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CNS Photo/Gregory A. Shemitz



The Lord's Victory Is Our Victory

2018 Easter Message from Bishop Mark

"We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again."

Shortly after the funeral of my mother in late February, I received the following request: *"I'm not sure if you feel you're ready to write about this yet, but as someone who has just experienced personal loss, perhaps you can speak about how Easter assures all of us -- but especially you this year -- that Christ's victory is a victory for all of us. Again, I realize this may be challenging for you to share, but I think your personal witness could be powerful."*

The first thing that came to mind when I read this request are the familiar words of an acclamation which we make immediately after the consecration at Mass: *"We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again."* In the Roman Missal this acclamation is referred to as the great Mystery of Faith.

It's important to note that these are not just words of faith. They are also words of love and hope.

However, it's important for us to admit there is no point in talking about the Resurrection without stating the obvious. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died on the cross. In his humanity, our Lord experienced the most dreaded human experience: death.

The impact of the loss of a loved one is often felt in a profound way when the final prayers are said at the cemetery. At that moment we often feel an emptiness and we find it hard to make sense of death and what it means.

The empty tomb discovered by Mary Magdalene and the other disciples was not a proof of the Resurrection, but a fact whose meaning needed to be discovered. They were as bewildered and grief-stricken as anyone who has lost a loved one. The meaning of the empty tomb did not become clear until the disciples experienced the risen Lord in person. They did; they really did see him. But for some, that didn't come easy. Just ask the apostle Thomas who did not believe until he touched the wounds in the hands and side of Christ.

So you may be thinking, "Where can we experience the risen Lord in person?" How about all the things that your mother or father taught us; like prayer, the Word of God in the Sacred Scriptures, the sacraments of the Church (especially the Holy Eucharist), or the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

And how about one of the most ordinary ways we see the risen Lord in person; in nameless persons we simply know as neighbors or the poor; in each other; or in members of our own families.

After going to the cemetery following Mom's funeral Mass, our family gathered with friends for a meal. Stories of loss and grief continued to be shared, but gradually they turned to other things that are signs of the newness of life that comes to us through our faith in the risen Lord.

Two of my nieces shared plans for Uncle Mark to baptize their new children. Another boy and twin girls have joined the family! And my eldest sister and brother-in-law shared plans to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary this summer. I was an altar server for their wedding and now they want me to witness the renewal of their vows! And if that's not enough, a sister-in-law asked me to invite all the priests present at the luncheon to join me in saying a prayer of blessing over her new grandson because we need another priest in the family!

I'm sure that anyone reading this Easter message can tell similar stories. It's the stuff of our daily lives, which are filled with the good and the not so good. It's the stuff of our daily lives where faith, hope, and love truly make a difference.

My mother Rosemary was almost 92 when she died. During the last months of her life she had her share of human suffering as she passed through the advanced stages of Alzheimer's, not to mention heart and kidney disease. Mom had a devotion to St. Therese of Lisieux. Therese is Mom's middle name. One of my nieces now has Mom's statue and first class relic of the "Little Flower." It is reported in *The Last Conversations* that when the young 19th century Carmelite nun was getting close to her own death from tuberculosis she said, "I am not dying; I am entering life."

In the funeral homily for Mom, I cited an expression often used in the Greek Orthodox tradition, "Death is the threshold of eternal life." These are words that should assure all of us that the victory of Christ over the power of sin and death is a victory for all of us. We can share in the effects of the Resurrection even as we wait for Christ to come again. As St. Therese knew, wherever we find Christ, we find eternal life.

And if those words are not enough; if those words don't adequately convey how this great Mystery of Faith applies to all of us who believe in Christ; consider these words of encouragement that I found in an Easter reflection:

"Take joy in everything. Start with whatever it is that burdens you the most. Whatever it is that makes you angry, sad, or depressed. Whatever that is, it can potentially become one of your greatest sources of grace and joy. Seriously, it can. If the brutal Crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God, can turn out to be the greatest event in all of human history, then your personal suffering, your burden, or even your sin can very much become a source of great joy as long as you let God transform it into part of His Resurrection!"

"This is the meaning of Easter! Easter means that nothing can keep us from the joy that God wants to give us. Nothing can steal that joy away. Sure, at times we will struggle as Jesus did in the Agony of the Garden and the Way of the Cross, but those sufferings will not win. The Resurrection won with Christ and it will win with us when we cling to Him. Jesus persevered and, in the end, rose victorious. This is Easter!" (John Paul Thomas, *Lent And Easter Reflections*, p. 120).

With prayers and blessings for you and your families at Easter and always,

+Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak
Bishop of Altoona - Johnstown

In The Alleghenies



PARVULI DEI AWARD: Six Cub Scouts from Pack 2025, Johnstown, completed the requirements for the Parvuli Dei (Children of God) scouting award. They received the award Saturday, February 24 at Saint Benedict Church. Pictured are (left to right) First row: Bryan Orr, Donovan Pollard, Jonathon Hill, Jonathan Gindlesperger, Luke Polacek, Jonthan Orr. Second row: Judy Bako (religious emblem coordinator and assistant Cub Master) and Father Peter Crowe (parochial vicar). Pack 2025 is chartered by the Richland Volunteer Fire Department. Jon Gindlesperger is the Cub Master.

High Schools

Win Business Challenge

Boalsburg: Seven students from Saint Joseph's Catholic Academy participated in the 17th Annual Business Day at Saint Francis University on Friday, March 23, 2018. The students are enrolled in the class "Business in a Global Society" at Saint Joe's, taught by faculty member Laura Cunningham.

The event is designed by the Business School at Saint Francis for students from local high schools looking to gain further knowledge and experience about business - related fields.

The event featured a business challenge based on three categories: business ethics, marketing and occupational licensing. One of Saint Joe's teams emerged as the winner of the challenge, from among a total of 21 teams comprised of 265 students.

The winning team included Shannon Saclyn, Kristi Hile and Max Krasowitz. Ethan Khoza, RJ Marsh, Matt Steyers, and Jason Thomas also participated..

Higher Education

Movie Screening

Loretto: Saint Francis Uni-

versity will host a screening of the dramatic documentary film "The Sultan and the Saint" in the John F Kennedy Auditorium on campus Wednesday, April 11, at 7:00 pm. The film, which was released nationwide last December, is a powerful depiction of a Muslim - Christian encounter as told through the story of Saint Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik al - Kamil in Egypt during the Fifth Crusade in 1219. That meeting brought about a deeper understanding and respect between the two world religions and serves as a model for inter-religious dialogue and peace-making to the present day.

The film was produced by Unity Productions Foundation



MINISTRY OF LECTOR: Diocesan seminarian Brian Norris (second from right, holding book) was instituted into the Ministry of Lector - - the first formal step to the Priesthood - - during a ceremony on Saturday, March 17 at Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. Norris is in his second year of Pre - Theology studies at Saint Mary's. He is a member of Saint Mary Parish in Hollidaysburg.

in collaboration with the Franciscan Action Network. It has been awarded nineteen prizes for excellence, including Best Documentary at the Christian Film Festival of 2017.

Following the screening, a panel of Christian and Muslim representatives will offer perspectives on the film and entertain questions and comments from the audience.

(Continued On Page 6.)

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Has openings for the following full-time positions:

Comptroller Accounting Assistant

To view job descriptions, responsibilities and qualifications, go to www.dioceseaj.org. Resumes must be submitted by April 6 to 927 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648; Attn: Human Resources

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Point Of View

“Can I keep you?” Casper whispers into Kat’s ear, and she ever so softly agrees. Somehow in that moment it didn’t matter that Kat was human and Casper was a ghost -- an attraction crossed that very real divide. The most powerful messages of the movie “Casper” relate to love and belonging, giving and receiving ... and even letting go.

