



# The Catholic Register



Official Publication Of  
The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Volume 92, No. 42 Published Bi - Weekly (USPS 094 - 280)

www.dioceseaj.org December 10, 2018

## A Special Message From Bishop Mark

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this issue of *The Catholic Register* (pages 7-10), you will find information that many have been asking for a long-time. It has to do with the impact of the clergy sexual abuse scandal on our diocese.

Since the investigative reports about other dioceses in Pennsylvania this past summer, and the alleged abuse committed by a former Cardinal and the cover-up that followed, many of you have shared your thoughts and emotions.

They are described in words like shock, disgust, anger, confusion, disappointment, and betrayal. I understand why you have experienced those thoughts and feelings. I have experienced the same, but I barely have time to process them when there is so much that needs to be done every day. There has not been one day that I did not hear from or about a person who was a victim and struggles to be a survivor of child sexual abuse. I continue to hear from their families who are deeply affected. I hear from the many good priests who are trying to do their best in ministering to God's people.

I have heard from priests who have been accused of these horrible offenses against



**SUPPORTING YOUTH:** Bishop Mark receives the offertory gifts during a visit to Camp Zacchaeus, the annual diocesan youth summer camp. The Bishop remains dedicated to supporting and nurturing young people through his enthusiastic participation in diocesan youth events.

the innocence and God-given dignity of young people. I have heard from people who have simply walked away from the Church. I have heard from advocates for change. And I have heard from those who will not give another nickel to the Church, to our diocese, until there is change. They want to know what this is all about.

So let's start with looking at the past. The much publicized

case involving the former priest Francis Luddy in 1999 marked the beginning of this long and painful time that we have been going through in our diocese.

In 2004, a second case was in the news involving 21 victims. It demonstrated the fact that the suffering for many victims of sexual abuse and their families began years earlier.

Those two cases prompted the Diocese of Altoona-

Johnstown to initiate a victim assistance program in 2004 to assist all victims of child sexual abuse, regardless of when the abuse occurred, even when legal action was not available because of the Statute of Limitations under Pennsylvania law. Ignoring those limits, the diocese provided a path for all survivors to come forward, to be heard, to receive financial assistance, and be provided with counseling and support services so that victims could begin the healing process. From July 1999 to the present, over 290 individuals have received settlements and/or financial assistance through our diocesan program totaling over \$15.7 million. During that same time period an additional \$2.8 million was offered for counseling and support services. As of today, \$515 thousand has been expended by the diocese to provide assistance for those who chose to make use of counseling services.

Elsewhere you will see a chart which shows that a little more than \$4.3 million has been paid for legal expenses. Just under \$900 thousand has been used from the insurance fund and proceeds from the sale of real estate to provide for priests who have been accused of sexual abuse of minors.

It has also been difficult to understand that the diocese paid for most of the damages that

resulted from the misconduct of one religious brother who was not a member of the clergy of our diocese. That is no longer the case since his former superiors have accepted responsibility.

Many have asked where we get the money to pay for all of this. Parish savings and funds designated for specific needs have not been used. This includes, for example, cemetery funds and designated contributions made by individual donors to a specific cause such as Catholic Charities.

As you know, after consulting with the diocesan finance council and college of consultors, I ordered the bishop's residence to be sold and later approved the sale of the Diocesan Administration Center. The proceeds from the sale of these properties were largely applied to the expenses outlined above. The funding for settlements and counseling has otherwise been from savings of the diocese and insurance.

Other dioceses have recently announced the establishment of programs that will involve tens of millions of dollars to provide services and compensation for victims. Our diocesan savings is insufficient

(Continued On Page 16.)

# Vatican Official Warns That Robotic Weapons Must Be Banned Before They Become Reality In Wars



(CNS photo/Omar Sobhani, Reuters)

**REAPER DRONE:** A U.S. service member passes in front of an MQ-9 Reaper drone to help to step up the fight against the Taliban at the Kandahar air base in Afghanistan.

By Carol Glatz  
Catholic News Service

## VATICAN CITY (CNS)

-- Fully automated and autonomous lethal weapons systems must be banned now before they become a reality in tomorrow's wars, a Vatican representative said.

The development of robotic weapons or "killer robots" will provide "the capacity of altering irreversibly the nature of warfare, becoming more detached from human agency, putting in question the humanity of our societies," Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic told a group of experts at the United Nations in Geneva.

The archbishop, who is the Vatican observer to U.N. agencies in Geneva, spoke Nov. 22 at a meeting of the high contracting parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held in Geneva Nov. 21-23. The Vatican mission in Geneva released the archbishop's remarks Nov. 27.

The legal and ethical implications of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) have been discussed

and on the convention's agenda for the past five years, the archbishop said in his speech.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has defined LAWS as being "any weapon system with autonomy in its critical functions. That is, a weapon system that can select -- i.e. search for or detect, identify, track, select -- and attack -- i.e. use force against, neutralize, damage or destroy -- targets without human intervention."

The first such autonomous weapon was the land mine, but rapid advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning have broadened the potential for weapons with extensive autonomy from human decision-making.

"The Holy See has expressed its concerns on several occasions" about this deadly form of weapons system, the archbishop said.

"Various proposals for possible concrete outcomes have been put forward; what these proposals have in common is the underlying need for a multi-lateral approach and the need to retain the human person at the heart of decisions exerting injurious or lethal force," he said. The Vatican advocates the attitudes of precaution and prevention as being "the only options that will ensure a sound and last-

ing outcome."

"In order to prevent an arms race and the increase of inequalities and instability, it is an imperative duty to act promptly: Now is the time to prevent LAWS from becoming the reality of tomorrow's warfare," he said.

The convention's parties "should make a courageous and enlightened decision of prohibiting LAWS like it did in the past concerning other types of weapons," Archbishop Jurkovic said, like with the international ban on land mines and the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

**ARTIST:** Sand sculptor Rich Varano is pictured as early work progresses on the sand sculpture Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Nov. 21. Varano, a native of Florida, is the artistic director of this year's Nativity scene.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

**NATIVITY SCENE OF SAND:** A worker sculpts an angel on a Nativity scene made entirely of sand in Saint Peter's Square at the Vatican.

## Nativity Sand Sculpture

By Junno Arocho Esteves  
Catholic News Service

### VATICAN CITY (CNS)

-- From the beach town of New Smyrna, Florida, just a stone's throw away from Daytona Beach, Rich Varano never imagined his unique talent of sculpting sand would take him to the heart of Christianity.

Varano is the artistic director of the "Sand Nativity," a massive 52-foot-wide sculpture made of sand imported from Jesolo, an Italian seaside resort town roughly 40 miles north of Venice.

"What does it mean for me to be here? I think, quite understandably, it's the greatest honor there is" and certainly the biggest client he's ever had, Varano told Catholic News Service Nov. 21.

The American artist and three other sculptors were charged with creating the intricate sculpture, which, along with a 42-foot-tall red spruce tree donated by the Diocese of

Concordia-Pordenone in the northern Italian region of Veneto, was to be unveiled at the Vatican's annual tree lighting ceremony December 7.

Bas-relief sand sculptures, like the one to be featured in St. Peter's Square, are a tradition in Jesolo, which, since 1998, has been the home of an annual sand sculpture festival.

"I've been sculpting sand since I was 6 years old," Varano told CNS. "My father was an amateur and the beach where I grew up had good sand."

Varano began as an amateur, too, "until I discovered that people would pay for it in my late 20s. And within a year, sand sculpting was the only thing I've been doing professionally ever since."

The process of creating the sculptures, however, is more than just molding and shaping sand. Unlike the sand castles vacationers often see disintegrate from a single touch or the occasional passing wave, sand sculptures are made durable enough to even withstand light rain through a process of compression.

The sand, which was delivered from Jesolo to St. Peter's Square in massive trucks, is mixed with water and compressed into layers of blocks stacked on top of one another.

Varano said that this process allows for the sculpture to last "indefinitely as long as it wants to be left on display." The "Sand Nativity" scene and tree will remain in St. Peter's Square until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 13.

# In The Alleghenies

## Carmelite Novena In Honor Of Infant Jesus

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Loretto, invite everyone to share in the annual private novena in honor of the Infant Jesus on Sunday, December 16 to Christmas Eve on Sunday, December 24. The novena will be held at the Carmelite Monastery Chapel. It is in preparation for the Solemn Feast of Christmas.

The regular private monthly novena honoring Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Therese will take place at this time as well. All intentions will be remembered in the spe-

cial novena prayers offered following the daily Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Every Sunday at 4:00 PM and every First Friday of the month Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament will be given in the public chapel at Carmel, followed by the veneration of the relic of Saint Therese.

Those desiring to share in the grace and blessings of these nine days of prayer are requested to send their petitions to: Mother Prioress, Carmelite Monastery, Post Office Box 57, Loretto, PA 15940.



