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A Special Letter From Bishop Mark To The Laity, Religious, And Clergy Of The Diocese Of Altoona - Johnstown

January 1, 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

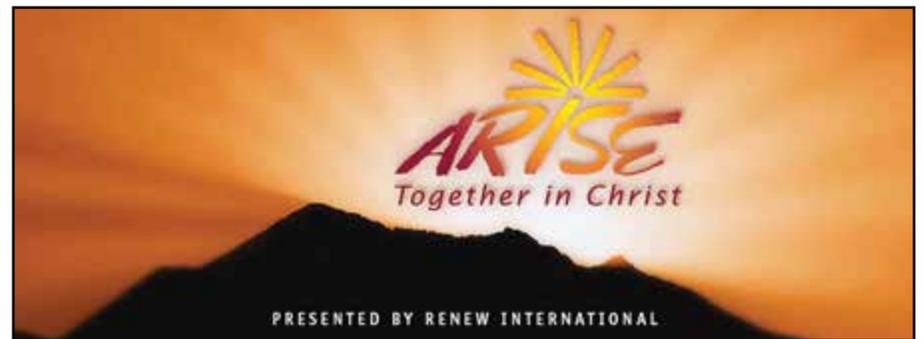
At the beginning of this New Year, I am pleased to announce that plans are underway for an opportunity of pastoral and spiritual renewal for everyone in our Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

It's called ARISE Together in Christ. You will be hearing about orientation sessions, leadership training and formation for ARISE parish teams, as well as evangelization training for parish leaders.

If you are approached by your pastor or by parish staff or leaders to participate in the ARISE process, I urge you to say yes to this opportunity for everyone to develop a closer relationship with Christ; to deepen your faith through prayer and small group sharing; to receive new ideas and encouragement to put faith into action in daily life; to foster spiritual renewal and bonds of Christian friendship in our families and parishes; to expand our outreach to youth and young adults.

Speaking of young people, it is no secret that I devote much time and attention to them. They tell me that they need and really want our guidance and support. They are searching for their place in the Church and in our parishes. They have a passion for discovering the truth about themselves, about our world, about our faith, and about their relationship with Christ.

In my conversations with young adults, they often ask me how they can pass on the Catholic faith to their children within their families. They too are asking for guidance and support. And in my conversations with older adults, they have expressed concern for their children and grandchildren. They wonder if their prayers are enough to sustain them in the later years of life or to keep alive the Catholic faith within their families.



ARISE Together in Christ, is a program developed by RENEW International in the Archdiocese of Newark. RENEW has more than 30 years of experience in the planning, training, and successful completion of parish-based renewal programs in over 150 dioceses in the United States and 23 other countries.

You may ask, "Why this program, and why now?" My response is inspired by the insight of Pope Francis who writes in his exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*: "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter." Isn't it true that so many of our brothers and sisters who are Catholic only join us at Easter or maybe Christmas, or do not join us at all?

And Pope Francis writes, "Sometimes we are tempted to find excuses and complain, acting as if we could only be happy if a thousand conditions were met." Our diocese is not alone in the experience of scandal, loss of confidence, and even a kind of spiritual disorientation or disconnection from God and the Church.

But, as Pope Francis writes in *The Joy of the Gospel*: "Thanks to a renewed encounter with God's love, which blossoms into friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness...and we become fully human."

In my time as Bishop, I have seen discouragement and I have seen numerous people become fully human because of a renewed encounter with God's love. That encounter did not occur through an apparition or mystical experience. It occurred most often when their eyes were open to see the face of God in someone who reached out to them with compassion; who listened to them and invited them to walk together on the road where Christ can be found.

(Continued On Page 2.)



(Continued From Page 1.)

I have seen, and heard, the good and not so good excuses, and I have heard the complaints which need to be expressed in order for truth to emerge and for love to return.

When all that occurs, something powerful happens. As Pope Francis adds in The Joy of the Gospel, "If we receive the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?"

ARISE Together in Christ, is an opportunity for all of us, in every parish and place in our diocese, to have a renewed encounter with God and to share God's love in sharing the friendship of Christ with each other. The result, the goal, the reward that comes from this opportunity is that we become more fully human; persons of body, mind, and soul who are all made in the image and likeness of God.

The renewed encounter with God and with each other will occur in small groups that will meet under the direction of a trained leader. There are a total of five (5) seasons in the process.

Season One is about encountering Christ today. Season Two is dedicated to the theme of ongoing conversion; of accepting Christ into my life. Season Three focuses on living our faith by following in the footsteps of Christ in charity and justice. Season Four is about our need for forgiveness and reconciliation as individuals and as a community. And Season Five explores how we become people of the Good News.

It is my desire and intention to see to it that Arise Together in Christ will be available in every parish. Every effort will be made to have small groups available at different times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening) so that everyone will have an opportunity to participate.

You will also hear about the ways in which Arise Together in Christ will make its way into schools, gatherings for teens, in religious education sessions, in prisons, and in other places and circumstances within the diocese so that everyone has an opportunity to participate together.

Please encourage and support the efforts of your pastor and parish leaders to make this pastoral and spiritual renewal opportunity available. Above all, please pray with thankful hearts and with great anticipation for the blessings that will come through this experience. Make every effort to commit yourself and encourage others to participate.

Be bold in responding to a request to host, facilitate or otherwise support one of the small groups. Maybe you can be a group leader. Maybe you can make the coffee. Maybe you can babysit someone's children or stay with their elderly family member so that they can participate. Maybe you can be the person who has one special story to share about the presence of God in your life.

ARISE Together in Christ. "Why this program, and why now?" I have offered my reasons and I am determined not to make any excuses. It's time for us to ARISE. We must do it Together. We can do it Together. We need one another for encouragement and support. And we need to do it in Christ. He alone is the way, the truth, and the life. It is the Lord Jesus who calls us to ARISE!

Thank you for your attention to this plan for pastoral and spiritual renewal. I am entrusting this effort with confidence to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who under the title of Mother of the Church is the patroness of our Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. Ask her to pray for us as we pray to her Son our Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of renewal in our diocese, in our families, and in the heart of each and every person. Please know that I am praying for all of you.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Mark L. Bartchak".

+ Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak

Bishop of Altoona - Johnstown

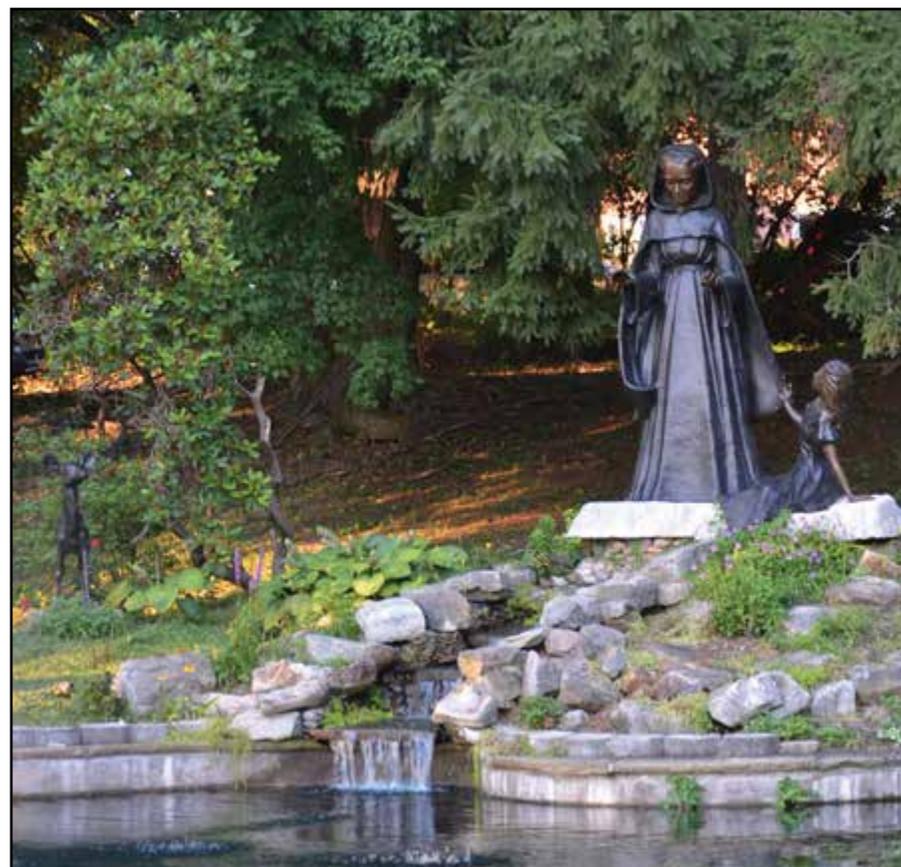


Photo By Msgr. Timothy P. Stein

Holy Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, you have given the world its true light, Jesus, your Son - the Son of God. You abandoned yourself completely to God's call and thus became a wellspring of the goodness which flows forth from him. Show us Jesus. Lead us to him. Teach us to know Jesus and to love him.