These themes always captivate the human heart. People are searching for love and ways to give themselves away. At times they are even eager to say “yes” when they hear the proposal, “Can I keep you?”

Yet, a core struggle that is just as real lies deep within the human heart -- do we know ourselves enough to truly give ourselves away? In my work with young people, I’ve seen this struggle at play.

Many young people are hurting inside -- even deeply wounded. Whether it be from a difficult childhood, abuse or sins that haunt them, they are struggling and don’t know where to turn. These deep wounds can make discernment incredibly difficult because the wounds manifest in so many ways and drain energy.

I am not proposing that one must be “wound-free” to do God’s will, but what I am suggesting is that many young people struggle along the path because they don’t know what to do with the pain -- some don’t even believe healing is possible.

This is exactly where the church must meet young people. Every time I speak to a group of teens or young adults and



In Light Of Faith

By Sister Alicia Torres
The Church As A Field Hospital For The Wounded

ask them if they’ve experienced suffering in their lives, hands always shoot up, heads nod. Particularly after speaking to young adults, I’m often surprised by how many women and men will come up to me, asking for advice to deal with their own specific wounds.

Pope Francis said that the church should be a field hospital. What does that mean? Have you ever seen a field hospital? Check out “We Were Soldiers” or “Gone with the Wind” to get an idea of how messy, earthy, acute and bold a field hospital really is. It is run by men and women who are both responsive and attentive -- who can assess needs and make decisions, who know what they are able to provide, and where their limits are met.

What kind of resources does the church have in her field hospital? We have people -- priests, consecrated men and women, and laity -- who have hands to serve and hearts to love. We have the treasure of the sacraments -- especially the Eucharist and reconciliation -- that literally have the power to set people free. We have the spiritual gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel and fortitude.

Ultimately, we have Jesus Christ, who came to set us free.

Do we know Jesus? Can we testify to how Jesus has changed our lives? How, as a church, are we giving witness? Does that witness bear authenticity, does it draw people who are hurting to the One Person who can set them free?

In our church that is a field hospital we need brave soldiers who are willing to risk their reputations and even at times their lives to care for the wounded. We need men and women who are so convicted by what Jesus has done for them that they boldly and confidently invite others into a relationship with Jesus, who can set them free.

It is only through self-possession that one can make an authentic self-donation. Setting captives free ... this indeed is what Jesus asks of his church right now. How can we help young people be free to say yes when they hear Jesus whisper deep in their hearts, “Can I keep you?”

Sister Alicia Torres is a member of the Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago, and serves at the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels on Chicago’s West Side.



Another Perspective

By Monsignor Timothy P. Stein
The Only Way Out Is Through

Sister Geraldine Warthling, a Franciscan Sister of Penance and Christian Charity of Stella Niagara NY, was the director of theological field education at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus OH when I was a seminarian there in the early 80s. More than that, she was a mentor and a friend.

Geraldine can best be described by the words “no nonsense.” “Intense” and “earnest” also come to mind when I think of her. Her favorite word was “integrity,” always reminding us to practice what we preached -- to walk the walk if we were going to talk the talk. Geraldine had a marvelous capacity for being able to take phrases that would have been mere clichés in anyone else’s mouth, and turning them into real pearls of wisdom. As we enter into the mystery of the Easter Season, one of those phrases strikes me as being particularly apt: “The only way out, is through.”

In this season of grace we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The potent and powerful symbol of this mystery is the empty tomb -- the dark cavern with the stone rolled away. The only way out, is through, seems to be a good shorthand way of explaining what the Easter mystery is all about. We are called -- invited -- to new life; but we only come to that new life by passing through the dark times, the dark places of our hearts, minds and souls. We are called to come out of the tomb and to stand in the light. We cannot bypass the difficult parts of the journey. We know (or at least we hope we know) where we are going. But to get there is a struggle. The only way out to new life, is through the tomb, the grave where broken dreams and hopes and visions are buried away and left behind. The only way out, is through.

It would be a wonderful thing if Easter marked a neat and tidily wrapped up ending to the story of our salvation. If it was a once only event, then it would be. But life isn’t about having all of the odds and ends fit together in a perfect pattern of peace and contentment. Life is about striving, going forward, reaching onward and upward and looking for something better and brighter to come. We leave one empty tomb behind, only to find another waiting for us somewhere further along the road. And so we pass through that tomb, too, and rise again to new life, with all of the pitfalls and potholes that keep the journey interesting. The only way out, is through.

The six weeks of the Easter Season, beginning with the glorious celebration of Easter Sunday, reminds us that Easter is an ongoing mystery, something continuing unfolding as we make our pilgrim way to God’s Kingdom. Actually, we celebrate three days of Easter mysteries, beginning on Holy Thursday, calling to mind the fact that the reality of our salvation is tied up in passion, death, and only then, in resurrection.

Each step is necessary. Each step is an important part of the journey. And as we live and grow older, we will take each of those steps many times, until we are called to take them for the last time.

The only way out, is through.

(Reprinted from the April 21, 2014 edition).

The church embraces families, allowing them to grow in their faith, feel connected and strive to have all feel as if they belong. By being intentional and creating a sense of belonging in our parish communities, friendships are established, life's struggles and hopes are shared, and members feel good about contributing their time, talents and treasures.

Experiencing a sense of belonging is a common human need. Feeling that you 'belong' brings value and can be considered an emotional resource if it is part of a healthy environment. Sadly, some struggle to find a sense of belonging and that can lead to destructive behaviors and isolation.

Recently my middle - school aged son and I attended the annual Junior High Youth Day sponsored by the Diocese of Altoona -Johnstown's Youth Ministry Office. Over 150 students from across our diocese gathered to learn about our faith, became part of a movement and participated in Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark. As first-time attendees, we experienced a fun-filled day of laughs and engaged in the theme asking ourselves: 'What Would Jesus Do (WWJD)?' and 'What Would You (we) Do (WWYD)?'.

Francine Swope, her youth ministry staff and a mighty team of volunteers built a sense of belonging for our diocesan youth in one afternoon. A group of teen



A Sense Of Belonging

By Cindy O'Connor



organizers set a foundation of both faith and connection for the next generation of Catholics. As a community of believers throughout our diocese, we are all part of promoting positive youth development, so our children can truly feel that they belong. Positive Youth Development is the foundation for strong, connected families where young people learn to thrive.

I have been blessed with opportunities to serve as a professional and volunteer supporting youth - serving organizations focused on positive youth development. Youth development is a process that prepares a young person to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood and achieve his or her full potential. Youth development is promoted through activities and experiences

to develop social, ethical, emotional, physical, and cognitive competencies.

The Search Institute (www.search-institute.org) offers a research-based framework of Developmental Assets® and is considered the most frequently cited and widely utilized approach in positive youth development. The 40 Developmental Assets® framework consists of preventative measures, positive experiences, and qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible. Half of the assets focus on the relationships and opportunities they need in their families, schools, and communities (external assets). The remaining assets focus on the social-emotional strengths, values, and commitments that are nurtured within young people (internal assets).

Number 19 on the list of 40, under 'External Assets,' in the category of 'Constructive Use of Time,' is 'Religious Community,' defined: where a young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. Young people who are involved in a faith community are more likely to have positive values; have strong bonds with people of different ages and interests; and spend less time experimenting with risky behaviors.

(Continued On Page 15.)

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

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The Abuse Network
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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
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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

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

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.