Finian of Clonard died circa 549

FEAST December 10

This Irish abbot, known as the master and teacher of saints in the period following St. Patrick, was reported to be from Leinster, where he began establishing monasteries. He traveled to Wales and studied its traditional monasticism, which stressed the superiority of monastic over secular life and the importance of learning. After returning to Ireland, he founded many churches and monasteries, including his great monastery at Clonard on the Boyne, which drew 3,000 disciples, including St. Ciaran of Clonmacnois, St. Columba of Iona and St. Brendan the Voyager. It is uncertain whether he was also a bishop. He died of the plague, probably contracted while he was nursing other victims.

## Coming Up On Proclaim!

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

**December 16** -- New Pennsylvania Catholic Conference Communications Director Al Gnoza will offer an update on PCC happenings and explain his vision for his new position.

**December 23** -- Just days before the celebration of Christmas, Bishop Mark will celebrate the joy of the season with some of our outstanding Catholic school students.

## 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.

## Bishop's Appointments & Announcements



**REVEREND ANGELO PATTI**, appointed Pastor of Saint Peter Parish in Somerset and Dean of the Southern Deanery, effective immediately, continuing as Pastor of Saint Andrew Parish in Johnstown and Administrator of Saint Anne Parish in Davidsville until December 12, 2018.

**REVEREND MATTHEW REESE**, Temporary Administrator of Saint Aloysius and Saint Francis Xavier Parishes in Cresson and All Saints Catholic School in Cresson, appointed Pastor of Saint Andrew Parish in Johnstown, effective December 12, 2018, continuing as Diocesan Director of Vocations.

**REVEREND ALBERT LEDOUX**, appointed Administrator of Saint Aloysius and Saint Francis Xavier Parishes in Cresson and All Saints Catholic School in Cresson, effective December 12, 2018, continuing as Pastor of Saint Demetrius Parish in Gallitzin.

**REVEREND PETER CROWE**, appointed Administrator of Saint Anne Parish in Davidsville, effective December 12, 2018, continuing as Parochial Vicar at Saint Benedict Parish in Johnstown and part-time chaplain of DLP Conemaugh.



## Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Adult Enrichment and Lay Ecclesial Ministry

### UPCOMING CLASS SCHEDULE

All Are Welcome!

These classes may be taken for continuing education hours

#### Sacraments

Seton Suite, Cathedral, Altoona - Msgr. Robert Mazur  
Mondays: **6:30-9:00 PM (2 1/2 hr. classes - 6 weeks)**

January 7, 14, 21, 28; February 4, 11

St. Michael Church Hall, St. Michael - Fr. Timothy Grimme

Tuesdays: **6:30-8:30 PM (8 weeks)**

January 8, 15, 22, 29; February 5, 12, 19, 26

Registration Fee: \$35/ Book Fee: \$30

#### Living Your Strengths Workshop

Family Life Office, Lilly - Msgr. Michael Becker

Thursdays: **6:30-8:30 PM**

January 24, 31; February 7, 14, 21, 28; March 7

Registration and Material: \$70

#### March 2019 Classes

##### Christian Prayer and Spirituality

Offered in two locations  
(Duncansville and Johnstown)

##### Church History

Offered in two locations  
(Duncansville and Mundy's Corner)

For more information: (814) 361-2000 / mheinze@dioceseaj.org

Course descriptions and registration forms online:

[www.dioceseaj.org/lay-ecclesial-ministry/](http://www.dioceseaj.org/lay-ecclesial-ministry/)

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<p><b>THE CATHOLIC REGISTER</b> SERVING THE DIOCESE OF ALTOONA - JOHNSTOWN</p> <p>Published Bi - weekly at 925 South Logan Boulevard Hollidaysburg PA 16648</p> <p>Phone (814) 695 - 7563 FAX (814) 695 - 7517</p>	<p>Subscriptions: \$8.00 Parish Based \$18.00 Individual</p>	<p>Publisher: Most Reverend Bishop Mark L. Barchak</p>
	<p>Periodical Class Postage Paid At Altoona PA and other mailing offices. Postmaster send change of address to: 925 South Logan Boulevard (USPS 094 - 280)</p>	<p>Manager: Bruce A. Tomaselli</p>
	<p>Member Publication Of The Catholic Press Association</p>	<p>Secretary: Frances M. Logrando</p>

Many of you are aware of the effort by certain schools across the state to bring about some sort of change in the PIAA playoff system. Their contention is that private schools—the majority of which are Catholic schools—are enjoying an unfair competitive advantage. Their main point of contention is that the private schools are not subject to the same boundary limitations that public schools must adhere to.

## PCC Perspective

By Al Gnoza



A recent effort to separate the schools for playoff purposes failed due to the lack of a definition of a boundary school. However, the backers of the plan have indicated they will keep trying.

with the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference and the PIAA Oversight Committee. The recent effort to differentiate the schools came from the PIAA Equity Steering Committee. But that committee does not speak for the PIAA Administration, which remains opposed to such changes to the playoff system.

It would be understandable if parents and athletes would be feeling a bit anxious by all this talk. But the general feeling among many insiders is that such a move does not seem likely to happen any time soon, if at all. In other words--don't worry.

One of the main backers of the change is Leonard Rich, the Superintendent of the Laurel Schools District. But Rich was recently denied a contract extension by the Laurel School Board and will be out of the job at the end of the school year. His days as a voice in PIAA affairs would seem to be numbered as a result, unless he is hired by another district in the state.

“There is no legally supportable basis for any distinction to be made between boundary and non-boundary schools,” said Sean McAleer, the Education Director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference said in a recent letter to the PIAA. McAleer says state law “is crystal clear in its intent that the PIAA must treat all membership schools equally and equitably.”

There is another less prevalent pothole lurking for private schools or any school for that matter that falls out of favor for whatever reason with the rank and file. What happens when your league decides it doesn't

The good news is that the PIAA administration agrees

want you?

And consider the case of Bethlehem Catholic in the mid 90's. They were dominating the East Penn Conference in football to the point that a number of members of the conference left the league for friendlier confines. There has been considerable movement and realignment in the Lehigh Valley sports scene ever since.

There are some serious issues facing the Catholic Church. There are many people for whom sports is not on a par with the other concerns. But with the possible PIAA realignment and even the anxiety that may come with hearing about it, it is once again the kids who are affected. The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference will continue to monitor the situation and be ready to take whatever action is necessary to keep things the way they are.

*Al Gnoza is the Communications Director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference.*

# Vocation View

By Father Matthew Reese

## Diocesan Director Of Vocations

As I write this article I am in the midst of a change in assignment. This leads me to reflect upon the life of a Diocesan Priest. Unlike some Religious Orders, the main ministry of a Diocesan Priest is a parish pastorate. In years previous when a priest was named a Pastor of a parish, it was not uncommon for that priest to keep that assignment for a lifetime. Now the common way of things, especially among younger priests, is frequent change.

I have had it said to me that stability in the ministry of Parish Pastor helps to influence a young man to consider the vocation of priesthood. Is this influence based on the person or rather on the stability of that leadership role? Good leaders inspire faithful followers. Good stable leadership inspires aspirants to leadership. It takes time to nurture vocations to priesthood and therefore a stable role model found within the parish's pastor is invaluable.

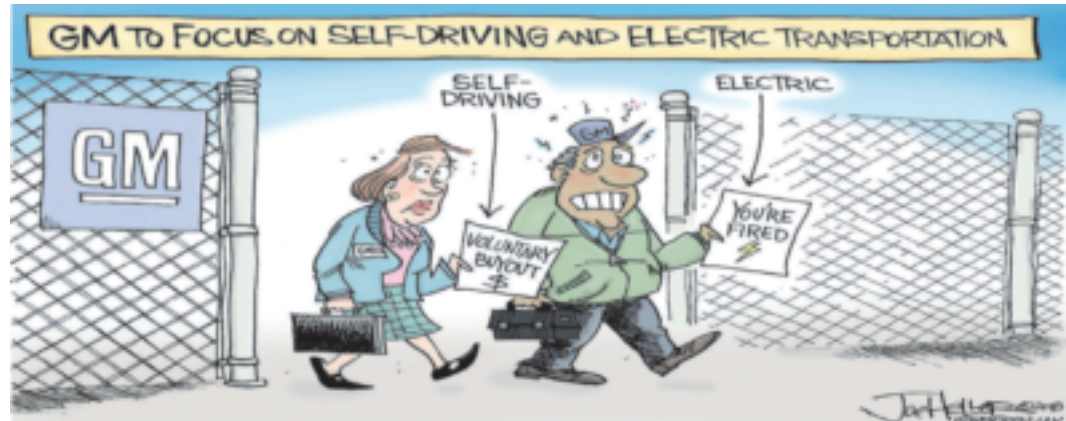
Does this mean that priests who have been at their parishes for 15 to 20 plus years automatically have a man in their parish step forward inspired to be a priest? Not necessarily. We need to remember that God is the one who ultimately calls someone to this vocation. My first parish pastor was my parish's pastor for 38 years, and during that time he had two of us step forward to become priests.