Help us to open the door of Christ's love by sharing our faith and living our faith with each other and with all who are searching for the way, the truth, and the hope and promise of eternal life.

As patroness of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown be with us on our journey to ARISE Together in Christ. Pray for us, Mother of the Church, Pray for us!

In The Alleghenies

Day Of Prayer For The Legal Protection Of Unborn Children

Monday, January 22, all Dioceses in the United States of America are observing a Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. January 22 is the day of the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision, Roe vs. Wade (1973), the Church in America prays for the violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee to the right to life. Members of the Diocese are encouraged to go to Mass on this day, pray the rosary, the chaplet of Divine Mercy, fast and abstain, and join the Altoona - Johnstown family in praying the following:

O God, who adorn creation with splendor and beauty, and fashion human lives in your image and likeness, awaken in every heart reverence for the work of your hands, and renew among your people a readiness to nurture and sustain your precious gift of human life. 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.



THANKFUL BAGS: Religious education students at the Church of The Transfiguration, Conemaugh, decorated grocery bags to depict those people and things for which they thank God as part of an annual project. These bags were then taken, filled with groceries by parish members, and returned during the offertory at the Thanksgiving Day Mass. The bags were then donated to the food pantry at the Society of Saint Vincent DePaul. Pictured are parishioners placing the filled and decorated “Thankful Bags” at the altar to be blessed.



SEMINARIANS: Bishop Mark L. Bartchak hosted his annual Christmas gathering for seminarians and prospective seminarians on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at Saint Aloysius Parish in Cresson. The event included Evening Prayer, dinner, and fellowship. Pictured with the Bishop are the five Diocesan seminarians (left to right) Michael Pleva, Holy Rosary Parish in Altoona; Mark Groeger, Saint Leo Magnus Parish in Ridgway; Neil Brett, Our Mother of Sorrows Parish in Johnstown; Bishop Mark; Justin Treon, Saint Aloysius Parish in Cresson; and Brian Norris, Saint Mary Parish in Hollidaysburg.

Higher Education

Aid Director Honored

Cresson: Mount Aloysius College Director of Financial Aid, Stacy Schenk was recently honored by the Pennsylvania Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (PASFAA) with their Presidential Award.

Schenk received the recognition for her commitment, energy, and work for students at Mount Aloysius College and PASFAA, where she served as chair. She received the President’s Award at the annual PASFAA meeting.

Schenk has been affiliated with Mount Aloysius College since 1989. She earned her Baccalaureate degree from Mount Aloysius College, and the Mas-

ter of Arts degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Vice President of Enrollment Management at Mount Aloysius, Dr. Frank Crouse noted Schenk’s commitment to helping students at Mount Aloysius distinguishes her among her peers in the field. “Many of our students are first-generation in their families to attend college,” noted Dr. Crouse. “These stu-

dents and their families are new to the deadlines and guidelines surrounding the quest to ascertain their eligibility for financial aid. Stacy Schenk has been tireless in helping students and their families achieve their dreams of a college education. She is an asset to the College and a real help to our students.”

(Continued On Page 6.)

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Point Of View

When Isaiah speaks of a bear and cow being neighbors and a baby sitting aside a viper (Is 11:1-9), what message is he sending for us in 2018?

At first look his examples symbolize peaceful coexistence. That which seems unlikely is now likely; direct opposites uniting as one.

The derivation of the word "peace" comes from the word "pact." Isaiah envisions a world desirous of making covenants that create peaceful existence.

In our present age of bitter divisions, Isaiah is encouraging us to shake hands with those we tend to avoid. As a bear and cow enjoy neighborly peace together, so too, are we invited to practice wholesome neighborliness.

A second look at Isaiah's message is even more heartening: to envision a future in which



The Human Side

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Hope In 2018

we coexist together just as his image of a bear and cow do and the hopefulness this inspires.

South Carolina's state motto is "Dum spira spero," "While I breathe, I hope." It encourages us to breathe in hope's inspiration, zestful powers and strength.

Hope is the heart of life's greatest achievements. If we didn't have hopeful inventors, progress wouldn't exist. If it weren't for musicians exploring new modes of music, much of the inspirational music we enjoy

wouldn't occur. If it weren't for scholars, hopeful of uncovering exciting insights into God's word, religion would be deprived of its infinite inspiration.

And we must wonder what life would be without hope of returning to God after this life.

Hope possesses power to conceive of new possibilities and to dream of a better world. Theologian Bernard Olivier tells us, "Hope gives us the assurance that the mystery of suffering will be solved, that it will all lead somewhere, that all problems will find adequate solution in a new earth ... wherein dwells justice. ... Truly hope is the mainstay of the Christian life on earth."

The opposite of hope is despair. Despair takes away the very breath mentioned in the motto "Dum spira spero." Dreams of a brighter future are dashed and zest is snuffed out, allowing dark clouds of disillusionment and depression to blot out a hopeful future.

Our faith teaches all things are possible with God. To enjoy the best of 2018 we need to join that faith with the motto, "While I breathe, I hope." With God's breath and its hopefulness filling us with zest, the new year will possess all we hoped it to be.



CNS Photo/Igor Kovalenko, EPA

Another Perspective



By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein
We Arise, Walk To Christ, With Mary

Announcing the "Arise Together In Christ," experience, Bishop Mark has placed that experience under the special patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is honored as the patroness of our Diocese under her title "Mother of the Church."

In entrusting this three year process of growth and renewal to Mary's care, Bishop Mark is carrying out a tradition as old as is Catholic life in the Allegheny Mountains: turning to Mary for help and support, for prayerful intercession when moving into the future.

This tradition began when the Servant of God Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, filled with the holy desire to see a Catholic center of faith, worship, culture and education grow up in the mountains gave the name "Loretto," after the Italian shrine of the Holy House, to what had previously been known as McGuire's Settlement. To think of Loretto is to think of Mary: the diocesan shrine of Our Lady of the Alleghenies on the grounds of the Basilica of Saint Michael the Archangel; the grotto of our Lady of Lourdes on the campus of Saint Francis University; the chapels of Our Lady of Fatima and of our Lady of Loreto in the grounds of Mount Assisi - Saint Francis Friary; and the chapel of the monastery of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, where the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel beckons to visitors from beyond the cloister grille.

Parishes named for the Blessed Virgin Mary criss - cross the map of our eight county Diocese like the beads on a rosary. Most are simply known as "Saint Mary's" no matter what other title or attribute of the Virgin's they are formally named after. It's as if we don't need the fancy titles to tell us who she is or what she is. We are at home with Mary - - on a first name basis. She's one of the family.

Bishop Mark's prayer to Mary as we begin the "Arise" experience appears on page 2 of this issue, along with a picture of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Alleghenies. I'd like to suggest that you cut out the prayer and the picture and pray it daily for our diocesan intentions.

Throughout the Christmas season we heard reference made to Mary reflecting in her heart on all that she had seen and heard during those days when God's grace was being poured out in abundance. In this regard she can be especially helpful to us as we enter into the "Arise" experience. Mary will encourage us to be reflective, too - - to treasure God's actions in our lives, to keep them in our heart, and to reflect on them often. By sharing those reflections with one another we will indeed Arise, together in Christ, and make a new beginning as a people of faith, drawing ever closer to Him, accompanied on our way by His most holy mother. Come, let us walk together!

Doing The Right Thing: Admit Wrongdoing

One of the most difficult things to do is admit when we are wrong. And yet, it is also what we most want to hear from those who have wronged us or hurt those we love. In a statement on September 22nd, Pope Francis said what many have been waiting to hear for many years. He admitted that the Church was "late" in addressing the clergy child sexual abuse crisis.

In prepared remarks for the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, Pope Francis said "I wish to share with you the profound pain I feel in my soul for the situation of abused children, as I have had occasion to do recently several times". News reports of the meeting share that at one point, he set aside his prepared remarks and acknowledged not only that the Church was admittedly late in responding to the allegations of child sexual abuse, but that it did not truly hold priests and bishops accountable for the failure to protect children in their care and trust.

Pope Francis spoke about what he has learned since taking on the mantle of our Holy Father and has come to understand more fully the problem of child sexual abuse and the Church's failure to protect the most vulnerable



The mission of the Office of Protection of Children and Youth Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown is to implement and maintain "Safe Environments" within our parishes, schools, religious education classes, and other diocese youth focused programs to insure the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults by:

- thoroughly screening and supervising all members of the clergy (priests and deacons), as well as all employees and volunteers who work with children and young people as part of their ministry
- providing appropriate training in recognizing and reporting child abuse to appropriate civil and church authorities
- holding all to a Christ-centered and professional code of conduct, this includes: members of the clergy, employees and volunteers who work with children and young people
- continuing to offer support to victims of sexual abuse

As stakeholders of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown stay tuned for increased communications regarding existing youth protection policies and procedures updates, an upgraded data base management system to monitor clearances and reconnecting with Virtus® for youth protection and awareness trainings. For more information or inquiries please contact Cindy O'Connor at (814) 695-5579, extension 2621 or coconnor@dioceseaj.org.

among us. He fully acknowledged that the people in authority - - including him - - were slow to realize the scope and real nature of the harm inflicted on children and families and the damage to the spiritual wellbeing of the faithful.