In The Alleghenies



KNIGHTS AT NOVENA: Father Angelo Patti, pastor of Saint Andrew Parish, Johnstown, is shown with the Color Corps of the All Saints Assembly of the Knights of Columbus. The Color Corps participated in the parish's March 4 - 12 Novena to the Infant Jesus of Prague. Pictured are (left to right) John George, James Muir, Phillip Brezovic, John Calka, Father Patti, Tony Ream, William Ackman and John Bezzarri.



RECONCILIATION: Transfiguration Parish, Conemaugh, celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the First Holy Communion class. A luncheon was served to family and friends. Pictured are (left to right): First row: Madison McCleester, Savannah Kephart, Elsa Strazisar, Olivia Urban, Ciara Urban. Second row: Father Robert Hall (pastor), Louise Brezovic (director of religious education), Eve Hajduk (teacher) and Elizabeth Hajduk (teaching assistant).

(Continued From Page 3.)

The program, which is open to the public and free of charge, is jointly sponsored by the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies and the Rev. Gabriel J. Zeis, T.O.R. Endowment for Franciscan Studies and Roman Catholic Theology.

Blanket Collection

Loretto: The Saint Francis University Community Blanketeer group recently collected 200 beautiful quilted, crocheted, knitted, and embroidered blankets that will be distributed to sick and needy children through the Healing Patch, Nurse Family Partnership (Home Nursing Agency), and local hospitals.

The Blanketeers have been active on campus since 2006, and over the past twelve years have donated more than 1,590 blankets to local children in need in Cambria County and surrounding areas. Each year the group focuses on creating comfy, soft blankets for babies and young children.

The Saint Francis group was formed by Dr. Robin L. Cadwallader, Professor of English/ Communications, and Dr.

Margaret A. Kealey, Associate Professor of Business/Finance, with the assistance of Melita O'Donnell, Executive Assistant/Academic Affairs.

Over the past few years, the Healing Patch has distributed the blankets in "comfort bags" along with various other items (i.e. tissues, a memory book, a picture frame, a teddy bear, etc.) to children following the death of a loved one. Additionally, the blankets have been distributed to Healing Patch participants during program activities around fears, worries, sleeping issues, etc. and sent home to provide comfort during the difficulties and isolation throughout the nighttime hours...a common struggle for many young children during illness or following the death of a loved one.

Providing free, comprehensive educational, homemaker, & mentoring services to first-time mothers, Nurse - Family Partnership® registered nurses will distribute blankets to newborns and toddlers within the program. These special blankets will be

used for warm swaddling, tummy play time, and creating cozy, snuggles with Mom or Dad.

For additional information regarding the Saint Francis University Community Blanketeers, please contact Melita O'Donnell at modonnell@francis.edu.

Prayer

Retreat For Women

Portage: The Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus invite all women to a Weekend Retreat (Stepping Stones to Prayer) beginning with dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, April 13 and ending Sunday, April 15 with a brunch at noon, at Saint Joseph Convent, 1872 Munster Road.

Those who can only make it on Saturday are welcome to join the retreat at 8:30 a.m. Mass, followed by breakfast.

Please register by Wednesday, April 11 by contacting Sister Jacinta at sisterjacinta@gmail.com or (814) 886 - 4459. Suggested donation is \$75.00.

Divine Mercy Sunday

Second Sunday of Easter

There will be special prayer
Sunday, April 8, at 2 p.m.

for the 29th annual celebration
of the Feast of Divine Mercy

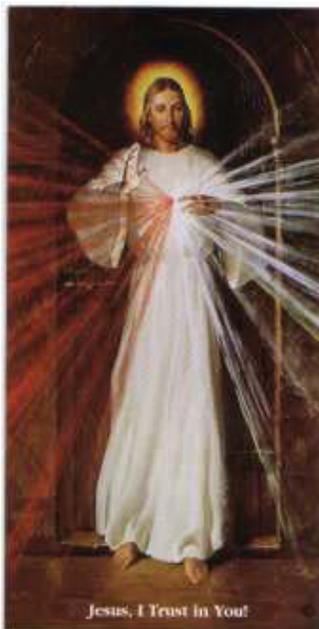
at Saint Catherine of Siena Parish
in Duncansville

The service will include:

a talk on Divine Mercy
by Deacon Gene Neral
the singing of
the Chaplet of Mercy
and
Benediction
of the
Blessed Sacrament

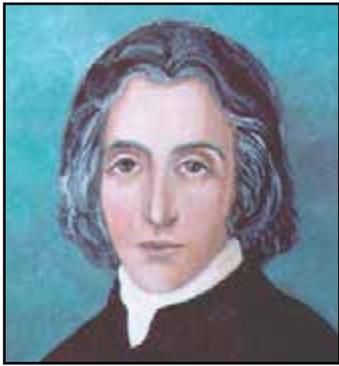
A video on Devotion
to the Divine Mercy
and the life of
Saint Maria Faustina
will be shown
at 12:30 p.m.

All are welcome!



Literature on the Devotion to the Divine Mercy and Novena booklets and others will be available!

Following the service
there will be an opportunity
to venerate the relics of
St. Maria Faustina & St. Therese of Lisieux.



A Prince In The Service Of The Great King

**The Servant Of God
Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin
1770 - 1840**

Romero Miracle Described

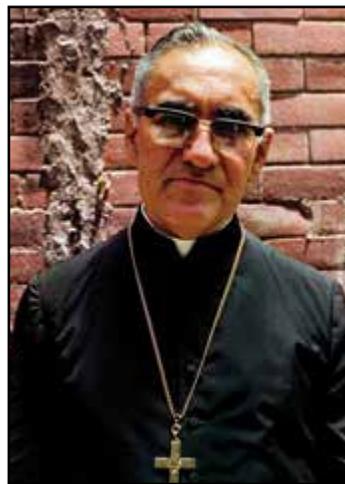
By Rhina Guidos
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Though church authorities in El Salvador said they would wait to give more details of a Vatican-approved miracle that has cleared the way for the canonization of Blessed Oscar Romero, a Salvadoran newspaper March 8 published an account of a 35-year-old woman

who said her husband's prayer asking for the intercession of Blessed Romero saved her life.

The newspaper *El Diario de Hoy*, which publishes the online version *ElSalvador.com*, said a woman named Cecilia in August 2015 had been having problems with her pregnancy. After she gave birth, she was diagnosed with HELLP syndrome, a life-threatening condition that affects some pregnant women and damages the liver.

The newspaper story said



CNS Photo/Octavio Duran
BLESSED OSCAR ROMERO

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**

a doctor told Cecilia's husband that her liver and a kidney were damaged and, "if you believe in something, in a god, (pray) for her because the way she is, it's likely that she'll die."

HELLP is an abbreviation of the three main features of the syndrome: hemolysis, elevated liver enzymes and low platelet count.

The husband went home to pray, opened a Bible his grandmother had given him, saw a card with Blessed Romero's image in it, and even though he'd had an "aversion" to his grandmother's prayers to the slain Salvadoran archbishop, he prayed for his intercession, the story said.

Though Cecilia had slipped into a coma, she awoke Sept. 10 and made a full recovery, the newspaper said.

The couple told the newspaper they knew it was a miracle and decided not to tell anyone about it but eventually confided in their pastor, who secured the documentation to send to the

Vatican. On March 7, the Vatican announced that the decree approving a miracle attributed to Blessed Romero's intercession had been approved.

Blessed Romero was assassinated March 24, 1980, as he celebrated Mass following several public denunciations of violence against civilians in the Central America nation. He had spoken out against injustice toward the poor that was lead-

ing to a conflict that would last 12 years and leave more than 70,000 dead. He was beatified May 23, 2015.

At a meeting March 6 with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, Pope Francis formally signed the decree recognizing the miracle needed to advance the sainthood cause of Blessed Romero. No date has been announced for his canonization.