Change is inevitable in life. This is a fact. Still, we ought to be wiser with how we approach change. Why? Change effects so much more than we realize. Could frequent changes in the role of Parish Pastor affect vocations? It is certainly worth considering.

**Father Matthew Reese is the diocesan Director of Vocations. E-mail him at [vocations@dioceseaj.org](mailto:vocations@dioceseaj.org) or call him at (814) 695-5579.**



**FOOD BASKETS:** The religious education students at Saint John the Evangelist Church in Everett provided Thanksgiving food baskets to needy families in Bedford County. Pictured (left to right) are: Father Derek Fairman, pastor; Chaz Lankey, Violet Johnson, and Olivia Hillegas. An anonymous donor provided vouchers for turkeys. The Saint Vincent DePaul Society delivered the baskets.





# Why People Wait So Long To Tell

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**By Paul Ashton, Psy.D., D.Min.**

People wonder sometimes about disclosures. When victims come forward to report that someone sexually abused 30 years ago, there often is a question in people's minds of "what took them so long to report this?" They ask questions such as, why do people wait so long to come forward? What happens to people that they don't speak up right away? Is this really true all these years later? Are these people making these memories up? Do psychologists plant these stories and doubts in people's minds? Don't victims just like being victims and look for something or someone to blame for their broken lives?

All of these doubts are exactly what assists offenders to carry out their crimes against children and vulnerable adults. They know that children have great difficulty in coming forward and they rely on this to keep their abusive behaviors a secret.

Fear is a primary motivator in not coming forward. Children's minds are young, fragile and filled with mystery, awe and creativity. Children look for reasonable explanations that make sense to them when faced with difficult concepts. They blame themselves when things go wrong in their families. In trying to explain the pain they encounter, they sometimes look inward and quickly surmise that they did something wrong to make the bad things in their life happen.

Children often think to themselves, "If only they could behave better," then their parents would not

fight as much. "If they got better grades," then their dad wouldn't drink so much, and on and on the list goes. All very sad. But we all know it. We all remember from a time long ago when we were younger in our own families and we felt the pressures of the world on us. We prayed for a way out, and sometimes the prayers didn't seem to be answered.

When someone hurts us as a child, shame sometimes takes deep root. Its roots drain us of creativity, spontaneity, and the fearlessness that every child needs to find their way in the world. Shame and guilt bond together tightly to form a core within us that shades the colors of everything we see. We live in anxiety that something will happen. That we will be found out. That someone will know. The feelings of dirtiness will be made visible for all to see and we will never be free from shame. We feel different, odd, unusual. We feel that all must be hidden, unknown, and secretive. We are loathe to share our deeper feelings with anyone, lest we show a glimpse of who we really are. We let the abuse define us, shape us and form us. We let ourselves be overtaken by what we thought was love, and in trying to love back, we deceive ourselves.

Some children don't tell because they come from families where telling is not a part of what they do. There is no appropriate vocabulary that is taught or acceptable. There is no way for us to communicate an unspoken horror, because no one shows us how. We want it to all be OK, and in the process we die each day to ourselves a little more so that we begin to forget who is really to blame, and there is no one left to blame but ourselves.

Many abused children grow up and strive to survive in the best way possible. Some excel, some just remain under the radar, and others let themselves fall away to a drug- and alcohol-riddled place where no one cares.

Everyone tries, but when they do, the world, the culture, the society, the church, the family, etc., makes them feel worse—more responsible, needier, and more troubled.

Families are systems in which each subsystem relies on the other to complete a whole picture, to gain and regain balance, to absorb pain and difficulty, and to mediate the various ways of joy that each deserves. When you are robbed of your voice and cannot speak your truth, you don't feel fully a part of this system, and sometimes you feel that you drag the system down, so you separate, isolate and move away from it all. Sometimes the other members help and reach out; sometimes they make it worse by blaming.

So one day, when the time is right, and the journey has been long and arduous, and the burdens have become light enough to bear and share, the silence is broken. And the truth is told, and the heart is freed from the chains of secrecy, and your life becomes more real and liberated, and the world becomes clear enough for you to see the blueness of the sky, and you stop worrying about just making it through the day, and for another shoe to drop. And you breathe, just breathe. And you are born anew. And the rest of the family, and the culture, and the society and the world are left to see the nightmare that you have been living. And they don't like it, and don't want to accept it, or believe it, and the cycle continues. And the abuse can go on. But you know the truth, and you reach out to others who do, too.

Dr. Ashton works in the area of child sexual abuse prevention and healing includes training facilitators, developing and implementing curricula and retreat programs, counseling, and support group facilitation development.

*For inquiries on youth protection and safe environment efforts within the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown please contact Cindy O'Connor at (814) 695-5579, extension 2621 or via email at [coconnor@dioceseaj.org](mailto:coconnor@dioceseaj.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**.

## Assistance And Resources For Victims And Survivors

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown is committed to the safety and protection of children and youth, and to supporting the victims and survivors of sexual abuse. The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) and trained professionals serving local agencies greatly assist with the needs of victims of sexual assault and their loved ones in the healing process.

In an effort to educate the public and raise awareness of the support available in our community, the diocese continues to refer victims and survivors to the resources provided by PCAR and the local centers to help spread the word. The diocese's collaboration with these agencies is limited to our mutual desire to help those who are suffering and is not an endorsement of other policies or positions the agencies may hold.

No one should suffer alone. If you need of help, please take advantage of the contact information on this page. Please join the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown in praying for all those who have been affected by sexual abuse in our society. May God grant them healing and peace.

PCAR partners with a network of rape crisis center programs to bring help, hope and healing around issues of sexual violence to all 67 counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. To find services

within Pennsylvania call **PCAR at 1-888-772-7227**.

For information on Sexual Abuse Victim Assistance and Service Agencies within the eight counties of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown (Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset) please refer to:

**Bedford County:** Your Safe Haven Inc. (800) 555-5671 or (814) 623-7664

**Blair County:** Family Services, Inc. (800) 500-2849 or (814) 944-3585

**Cambria/Somerset Counties:** Victim Services, Inc. (800) 755-1983 or (814) 288-4691

**Centre County:** Centre County Women's Resource Center (877) 234-5050 or (814) 234-5050

**Clinton County:** Clinton County Women's Center (570) 748-9509

**Franklin/Fulton Counties:** Women in Need/ Victim Services (800) 621-6660 or (717) 264-4444

**Huntingdon/Mifflin/Juniata Counties:** The Abuse Network 24-Hour Hotline (717) 242-2444. Toll-Free PA Hotline (888) 810-2444; Mifflin County Office (717) 242-0715; Juniata County Office (717) 447-1885 and Huntingdon County Office (814) 506-8237 or (717) 242-2444

**Catholic Charities Inc. of The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown:** Victim Assistance Coordinator (814) 944-9388, extension 204.

# Pauline Sister Share Their Gift Of Music, Joy As Religious

By David Luecking  
Catholic News Service

ST. LOUIS (CNS) -- Ask Pauline Sister Nancy Usselmänn whether she sang in high school at Cor Jesu Academy or had a musical background, and her answer is short and simple.

"Not really," she said, with a laugh.

So, how did she become a mainstay of the Daughters of St. Paul Christmas concerts, now a 24-year holiday tradition?

Credit the Holy Spirit with that one, putting together the right people in the right time and place -- the early 1990s at the Paulines' motherhouse in Boston.

"We sang together in chapel for years," said Sister Nancy, who was a novice at the time with final vows upcoming in 1995. "It was really neat to see. We knew each other and knew each other's voices."

"The choir director listened to the different voices, how we harmonized, and selected some sisters to begin with this concert and asked me to be part of it," she told the St. Louis Review, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

From the humble beginning of a single concert in 1995, the Paulines' Christmas concert has grown into an annual nationwide tour in Advent. The choir also has produced 30 albums at the motherhouse recording studio.

"We started because some friends of ours wanted to help us raise some money," Sister Nancy said. "They asked,

'What do you sisters know how to do?' We had our recording studio and were recording albums already by that point, so we said, 'We sing a little. ... OK, let's put on a concert!'"

They received rave reviews for the first show, which was a debut in more ways than one.

"They hadn't heard us sing until the night of the concert, and they were blown away: 'You can actually sing!'" Sister Nancy said, laughing.

This year, the Paulines will perform Christmas concerts in New York, Boston, Lafayette, Louisiana, New Orleans, St. Louis, Cleveland and Los Angeles. The "Glorious Night" shows in St. Louis will be Dec. 9 and 10 at the Skip Viragh Center for the Arts at Chaminade College Preparatory School.