(Continued On Page 13.)

Support For Survivors

Support for survivors of sexual abuse is always available throughout the Diocese of Altoona-Johnston. Survivors are encouraged to seek help for recovery through any of the sexual assault centers in their area. All of the sexual assault centers offer:

- * 24/7 Hotline Services
- * Crisis Intervention
- * Case Management
- * Individual Counseling
- * Legal Advocacy and Accompaniment
- * Medical Advocacy and Accompaniment
- * Prevention and Awareness Education Programs
- * Sexual Assault Response Team (emergency medical care, emotional support, and medical/ legal examination)
- * Professional Trainings
- * Information and Referrals to other community services

Bedford County

Your Safe Haven Inc.
(800) 555 - 5671
Yoursafehaven.org

Also offers: * Safe Shelter and/or Transitional Housing
* Transportation * Additional Services for Domestic Violence Survivors

Blair County

Family Services, Inc.
(814) 944-3585
Familyservicesinc.net

Also offers: * Therapy/ Therapeutic Counseling * Transportation * Additional Services for Domestic Violence Survivors

Cambria-Somerset Counties Victim Services, Inc.
(814) 288-4691 and (800) 755-1983
Victimservicesinc.org

Also offers: * Therapy/ Therapeutic Counseling * Support Groups * Group Counseling

Huntingdon - - Mifflin - - Juniata Counties

The Abuse Network
(717) 242-2444
Abusenetwork.org

Also offers: * Crisis Counseling * Support Groups * Group Counseling * Safe Shelter and/or Transitional Housing * Transportation * Additional Services for Domestic Violence Survivors

Clinton County

Clinton County Women's Center
(570) 748-9509
Ccwcsafe.org

Also offers: * Therapy/ Therapeutic Counseling * Support Groups * Safe Shelter and/or Transitional Housing * Transportation * Additional Services for Domestic Violence Survivors

Franklin - - Fulton Counties

Women in Need/ Victim Services
(717) 264-4444
Winservices.org

Also offers: * Support Groups * Group Counseling * Safe Shelter and/or Transitional Housing * Transportation * Additional Services for Domestic Violence Survivors

Centre County

Centre County Women's Resource Center
(814) 234-5050
Ccwrc.org

Also offers: * Support Groups * Therapy/ Therapeutic Counseling * Safe Shelter and/or Transitional Housing * Transportation * Additional Services for Domestic Violence Survivors * Civil Legal Representation in family, law, immigration or Title IX matters * Safe Custody Exchange and Supervised Visitation

Reporting Child Abuse

Bishop Mark L. Bartchak and the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown are firmly committed to protecting children and young people. If you have any information concerning suspected sexual or other abuse of minors, you are urged to report it immediately to:

- - PA Child Line 1 - 800- 932 - 0313 (intake is available 24/7)
- - Pennsylvania Attorney General Hotline (888) 538 - 8541
- - Pennsylvania State Police Headquarters (717) 783 - 5599 or your local Pennsylvania State Police Station
- - Your local police department

If there is an indication of imminent danger, you should call 911 immediately.

The Diocese reports all information regarding sexual abuse of minors to law enforcement. You are urged to do the same. Anyone may and should report suspected child sexual abuse.

To report to the Diocese any suspected abuse of a minor, please call Jean Johnstone at (814) 944 - 9388.

(Continued From Page 3.)

More than 94 percent of Mount Aloysius students receive financial aid. The average package for students is more than \$10,000. Many Mount Aloysius students are eligible to receive support from a variety of institutional grants and endowed scholarships. The College's Financial Aid Office offers assistance to clarify regulations and help students.

Mount Aloysius students pick from over 70 academic programs which statistically earn good jobs or a ready pathway to grad school. Mount Aloysius signed an early acceptance agreement with the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic

Medicine (LECOM), Dental and Pharmacy school. Mount Aloysius College's NCAA Division III athletic status and the developing campus continues attracting students looking for a "next level" college experience. Mount Aloysius students compete in 14 NCAA Division III sports.

Mount Aloysius College was recently named one of 100 Best Value College's in the US. They are also a College of Distinction, A Pennsylvania College of Distinction and three separate academic areas of Mount Aloysius - - Business, Education and Nursing - - have separately earned College of Distinction status.

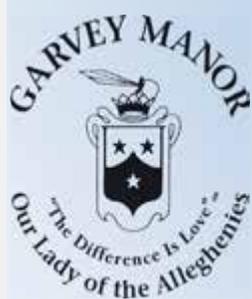
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FAITH & LIGHT CHRISTMAS GATHERING: The Faith & Light Community gathered Saturday December 2, 2017 at the convent of the Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart on Munster Road in Portage, to celebrate Breakfast in Bethlehem and mime the story of Jesus' birth. All members participated as the scripture story of the Annunciation, Visitation to Elizabeth, travel to Bethlehem for the census and birth of Jesus, followed by the Angels appearing to the shepherds and the visit of the Magi, unfolded. The Faith & Light group consists of individuals with intellectual disabilities, family and friends. Third Order Regular Franciscan Father Jonathan St Andre is chaplain, with Nancy Wojno and Louise Zankay as coordinators. They may be contacted through the Family Life Office at (814) 886 - 5551.

Mount Aloysius visit their web site at www.mtaloy.edu or call (814) 886 - 6383.

Prayer

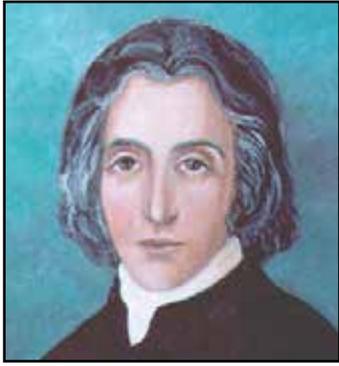
Retreat For Girls

Portage: The Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart

of Jesus invite girls in grades 7 - 12 to a weekend retreat, "Stepping Stones to Prayer," to be held January 12 - 14, at Saint Joseph Convent, 1872 Munster Road.

The weekend begins at 6:00 p.m. Friday and concludes Sun-

day at 1:00 p.m. Please register by Wednesday, January 10 by contacting Sister Jacinta at sisterjacinta@gmail.com or (814) 886 - 4459. Meals will be provided. The suggested donation is \$35.00.



A Prince In The Service Of The Great King

The Servant Of God
Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin
1770 - 1840

Founder Of Rosary Crusade One Step Closer To Sainthood

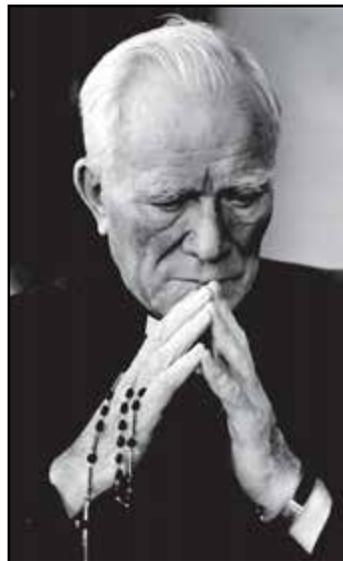
By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis advanced the sainthood causes of Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton and St. John Paul II's mentor, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.

The pope approved the de-

crees recognizing their heroic virtues during an audience Dec. 18 with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes.

The pope also recognized the miracles needed for the beatification of: Jesuit Father Tiburcio Arnaiz Munoz of Spain; Father Jean-Baptiste Fouque of France; and Sister Maria Carmen Rendiles Martinez of Venezuela.



CNS Photo/Family Theater Productions
FATHER PATRICK PEYTON

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**

Father Peyton emigrated from Ireland to the United States in 1928 when he was 19, with his heart set on becoming a millionaire after his dream of becoming a priest was thwarted when a seminary turned down his scholarship request.

He found a job as a sexton in the cathedral of Scranton, Pennsylvania, and he and his brother joined the seminary and were ordained in the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1941.

Father Peyton's first assignment was as chaplain in Albany, New York, where he launched a project to promote praying the rosary and family life. He had a special devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary after attributing his recovery from tuberculosis to her intercession.

He founded Holy Cross Family Ministries, which includes Family Rosary, Family Theater Productions, Father Peyton Family Institute and Family Rosary International.

Father Peyton died in 1992. After the pope's decree recognizing his heroic virtues, in general, a miracle is needed for his beatification and a second one for his canonization.

Cardinal Wyszyński was primate of Poland from 1949 until his death from cancer in 1981. He was Poland's youngest bishop when he was installed as archbishop of Warsaw and Gniezno during the imposition of communist rule.

Despite Vatican misgivings, Cardinal Wyszyński signed the first church accord in 1950 with a communist government, which promised the church protection in return for encouraging "respect for state authorities."