Roast Beef Dinner Spring Festival

**Sunday, April 8, 2018
11:00 AM to ???**

**St. Demetrius Parish.
Gallitzin
Church Hall**



**Games, Baskets, Bake Sale
Adults \$10.00**

**Children 6 to 12 Years 6.00
5 Years and under Free**

Takeouts \$10.00

Carmelite Community of the Word 16th ANNUAL HAITI FÊT

Formerly the Paschal Festival

Sunday, April 22, 2018
Our Lady of Loretto Hall
279 St. Elizabeth St.
Loretto, PA 15940

Dinner and Silent Auction,
A portion of the afternoon will include Haitian music performed by a small choral group who has studied and practiced the music of the Little Sisters of the Incarnation.

Doors open at 1:45 p.m.
Dinner and Silent Auction at 2:30 p.m. followed by entertainment.

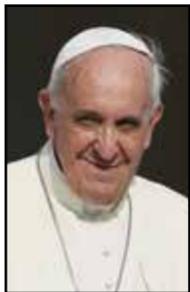
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Word of Life



The Pope Teaches

By Pope Francis
Young And Old

ROME (CNS) -- A new book - length interview with Pope Francis, titled **God Is Young**, represents a kind of "how-to" guide for creating a "revolution of tenderness" in which young people and the elderly -- both "thrown away" by society -- band together to help change the world.

Written by 32-year-old Italian author Thomas Leoncini, the book was released in Italian, German and French March 20-22 in time for regional World Youth Day celebrations on Palm Sunday, March 25. The English edition, published by Penguin Random House, was due to be released Oct. 2 in time for the world Synod of Bishops on young people Oct. 3-28. The Spanish edition was due out March 27.

The pope hoped the book, which is a series of interviews in question-and-answer format, would be a way to get an "unfiltered" message to young adults and those closest to them around the world, Leoncini said in the book's introduction.

The courage, energy and creativity of young people, together with the wisdom and experience of older generations, "are the necessary ingredients of the gentle revolution we all deeply need," Leoncini wrote.

The interviews -- between an 81-year-old and a man 50 years younger -- reflect the exact process the pope would like to see worldwide: young and old sharing their dreams and concerns with the aim of making the world a better place by helping others.

The pope shares personal details of his life growing up and addresses a broad range of issues, like climate change, leadership, social media and technology, bullying, cosmetic surgery and "purse dogs."

Some excerpts translated from the Italian:

-- God "is young because he makes all things new and loves newness, because he amazes and loves amazement, because he knows how to dream and desires our dreams, because he is strong and enthusiastic, because he builds relationships and asks us to do the same. He is social."

-- "Why don't we love ourselves and the way God made us? Why are human beings, men and women, increasingly becoming slaves to appearances and to having, forgetting how essential being is?"

-- The mindset "that holds no particular concern for the environment is the same mindset that throws away the most fragile."

-- "It seems the shame of sinning no longer exists, and this is a terrible sin."

-- "Diversity allows us to dig deep into the soul and heart: black or white doesn't exist; black, white, gray and then all shades of gray exist. We are all children of the same God, we have to recognize this and be ready to welcome every young person. Life itself is gray, it is a quest toward which we cannot be rigid, but like society, proudly multicolored."

-- "When I was young I was greatly afraid of not being loved." When asked how he overcame that fear, the pope said he sought to be authentic because "if people respect you for what you truly are, then you will see that you will feel loved."

-- "Old dreamers and young prophets are the way of salvation of our rootless society -- two thrown-away generations who can save everyone."



ONE MORE TIME: (Left to right) Sister Mary Madelaine, Mother Mary Raphael and Sister Mary Justa of the Congregation of Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, staffed Saint Catherine School in Mount Union in 1963.

My wife and I have taken to watching the population boom of dogs in commercials. Have you noticed they are everywhere? Dogs are the new children, but better groomed.

Pet food sales in the United States top \$28 billion a year, more than the U.S. government spends on non-military foreign aid to the rest of the world.

Dogs are not just being trotted out to sell bags of Pedigree or Iams. Increasingly, dogs are making appearances in ads selling other products, from cars to psoriasis drugs. They are guaranteed to inspire the warm and fuzzing feeling that marketers want associated with their products.

That advertising is going to the dogs tracks with our experience of families, young couples and singles. Talk around the water cooler is as likely to be about pets as kids. Folks are spending a fortune on anti-anxiety drugs for their animals, for hip replacements and kennels, for doggie play groups and for pet therapy. All totaled, Americans spend more than \$65 billion on Fido and Fluffy.

Lots of baby boomer grandparents - in - waiting can tell you about their offspring who may be delaying pregnancy (and marriage), but who like the pitter-patter of little feet around the house. Vacations home to



Amid The Fray

By Greg Erlandson
Doggone It,
Kids Are Great!

visit mom and dad now include elaborate arrangements for the housing of the pets at kennels, or they are brought along on the trip because they suffer from separation anxiety.

Often referred to as "the kids," pets now have their own greeting card lines. Check it out this coming Mother's Day. My favorite: "You make me want to be a better cat." Surely a sentiment no cat has ever felt.

So amid this allergen-saturated love fest with our furry friends, let me, as a parent and perhaps-someday-grandparent, make the case for kids.

-- Ignore all the bogus statistics about how much children cost. Those astronomical numbers are meant to scare you sterile, but they have no connection to reality. The truth is: It works out, whether it's braces, first car or college. It just takes patience, faith and a little ingenuity.

-- Pets are cute, but children are fascinating. Mine are all barreling toward full adulthood, and I find them even more inter-

esting now than when they were learning how to throw a football or master a math problem or discussing Harry Potter. I want to hear their thoughts on life and love and what's showing at the Cineplex, and of course share mine.

-- Kids help us to grow in love. They are designed to inspire our most protective feelings at birth, but that is just the beginning. Through them we learn how to sacrifice ourselves for others.

We learn to up our game -- giving them examples of discipline and forgiveness. We learn humility, for they expose our weaknesses and shortcomings as well. They teach us that love is not zero sum, but grows exponentially.

(Continued On Page 9.)



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Relics And Cremation

Q. In a recent answer regarding cremation, you explained the church's position that the cremated remains should be kept together and buried -- not scattered or divided up among family members (for example, in lockets). But I can recall a priest showing us, some years ago, a relic that was a small bone chip of a saint (whose name I have since forgotten).

How can we have such relics, albeit of a saint, when the church precludes the separation of cremains? Isn't that inconsistent? (Bettendorf, Iowa)

A. Relics of the saints have been venerated in the church for nearly 2,000 years -- certainly since the martyrdom of Polycarp in the middle of the second century; and commonly, bones of a saint were divided up with a noble purpose, so that more people could be reminded of the heroic virtue that saint had displayed.

The church's oversight of relics, though, is much more active today than it was in earlier centuries; now, for example, the Vatican no longer grants first-class relics to private individuals, as it once did, but only to churches and oratories for public veneration.

To answer your question directly, one might argue that there is a difference between a saint and an ordinary individual, between the public veneration of relics for the edification of the faithful and the private custody of cremains by family members in lockets.

But part of the answer, too, is that the fragmentation of a saint's remains that marked the church's earlier history would normally not be allowed today. In December 2017, the Vatican released a new instruction on authenticating and protecting relics that noted that the "dismemberment of the body is not permitted" unless the bishop has received permission from

the Congregation for Saints' Causes.