A state-of-the-art concert venue calls for a state-of-the-art production, which the "media nuns" deliver in a two-hour performance. Pauline sisters run the lights and sound system, prepared the choreography and props, and of course provide heavenly harmony to set the stage for the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ.

"The start of Advent is a time that people want to hear the music and have an experience of Christmas," Sister Nancy said, adding that the sisters "help people enter into the mystery of the Christmas story, the Christmas message."

The Paulines bring more than the gift of music, though.

"It's also the joy we have as religious sisters -- the joy we have together and our love for Christ and love for the church," she said, adding that those aspects "come out in how we sing, how we interact with one another on stage and how we interact with the audience."

It's all in keeping with the



(CNS photo/courtesy Pauline Media)

**SISTERS ON TOUR:** Daughters of St. Paul perform in 2017 during their annual Christmas concert. This year, the sisters' choir will perform Christmas concerts in New York, Boston, Lafayette, La., New Orleans, St. Louis, Cleveland and Los Angeles.

Paulines' charism to evangelize in whatever medium necessary. Founded in 1915 by Blessed James Alberione, the Daughters of St. Paul started with pamphlets, newspapers and books, graduated to recordings, radio and television and adapted adeptly to the digital world of the 21st century.

A professional choir has added to the modes of evange-

lization.

"That's who we are as Daughters of St. Paul; we evangelize through the media," said Sister Nancy, director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los Angeles. "The medium of music has a power all its own, a power to touch the heart."

The ensemble choir draws on Pauline sisters serving throughout the United States

and Canada. They pick the music in March, gather for about 10 days to plan choreography and rehearse in August, and meet again after Thanksgiving to finalize preparations and rehearse again for the 10-show, 18-day tour. Then, it's show time.

"It's miraculous how it comes together," she said.

## US Abortion Rates Continue To Decline

By Catholic News Service

**WASHINGTON (CNS) --** The abortion rate in the United States continues to decline, as do the number of abortions overall, according to a report issued Nov. 21 by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

The drop in both abortions overall and the abortion rate has declined each year for a decade.

According to the new report, the abortion rate in 2015 -- the last year for which statistics are available -- is at 11.8 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44. The rate has dropped eight of the past nine years since 2006's rate of 15.9; the rate of 15.6 held steady in 2008.

The overall number of abortions also continued to slide. The 2015 number of reported abortions was 638,169, about one-fourth less than the 852,385 reported in 2006. It is down 2 percent from 2014's figure of



(CNS photo/David Maung)

**ABORTIONS DECLINE:** Young people participate in the annual Walk for Life in San Diego January 20. A report released November 21 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says fewer U.S. women are having abortions than at any time since Roe v. Wade.

652,639.

Over the past decade, the ratio of abortions to live births has also trended downward. The ratio rose slightly from 2007 to 2008, and held steady in 2009 and 2010, but has declined from 2006's 233 abortions per 1,000 live births to 2015's 188 abor-

tions per 1,000 live births.

The number of legal abortions in the United States peaked in the 1980s before beginning a slow but steady decline, interrupted only by the slight rise in, or holding steady of, numbers in the late 2000s.



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# Supporting Survivors

By Tony DeGol

It was a revelation more than four decades in the making, and one that Claire Rennie was not expecting.

She and her husband were visiting friends in Cresson in December of last year when the subject of the clergy sex abuse scandal came up in conversation. At that moment, Claire noticed a change in her husband's demeanor.

He was very quiet on their trip home to Lancaster County the next day, she recalled, and when they arrived home, he finally told her something a wife would never want to hear.

Claire's husband, who is 52 years old, shared that he was abused by a priest in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown when he was an eight year old altar server and also by another priest while he was a high school student, also in the diocese.

"He did not tell me all of the details at that moment, but he has shared them with me slowly over time," Claire said. "It's hard to judge when he's going to talk about it or what he's going to say."

The long path for Claire's husband to finally share his story was not unique. Victims of sexual abuse always reveal details of their horror on their own timetable – often many years after the abuse occurs.

The road to healing is a life-long journey.

Claire took an important step in helping her husband heal by calling Jean Johnstone, the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

"Jean has been a huge support," admitted Claire. "She has directed us to every possible avenue to get help."

When Johnstone receives a call from a survivor of sexual abuse or his or her loved one, she



**HELPING OTHERS:** Victim Assistance Coordinator Jean Johnstone routinely fields calls from victims and survivors of sexual abuse. Johnstone listens to each individual's story and encourages them to seek support through counseling.

typically follows a few steps.

The first is simply listening to the person's story.

"That is such a monumental turning point for any victim because by the time they call me, it could have been years since the abuse," she stated. "I listen to their story, I document it, and report it to authorities and Children and Youth Services."

Her next move is asking how she can help.

"We don't tell them how to heal, we ask them how we can help, including if they've started counseling," she continued. "If they haven't, I make a recommendation -- a therapist who has experience in trauma-informed care."

Johnstone, who is the Exec-

utive Director of Catholic Charities, has professional experience working with at-risk children, and she has held leadership positions with various social service agencies, then learns whether or not the individual has health insurance to cover counseling expenses.

"We want to make sure they are supported and they don't incur costs," added Johnstone.

Beyond those actions, Johnstone's role includes being a source of support -- not in the role of a counselor, but as a link to the resources that could offer healing.

"I know they have a long journey ahead of them," Johnstone acknowledged. "I know counseling is the one thing that's going to help them. Making sure

they get counseling is important to me."

For Claire and her husband, the advice and guidance from Johnstone seems to be making a difference. Claire's husband has been engaged in counseling for about nine months, which is "helping tremendously."

Claire, herself, is also considering the same path -- a move Johnstone encourages.

"When someone has been abused, it affects their spouse, their family, their job, every part of their life," added Johnstone, who has handled at least 32 complaints as Victim Assistance Coordinator.

In fact, Claire admits that she has experienced a range of emotions and suffered nightmares.



Despite her own struggles, she quickly pointed out that they are miniscule compared to her husband's trials.

As the couple move forward, they do so outside of the Catholic faith. Both left the Church and are now members of the Episcopal faith tradition.

Their three children are aware of the abuse their father experienced, but, according to Claire, they do not readily discuss it.

The one priest who abused Claire's husband was laicized, the other is deceased.

"The most important thing to me is that people understand the hell these victims go through, Claire stressed.

In the case of her husband, it is a hell that ultimately came to the surface after a simple visit with friends, and one that hopefully will become more manageable with counseling and support.

*Victims and survivors of clergy sex abuse – no matter when the abuse occurred – are encouraged seek support through Victim Assistance Coordinator Jean Johnstone at (814) 944-9388.*

## Supporting Children – Our Most Valuable Resource



*By Tony DeGol*

When Cindy O'Connor goes to work each day, she knows she must keep three things in mind: the past, the present, and the future.

O'Connor is the Director of the diocesan Office of Youth Protection – a position she has held for a little more than a year.

“We can't forget the past – it's daily in our lives,” reminded O'Connor about the tragic history of clergy sexual abuse in Altoona-Johnstown.

The present, she continued, involves the diocese's ongoing efforts to address the horrible situation, including the support of abuse victims and survivors. It also means continuing to raise awareness, and making available more training and prevention efforts, which all looks to the future.

“It's a process, and processes take time,” she admitted. “Is it fast enough for people? No, but people have said they have seen changes.”

In fact, the Independent Oversight Board – a five-person group responsible for overseeing the diocese's development and implementation of youth protection policies and procedures – recently noted that the diocese has made “significant headway” toward the effort.

The assessment came in the Board's first annual report released in late November. The Board's statement to the media is on page 14 of this edition of *The Catholic Register*, and their full report is available on the diocesan website.

Despite the diocese's progress, the Board recommended several steps to bring about what they call a “culture that places the highest value on protecting

and nurturing children.”

Achieving that “culture” is a goal for which O'Connor works tirelessly.

It's a “bottom-up” approach, as she calls it, which involves going straight to parishes and schools – ground zero for where the work must be done.

“Each parish has the uniqueness of its faith community,” O'Connor emphasized. “What are their challenges? In what ways are they being successful? Let's applaud that. Let's use that as benchmarking for other parishes to make sure everyone is in compliance to create the safest environment possible.”

Among the accomplishments of O'Connor's first year was the completion of a Diocesan Code of Conduct, which applies to all clergy and lay individuals. O'Connor also revised the required safe environment training program, which is mandatory for all clergy, employees, and volunteers.

“The information I gained today was absolutely necessary for my work,” said one participant of a recent training session.

“As a choir member, I'm not sure how it will apply, but actually this information is important for ALL people,” concluded another.

And yet another participant summed up the experience as follows: “It reinforces the awareness of the seriousness of protecting our children.”