Although the accord was quickly violated, he defended the intentions behind it in post-humously published diaries, compiled while he was imprisoned without formal charges from 1953 to 1956 by Poland's ruling communists.

"I was of the opinion the modern world needed the martyrdom of work, not of blood," the cardinal wrote.

"It seemed possible, as well as indispensable, to establish several points in a 'modus vivendi' if the church was to avoid

a new -- perhaps accelerated and drastic -- annihilation," he wrote.

In later years, Cardinal Wyszyński vigorously defended human rights and reminded Vatican diplomats they should secure local religious freedoms before signing top-level international agreements.

Acknowledged by Poland's ex-communists and anti-communists as one of their country's greatest modern leaders, Cardinal Wyszyński was credited by former President Lech Walesa with laying the groundwork for the rise of the Polish trade union, Solidarity, and the eventual fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

Among his proteges was the future St. John Paul II. When then-Father Karol Wojtyła was appointed auxiliary bishop of Krakow, the cardinal presented him to a group of priests, saying "Habemus papam" ("We have a pope").

"In the light of later events, one could say those were prophetic words," the pope wrote.

Cardinal Wyszyński also told him at the 1978 conclave, "If they elect you, do not refuse it."

The newly elected Pope John Paul told the cardinal there would have been "no Polish pope" without his "faith, heroic hope and limitless confidence in the Mother of God."

Among the other decrees Dec. 18, Pope Francis recognized the heroic virtues of three priests, three religious women and one Italian laywoman.



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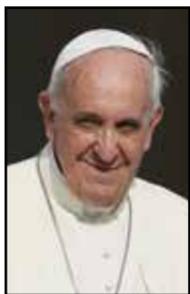
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Word of Life



The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis
Risking A Festive Facade

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Only when Christ is the focus of the Christmas season do all the colorful lights, carols, special meals and traditions help create a festive and joyous atmosphere, Pope Francis said.

"If we take him away, the lights go out and everything become fake, illusory," he said at his weekly general audience Dec. 27.

"Without Jesus, there is no Christmas. It's some other celebration, but it isn't Christmas," he said to applause.

Dedicating his audience talk to the true meaning of Christmas as a celebration of Christ's birth, the pope greeted pilgrims gathered in the Vatican's Paul VI audience hall, which was decorated with a Christmas tree and a life-size Nativity scene.

The creche, the liturgies and the seasonal songs all help the faithful relive today the birth of Christ the savior, he said.

However, especially in Europe, he said, Christmas is being stripped of its true nature "in the name of a false respect for those who are not Christian." But, often the true motive behind eliminating any reference to the birth of Christ is a desire to "marginalize faith."

Just as God gave the world his son -- born at night to a poor girl in a stable in Bethlehem -- he still sends Christ into a world that is enveloped by darkness and slumbers, the pope said.

"And still today we witness the fact that often humanity prefers darkness because people know that light reveals all those actions and thoughts that would shame and prick one's conscience," he said. "So, people prefer to stay in the dark and not disturb their erring ways."

Instead, people are called to be like the shepherds, seeking out that true guiding light, who appears first to those who are marginalized and poor, he said.

"Jesus establishes a friendship with the lowly and despised," the pope said; he offers hope and encouragement for building a better world, where "there are no longer any people who are turned away, mistreated and destitute."

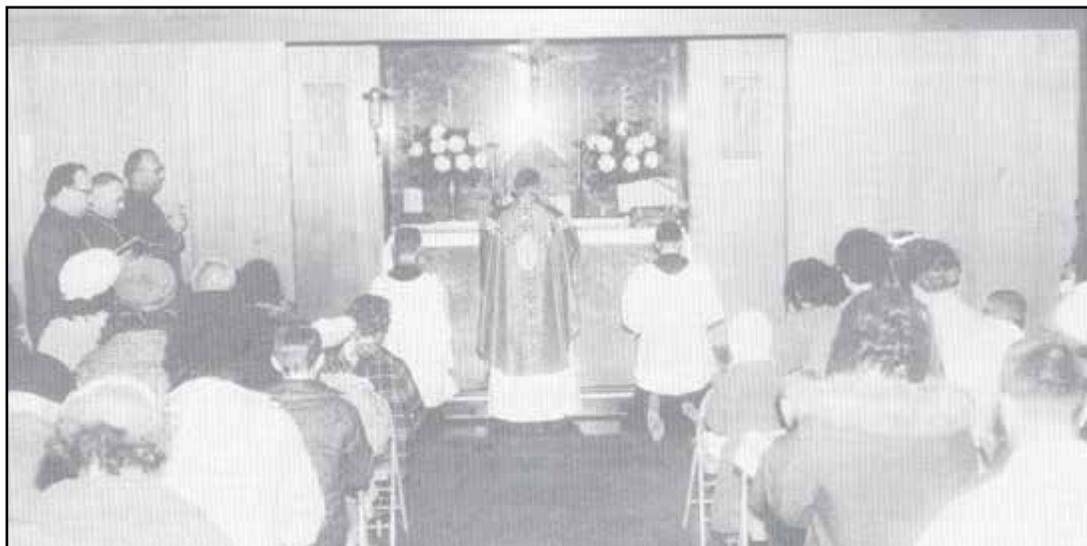
"God opened for us the way to a new life, built not on selfishness, but upon love," he said.

In that context, he said, exchanging gifts on Christmas is a sign of accepting God's example and teaching: to freely give oneself, one's love and tenderness to others.

"The true gift for us is Jesus and, like him, we want to be a gift for others," especially for those who have never experienced any love, care and tenderness in their lives, he said. The Christmas season "encourages us" to do this for others, he added.

At the end of the audience, members of Italy's "Golden Circus" performed for the pope. After two giant costumed polar bears did a little dance, female acrobats dressed in green, dragon-print leotards balanced high atop one another before a male troupe in fake leopard skins leapt into more gravity-defying poses. A muscular "strong man" bent a piece of metal and gave it to the pope, who thanked him for the present.

He thanked the performers for the show, saying the circus -- just like all real art -- "always brings us closer to God. You, with your work, with your skill, bring people to God. Thank you for what you do."



ONE MORE TIME: The first Mass at Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Duncansville, was celebrated July 7, 1963 in the basement of the R.J. Glass building between Duncansville and Newry. This photo shows the first Mass celebrated six months later, January 26, 1964, in the chapel building on Route 22 in Duncansville. The celebrant was Father Regis Myers, founding pastor. The chapel would serve as the parish church until the dedication of the present church in 1979.

I think there is no holiday we so look forward to and are so happy when it's over as Christmas.

Christmas, we all know, should be about celebrating God's great gift to us. Too often it becomes instead an endless series of to-do lists: searching for the perfect gift, planning perfect meals, scheduling all sorts of traditions that our families associate with the holiday.

Now as we contemplate when to take down the tree and who will take down the lights, it is time to focus on the year ahead, which of course means another to-do list: creating New Year's resolutions.

If you are casting about for resolutions, or afraid you have too many of them, I have four suggestions that may save you either anxiety, guilt or both.

Resolution No. 1: Make someone think all that Christmas shopping was worth it by writing a thank-you note. It is a lost art, I know, but a thank-you note can be a little gift in itself. In a world that often seems supremely ungrateful for all its blessings, thank-you notes are a tangible expression of gratitude.

A handwritten note sent via snail mail is the Platonic ideal of thank-yous, but an email thank-you is good too, even if adorned with heart and smiley face emojis. It really is the thought that counts.



Amid The Fray

By Greg Erlandson
Resolutions For 2018

Resolution No. 2: Work out a strategy for working out. The vast majority of us usually start the year thinking we need to exercise, diet or both. We set an ambitious goal for ourselves, we fall off the treadmill early, so to speak, and then we throw in the towel and go off in search of a sugar high to cut our disappointment. It's a vicious cycle.

When I had to put myself on an exercise regime, my guide to the workout stations was a bored young woman who clearly had lost her faith in humanity. When I asked her how long people usually lasted before giving up on their plans, she answered with a cynical laugh: "By the middle of February."

So my resolution was to make it to March 1. Whatever you commit to, give yourself a two-month goal. You might find that not only have you created a habit, but you've outlasted those January crowds at your local gym.

Resolution No. 3: The same principle may apply to being a better Catholic. Many of us want

to add something to our spiritual life: more Masses, more rosaries, more Scripture.

Again, my suggestion is pick one, and set yourself a goal: Go to a daily Mass once a week until Lent. Say one decade of the rosary every night until Lent. Just pick one thing, and see if you can get to Ash Wednesday (which is Feb. 14 this year). Who knows, in February you might just want to extend that resolution to Easter.

Resolution No. 4: Finally, let us all resolve to add a little civility to our texts, emails and social media. Don't say anything to anybody that you wouldn't say to their face. Avoid anonymous messaging. Say a prayer for someone you want to snark bomb. Or wait 24 hours before you hit send.