Q. A few months ago, I went to my grandnephew's wedding. He married outside the church because his Catholic parish wanted \$1,000 for them to get married there. I was sad for this couple and embarrassed, too. No wonder that many couples chose a non-church wedding. (Michigan)

A. I am truly sorry for your grandnephew's experience, and I regret especially that it resulted in his being married outside the church. I will pray that they have the marriage blessed ("convalidated") by a priest.

Some parishes do suggest a certain fee for the use of the church for a wedding -- especially for an historic church or chapel. (These are often located in inner city areas and depend heavily on such revenues for maintaining the facility.)

Frequently, though, a parish recommends no set amount or range, and it is left to the bride and groom to decide whether to make a donation, which most couples traditionally do. I prefer that option, because then the offering is more likely to match the couple's financial circumstances.

Amid The Fray

(Continued From Page 8.)

-- Children teach us about empathy. They say no parent is happier than his saddest child, and it's true. To see a child suffer -- whether from a skinned knee, a breakup or a business failure -- is to share that suffering with them. And that is love, too.

-- And for all you actuaries out there, the truth is that kids live longer than dogs and cats. God willing, we get to walk through the rest of our lives with them, which is what makes families so amazing (and occasionally maddening).

Pets are nice, but what all of us grandparents - in - waiting want to say is that children are God's wonderful gift. And it is a gift that keeps on giving.



For The Journey

By Effie Caldarola
Caught In The Very Act

One of the Gospel's most gripping stories unfolds in John 8:1-11.

In this era of "#metoo," the movement that reveals women's experiences of sexual assault, this reading describes an incident of the oppression and condemnation of a woman and Jesus' remarkable reaction to it.

In John, a woman "caught in the very act of committing adultery" is brought before Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees.

Often, I wonder how past generations viewed the good news of Jesus in different ways than we do. How did they use their imagination to contemplate this scene?

Today, it's probably rare for one reading this story not to immediately question the whereabouts of the man with whom this woman had sex. That phrase resonates: "in the very act." If you catch someone so flagrantly, obviously the other party is clearly identifiable.

Yet it's only the woman who is roughly dragged forward and thrust before Jesus into the middle of a group of self-righteous men. Where's her adulterous partner? Why isn't he being publicly rebuked and threatened? The law of Moses, the men say, condemns "such women" to stoning.

In so much of history -- and even today -- it's often the woman who pays society's price for sexual transgression. Not so long ago, the pregnant unmarried teen was hustled away to a maternity home while the prospective dad was allowed to finish high school.

In John's story, we are struck once again by the gentleness and mercy of Jesus, the way he crosses the border into the lives of women, engages them and stands up for them.

A mystery of this story is what Jesus is writing in the dirt. Twice, he bends over and uses his finger to write in Palestine's dust.

Then Jesus asks the men, whose faces I imagine are hostile and indignant, which of them is without sin. Let that man cast the first stone.

One by one, beginning with the eldest, they move silently away. They slither away. Is their indignation now replaced by embarrassment? Insight? Were their sins written on that road?

Jesus, who came to fulfill the law and the prophets, had little use for religious laws made by men that favored authority over mercy. As my favorite Jesuit homilist was told by his spiritual director, "Our God is a rule breaker. Don't focus on the rules. Focus on God."

This reading illustrates the great compassion of Jesus toward the underdog -- in this case, the woman. Jesus stands with all the oppressed, the victim of rape as a tool of war, the immigrant mercilessly separated from his family and deported, those marginalized because of their race or religion, those imprisoned in the relentless cycle of poverty, the victims of violence, those on death row.

Jesus is the Lord of the underdog.

He speaks to the woman. "Has no one condemned you?" When she replies no, he says, in a voice I imagine to be full of affection, "Neither do I condemn you." He sends her away to sin no more.

I examine my own role in this story. Whom do I condemn? Not in major ways, perhaps, but in the silent "tsk, tsk" of my mind. How often do I shake my head, thinking I could direct people to make better choices, when I have enough of a challenge making my own? Which of my sins would be written in that dust?

If Jesus stands in mercy with the underdog, that's where Christians are challenged to stand. Am I standing there? Are we standing there as church?

Saint Isidore
Of Seville
565 - 636
Feast - April 4



This bishop's extensive writings influenced church thinking for a millennium. As bishop of Seville, Spain, from about 600 until his death, he presided over two councils, promoted acceptance of the "filioque" clause of the Creed, and battled the Arian heresy. He wrote a history of the barbarian invasions of Spain and compiled in "The Etymologiae" all that was known in his time. Nearing death, he gave away everything he had, confessed his faults to his people in church, and received Communion. Pope John XXIII admired his ideas about the ideal bishop, notably that "Every bishop should be distinguished as much by his humility as by his authority." A doctor of the church, Isidore is the patron saint of computer users.

Romero Canonization Called 'Gift From God'

By Catholic News Service

LOS ANGELES (CNS) -- El Salvador's Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chavez called the upcoming canonization of Blessed Oscar Romero a "gift from God" and is optimistic it can bring hope to his troubled homeland and to the Catholic Church.

At a meeting March 6 with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, Pope Francis formally signed the decree recognizing the miracle needed to advance the sainthood cause of the slain archbishop of San Salvador, who was martyred for the faith.

No date or place has been announced yet for canonization ceremony, but Cardinal Rosa Chavez said the bishops of El Salvador had sent a letter to the pope asking if the canonization could take place in El Salvador "so that the poor could participate."

The cardinal, who is auxiliary bishop of San Salvador,

was interviewed in Los Angeles by Pablo Kay of Angelus News, the archdiocesan news site. The prelate was invited to this year's Religious Education Congress in Anaheim. The March 16-18 congress is sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Office of Religious Education.

Upon arriving in Los Angeles, Cardinal Rosa visited schoolchildren and celebrated Mass at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Pico-Union, a parish with a large Salvadoran community.

Then he headed to the Congress, where he concelebrated a Mass and hosted two workshops titled "Justice Isn't Enough: Forgiveness Is Necessary" and "Why Is Our Holy Father Named Francis? A Christian Reflection on Peace."

During a wide-ranging interview he talked about the Romero canonization and the second miracle confirmed by the Vatican to move the cause forward; shared his thoughts on immigration and U.S. President Donald Trump's push for a bor-

der wall; and described a "hurricane named Francis," meaning the pope and all he has done during his five years as pontiff.

Asked how people should prepare for Blessed Romero's canonization, he said: "This question is so important that we (the bishops of El Salvador) discussed it with the pope when we met with him last March because there was an attitude that his canonization was like having won the lottery. But this is a gift from God, and now this gift has to be merited.

"The pope gave us three ways to prepare," Cardinal Rosa Chavez said. "First, by getting to know Archbishop Romero. Many have never read his homilies. Second, by following his example. Third, by learning to invoke his intercession, to pray to him. We're learning to do this."

He said that there is "a different atmosphere" in El Salvador, knowing that the canonization is "imminent" and beyond the preparation, he feels this will help "achieve peace in the country."

"The country can do things that are impossible," Cardinal Rosa Chavez said. "We're the country of impossible things, a country of surprises that can rise

from the ashes, that can make peace possible -- with Romero at the front. ... Now, we're all in 'Romero mode,' as they say."

The cardinal said he was invited to the Religious Education Congress long before the pope marked this fifth anniversary and of course before the announcement that Blessed Romero will be canonized.

The prelate was glad both happenings occurred shortly before the congress, because he saw being in Los Angeles as a chance to talk about Blessed Romero and also "to help people know who this Francis really is, this hurricane named Francis."

Asked if he prays for the late archbishop's intercession, Cardinal Rosa Chavez replied: "I remember the first time that I prayed to him after he was beatified, I felt like I was conversing with the same person I had known, the one I had walked together with so many times."