The enthusiasm of those who completed the training is a good reminder that everyone has a role and responsibility in assuring the well-being of youth and vulnerable individuals.

In that spirit, O'Connor stressed, the diocese will continue on its way to creating the desired culture of child protection.

She also remains committed to strengthening relationships with law enforcement and the



**CULTURE OF CHANGE:** Cindy O'Connor, Director of Children and Youth Protection for the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, strives each day to promote a culture of change by ensuring that all clergy, employees, and volunteers are focused on protecting young and vulnerable individuals.

many victim assistance agencies throughout the diocese and the state.

So, the work continues for O'Connor, a member of Resurrection Parish in Johnstown. She is quick to point out how much she relies on her faith to sustain her in this challenging endeavor.

“We're all affected by this crisis,” she added. “The stories are heartbreaking. I've had the opportunity to talk with victims.”

She hopes that during such conversations, she is an extension of the diocese's unwavering commitment to supporting survivors on their journey. In doing so, she is truly recognizing the past, making a difference in the present, and working to ensure a better future.

### *Advent Prayer Of Preparation And Journey*

Lord Jesus, you challenge us during this Advent time, this season of preparation, to put aside our pride and understand our need for repentance, forgiveness, and mercy. Help us to be less mindful of self, more mindful of others, and most of all mindful of you. As we prepare for our journey to Bethlehem and beyond, purify our hearts and sanctify our lives that we might serve you faithfully this day and all days. Renew us as a people of hope, who trust in your merciful love. We ask this through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, your Mother and Mother of the Church. Amen.



## Supporting The Mission



By Tony DeGol

Matt Stever vividly remembers his first few days working for the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown in 2014.

He approached Bishop Mark to ask a reasonable question: Can you tell me what your mission is for the Diocese?

“What’s written at the end of the Gospel of Matthew: To go forth and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” the Bishop responded.

As Chief Financial Officer for the diocese, Stever was not directly involved in specific liturgical ministries. Still, Bishop Mark’s answer resonated with him.

He quickly realized that even his “number crunching” played a key role in helping the clergy and lay people around him achieve that mission.

It was not long after that conversation that scrutiny of the diocese and its history of clergy sexual abuse intensified. It by no means derailed Stever’s focus, but it certainly made it more challenging.

“There is not a day that goes by that I don’t deal with some aspect of the sexual abuse crisis in my work,” he admitted.

As the diocese releases a summary of the financial costs of sexual abuse from 1999 to the present, (*please see page 10*), Stever realizes this is a key turning point for the Church of Altoona-Johnstown.

“I’m happy these numbers have been announced so the faithful are aware that there has been a true effort to begin the healing process,” he noted.

Stever is specifically referring to the Victim Assistance Program that began in this diocese in 2004 to assist the survivors of sexual abuse. Over the years, close to 300 individuals have been helped



**STAYING ON MISSION:** Chief Financial Officer Matt Stever talks with Annette Wholaver, a member of the Finance Office staff. Stever and his team remain focused on the mission to better support parishes and diocesan operations, despite the financial challenges of the clergy sex abuse crisis.

by the program, which offered support through settlements and counseling whether or not the survivors came forward within the Statute of Limitations.

“The true benefit of our program is the fact that it allows for a path for people to begin the healing process,” commented Stever.

Also, the program has never required a survivor to have legal representation, and those who chose to not have an attorney ended up with 100 percent of any financial settlement.

Recently, other dioceses in Pennsylvania announced plans for a Victim Compensation Fund. The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown plans to continue its Victim Assistance Program, which will still assist survivors and their loved ones through counseling even for those outside of the Statute of Limitations (*please see story on page 7*).

“I’m personally so proud to be a Catholic in this diocese

knowing that since 2004 we did not see the Statute of Limitations line in the sand,” he said. “Survivors who came forward were offered assistance. Was the cost significant? Yes, but the Church could not afford to ignore its moral obligation to help those who were hurting.”

Stever assured that the costs cited in the financial summary were covered by the sale of the Bishop’s residence in Hollidaysburg, the sale of the Diocesan Administration Center in Hollidaysburg, and through the diocese’s savings and property and casualty insurance program.

Contributions to the diocese through the former Annual Catholic Appeal and current Catholic Ministries Drive were never used for sexual abuse costs, he maintained. All money donated to the CMD supports designated ministries such as Vocations, Youth Ministry, and Christian Initiation.

Stever – although still im-

mersed in matters relating to the sex abuse crisis – is excited about what he describes as much-needed improvements to the financial operations of the diocese. The changes are the culmination of a two-and-a-half-year evaluation of the Finance Office and how it must better serve diocesan offices and the parishes.

In early 2019, the diocese will release an annual report that Stever calls a “completely transparent summary of the financial status of the diocese.” It will also identify areas where reductions in overall costs have been realized.

It all goes back to that conversation that Stever had with Bishop Mark in 2014 about his mission for the diocese.

“We are finding better ways to operate in this environment by reducing costs and creating appropriate internal controls, policies, and procedures that will relieve parishes of the temporal burdens they face,” Stever

mentioned. “The more efficient we can become, the more time pastors will be able to spend with parishioners and ultimately proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we can reduce the temporal burdens they face, it will afford them the time to focus on being the priest the Lord called them to be.”

Continued Stever: “As challenging as it has been, we are committed in the Finance Office to do everything we can do to gain efficiency and assist parishes in sharing the Gospel. That’s my primary focus when I come to work every day.”

### Advent Prayer of Self-Offering

O Lord, we bring to you our lives; troubled, broken or at peace; as a sacrificial offering for you to use as you will. Take away our selfishness and teach us to love as you loved. Take away our sense of pride and show us the meaning of humility. Take away our blindness and show us the world through your eyes. Take away our greed and teach us how to give as you gave. Show us your way and teach us your path. Lord Jesus, help us to walk with you more closely; our hand in your hand and our feet in your footsteps; from the baby in a stable, to the cross on Calvary and through your resurrection to eternity. Amen.



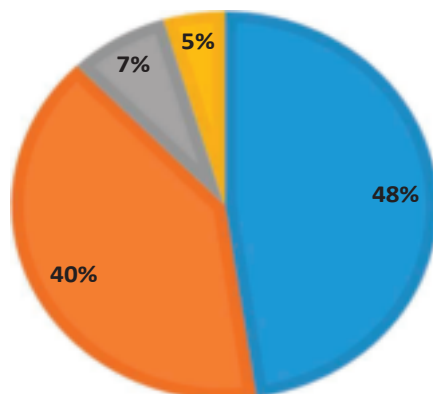
**Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown  
Sexual Abuse Cost and Payment Source Summary  
July 1, 1999 – December 1, 2018**

**EXPENSE**

Settlements/Awards	\$15,755,988
Legal Expenses	\$ 4,313,253
Survivor Counseling	\$ 514,422
Clergy Compensation	\$ 907,389
 Total	 \$21,491,052

**SOURCES OF PAYMENT**

- Property & Casualty Insurance Fund
- Diocesan Savings
- Sale of Diocesan Administration Center
- Sale of Bishop's Residence



- Settlements/Awards include all payments to survivors - 1999 Francis Luddy case, 2004 - 21 victim settlement and awards via the Victims Assistance Program through 11/1/2018.
- Legal expenses include all legal costs associated with Francis Luddy, 2004 - 21 victim settlement, Steven Baker, T.O.R. & PA and US Attorney General Investigations.
- Survivor Counseling - \$2.8M was offered for victim counseling and support services. Total listed is actual expense incurred for survivors who chose to participate.
- Clergy Compensation - Represents payments for salaries, benefits and counseling for clergy members removed from ministry while awaiting outcome of Canonical investigation.
- The Property & Casualty Insurance Fund has received \$4,479,425 in insurance recoveries related to the above. Net diocesan cost - \$17,011,627.

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For a comprehensive financial summary, please visit the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown's website.

[www.dioceseaj.org](http://www.dioceseaj.org)

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# Officials Release Pope's Panama World Youth Day Schedule

By Junno Arocho Esteves  
Catholic News Service

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** -- When Pope Francis visits Panama for World Youth Day in January, he will meet with young people not able to attend the festivities: some in jail and with some living with HIV.

He also will dedicate the altar of Panama's newly renovated 400-year-old cathedral, meet with bishops from Central America and have lunch with some of the young people attending the youth day gathering, according to the schedule released by the Vatican Nov. 20.

The pope's visit to Panama Jan. 23-27 will be his 26th trip outside of Italy. During his visit, he will deliver seven speeches and celebrate two Masses as well as a penitential liturgy.