Social media is becoming a nasty, bitter space. We can't clean it all up, but we can make sure we don't add to it.

And whatever your resolutions for 2018, may it be a year of blessings for you and your family.



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Cellphone Photos
In Church

Q. I've been reading about Pope Francis' dislike of people using cellphones to take pictures during Mass. He believes that it is disrespectful to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and creates a carnival-type atmosphere.

But at our parish, on special occasions -- like a Mass recently to dedicate our newly remodeled sanctuary -- cellphone photos are taken for the parish newsletter and the parish webpage. This is of particular help to shut-ins and keeps up their relationship with the parish.

Similarly, who could blame a visitor to Rome lucky enough to attend the pope's Mass for wanting to have a pictorial record? The pope asked if Jesus were present, would you be in a state of worship or taking cellphone photos? Could the answer be, "Both"? (southern Indiana)

A. I am quite confident that, if you were to ask Pope Francis, he would make an exception in the first example you suggest --

keeping shut-ins informed about special parish events through a parish newsletter.

But as for your other example -- a visitor to Rome snapping a photo during a papal Mass -- I am just as sure that the pope would say, "Sorry, but no. That's just what I'm talking about."

Here is what Pope Francis actually said at a Wednesday general audience in St. Peter's Square in early November 2017:

The pope said that when the priest says (as he begins the preface of the Mass), "'Lift up your hearts,' he is not saying, 'Lift up your cellphones and take a picture.'" "No," said the pope, "it is an awful thing." And he added, "It makes me sad when I celebrate (Mass) in the square or in the basilica and I see so many cellphones in the air. And not just by the lay faithful, some priests and bishops, too."

The Mass, the pontiff explained, is meant to draw a person into a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ, and anything that distracts from that

personal meeting with the Lord is to be shunned.

I would feel differently about a papal event that was not a Mass. At the regular weekly audiences, for example -- which do not involve a Eucharist -- the pontiff moves throughout the crowd, and there is ample opportunity even for close-up photos.

Q. Thirty-five years ago, I met my husband and disobeyed my parents by pursuing a relationship with him. My parents are good people, and I at the time was a willful 17-year-old idiot. They told me that I could not receive Communion because I was in a state of sin and unrepentant.

So I left the church, and it has taken its toll. Now I would like to come back; my soul, I know, would be better off if I were going to church and receiving Communion. I am missing Christ very badly.

But the thing is this -- I still don't regret my love for my husband. He is a Southern Baptist and is very close to God in his own way. In order for me to return to the sacraments, do I have to leave him? He is a good man and doesn't deserve that kind of betrayal. (City of origin withheld)

A. Thank you for writing -- and the solution, it would seem, is fairly simple. I am assuming that you married your husband in an other-than-Catholic ceremony for which no permission had been granted by the Catholic Church. I am also assuming that your husband had never been married before (so that he does not need a Catholic annulment from a previous marriage).

You would by no means have to leave your husband now to return to the sacraments, nor should you. (Instead, you should thank God for bringing you into a union with a man who values his relationship with the Lord.)

What you need to do is to see your parish priest to arrange for a blessing (technically, a "convalidation") for your marriage -- and then you will be ready to return to the sacraments of penance and holy Communion.



For The Journey

By Effie Caldarola
Gun Violence:
Have We Forgotten?

My friend Shevaun was nearly seven months pregnant when shots rang out all around her in Las Vegas Oct. 1. She was forced to "army crawl in my flip-flops with my pregnant belly" to seek safety.

A shooter, ensconced in a room at the Mandalay Bay hotel, killed 58 people and wounded more than 500 at an outdoor concert that night.

This was -- so far -- the worst mass shooting in U.S. history. But, inured to gun violence, the nation moved on.

Not so quickly, however, for those like Shevaun or the thousands of Americans caught in the crossfire yearly.

Las Vegas is a popular destination for Alaskans like Shevaun and her husband Thane, who were attending their third annual Route 91 Harvest Festival.

"But since I was pregnant this time, we weren't on the ground. We purchased VIP seating above the House of Blues so I could have a chair," Shevaun said. Thane moved between his VIP spot and friends in the crowd, but luckily he had rejoined Shevaun minutes before the shooting started.

Thane is the consummate Alaskan outdoorsman. A responsible gun owner, hunter and fisherman, he can casually relate encounters with grizzly bears. But when shots first rang out, Thane thought of fireworks.

"Then, we looked down and tons of people were running," Shevaun recalls. "Thane was very calm, but said, 'We've got to get out of here. We're sitting ducks up here.'"

Maneuvering their way behind a makeshift bar, then pressed behind metal stairs, they even hid briefly behind a rock and a palm tree.

"Some shots sounded super close," recalled Shevaun, who saw people covered with blood. Despite subsequent counseling, Shevaun, an elementary school teacher, still isn't sure "how much I saw that I've blocked out."

Eventually, they ran to the MGM Grand, where they'd once stayed. Incredibly, they discovered their friends there, who found another Alaskan staying at the hotel. This woman opened her room to them, and Shevaun was able to lie down as they watched the unfolding news on television.

I've known Shevaun since she and my daughter met in kindergarten. Shevaun was in Elizabeth's wedding party, and Elizabeth is godmother to one of Shevaun's daughters. She's a lovely woman and a wonderful teacher.

And like many Americans, she's ambivalent about what to do about guns.

"Something has to happen," she said, recounting a conversation with an acquaintance who had just bought an assault rifle.

"Why?" Shevaun asks. "Why would anyone need that?"

Meanwhile, she's back in the classroom, "and every day I try to teach kids to be kinder."

In recent years, the Second Amendment has been reinterpreted to encourage unregulated private arsenals. The "well-regulated militia" part of that amendment is ignored. Even sensible proposals like banning assault rifles or bump stocks fail as the National Rifle Association pumps huge sums into campaign coffers.

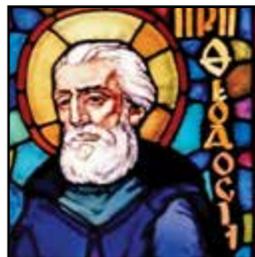
(Bump stocks are devices that enable semiautomatic rifles to fire more rapidly, similar to automatic weapons. Twelve of them were found on firearms recovered from the gunman's Las Vegas hotel room.)

After every massacre, debate erupts and then quickly subsides. Conversation devolves into inane arguments about whether the "thoughts and prayers" response is adequate.

Yes, let's pray.

Pray for victims, perpetrators, the thousands who grieve loved ones. Pray -- and take action -- for a civil discussion about guns.

Saint Theodosius the
Cenobiarch
423 - 529
Feast - January 11



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

Pope's New Year Priorities: Refugees, Youth, Trips, More Curia Reform

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Foreign trips, a focus on the rights and needs of migrants and refugees and a Synod of Bishops dedicated to young people all are on the 2018 calendar for Pope Francis.

His activities and the passions that drive them are familiar by now. In fact, March 13 will mark the fifth anniversary of his election as pope, succeeding retired Pope Benedict XVI.

Pope Francis, newly 81, will begin 2018 with a focus on

Mary and on migrants and refugees.

As with all modern popes, Pope Francis' Marian devotion and his concern for people forced to flee their homes have been a constant in his ministry.

But Pope Francis is the first to dedicate a celebration of World Peace Day specifically to the theme of migrants and refugees. On Jan. 1, for the 51st time, the Catholic Church began the new year praying for peace. The day also is the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and while Pope Francis sent a message to heads of state in November reflecting on the peace day theme, his homily at the Mass is likely to focus on Mary.

The pope's focus on migrants and refugees will come to the fore again Jan. 14 when he adds to the normal papal liturgical calendar a special Mass for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

In both his message for the Jan. 14 celebration and his message for World Peace Day, Pope Francis urged Catholic involvement in the drafting of the U.N. global compacts for migrants and for refugees.

Approving the development of the compacts in September 2016, "world leaders clearly expressed their desire to take decisive action in support of migrants and refugees to save their lives and protect their rights," the pope said in his message. He urged Catholics to get involved by lobbying their governments to include in the compacts proposals that would ensure the welcome, protection, promotion and integration of migrants and refugees.

Although work on the compacts suffered a setback when the Trump administration announced in early December it was pulling out of the process and would not be a party to the accords, the United Nations hopes to have a draft of the doc-

uments ready by February. Late in 2018, the U.N. General Assembly will hold a conference to adopt the compacts.

On Jan. 15, Pope Francis will set off for a six-day visit to Chile and Peru. As is his style, the trip will include meetings with government authorities and large public Masses, but also a visit to a women's prison and to a home for children at risk.

As of Dec. 20, no other papal trips for 2018 had been confirmed, although Vatican officials have said it is almost certain Pope Francis will travel to Dublin in late August for the World Meeting of Families; on the same trip, he is likely to be the first pope to visit Northern Ireland.

Vatican officials also have confirmed that a September trip to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is under consideration. And they do not rule out a spring trip, perhaps to Africa.

