this country based on their religion sends the wrong message to the rest of the world about who we are as Americans. We are a welcoming country with a religiously diverse so-

ciety and our resettlement program should continue to reflect this. To not do so only feeds into ISIS’ propaganda and make us all less safe,” the advocacy center told lawmakers.

A group of 14 Catholic organizations added their voices in a call to Congress to welcome Syrian refugees Nov. 22, saying that “to reject Syrian refugees out of fear would be wrong.”

“That many governors and presidential candidates would have the United States stop accepting Syrian refugees or accept only Christians is deplorable and a form of structural violence. The faithful response is to open our hearts and our homes to Syrians of all faiths in recognition of our sacred call to protect and nourish life,” the groups said.

Signing the statement were: Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good; Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach; Conference of Major Superiors of Men; Faith in Public Life’s Catholic Program; Franciscan Action Network; Ignatian Solidarity Network; Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States; Leadership Conference of Women Religious; Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns; National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; Network, the national Catholic social justice lobby; Pax Christi USA and Pax Christi International; and the Institute Justice Team of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

The statement cited the thorough vetting process the U.S. government already has in place to screen refugees from any country that includes background checks, biometric tests, medical screening, forensic testing and in-person interviews.

The groups also called on Congress to support diplomatic efforts underway in Vienna, Austria, to reduce the violence in Syria, explaining that it would be a “significant step to mitigating the refugee crisis.”

In an earlier statement, more than 1,000 U.S. faith leaders, including numerous Catholic women religious and several priests, rejected plans from U.S. governors who said they would block Syrians for resettlement in their states.

Citing Old Testament verses that urge faithful people to treat foreign-born immigrants as native born peoples, the leaders said in a statement Nov. 18 that protecting refugees is the responsible action for the U.S.

The sign-on statement developed by the organization Faith in Public Life also condemned “proposals to discriminate against refugees on the basis of religion.”

“The Statue of Liberty is not etched with the message ‘Christians only,’” the statement said.

“Our elected officials have a responsibility to protect the nation, but turning away families who risk their lives to escape the destruction of war is unnecessary and wrong,” the statement added. “America can prevent attacks without turning our back on desperate refugees.”

Bishop Peter A. Libasci of Manchester, New Hampshire, asked Catholics and all people of goodwill at the local, state and federal level to be welcoming to the Syrian refugees seeking asylum.

“We can continue to be a country that resettles refugees of all faiths while continuing to ensure the safety of our nation and its citizens. We are not required to choose, and we can do both,” he said.

“Even though we as individuals cannot stop what is happening in Iraq and Syria, we can help,” Bishop Libasci added. “Through individual acts of mercy we can, in the words of (Father) Thomas Merton, ‘Leaven the mass of human misery with the charity and mercy of Christ’ and in the aggregate we can overcome evil by doing good.”

“The Statue of Liberty is not etched with the message ‘Christians only,’” the statement from the Faith In Public Life organization said.

Now Showing

'Mockingjay' A Glum Finale To Franchise

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- With "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2" (Lionsgate), one of the most successful cinema franchises of recent times reaches a surprisingly glum finale.

Given that the series is founded on the idea of a dystopian society where young people are sacrificed in the gladiatorial tournaments of the title, perhaps the sober tone of this fourth and final chapter in the screen saga is only appropriate. All the more so, since the later stages of the narrative chronicle the bloody effort required to challenge the regime that sponsors these barbaric contests.

Still, while a restrained mood may be fitting, there's no denying that the film's grimly realistic, though largely bloodless, portrayal of combat makes

the last stretches of its heroine's long odyssey something of a slog. The wide audience for whom this briefly horror-tinged sci-fi outing is suitable will take their leave of Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence), accordingly, in a worn-down and meditative frame of mind, rather than with any exuberance.

At once a victor in and subverter of the Hunger Games, former media darling Katniss has become the symbol of the revolution being led by rebel President Alma Coin (Julianne Moore) and establishment turncoat Plutarch Heavensbee (Philip Seymour Hoffman). Although this duo wants to use her for strictly symbolic purposes, stubborn Katniss has an agenda of her own.

Without consulting anyone in authority, Katniss has committed herself to the task of assassinating President Coriolanus Snow (Donald Sutherland), the tyrannical chief of the old order.



CNS Photo/Lionsgate

THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY, PART 2: Natalie Dormer and Jennifer Lawrence star in a scene from the movie "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2." The Catholic News Service classification, A-II -- adults and adolescents. Motion Picture Association of America rating, PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Along the way to fulfilling this mission, however, she's distracted by romantic complications left over from the earlier passages of her story.

Fellow Hunger Games veteran Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson) has had his love for Katniss infected with hatred against her as a result of being captured, tortured and brainwashed by the enemy. Emotionally broken, he veers between trying to kill his former sweetheart and continuing to carry a torch for her.