Cardinal Rosa Chavez commented on proposals and feedback the youth of El Salvador have sent to Pope Francis in advance of the October world Synod of Bishops on youth, faith and vocational discernment.

"The greatest danger that they named was social media,"

he said. "The youth of El Salvador! In the document, they describe how today's youth are captivated by this new technology that they can't master, and they end up being enslaved by it."

"To these young people, the threat of violence practically came in second place," he added, referring to the gang violence that is a daily reality for many. "A kid can't go down the street to even see his girlfriend, because the gang members are there," he noted.

With regard to today's technology and young people, he said: "Pope Francis has referred to how Jesus loved to share with his disciples around a table, but also with those that the world despised: the sinners, the poor. But what happens today? The youth have lost this sense of 'conviviality.' The people don't share -- they get on their little gadgets, and they become absent. So, the pope says, these people are connected, but not communicated."

He also talked about the Catholic Church's role on immigration, thanking Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez "for his courage and his clarity on this issue, as well as the U.S. bishops."

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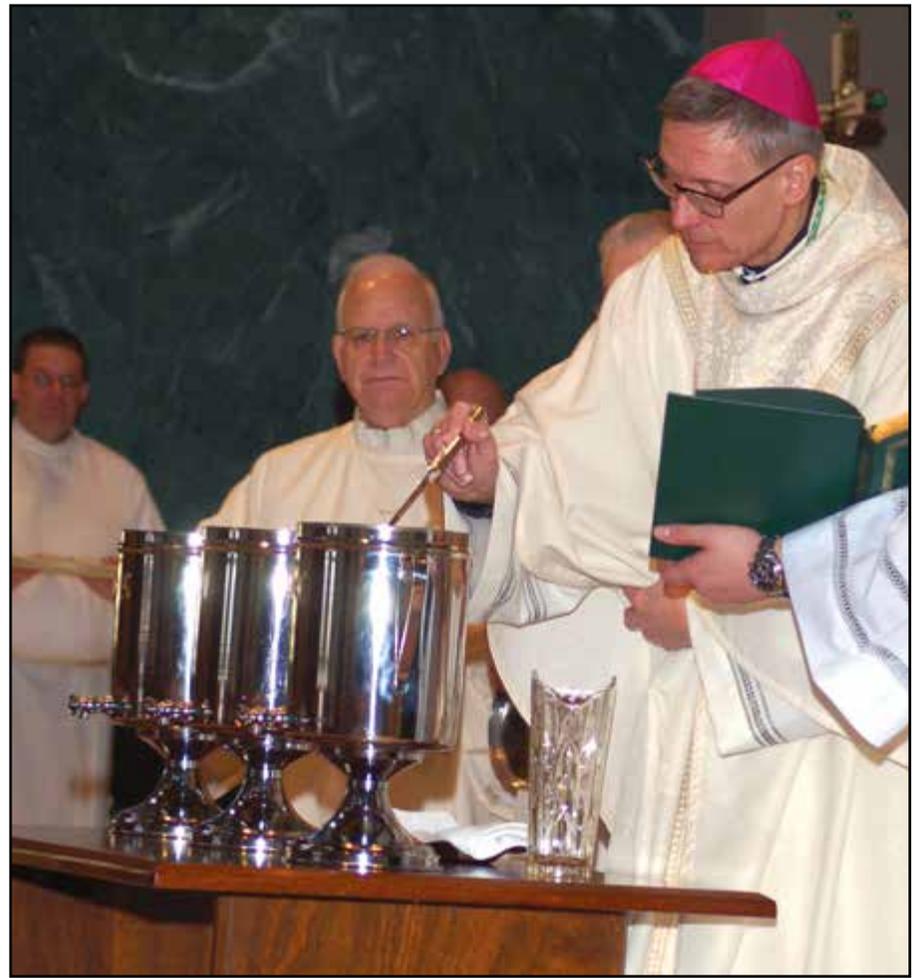
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Photos By Bruce A. Tomaselli

CHRISM MASS: Bishop Mark L. Barchak celebrated the Chrism Mass Monday, March 26 at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona. He prayed over each urn of oil (left photo) and mixed balsam with pure olive oil for the Sacred Chrism (right photo).

Bishop Lauds Priests

(Continued From Page 16.)

Bishop Mark further stated that priests are “anointed to live and minister to God’s people in the person of Jesus Christ.” Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they are to do that by bringing glad tidings to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, letting the oppressed go free, and proclaiming a year acceptable to the Lord. This was the message of the Prophet Isaiah embraced by Jesus in his public ministry.

In determining how to do all those things, Bishop Mark challenged the priests “to pay attention to what our people are saying.”

“People are crying out to be anointed,” the Bishop reflected. “They are crying out to us to get down into the mud and messiness of life.

“We can do that. We can do that even when the cry of our

people to be anointed with grace and mercy becomes overpowering.

“We can do it. It is our vocation to act *in persona Christi*. He is the suffering servant foretold by Isaiah. There is nothing glamorous about the dirty and bloody manner in which he redeemed the world through His death on the cross.”

Jesus said of Isaiah’s prophecy “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” Priestly ministry means that that prophecy continues to be fulfilled.

Priests share in the Lord’s sacrifice by offering Mass. But, Bishop Mark pointed out that sacrifice “continues every day to the extent that we don’t remain behind the altar, but go out to the may places of sacrifice where the lives of our people are on the line every single day.”

Scripture is fulfilled, Bishop Mark stated, by the mission and ministry of grace and mercy.



Photo By Bruce A. Tomaselli

RECEIVING THE OILS: Parish representatives received the Holy Oils from the priest - deans gathered in the Cathedral’s sanctuary.

“Brother priests, we need this day to be reminded that no matter how much of our time and energy they seek, our people love us and want us to be faithful to God and to our call to holiness,” said Bishop Mark to the priests.

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Youth Reminded They Are Made For Greatness

**Photos And Text
By Tony DeGol**

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students do not need to wear a cape or drive the Bat-

mobile to help make the world better.

“You were placed where you are because you bring something unique to where you are, and that’s where it’s needed,” reminded Brad Farmer. “So your own special superhero secret mission isn’t about what you do

at church. That’s important, but it’s also among your friends, and in your school, and in your families, and in the shopping malls, and in the cafes, and in the restaurants, and even in Walmart.”

No matter where we go, Farmer stressed, we bring that

mission and hopefully fulfill that mission.

“Isn’t that what Jesus did?,” Farmer asked. “That’s precisely, and our mission is to bring Christ, to bring truth, to bring beauty, to bring goodness, to bring Jesus Christ to the world. That’s what the saints give the world, and that’s our special superhero secret mission.”

Farmer is part of APeX Ministries, a duo that uses “Christian Vaudeville” to spiritually enlighten and entertain young people. APeX was the featured presenter at the annual Junior High Youth Day, spon-

sored by the Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry. It was held Sunday, March 18 at Bishop Carroll Catholic High School in Ebensburg.

“What Would Jesus Do? What Would You Do?” was the theme for the event.

“There is so much bad news in our world today,” said Francine Swope, Diocesan coordinator of Youth Ministry, Religious Education, and Sacramental Preparation.

(Continued On Page 13.)

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By Pam Seasoltz

Director of Stewardship and Development

In 2017 more than 6,709 children and teens benefitted from Youth Ministry programs that were made possible by your support of the Catholic Ministries Drive.

The Youth Ministry programs offers spiritual education and enrichment programs that are both family based and parish centered. Religious Education programs are offered to all school age children, including sacramental preparation of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation; summer camps (Camp Zacchaeus & Camp Timothy); and retreats like Senior High Youth Convention (SHYCON) and Faith Day.