One month of the pope's calendar already is booked solid. The Synod of Bishops focusing on young people and their vocations will be held at the Vatican Oct. 3-28. In preparation for the bishops' gathering, the Vatican has asked bishops' conferences around the world to nominate young people to attend a presynod gathering March 19-24 in Rome.

Cardinal Lorenzo Baldiseri, secretary-general of the synod, said Pope Francis hopes about 300 young people -- mostly, but not all, Catholics -- would attend the gathering. Many of them will speak to the whole group about the hopes and concerns of young people, what they can offer the church and what they need from it. They will discuss the presentations in small groups and will be asked to prepare a summary document for the bishops attending the synod.

The fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' papacy also



CNS Photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

YOUTH: Pope Francis greets young people after celebrating Mass with youth Nov. 30 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Yangon, Myanmar. Foreign trips, a focus on the rights and needs of migrants and refugees and a Synod of Bishops dedicated to young people all are on the 2018 calendar for Pope Francis.

means 2018 is the fifth anniversary of his international Council of Cardinals and the effort to reform the Roman Curia.

Changes have been made, new laws have been passed, offices have been combined to cut down on duplication. But 2017

ended without a clear indication of when a document presenting a global vision of the Curia and each of its offices would be ready.

Perhaps that is what Pope Francis wants for Christmas 2018.



CNS Photo/Ints Kalnins, Reuters

LITHUANIA: A Christmas tree is seen illuminated Dec. 6, 2017 in Vilnius, Lithuania. Vatican officials have confirmed that a September trip to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is under consideration.

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Curia Exists For Service, Not Glory, Says Pope

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

-- The people who work at the Vatican and in the Roman Curia are supposed to be "sensitive antennas" that faithfully transmit the desires of the pope and receive information from dioceses and Eastern Catholic churches around the world, Pope Francis said.

Remembering that the Curia exists exclusively for the service of the Gospel, the pope and the church is the only way to counter "that imbalanced and degenerate logic of conspiracies or little cliques that, despite all their justifications and good intentions, represent a cancer," the pope said Dec. 21, 2017.

Holding his annual pre-Christmas meeting with top officials of the Roman Curia and Vatican City State and with cardinals living in Rome, Pope Francis said he wanted to build on his previous talks about the reform of the Curia by focusing on its relationship to the world outside the Vatican walls.

His reflections, he said, were based on principles and church laws governing the Curia, but also "on the personal vision I have tried to share" as the process of reforming the Curia has unfolded.

The process began a month after he was elected in March 2013 and is ongoing, which brings to mind, he said, a saying attributed to a 19th-century Belgian cleric and Vatican statesman: "Carrying out reform in Rome is like cleaning an Egyptian Sphinx with a toothbrush."

Still, he said, the process must continue for the good of the Curia itself, the good of the church and, ultimately, the good of the world.

Pope Francis cited as a sign of the work left to be done the danger posed by "traitors of the truth or profiteers of the church's motherhood," meaning personnel hired to give their expertise to the Vatican, but who "let themselves be corrupted by



CNS Photo/Claudio Peri Pool via Reuters

CURIA: Pope Francis greets prelates during his annual pre-Christmas meeting with top officials of the Roman Curia and Vatican City State and with cardinals living in Rome in the Clementine Hall December 21, 2017 at the Vatican.

ambition or by vainglory and, when they are delicately let go, erroneously declare themselves to be martyrs of the system, of the 'uninformed pope' or of the 'old guard' rather than reciting a 'mea culpa,'" in admitting their faults.

Repeatedly in his talk, Pope Francis spoke of "diaconal primacy" or the primacy of service, which must characterize his ministry and the work of all in the Curia in imitation of Jesus, who came to serve and not be served.

The focus of the Curia, he said, must be on service and not on self-preservation or maintaining areas of influence and power.

Quoting a third-century Christian treatise, Pope Francis said the Curia, like a deacon, must be "the ears and the mouth of the bishop, his heart and his soul."

Listening to the local churches and to the needs of the poor comes first, he said. "I

don't think it's an accident that the ear is the organ for hearing, but also for balance."

Looking more closely at the church's relation with the world outside itself, Pope Francis spoke about the new section he created in the Vatican Secretariat of State to oversee the training, assigning and ministry of Vatican nuncios and diplomats around the world.

Vatican diplomacy has no "mundane or material interest," he said, but seeks only to build "bridges, peace and dialogue among nations."

Pope Francis listed as diplomatic priorities "the importance of safeguarding our common home from every destructive selfishness; to affirm that wars bring only death and destruction; to draw from the past the necessary lessons to help us

live better in the present, solidly build a future and safeguard it for new generations."

Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue also are essential forms of outreach to the world, the pope said.

The search for Christian unity, he said, "is a journey, but as my predecessors also repeated, it is a journey that is irreversible and with no putting the brakes on."

"The Curia works in this area to promote encounters with our brothers and sisters," Pope Francis said, "to untie the knots of misunderstandings and hostility, to counter the prejudices and the fear of the other that have prevented us from seeing the richness of and in diversity and the depths of the mystery of Christ and of the church, which remain greater than any human

expression."

Pope Francis told the cardinals and other Curia officials that the faith celebrated at Christmas must be a living, lively faith that provokes conversion in all who call themselves believers.

"A faith that doesn't put us in crisis is a faith in crisis," he said. "A faith that doesn't make us grow is a faith that must grow; a faith that doesn't question us is a faith that must be questioned; a faith that doesn't enliven us is a faith that must be enlivened; a faith that doesn't shake us is a faith that must be shaken."

If faith does not provoke the faithful to change and grow, the pope said, it really is something that is simply lukewarm or just an idea.

Faith becomes real, he said, only when it "allows God to be born or reborn in the manger of our hearts, when we let the star of Bethlehem lead us to the place where the son of God lies, not among kings and luxury, but among the poor and humble."

Quoting a third-century Christian treatise, Pope Francis said the Curia, like a deacon, must be "the ears and the mouth of the bishop, his heart and his soul."

Presiding In Charity: Ecumenical Dialogue Looks At Pope's Role

By Robert Duncan
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

-- Many people, including many Catholics, believe the pope always ruled over the Catholic Church as an absolute monarch, appointing the world's bishops and definitively settling issues of faith and morals. Yet that exercise of the papal office is comparatively new.

The pope's supreme power, both in governance and doctrine, was defined by the First Vatican Council in 1870 and has been seen as crucial to defending the church from hostile governments and cultural forces around the world.

But at the same time, the pope's universal jurisdiction and doctrinal infallibility have emerged as major obstacles to the long-sought goal of Christian unity.

The idea that the pope, as the "first bishop" of the church, has a leadership role that other bishops do not is an especially large stumbling block for East-

ern Orthodox Christians, but one that the Catholic and Orthodox churches are committed to discussing.

Recent popes have sought to explore ways to exercise papal primacy in terms more amenable to other Christians. For instance, in his encyclical letter on ecumenism in 1995, St. John Paul II expressed openness to finding "a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation."

According to Dominican Father Hyacinthe Destivelle, an official of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Pope Francis has furthered this effort with his frequent references to synodality -- the involvement of a gathering of bishops in decision making, as practiced in the Orthodox churches -- and by often referring to himself simply as the "bishop of Rome."

The pope is trying to exercise his office "as St. Irenaeus of Lyon defined the church of Rome: the church that presides in love, in charity," said Father Destivelle.

"The primacy that we know now, which is defined as a primacy of universal jurisdiction, is quite new. The fact that the pope appoints all the bishops is new, it's from the 19th century; it was not at all the case in the first millennium," said Father Destivelle, summarizing one conclusion from the current work of the official Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue.

Recent scholarship on the topic challenges both Catholic and Orthodox ways of thinking about the pope's role, said A. Edward Sicienski. The Orthodox scholar is author of the 2017 book, **The Papacy And The Orthodox: Sources And History Of A Debate.**

"Universal jurisdiction, the idea that the pope has in another diocese the same power he has in the diocese of Rome," Sicienski said, "is not something that the Orthodox could ever accept,

because they had never accepted it."

On the other hand, he said, "the idea that, as the successor of Peter, (the pope) has a universal ministry is very, very different, and I think that the Orthodox could accept that the Petrine ministry does have this universal aspect to it."

That the papacy increased in power during the Middle Ages and Renaissance cannot be dismissed simply as a power grab, said a German Jesuit historian.

In a very practical way, "Rome could judge more impartially over certain things than local institutions who were subdued to local pressures," said Jesuit Father Klaus Schatz.

At the same time, Father Schatz said the Catholic Church had a constitutional or "parliamentary" tradition of church governance that did not fully give way to the monarchical model until the First Vatican Council.

"At least until the 16th century, all major questions were debated with the pope in the general congregations with the cardinals," Father Schatz said. And, "in extreme situations, the cardinals had power over the popes."

The 2017 commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation was another opportunity to discuss how a modified exercise of papal primacy might benefit Christians of all denominations.