Katniss' childhood friend-turned-steadfast-comrade, Gale Hawthorne (Liam Hemsworth), whose affections have made him Peeta's long-standing rival, is equally, if less painfully torn. He'd like to take advantage of Peeta's vulnerability, but finds Katniss too troubled by Peeta's pathetic fate to give him her wholehearted love.

As director Francis Lawrence wraps up the blockbuster adaptations of novelist Suzanne Collins' trilogy, his film avoids painting armed conflict with too bright a palette. And the obscenity-free script, penned by Peter Craig and Danny Strong, honorably explores the morality of war and the justice of targeting oppressors.

The dialogue makes incidental references to the suicide pills which are routinely distributed to insurgent soldiers so that, if taken prisoner, they can avoid torments similar to -- or perhaps even worse than -- those doled out to Peeta. Parents of teen viewers may want to discuss the fact that Catholic teaching forbids resort to such measures, no matter how fearful the ordeal a captive may potentially face.

Given the ethical tenor of its predecessors, however, "Mockingjay, Part 2" is entitled to the benefit of the doubt on this score. So youthful moviegoers for whom Katniss is catnip

will, in all likelihood, not be led astray.

The film contains much stylized and some harsh violence but with minimal gore, mature themes including war atrocities and suicide, potentially frightening scenes, and an apparently innocent but possibly ambiguous bedroom encounter. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Coming Up On 'Proclaim!'

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

December 6 - - As the Church prepares to open a Holy Year of Mercy, Father David Arseneault, pastor of Most Holy Trinity Parish in Huntingdon, discusses the significance of the upcoming observance and how his parish shows mercy to others.

December 13 - - Teens who attended the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis in November will share their experiences from the gathering with Bishop Mark.

Sunday Mass Broadcast Live from the Cathedral of

the Blessed Sacrament, Altoona
10:00 a.m. WFBG Radio, 1290 AM

Sunday Mass Telecast

Live from Saint John Gualbert Cathedral
Downtown Johnstown
11 a.m. - Noon WATM - TV ABC Channel 23

Proclaim!

10:30 a.m.

A half - hour of local Church news and features

May They Rest In Peace



**Sister M. Barbara DuMont
I.H.M.**

Sister M. Barbara DuMont, of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary died Saturday, November 21, at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton. She was 90.

She was born on August 15, 1925, in Spokane WA, and given the name Barbara Mary. She was the daughter of the late Paul and Mildred (Trimborn) DuMont. She entered the IHM Congregation on February 2, 1944, and made her temporary profession

of vows on August 2, 1946, and her final profession of vows on August 2, 1949.

Sister Mary Barbara served locally at Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School, Altoona, from 1971 - 1975.

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

She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Master of Science degree in education both from Marywood College, Scranton, and a Master of Science degree in mathematics/biology from Idaho University.

She was preceded in death by five brothers, Dr. Clement, Frederick, John Paul, Matthew (Bill), and Jack; and a sister, Barbara.

She is survived by nieces and nephews; and the members of the IHM Congregation.

The funeral Mass for Sister Mary Barbara DuMont I.H.M. was celebrated Tuesday, November 24, at Our Lady of Peace Residence. Committal will be at Osoyoos Cemetery in British Columbia, Canada, at a later date.

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.

Cardinal Korec Dies At 91

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Slovak Cardinal Jan Chryzostom Korec, the retired bishop of Nitra who was secretly ordained a priest and bishop and spent more than a dozen years in a communist prison, died Oct. 25 at the age of 91.

In a condolence message to the president of the Slovakian bishops' conference, Pope Francis said Cardinal Korec was a "fearless witness of the Gospel and a strong defender of the Christian faith and human rights."

After the communists came to power in Czechoslovakia, the authorities began arresting bishops, deporting priests and closing churches. The survival of the church was entrusted in

part to a handful of people like the then-26-year-old Jan Korec, who was ordained a Jesuit priest in secret in 1950 and secretly was ordained a bishop less than a year later.

For nine years, he worked in a factory full time, secretly celebrating Mass and ministering to Catholics. Arrested and sentenced to prison in 1960, he continued to celebrate Mass and would minister to his fellow inmates.

In 1990, with the fall of communism and the full re-establishment of the hierarchy, St. John Paul II named him bishop of Nitra, the diocese in which he was born Jan. 22, 1924. He was named a cardinal in 1991.



CNS Photo/Courtesy Vatican Philatelic And Numismatic Office

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- This year's Vatican Christmas stamps feature a 15th-century manuscript illumination of the Holy Family.

Flanked by a lowing ox and a donkey, Mary and Joseph pray over baby Jesus as angels sing above and poor shepherds approach.

The image, painted by an unknown artist, is from the Codices Urbinates Latini 239 (1477-1478) from the Vatican Library.