A Story Of Faith, Hope & Charity

Fifteen - year - old Rob arrived at Camp Timothy with a bit of a chip on his shoulder, nervous about what to expect. He was being raised by devout grandparents and felt sure he had nothing in common with the other campers—at least that’s what he thought. But by the end of the first day, he quickly learned other kids had similar stories and feelings too. He wasn’t so different after all.

Camp Timothy is a fun - filled adventure that is deeply rooted in the belief of living a Christian life. Through various hands-on activities like zip lining, Rob was challenged to look at his life today and how to trust someone—of how faith can be a guiding light. He only had to reach out.

At week’s end, Rob realized he had a great time, met some cool kids, and the chip had melted. He became especially close to one friend who he learned to confide in—Jesus Christ.

He also said that a miracle happened that week. “We didn’t miss or want our cell phones!”

Your support today will empower our youth to live as today’s disciples, encouraging them to embrace the personal and spiritual mission of their Catholic faith, and to carry it forward tomorrow into the world.

Your gift can be mailed to Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, P.O. Box 409, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648; placed in your parish offertory; or made online at www.dioceseaj.org.



HANGING OUT WITH APeX: A group of students from Good Shepherd Parish in Port Matilda enjoyed a few moments with APeX Ministries between presentations at Junior High Youth Day. Gene Monterastelli (left) and Brad Farmer make up APeX, a duo that uses what they call “Christian Vaudeville” as part of their routine.

SAINT PETER PROUD: Holding their parish sign, two Saint Peter youth pose with Bishop Mark L. Bartchak after Liturgy at Junior High Youth Day. During his homily, Bishop Mark reminded the more than 200 students in attendance that they should want to see Jesus every day.

(Continued From Page 12.)

“We really wanted the students to imagine what the world would be like if everyone stopped and considered what Jesus would do. How would He react?”

Swope said the participants were immersed in the theme from the beginning with the opening prayer skit from the planning committee. The group staged a game show with contestants considering how Jesus would handle various situations.

Then, APeX literally kept the ball rolling through juggling, storytelling, and other engagement.

Farmer’s APeX partner, Gene Monterastelli, invited an audience member to tightly secure him in a straightjacket. After several interesting minutes of squirming his way out of the garment, the slightly fatigued Monterastelli made a valuable point.

“I do not know what the obstacles are in your life, I don’t know the burdens you bear, I don’t know what these things are in your life,” he said, referencing the confining straps of the straightjacket. “As much fun as a day like this is, in a few hours we’re going to head back

home and those places that you struggle in – school, family, whatever you’re facing – just because we’re Catholic Christians doesn’t mean these things just magically go away. What’s important is not that, but the way we choose to respond to those things.”

The core of APeX’s Junior High Youth Day message was that the students are made for greatness, Farmer stated.

Added Monterastelli: “The idea of living that out is something that happens in this moment. It’s not ‘when I grow up I become’ or ‘this is who I’m supposed to be,’ but in the interactions we have with our peers, with our family. That’s the place where Christian life plays itself out.”

As usual, Bishop Mark L. Bartchak celebrated Mass for the students. In his homily, he pointed out that scripture reminds us that Jesus is real, and all of us should have a desire to see Him.

“All of us should want to hang out with Jesus,” he emphasized. “All of us should want to get personal with Him every single day.”

The Bishop explained that people can see with their eyes

closed as long as their mind and heart are open.

He invited students to take the hands of those next to them and close their eyes. He asked them to recite a prayer asking to see Jesus and to help other young people see Jesus. The Bishop then told the group to open their eyes, to continue holding hands, and to look at the person next to them.

“You have just seen the face of Jesus,” he added.

The more than 200 participants came away from the day ready to put their faith into action.

“It’s good to have kids entertained, and it’s also good because they taught us about God,” said Carmyne O’Connor of Resurrection Parish in Johnstown.

“To treat others as they would want to be treated, and not to judge others,” responded Allura Nesbella, a parishioner at Our Lady of the Alleghenies in Lilly, when asked what she learned.

Tyler Smyder of Saint Matthew Parish in Tyrone said he is now inspired to pray more.

“I think APeX Ministries did very well in telling us how to improve on things and be more like Jesus,” noted Cadence Diehl, also a parishioner at Saint Matthew.

The students’ reaction was music to Swope’s ears.

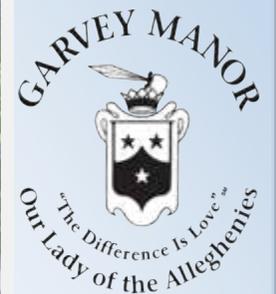
“We encourage them to take the message of today and go out

into the world, and others will see Jesus in them, and our world will be a better place,” she said.

“You know your job, superheroes,” Farmer concluded. “Become who you were created to be.”

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Fact - Based 'I Can Only Imagine' Strikes Truthful Chord

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Dennis Quaid brings his formidable talent to bear in the faith-driven drama "I Can Only Imagine" (Lionsgate).

His portrayal of Arthur Millard, the abusive father whose conversion to evangelical Chris-

tianity inspired his son, Bart (John Michael Finley), to write the eponymous 2001 song -- an unprecedented chart topper that became popular even with non-believers -- represents the film's principal asset.

A washed-up high school football star whose gridiron career went nowhere, the elder Millard never loses an opportunity to throw cold water on



CNS Photo/Lionsgate And Roadside

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE: John Michael Finley, as Bart Millard, and Nicole DuPort, as Amy Grant, star in a scene from the movie "I Can Only Imagine." 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.

Bart's childhood dreams and nascent creativity. And his mistreatment of the lad involves wielding a belt as well as cruel words, though this is implied and discussed rather than seen.

Yet, as Quaid succeeds in

conveying, Arthur also is the victim of his own painful frustrations and sense of failure. His eventual repentance, moreover, is shown to be appropriately hard-won.

Directors and brothers Jon and Andrew Erwin's movie is essentially a biography of Bart, the front man for the group MercyMe.

Besides his turbulent relationship with his dad, the script, which Jon Erwin co-wrote with Brent McCorkle, also traces amiable Bart's on-again, off-again romance with Shannon (Madeline Carroll), his childhood sweetheart. And it chronicles his struggle to achieve musical success under the guidance of his group's dedicated manager, Scott Brickell (Trace Adkins).

As its advertising tagline "The song you know. The story you don't," suggests the prime audience for "I Can Only Imag-

ine" will be religious pop fans who, like Bart, would be star-struck on meeting genre icons Amy Grant (Nicole DuPort) and Michael W. Smith (Jake B. Miller). Indeed, the lead-up to the scene of the title song's premiere performance seems calculated to tantalize those especially devoted to it.

Still, with an inspiring real-life story to tell, and a screenplay free of anything at all offensive, the picture offers uplifting entertainment that parents and teens can share without worry.

The film contains mature themes, including marital discord and the physical abuse of a child. 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:

April 8 -- Youth Ministry coordinator Francine Swope and two veteran Camp Zacchaeus campers look ahead to the summer camp season.

April 15 -- Amy Hill, Communications Director for the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, discusses efforts to support unborn children with Down Syndrome.

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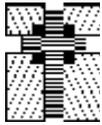
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11 a.m. - Noon WATM - TV ABC Channel 23

Proclaim!
10:30 a.m.

A half - hour of local Church news and features

May
They Rest
In Peace



Pope Urges Devotion To Christ's Wounds

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service



Sister Rosemary Snyder
C.S.J.

Sister Rosemary (Edna) Snyder, 88, died Tuesday, March 13, in the 71st year of her religious life as a Sister of Saint Joseph of Baden. The daughter of the late Anne and Howard Snyder, Sister Rosemary entered the Congregation from Saint Joseph in New Kensington.