"We need a synthesis," said John Milbank, a prominent Anglican theologian and president of the Center of Theology and Philosophy at the University of Nottingham, England. "We need a marriage of the papacy with a more conciliar model."

The late medieval tendency to view the papacy "in terms of a pure exercise of legal power and not sufficiently in terms of a spiritual authority" needs to be overcome, he said.

"Sometimes," he said, "it feels as if Catholic theology is



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

FRATERNAL EMBRACE: Pope Francis embraces Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople during a prayer service with religious leaders in 2016 at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy.

too much a sort of debate about papal pronouncements, and I think maybe a stronger sense of every bishop as being a spiritual guide" would be a path forward.

In the end, he said, "I believe the road to Christian unity is much more in terms of doing

things together and finding ways to share liturgy," rather than in seeking a juridical union.

"If you can do that, there will come a day when these doctrinal disagreements don't seem completely insurmountable," Milbank said.

Ecumenical Prayer Services For Christian Unity Scheduled

Two Ecumenical Prayer Services will be held this month, bringing together local leaders of Christian faith traditions, with their congregations, to pray for the blessing of Christian unity.

Bishop Mark L. Bartchak of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown will host the first service on Sunday, January 21 at 2:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona.

Bishop Gregory of Nyssa of the American Carpatho - Russian Orthodox Diocese in the United States of America will host the second gathering Sunday, January 28 at 2:00 p.m. at Christ the Saviour Cathedral, 300 Garfield Street, Johnstown.

Bishop Michael L. Rhyne of the Allegheny Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will join his brother - Bishops in the celebrations.

The faithful are encouraged to attend these prayer services, giving witness to the unity that already exists among the baptized.

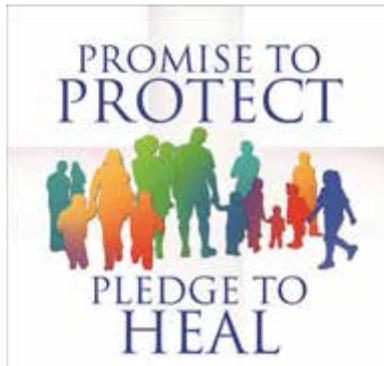
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Since 2002, U.S. Church Has Strict Protocols In Place To Address Abuse

Doing The Right Thing: Admit Wrongdoing

(Continued From Page 5.)

He spoke about delays in removing priests convicted of abuse and the many times that clergy were relocated. He also spoke about the realization that admitting sorrow for actions that harmed others in this way was not enough to stop it from happening again.

For some, these comments will be "too little, too late." But, for others, hearing these words so frankly spoken is the opening of a door to a new vigor in the work the Church is doing to protect our children. For any Catholic, confession is the beginning of a new life in Christ. Admitting when we are wrong, looking for ways to make amends for the harm caused, and working to make sure it never happens again is at the very core of our faith. The Church must do this also in order to move forward to a new birth.

The more cynical among us may see this statement and the admission by Pope Francis as just another attempt to dismiss the scope of the problem. However, those of us who are committed to creating safe environments and to assuring that we protect all God's children from sexual predators are taking these words as the catalyst for a more rigorous and worldwide effort to impact this issue. The sexual abuse of children is a problem for all of society. The Church's commitment to dealing with the issue and standing at the forefront of the work to heal victims and prevent it from happening again can make a profound difference in how the rest of the world responds.

Healing begins with admitting there is a problem. In this case, healing can escalate with the admission that the ongoing work to be done must take a prominent place in the work of the Church around the world. Those who abuse children must be stopped and there must be a zero tolerance in our Church for anyone guilty of this harm. The Pope's assurances that this is the standard that will be applied throughout the Church in the world is an opening to action that can have a profound and far reaching effect.

It is up to us to continue to raise the issue at Church and throughout our communities and to draw attention to anything that is inconsistent with this standard. It is up to us to continue to work to protect all God's children and to call on others to join us in the effort. Thank you for all that you do in your efforts to prevent abuse and protect children.

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By Julie Asher
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) - - The death of Cardinal Bernard F. Law opened "a lot of old wounds," causing "much pain and anger in those who have suffered so much already," Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley said Dec. 20, the day the Vatican announced Cardinal Law's death.

The passing of the cardinal in Rome has put the spotlight once again on Boston as the epicenter of a clergy sex abuse scandal that has affected the whole U.S. church. The scandal erupted in 2002 and Cardinal Law resigned a year later amid allegations of mishandling clergy sex abuse cases.

Since 2002, however, the U.S. Catholic Church has taken many steps to bring abusers to justice, to prevent abuse and to heighten awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse.

"Looking at the culture of safety and well-being, the modus operandi has changed," said Deacon Bernie Nojadera, executive director of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection. "No one can just go in to a parish and say they want to work with children, young people. They have to be cleared, background-checked, and it has to be done repeatedly. This ongoing awareness and mindfulness is in place."

In a Dec. 21 interview with Catholic News Service, the deacon said that he is always asked, "Are we going to completely eradicate abuse?"

"The answer to that is 'no,' but with what has been happening since 2002," he said, "I can confidently say the church does indeed provide safe environments, does have an eye out and looks out for the vulnerable -- our minors, our children -- and has protocols in place."

Those protocols were established by the bishops in 2002, when they met in Dallas that June for their spring assembly. They adopted the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

At that meeting, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, then-Illinois Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, who is now Atlanta's archbishop, placed blame for the crisis on the bishops' shoulders. He said it stemmed from "a profound loss of confidence by the faithful in our leadership as shepherds, because of our failures in addressing the crime of the sexual abuse of children and young people by priests and church personnel."

The charter, revised in 2005 and 2011, established the lay-run National Review Board and the Office, now Secretariat, for Child and Youth Protection at the USCCB to assure that bishops comply with the policy decisions spelled out in the charter and the legally binding, Vatican-approved "Essential Norms" implementing it.

The norms provide U.S. dioceses and eparchies with "standards for protecting young people, reaching out to victims, assessing allegations against clergy, with the benefit of the advice of competent lay persons, and for anyone who would harm children."

All U.S. dioceses and eparchies undergo independent audits of their current sexual abuse policies and practices and give detailed reports on complaints against their clergy since 1950.

"Since the 2002 inception of the charter approved by the bishops, every diocese and eparchy has safe-environment coordinators and victims assistance coordinators," said Deacon Nojadera.

"Every diocese has participated in an audit. The audit helps dioceses, make sure dioceses implement the charter," he

told CNS Dec. 21. "Every diocese has a review board now that looks at cases brought forward. Every diocese has a collaborative, cooperative relationship with law enforcement, an understanding of mandated reporting."

"But more important is that what's happened since this crisis is the understanding, the culture, has changed," Deacon Nojadera said. "Victims are listened to. Victims are believed."

"There is the understanding now, too, that instead of at all costs avoiding scandal, all transactions are out in the open, clear and transparent and additionally that is taking place on all levels -- diocesan and national," he said.

He added, "We have the blessing and grace and honor of accompanying survivor-victims on their journey toward healing and reconciliation. As a result of all of this, I believe the church is transformed, the church is healthier, holier now."

According to Mary Gautier of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, the U.S. church has spent more than \$3 billion on settlement-related costs between 2004 and 2016 and close to half a billion dollars in that same period on child-protection efforts, from Virtus background checks to victim assistance offices. Gautier said 2004 was the first year such figures were available and the 2016 figures are the latest available.

(Continued On Page 15.)

Now Showing

Big, Brash 'Showman' Appropriate For All

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- The life of pop entertainment pioneer P.T. Barnum provides the subject matter for the big, brash musical "The Greatest Showman" (Fox).

Ironically, the film arrives in theaters almost seven months to the day after the demise of the 19th-century impresario's most lasting legacy, the Ring-

ling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Though unlikely to engage the youngest viewers, an emphasis on marital fidelity and family values in general, together with the virtual absence of objectionable material, makes this screen biography appropriate for most others. Moviegoers' appreciation of it, however, will likely depend on their taste for the Lloyd-Webber style of Broadway and West End theater, whose approach it imitates.

Hugh Jackman leads with his chin in playing Barnum with bring-on-the-lions enthusiasm. Jenny Bicks and Bill Condon's script, meanwhile, traces its protagonist's rise from impoverished beginnings to worldwide fame with the kind of occasionally challenged, but ultimately unquenchable, optimism that might have appealed to novelist Horatio Alger.

Barnum gains support in his ascent from his childhood sweet-



CNS Photo/Fox

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN: Hugh Jackman stars in a scene from the movie "The Greatest Showman." The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

heart, Charity (Michelle Williams), who eventually turns her back on her wealthy and well-bred parents to marry him. Also shunning a genteel background to bolster Barnum's career is his business partner, socialite Philip Carlyle (Zac Efron).

Assembling an ensemble of such unusual figures as Lettie Lutz, aka the Bearded Lady (Keala Settle) and dwarf "General," Tom Thumb (Sam Humphrey), Barnum turns a large profit by exciting the curiosity of the masses. Tensions arise, though, when he shifts his focus away from these loyal performers and friends to concentrate on backing the American premiere of Swedish diva Jenny Lind (Rebecca Ferguson).