The theme for World Youth Day 2019 is taken from the Gospel of St. Luke: "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Archbishop Jose Domingo

## Prayer For Father Gallitzin's Intercession

O God, light of the faithful and shepherd of souls, who sent Servant of God Demetrius Gallitzin to serve God's people in the Allegheny Mountains, feeding your sheep by his words and forming them by his example, pour out your Spirit to sow seeds of truth in people's hearts and to awaken in them obedience to the faith.

May the Gospel continue to be preached and the Sacraments bring power and grace to the faithful. By the example of this man of faith, Demetrius Gallitzin, may your people advance in the path of salvation and love.

Confident of your faithfulness to us, we humbly ask you, our God, to grant us the favor of (name your intention).

May Christ's saving work continue to the end of the ages, and may we feel a more urgent call to work for the salvation of every creature. We pray this, as did your priest Demetrius Gallitzin, through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

+ + +

Kindly send information about favors granted to:

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



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

**WORLD YOUTH DAY:** In this 2016 file photo, Pope Francis walks with World Youth Day pilgrims as he arrives for a prayer vigil at the Field of Mercy in Krakow, Poland.

Ulloa Mendieta of Panama said Pope Francis' meeting with young detainees will be "a very special event" in which "young people deprived of freedom will take part in a penitential liturgy with the Holy Father in an act of repentance, reconciliation and forgiveness," the committee

said.

After the closing Mass for World Youth Day, the pope will visit Casa Hogar el Buen Samaritano (Good Samaritan Home), a center dedicated to helping HIV and AIDS patients "regardless of their sex, religion, sexual orientation, geo-

graphical origin" and "who lack the resources to live and cope with their illness."

The pope will also pray the Angelus there with young people from the Malambo hospice, which helps people addicted to drugs and alcohol, and from Hogar San Jose, a house for the poor run by the Missionaries of Charity and the Kkottongnae religious congregation.

Here is the detailed schedule released by the Vatican. All times are local, with Eastern Daylight Time in parentheses:

Wednesday, Jan. 23 (Rome, Panama)

-- 9:35 a.m. (3:35 a.m.) Departure from Rome's Fiumicino Airport.

-- 4:30 p.m. Arrival at Tocumen International Airport in Panama.

-- 4:50 p.m. Transfer to the apostolic nunciature.

Thursday, Jan. 24 (Panama)

-- 9:45 a.m. Welcoming ceremony at Palacio de las Garzas presidential palace.

-- 10 a.m. Courtesy visit with Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela at Palacio de las Garzas.

-- 10:40 a.m. Meeting with government authorities and the

diplomatic corps at Bolivar Palace. Speech by pope.

-- 11:15 a.m. Meeting with Central American bishops in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi. Speech by pope.

-- 5:30 p.m. Welcoming ceremony and gathering with young people in Santa Maria la Antigua Field. Speech by pope.

Friday, Jan. 25 (Panama)

-- 10:30 a.m. Penitential liturgy with juvenile delinquents in Las Garzas de Pacora Juvenile Detention Center in Pacora. Homily by pope.

-- 11:50 a.m. Transfer by helicopter to the apostolic nunciature.

-- 5:30 p.m. Way of the Cross with young people in Santa Maria la Antigua Field. Speech by pope.

Saturday, Jan. 26 (Panama)

-- 9:15 a.m. Mass and dedication of the altar of the Cathedral Basilica of Santa Maria la Antigua with priests, men and women religious and lay movements. Homily by pope.

-- 12:15 p.m. Lunch with young people at San Jose Major Seminary

-- 6:30 p.m. Prayer vigil with young people at St. John Paul II Field. Speech by pope.

Sunday, Jan. 27 (Panama)

-- 8:00 a.m. Mass at St. John Paul II Field to mark World Youth Day. Homily by pope.

-- 10:45 a.m. Visit to Casa Hogar el Buen Samaritano (Good Samaritan Home). Speech and Angelus by pope.

-- 4:30 p.m. Meeting with World Youth Day volunteers, the local organizing committee and benefactors at Rommel Fernandez Stadium. Speech by pope.

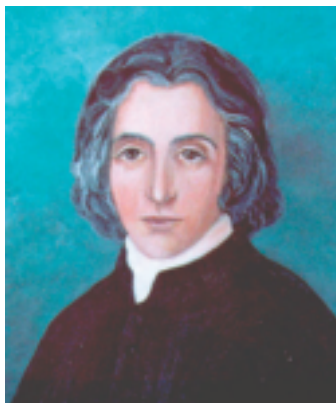
-- 6:00 p.m. Farewell ceremony at Tocumen International Airport.

-- 6:15 p.m. Departure from Tocumen International Airport.

Monday, Jan. 28 (Rome)

-- 11:50 a.m. (5:50 a.m.) Arrival at Rome's Ciampino Airport.

## A Prince In The Service Of The Great King



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**Spotlight On Schools****Saint John the Evangelist Bellefonte Students Are Training To Be Saints**

This year, the students at Saint John Catholic School in Bellefonte are “Called to be Saints.” We have celebrated good deeds and encouraged our students to let their halos shine each and every day. With a focus on the Corporal Works of Mercy, service continues to be at the forefront of our mission. Students have collected items for the food bank (including a special “soup can drive”); collected “Totes of Hope” items for our veterans in collaboration with the Student Red Cross Club at Penn State; and made cards to share with sick neighbors and friends in local home health agencies and assisted living and nursing facilities.

The students will continue

to practice Works of Mercy through their Faith Families. These 14-member Faith Families include two staff members and students from every grade level. They meet on a regular basis to celebrate their faith and to learn from each other. We thank our sister school, Our Lady of Victory, for developing this wonderful program. It is through these Faith Families that we teach the lessons of both the “ARISE Together in Christ” and the “Christ is RICH in Me” programs. As Pope Francis tells us, “To be saints is not a privilege for the few, but a vocation for everyone.” The students at Saint John the Evangelist Catholic School are truly saints in the making.



**FAITH FUN:** Some of Carol Fisher’s Pre-K Students joining in on the Faith Family fun. The names of the students pictured (left) to right are: Alexis Fisher, Adrianna Ruggiero, Levi Hockenberry, Aaron Cleaver, Grant Seymour, Benjamin Sharp, Beckett Albright, Sophia Ickes, and Thomas Wedlake.

### Peace Cranes

After reading, “Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes”, the 4th and 5th Grade students at Saint John Catholic School were inspired to make 1,000 peace cranes. This true story tells about the life of Sadako, a young Japanese girl who becomes ill after the bombing of Hiroshima during WW II. A Japanese legend gives the young girl hope. The legend states that if a sick person folds a thousand paper cranes they will be made well again.

Unfortunately, Sadako’s illness overtook her before she was able to fold 1,000 cranes, so her classmates finished for her. Origami peace cranes are a symbol of peace and hope. Our librarian, Mrs. Stanton, taught the students how to fold the origami paper cranes and, after many diligent weeks of folding in their spare time, our students surpassed their goal of 1,000 paper cranes. At last count there are 1,202 peace cranes hanging in our library. It is a beautiful display!

### Registration

Registration for Kindergarten and our 3 and 4 year-old Pre-K classes for the 2019-2020 school year will open on Monday, January 28th at 8:00 a.m. Limited openings remain in our 1st through 5th grades.

### Contact Information

Mrs. Kristina Tice, Principal  
814-355-7859 principal@saintjohnsch.net www.saintjohnsch.net



**CARNIVAL:** Some of our students with “Poppy the Clown” at our Home and School Association Back to School Carnival. Students collected items for the Food Bank at the Carnival. The students pictured (left to right) are: Lara Oden, Poppy the Clown (a.k.a. Mrs. Austin), Matisse Oden and Finn Kelleher.

### Combining Strong Faith And Strong Academics

Today, Saint John Catholic School continues the tradition of providing strong academics in a faith-filled environment. Our eight-member faculty boasts a combined total of 85 years of service to our students and school. We offer both 3 and 4 year-old Pre-Kindergarten classes, as well as full-day instruction in Kindergarten through grade 5. Working closely with the Central Intermediate Unit and our local school districts, students are able to access Enrichment, Speech and Language, and remedial Math and Reading services. Alongside our traditional curriculum, students enjoy Art, Music, Band, Choir,

Technology and Physical Education. Current technology is abundant at Saint John. From our full service computer lab, to SMARTBoards and iPads in every classroom and two mobile Chromebook units for student use, we work hard to balance new practices with traditional ones. At the heart of everything that we do, though, is Religion. Students learn and live the Catholic faith in all aspects of their day at Saint John Catholic School. With weekly Mass participation, daily religion courses, and prayer and gospel values embedded throughout our day, we are truly a thriving CATHOLIC school.



**FAITH FAMILY BROTHERS:** Fourth grade student, Quinn Park, (left) works with his Kindergarten Faith Family brother, Jude Lindquist to make cards for the sick and shut-ins.