Sister Rosemary served as a teacher for 54 years in the dioceses of Altoona - Johnstown, Greensburg, Pittsburgh, and Columbus, Ohio.

Following retirement in 2004, Sister Rosemary became a volunteer in the Motherhouse, generously and quietly offering her time: filing papers, watering plants, delivering mail, and posting signs.

Sister Rosemary is survived by a nephew, cousins, Associates and the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Rosemary Snyder C.S.J. was celebrated Friday, March 16 in the chapel of Saint Joseph Convent. Committal was in the Sisters' Cemetery on the Motherhouse grounds.

Donations in the name of Sister Rosemary may be sent to the Sisters of Saint Joseph Memorial Fund, Development Office, 1020 State Street, Baden PA, 15005.

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis seems to be fixated on the wounds of Christ. And he has suggested that other Catholics might want to be as well.

He has offered meditations on Jesus' pierced hands, feet and side throughout his pontificate, but since January, his references in impromptu speeches and homilies have been so frequent that it seems to be a major focus of his own prayer life.

In his homily at morning Mass March 20, he shared the advice of a spiritual director: "Look. Look at the wounds. Enter in to the wounds. By those wounds we were healed. Do you feel bitter, feel sad, feel life just isn't going the right way and you're also ill? Look there. In silence."

Sometimes, the pope said, artists want to focus more on Jesus' post-resurrection glory, so they will make a crucifix of gold and adorn it with jewels. But when one is feeling lost or frightened or in pain, he said, look at a crucifix "before the glory" and recognize how Jesus "annihilated himself" to defeat evil and death.

Reciting the Angelus prayer March 18, Pope Francis recommended a centuries-old devotion in which a person contemplates one of the five wounds of Christ and recites an Our Father before moving to the next wound.

"When we pray that Our Father, let's try to enter through Jesus' wounds and arrive deeper and deeper, to his heart," the pope said. "Enter into his wounds and contemplate the love in his heart for you, and you, and you, and me, for everyone," the pope told thousands of people in St. Peter's Square.

The wounds of Christ were a natural topic of reflection during Pope Francis' meeting Feb. 10 with members of the Stigmatine order; after all, their spirituality is inspired by devotion to the passion of Christ, vividly shown in the wounds he endured for the salvation of the world.

A devotion to Christ's wounds "may sound a bit medieval," the pope told the priests. In fact, meditating on "the five sacred wounds" became popular in the 12th and 13th centuries, but it also enjoyed a resurgence in the 20th century with the growing attention to the Divine Mercy devotions of St. Faustina Kowalska. The Polish nun wrote in her diary that Jesus told her,

"When it seems to you that your suffering exceeds your strength, contemplate my wounds."

Luminaries from St. Clare of Assisi to St. Alphonsus Liguori have guided the faithful in prayers focusing on each wound -- left foot, right foot, left hand, right hand and side -- and similar devotions are widely available online.

But Pope Francis' remarks seem to have more in common with the meditations of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and, perhaps naturally, with the popular prayer, "Anima Christi" or "Soul of Christ." The prayer often is attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola, and is included in the saint's Spiritual Exercises.

Mercy, the central theme of Pope Francis' pontificate, and "the gift of shame," something he mentions often, intersect in the two treatments of Christ's wounds.

St. Bernard's reflection includes the line: "Where have your love, your mercy, your compassion shone out more luminously than in your wounds, sweet, gentle Lord of mercy?"

And the "Anima Christi" includes the plea to Jesus: "Within your wounds hide me."

Talking to the Stigmatines, the pope adapted the prayer:

"Within your wounds hide me. Hide me from my shame. Hide me from the wrath of the Father. Hide me from my misery. But in your wounds."

And, he told priests and religious in Chile in January, wounds are not something we should hide from God or from others. In fact, recognizing one's own wounds, and the woundedness of the church, is the first step to being able to see and treat the wounds of others.

"We are not asked to ignore or hide our wounds," he said. "A church with wounds can understand the wounds of today's world and make them her own, suffering with them, accompanying them and seeking to heal them. A wounded church does not make herself the center of things, does not believe that she is perfect, but puts at the center the one who can heal those wounds, whose name is Jesus Christ."

"In Jesus, our wounds are risen," Pope Francis continued. "They inspire solidarity; they help us to tear down the walls that enclose us in elitism and they impel us to build bridges and to encounter all those yearning for that merciful love which Christ alone can give."

A Sense Of Belonging

(Continued From Page 5.)

Let us provide an environment for our youth where they feel that they belong to our faith communities. Encourage more attendance from your parish at diocese sponsored youth activities. We missed seeing youth from many of our churches across the region who were not represented at all during our Junior High Youth Day.

"Let us work together, then, so that we will always have the right, the courage and the joy to be able to look into the eyes of the children of our world." -Pope Francis

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco_20171006_congresso-childdignity-digitalworld.html

The month of April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It's a time to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families, and to recognize the significance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. For inquires on youth protection and safe environment efforts within the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown or to schedule training workshops on Youth Protection Awareness and Mandated Reporting, please contact Cindy O'Connor at (814) 695-5579, extension 2621 or via email at coconnor@dioceseaj.org.

The Prince of Life, who died, reigns immortal.
Amen. Alleluia!

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At Annual Chrism Mass

Bishop Exhorts Priests To ‘Serve With Gladness’

By Msgr. Timothy P. Stein

On a clear, crisp March Monday morning, filled with the promise of Springtime, Bishop Mark L. Bartchak shared a hope-filled, challenging message with his priests - a message that was greeted with thunderous applause by the faithful filling the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona.

“Brother priests, we need this day to be reminded that no matter how much of our time and energy they seek, our people love us and want us to be faithful to God and to our call to holiness,” said the Bishop to the priests.

“Can I ask the people in this Cathedral to join me in offering an expression of our gratitude and appreciation for their service,” asked Bishop Mark, as he lead the ovation for the priests who serve in the eight Counties of the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown.

“I ask all of you to pray for our priests,” he continued. “As often as you can, encourage them to be living signs of holiness. Encourage them to do their part in making the words of Jesus a reality.”

The Bishop’s homily at the Chrism Mass celebrated March 26 was a message of encouragement and hope for the priests



Photo By Bruce A. Tomaselli

PRIESTS JOIN BISHOP IN PRAYER: Gathering at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona on Monday, March 26, for the annual Chrism Mass, priests serving in the Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown extended their hands to join Bishop Mark L. Bartchak in praying the prayer of consecration of the Sacred Chrism.

who had gathered to pray with him and to renew their promises of priestly service. “We need this day to rededicate ourselves to the mission and ministry for which we were ordained,” Bishop Mark reminded them.

Bishop Mark was keen to have the priests renew their offering of self in a spirit of joy and gladness.

“A priest is one who offers sacrifice,” he said. “That’s part

of our Judeo - Christian tradition.

“And a priest is to be a person of service,” the Bishop continued, “which encompasses things like mission, mercy, and a clear spiritual direction in the life of the priest and for the benefit of the people of God we are ordained to serve.

“And we cannot forget that sacrifice and service are incomplete without the gladness that is

shared in ministering to God’s people and in their receiving the spiritual gifts of Christ and His Church.”

Bishop Mark reviewed the purpose for which each of the oils blessed or consecrated at the Chrism Mass would be used: “The Oil of Catechumens reminds us of the preparation that takes place before Baptism” he said, and “The Oil of the Sick reminds us of the healing power

of God and the care and service that we are to provide to those who are seriously ill or even near death.”

The Oil of the Sacred Chrism, Bishop Mark explained “reminds us that we are a priestly people, whether we are ordained or not ordained.”

(Continued On Page 11.)

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