Barnum risks his fortune in the effort to promote Lind, hoping thereby to gain the elite standing that has previously eluded him. The fact that this breakthrough may require him to shun those on whom he has built his success fails, initially at least, to deter him.

He is equally blind to the danger his absence on the road with Lind poses to his bond with Charity and their children from the beautiful soprano's prolonged company.

There is an implicitly pro-life message underlying director Michael Gracey's feature debut since its treatment of the social outsiders with whom Barnum surrounded himself strongly vindicates their inherent dignity and entitlement to respect. The picture's portrayal of Carlyle's convention-defying romance with African-American trapeze artist Anne Wheeler (Zendaya) is equally in line with Christian morals.

Both these aspects of the plot, however, betray historical naivete in projecting a contemporary outlook backward onto Victorian-era America. The audience is left with the impression that all the gaping inequalities of

Barnum's day might easily have been effaced by a few brassy songs delivered with the requisite zest.

Still, parents on the lookout for wholesome holiday fare will probably refrain from such nit-picking as, perhaps with teens in tow, they take in a love and success story that's old-fashioned in the best sense.

The film contains some nonlethal violence, a mild oath and a racial slur. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

Coming Up On 'Proclaim!'

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

January 14 -- Heidi Bence, a member of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Parish in Johnstown and pro-life supporter, looks ahead to the upcoming March for Life in Washington DC.

January 21 -- Bishop Michael Rhyne of the Allegheny Lutheran Synod joins Bishop Mark to preview the upcoming ecumenical events co-sponsored by the Catholic, Lutheran, and Orthodox faith traditions.

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U.S. Church Has Strict Protocols To Address Abuse

(Continued From Page 13.)

Released in May 2017, the 2016 audit on compliance with the charter by 194 participating dioceses and eparchies showed data on who received safe-environment training in the last year: 35,475 priests, or 99.1 percent; 16,294 deacons, or 99.2 percent; 6,847 candidates for ordination, or 99.2 percent; 159,764 educators, or 98 percent; 258,978 other church employees, or 96.2 percent; 1,912,152 volunteers, or 96.4 percent; and 4,267,014 children, or 94 percent.

Close to 250 newly identified victims/survivors and members of their families were offered outreach and healing, and ongoing support was provided to 1,510 victims/survivors.

According to the report, dioceses and eparchies in 2016 spent \$126,914,338 for costs related to abuse allegations including payments for allegations reported in previous years. Forty-five dioceses and eparchies did not have any payments related to abuse allegations.

"Despite all the policies, procedures, codes of conduct, reports and training, unacceptable events still occurred," the report said, noting 25 allegations were made by minors and reported to local civil authorities.

The report reminded church leaders that "we must be ever vigilant in our parishes and schools," warning against complacency. "One act of abuse is one too many," it said.

Because of what the church is doing to address sexual abuse and in light of the "current climate of sexual harassment in Hollywood, in politics, this dialogue is important and continues to come forward," Deacon Nojadera said. "And what is happening now, folks are talking about elder abuse, domestic abuse, cyberbullying. In the end, any form of abuse will not be tolerated."



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

CARDINAL BERNARD F. LAW

With Cardinal's Death, Hold Abuse Survivors 'Close In Prayer'

By Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops offered his prayers and condolences to family and friends of Cardinal Bernard F. Law, who died Dec. 20, 2017 in Rome, but at the same time he called abuse survivors "brave" and said the Catholic Church must keep them "close in prayer."

"Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord," Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston said of Cardinal Law.

"At this time especially we keep close in our prayer the brave survivors of sexual abuse," he said in a statement. "Their witness would lead to a comprehensive response from the church in the United States to protect and heal the deep wounds of abuse. I pray they may find strength and peace in the mercy of Christ."

Cardinal Law had been one of the most powerful and

respected U.S. bishops until his legacy was blemished by the devastating sexual abuse of minors by priests in his Archdiocese of Boston.

He died at age 86 and was buried in Rome, where he had his last assignment. His funeral Mass was celebrated the afternoon of Dec. 21, according to the Vatican.

In releasing Cardinal DiNardo's statement, the USCCB said: "As we reflect on the legacy of Cardinal Law, it will likely bring back painful memories for survivors. The church seeks to always respond as supportive pastors."

"If you have been abused or know of someone who has been abused, contact the local diocesan victims assistance coordinator and, where you may have knowledge of a crime, local law enforcement," it said.

In his reaction, Cardinal DiNardo said he echoed the statement released earlier in the day by Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, who said that Cardinal Law had headed the Boston Archdiocese "at a time when the

church failed seriously in its responsibilities to provide pastoral care for her people, and with tragic outcomes failed to care for the children of our parish communities."

He recognized that his predecessor's death "brings forth a wide range of emotions on the part of many people."

"I am particularly cognizant of all who experienced the trauma of sexual abuse by clergy, whose lives were so seriously impacted by those crimes, and their families and loved ones," Cardinal O'Malley said. "To those men and women, I offer my sincere apologies for the harm they suffered, my continued prayers and my promise that the archdiocese will support them in their effort to achieve healing."

In other reaction, an official with Survivors of Those Abused by Priests said: "We are sure that many people will have mixed feelings about the death of Cardinal Bernard Law."

The survivors of sexual abuse in Boston "were those most hurt" by the cardinal's "cover-up of sex crimes" and his "subsequent promotion to Rome," said Joelle Casteix, SNAP's Western regional leader. "No words can convey the pain these survivors and their loved ones suffered."

The "promotion" was a reference to St. John Paul II appointing Cardinal Law in 2004 to be the new archpriest of the Basilica of St. Mary Major, one of the four major basilicas of Rome, after he resigned as arch-

bishop of Boston in the wake of the abuse scandal.

"Why was (Cardinal) Law promoted when Boston's Catholic children were sexually abused, ignored and pushed aside time and time again?" SNAP asked.

The Boston sex abuse scandal broke in 2002. Cardinal Law's authority began to collapse in January of that year with the criminal trial of serial child molester John Geoghan and the court-ordered release of archdiocesan files on Geoghan to the media.

Cardinal Law publicly apologized on several occasions and announced a series of major policy changes -- most importantly, removing permanently from ministry any priest ever credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor and turning over to district attorneys the names of all priests against whom any abuse allegation had been made.

Casteix said SNAP hoped that the Vatican "keeps these survivors in mind when it comes time for the cardinal's funeral." The organization anticipated Cardinal Law's life would be celebrated with "pomp and circumstance ... when Boston's clergy sex abuse survivors suffered so greatly."

"We highly doubt there is a single victim of abuse who will ever receive the same attention, pomp and circumstance by Pope Francis," the statement said. "It is time for the Vatican to refocus on change: protecting children and those who have been hurt."

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Parishes Invited To 'Arise' Orientation Sessions

Carmelite of the Word Sister Linda LaMagna, the Diocese's ministerial coordinator of evangelization, is looking forward to the implementation of the "Arise Together In Christ," experience in the local Church.

Sister Linda wrote to all priests and deacons Thursday, December 14, ten days after Bishop Mark met with the clergy to announce "Arise" to them. Sister Linda shared her own enthusiasm for the experience in her message.

"The 'Arise Together In Christ,' experience will involve all parishes of our Diocese, as well as Campus Ministry, Prison Ministry, and Religious Education," she wrote. "It is a total parish experience designed to spiritually renew individuals and provide opportunities for parish communities to have zeal for their faith and for the Church, in hope that the future Church can move forward with expectation, hope and ardor."

Sister Linda is serving as diocesan coordinator for "Arise," a ministry offered by Renew International.

In writing to the clergy, Sister Linda asked their help in assembling parish leaders who will be responsible for "Arise" in their local faith communities, and asked that they be invited to orientation sessions to be held in late January.

Those sessions will be held at:

- - **Johnstown:** Saint Andrew Parish, 1621 Ferndale Avenue; (814) 288 - 4324; Wednesday, January 24; Daytime session - - 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.; Evening session - - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.;

- - **Duncansville:** Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, 308 Old Route 22; (814) 696 - 4126; Thursday, January 25; Daytime session - - 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.; Evening Session - - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.;

- - **Carrolltown:** Saint Benedict Parish, 100 South Main Street; (814) 344 - 6548; Friday, January 26; Evening session - - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.;

- - **State College:** Our Lady of Victory Parish, 820 Westerly Parkway; (814) 237 - 7832; Saturday, January 27; Morning session - - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Pastors are asked to select a session for them and their parish leaders to attend, and to reserve their places at the meeting by contacting the desired parish with the number attending, by Friday, January 19.

All parishes are welcome to attend.

Further information can be obtained by calling Sister Linda at (814) 934 - 0699; at Saint Joseph Parish, Bellwood at (814) 742 - 7894 (where she ministers) or by e - mail at srllamagna@gmail.com.

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