### Mission Statement

In the tradition of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the mission of Saint John the Evangelist Catholic School is to provide a foundation rich in the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. The school encourages responsibility, academic excellence, individuality, service and, above all, respect.





## Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle  
Source Of Settlements On  
Sex Abuse

**Q. The news reports of settlements made in the millions of dollars to victims of clergy sex abuse trouble me. Were there secret assets from wills and estates on reserve for that purpose? Where did all that money come from? (Metuchen, New Jersey)**

A. National Public Radio reported in August 2018 that dioceses and religious orders in the United States had thus far paid settlements totaling more than \$3 billion to victims of clergy sexual abuse. The settlements have come, not from any "secret assets," but from a combination of cash, proceeds from the sale of land and buildings, and from insurance payments.

As Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis said in May 2018 when announcing a settlement of \$210 million in restitution to several hundred survivors, "I recognize that the abuse stole so much from you -- your childhood, your innocence, your safety, your ability to trust and, in many cases, your faith. ... The church let you down, and I'm very sorry."

That settlement funds came from approximately \$170 million from insurance carriers as well as the sale of diocesan assets, including its three chancery buildings on Cathedral Hill in St. Paul. The plan stipulates that a minimum of \$50,000 be awarded to each claimant. In 2010, when the Diocese of Burlington, Vermont, settled 26 lawsuits for nearly \$18 million, it put its diocesan administration building and a former Catholic summer camp on the real estate market to help cover the cost.

**Q. Is there a fee for nullity? (I was married in a Methodist church and now want to get remarried in a Catholic ceremony.) (City of origin withheld)**

A. In 2015, Pope Francis, in speaking to the Vatican's marriage tribunal, expressed his desire that all annulment processes should be free of charge. (He also intimated that a fair number of marriages

might actually be invalid and that tribunal judges should seek to "determine if there was an original lack of consent, either directly because of a lack of a valid intention, or because of a grave lack of understanding of marriage itself.")

Previous to this, diocesan marriage courts customarily charged a fairly nominal fee for processing an annulment. Since 2015, though, certainly most dioceses -- if not all -- have eliminated the fees entirely.

Anyhow, in your case the issue of fees is irrelevant since you don't need a full-fledged marriage annulment. I am not entirely sure, from your question, whether the woman you now want to marry in a Catholic ceremony is the same woman you married earlier in the Methodist church.

If it is -- and assuming that you had not received a dispensation from the Catholic Church to marry her in the Methodist ceremony -- what you would need to do is to go to confession and tell the priest that you were married in a ceremony not approved by the Catholic Church. Then you would be clear to marry her in a Catholic ceremony.

If, however, your earlier (Methodist) marriage was to a different woman, you do need to get that marriage cleared away before being married in a Catholic ceremony.

What you would need now is just a declaration that this earlier marriage was never recognized by the Catholic Church -- a decree from a Catholic tribunal stating the "absence of canonical form." This is far simpler than a marriage annulment -- and much quicker. Your first step should be to talk to your parish priest -- or any priest you know -- and he will guide you through the process.

- - - Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [ask-fatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:ask-fatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203. Copyright ©2018 Catholic News Service/ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.



By John Grosso and Nicole M. Perone

It should come as no surprise to any married or engaged couples reading this, but we'll say it anyway: Preparing for marriage is hard work.

It's exhilarating to imagine a new life with your best friend, but the milestones en route, such as planning a wedding, figuring out finances and negotiating the holidays, can be stressful and all-consuming.

Though it is important to be physically and emotionally prepared for all of these changes, the most important preparation for marriage is the spiritual -- looking toward the sacrament itself.

When we prayed together over how best to prepare for the sacrament of matrimony, we asked a dear friend who is currently a transitional deacon to facilitate that preparation. His was a master class, but what was most critical was the point from which he began: He asked us to identify what our goal is in marriage.

Before he started with the various components of the day, our friend asked us to talk about what our "goal" was. As two very Type A personalities, we were sold. As two devout Catholics, there was no question what the goal was: to accompany each other in becoming who God made us to be -- our most joyful, faithful, holy selves.

When we argue or struggle in our marriage -- and we will -- our life preserver is to stop and remind each other of the goal. Is

whatever this moment is moving us toward the goal or further away? If where we are doesn't move us toward the goal, we need to re-evaluate what we are doing and how we are behaving.

Bringing out the best in each other isn't always easy. It sometimes involves some growing pains.

It involves taking constructive criticism from each other about every aspect of ourselves, be it our work or how we relate to people. It involves pushing each other outside of our comfort zones.

It involves having a significant other that will listen to you vent, maybe even cry about a certain obstacle, and immediately ask, "Have you talked to God about that yet?"

Sometimes it even involves telling your significant other that he or she is being a jerk and is need of a course correction. (Something both of us have had to do!)

Recently, the two of us were at a wedding where the homilist exhorted the couple to "bring out the worst in each other." Just as Jesus drew out demons in his ministry to free people from what had possessed them, a life-giving relationship draws out all of your nastiest qualities to free you to be the best, holiest, most authentic version of yourself.

Hit me with your best shot: Give me the worst of what you are so I can help you be the best you can be. The lesson of our marriage preparation was reaffirmed (proof it is of the divine!).

## Guest Column

### Remember The Goal

That's not to say we are always telling each other where we come up short; that would be exhausting and not particularly productive. On the contrary, we are deliberate in our praise, affirmation and consolation of one another, and the bulk of our communications falls into those categories.

But sometimes, one of us needs a push. How can we help each other become the version of ourselves that God created us to be if all we do is tell each other how great we are?

"Remembering the goal" involves telling everyone you meet about how wonderful your significant other is, even when he or she doesn't deserve it. It involves being a partner that yours can rely on to be there whenever needed.

It involves challenging your significant other when he or she needs to be challenged. It involves tears, smiles, anger, laughs and prayer. And sometimes, it involves telling your significant other he or she is being a jerk -- bringing out the best, and the worst, in each other.

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# Now Showing

## “Dr. Seuss’s The Grinch” Good Holiday Movie



(CNS photo/Hat Tip Films LLC)

This adaptation of Theodor Geisel’s 1957 children’s fable “How the Grinch Stole Christmas!” is an extravagant animated adventure, directed by Scott Mosier and Yarrow Cheney and narrated by Pharrell Williams. The eponymous grump (voice of Benedict Cumberbatch) lives high above the hamlet of Whoville with his loyal dog by this side. With a heart “two sizes too small,” he wants nothing more than peace and quiet and to be left alone. Determined to put a halt to the incessant joy and goodness of the Whos, he strikes on the idea of masquerading as Santa Claus and stealing every Christmas present, tree and decoration in sight. One intrepid girl (voice of Cameron Seely), has plans of her own, however. With a few welcome nods to the true religious meaning of Christmas, this is perfectly acceptable holiday fare for all ages with a core lesson about the redemptive power of kindness and forgiveness. Mild cartoonish action. The Catholic News Service classification is A-I -- general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children

### Sunday Mass

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**10:00 a.m. WFBG radio, 1290 AM**

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## Independent Oversight Board Issues Report On Altoona-Johnstown Diocese Child Protection Efforts

### Review Finds Progress; Pushes For Further Steps To Fully Implement And Enforce Reforms

The Independent Oversight Board for Youth Protection of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown today issued its first Annual Report on reforms developed and implemented by the Diocese for protection of children and youth, concluding that “much has been done, but much is left to do.”

The Oversight Board was formed to oversee the implementation of child protection reforms mandated by a 2017 Memorandum of Understanding between the Office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania and the Diocese. The involvement of the United States Attorney’s Office had its origins in a 2016 Pennsylvania Grand Jury report which documented a series of scandals involving sexual abuse of minors by members of the clergy and alleged subsequent coverups by two previous Diocesan bishops.

In its report, the Board concluded that the Diocese has made “significant headway” in developing and putting in place policies and procedures necessary to protect children and youth who come into contact with its clergy, employees, lay ministers and volunteers. The Board’s report covers numerous reforms including: public disclosure of the names of priests and others credibly accused of sexually abusing minors; automatic and immediate referral of credible allegations to law enforcement authorities; appointment of all new members to the Diocesan Allegation Review Board; improved mandatory background checks and training programs for Diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers; a new policy for youth protection and a new Diocesan code of conduct that apply to all clergy, employees and volunteers; counseling and financial assistance for victims; a 24-hour child sexual abuse hotline; retention of an outside

expert on child sexual abuse prevention; and appointment of a full-time youth protection director.

However, the Board emphasized that “all the policies in the world won’t work if they are not implemented and enforced.” It also issued several additional recommendations to bring about “a Diocesan culture that places the highest value on protecting and nurturing its children.” They include:

Establish Parish Level Leadership Teams/Safety Committees. The Board strongly recommended that the laypeople in each parish take a more active and formal role in making sure that reforms are carried out and monitored for effectiveness. Specifically, it called for each parish to create a parish-level Leadership Team/Safety Committee with real authority for ensuring the protection of its own children.