The special edition stamps went on sale Nov. 19 in two denominations of 80 euro cents and 95 euro cents in sheets of 10. The Vatican post office and Philatelic and Numismatic Office also offer a collector's booklet containing four 95 euro-cent stamps and commemorative cover for 3.80 euro.

All order requests should be made by email to: order.ufn@scv.va. The Vatican stamp office will then send a proper order form and methods of payment.

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Diocese's Newly Hired Human Resources Director Glad To Work In Faith - Based Environment

By Bruce A. Tomaselli

"In hindsight it seems as though the Holy Spirit led me here to the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown," smiled Lynette McEvoy.



CNS Photo/Lisa A. Johnston, Saint Louis Review

ADVENT HAS BEGUN: Advent, a season of joyful expectation before Christmas, began November 29 this year. The Advent wreath, with a candle marking each week of the season, is a traditional symbol of the liturgical period.

PERIODICAL RATE MAIL

The native of Nanty Glo and member of Saint John Vianney Parish in Mundy's Corner, began her duties as the first ever director of Human Resources in the Diocese on October 5.

Lynette, and her husband Brian, are the parents of two grown sons, Seth and Austin,

who also live in the Nanty Glo area.

She comes to the Diocese after working 10 years at Lockheed Martin in Richland. Her professional career began at Johnstown Conemaugh Hospital, where she worked for five years.

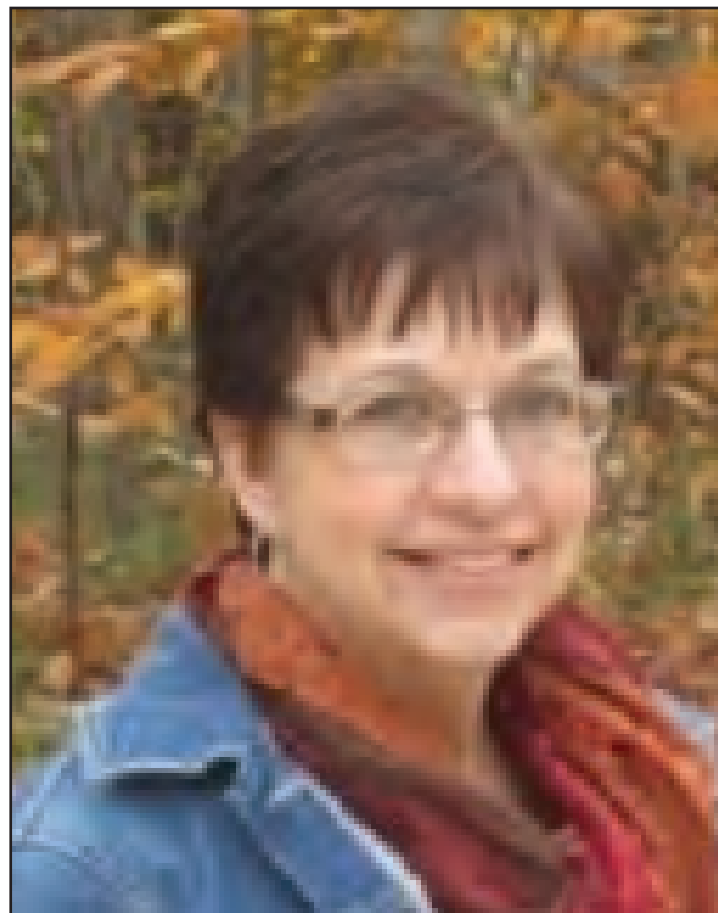
"Although I was happy with my work experience, a faith - based feeling kept gnawing at me and I wanted to do something that would fulfill both my professional and spiritual need to serve others," she said.

"I relish the opportunity to use my skill set to help spread the Gospel message to our parishes."

While growing up McEvoy was a member of Saint Mary Parish in Nanty Glo and graduated from Saint Mary Parochial School and Blacklick Valley High School.

She completed a Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Resource Management through Cappella University; and a Master of Science Degree in Human Resources from Villanova University in Philadelphia.

McEvoy said a set of circumstances came together to bring her to the Diocese. It was



LYNETTE McEVOY

like the hand of God led her here.

"We're not always aware of it at the time, but when you look back in your life, sometimes you pause and think, that had to be the Holy Spirit working," she said.

"I see this job as an opportunity to make a difference spiritually and professionally - - and to live out my faith through my daily work. I feel very content here." She said even during those hectic work moments we all have, she enjoys an inner calmness that she's never ex-

perienced in her other employments.

Lynette has made it one of her priorities to visit each parish in the diocese, so she can meet face - to - face with the pastors and parishioners to determine the best way in which she can help them in their faith journey.

"Everybody has been so very welcoming to me here at the administration center, including the priests, and parishes," Lynette said. "It's so nice to come to work at a place where you can express your faith on a daily basis."

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