Promote the Child Sex Abuse Hotline. Finding that the number of calls received by the Diocese’ 24-hour child sex abuse hotline has been minimal, the Board recommended that the hotline be more widely and effectively promoted.

Implement Procedures for Following Up on Referrals to Law Enforcement Authorities. The Board commended the Diocese for instituting and following a policy of immediately reporting allegations of child sexual abuse to appropriate authorities, including law enforcement agencies. It recommended that the Diocese implement an agreed-upon procedure for follow-up on referrals to law enforcement authorities, especially to the district attorneys in the counties within the Diocese.

Strengthen a Culture of Child Protection. The Board highlighted the importance of instilling a culture of child protection that is embraced by clergy, lay ministers, teachers,

employees and parishioners. Noting that “culture almost always trumps policy,” the board found that the Diocese “has put the policy in place” but “must continue to work on the culture.”

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, the Board has provided its report to the United States Attorney’s Office and to the Diocese. The full report of the Board can be accessed on the Diocese’s website at <https://www.dioceseaj.org>.

The Independent Oversight Board consists of outside experts and is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of policies and procedures for child protection. It does not handle specific allegations of abuse; that is the responsibility of the Diocesan Bishop, the Allegation Review Board of the Diocese and law enforcement agencies.

*The involvement of the United States Attorney’s Office had its origins in a 2016 Pennsylvania Grand Jury report which documented a series of scandals involving sexual abuse of minors by members of the clergy and alleged subsequent coverups by two previous Diocesan bishops.*



## May They Rest In Peace



**SISTER M. JAMESANN MCCUE, IHM**

Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister M. Jamesann McCue, of the Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary died on Monday, November 26, 2018, at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton.

She was born on August 15, 1928 in New York, NY and given the name Mary. She was the daughter of the late James and Anna Bennett McCue.

She entered the IHM Congregation on September 7, 1952 and made her temporary profession of vows on August 3, 1955 and her final profession of vows on August 3, 1958.

Sister Jamesann served as a teacher at the following schools: Cathedral Elementary School in Scranton, PA, from 1955 to 1958; Saint John the Evangelist Elementary School in Binghamton, NY, from 1958 to 1960; Saint Paul Elementary School in New Bern, NC, from 1960 to 1966; Saint John the Evangelist Elementary School in Bellefonte, PA, from 1966 to 1968; Saint Joseph School in Danville, PA, from 1968 to 1970; Saint Raphael Elementary School in Saint Petersburg, FL, from 1970 to 1977; Santissimo Nombre de Jesus Elementary School in Lima Peru, from 1977 to 1983; Saint Rita Elementary School in Baltimore, MD, from 1983 to 1986; and Saint Mary Elementary School in Upper Marlboro, MD, from 1986 to 1987. She also served

as an assistant in the IHM Business Office assistant at the IHM Center in Scranton, PA, from 1987 to 1996; and pastoral care coordinator at Holy Family Parish in St. Petersburg, FL, from 1996 to 2006.

From 2006 until the time of her death, Sister Jamesann was a prayer minister at Holy Family Convent in Saint Petersburg, FL and later at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton.

## January 1, Holy Day Of Obligation

Tuesday, January 1, 2019 – Holy Day of Obligation

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God and

Day of Prayer for World Peace and Justice

While the Mass for the Preservation of Peace and Justice may not be used on the Solemnity of

Mary the Holy Mother of God, the Local Church will still observe this as a Day of Prayer for world peace.

Please pray the following prayer on this day:

O God, who have revealed that peacemakers are to be called your children, grant, we

pray, that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice which alone ensures true and lasting peace.

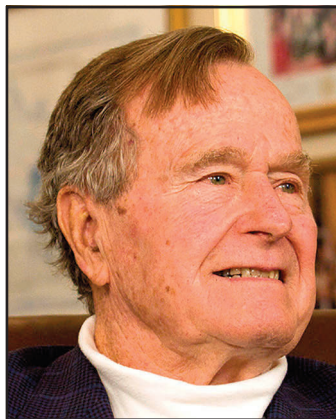
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Nation Mourns Death Of President George H. W. Bush

**WASHINGTON (CNS)** -- When he was running for re-election in 1992, President George H.W. Bush told Catholic News Service that he believed that a strong religious faith could provide "an extra shot of strength when you need it."

"I don't believe you can be president without having faith. I really strongly feel that," Bush said in a telephone interview that October as en route from a campaign appearance in Kentucky to scheduled stops in Florida.

That religious faith that sus-



**GEORGE H.W. BUSH**

tained him and his family and was clearly evident during his years in the White House and more recently as he mourned the April 17 death of his beloved wife of 73 years, Barbara, is being noted by many in paying tribute to his life and legacy after his death late Nov. 30 at age 94. His spokesman, Jim McGrath, announced the death of the former president in a tweet. The cause of his death was not immediately available, but he had been in failing health the last few years. The White House

announced December 1 that a state funeral is being arranged "with all of the accompanying support and honors." President Donald Trump designated December 5 as a national day of mourning. He and first lady Melania Trump will attend the funeral at the National Episcopal Cathedral in Washington. The flags at the White House were lowered to half staff.

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## Bishop's Letter

(Continued From Page 1.)

to settle remaining requests for compensation at this time.

However, we are in the process of seeking additional funds from past and present insurance plans in order to assist victims. We will continue to do all we can to assist the victim/survivors with counseling expenses as we have been doing since 1999.

I also wish to point out the recently announced reorganization of offices and departments that have been part of diocesan administration. Any future decisions and changes will be made as part of an ongoing approach to planning in support of the mission of the Church while paying attention to available financial resources that can be used to assist victims.

The diocese has and continues to report all allegations of sexual abuse of minors to law enforcement. The diocese has and will continue to cooperate with all investigations according to law.

This has been and continues to be a challenge for our diocese with limited resources and the smallest Catholic population in Pennsylvania. But this lived experience in our diocese, especially with regard to the suffering of victims and their families, is something we need to discern and respond



**FAITH DAY GREETING:** Bishop Mark welcomes a family at Faith Day 2018. The Bishop is committed to strengthening families and protecting all children and vulnerable individuals throughout the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

to with the eyes of faith. At the same time, I am aware that these challenges and burdens have weakened the faith of some.

In all of this, we need to be mindful of those who suffered sexual abuse as minors at the hands of some members of the clergy. The first meeting that I had with a victim/survivor of child sexual abuse was within a few months after I came to the diocese. I have continued to meet with them and their family members, right up to the time of preparing this letter.

I am grateful for those who have come forward to share their stories. We will continue to provide ways for them to be heard. The victims and their families remind me, and all of us,

that they are part of our diocese. They need our attention.

I apologize to all who have suffered from sexual abuse, especially perpetrated by some members of the clergy. I apologize to your families and loved ones. I apologize to all who feel shock, disgust, anger, confusion, disappointment, and betrayal.

When I addressed the media at the time of the publication of the Grand Jury Report concerning our diocese in 2016, I was reminded of the expression, "When you know more, you can do more." All the hard facts that I have shared in this letter are so that you and I can know more.

But there is one more thing. We can never forget that we can

do more. No matter how angry, disgusted, or hurt you feel about all of this, please do not forget our brothers and sisters who have suffered.

In this issue of *The Catholic Register*, we have included what is already being done through the establishment of a full-time Office of Youth Protection; through the reorganization of the Diocesan Review Board and the diligence of an Independent Oversight Board that assists in the assessment of youth protection policies and procedures and makes recommendations for improvement.

The Independent Oversight Board has completed a first year report. It will help us to know more and do more. That report is published in its entirety and is available on the diocesan website.

And so that you may know more, at the beginning of the New Year, a complete audited financial statement of the diocese will be published, and it will become the standard practice every year.

I am doing everything I can to get this right. It cannot be accomplished overnight. As we move forward, I will do my best to share with you our ongoing response to all of these challenges. I could never imagine doing this alone, and I do not try to do that.

These concerns and challenges are regularly brought to the attention of the key councils, boards, and committees that assist in the operations of our diocese. They are comprised mostly of laypersons from throughout the

diocese who bring incredible experience and expertise, and especially the passion and diligence that you would want and expect. I have also reached out to experts independent of the diocese to assist us as we move forward. They have generously agreed to help even though we cannot afford their services.

I understand the negative thoughts and emotions that so many have shared with me. Like most people, it's not always what I wanted to hear, but what I need to hear. I thank God for you every single day.

I am grateful to all of you for your past and current financial support of our parishes, schools, and ministries that provide for the good of the whole diocese and for all whom we are called to serve. I count on you for your prayers, your vigilance, and continued support for the reform and renewal of our diocese.

In this Advent season, please join me in prayer for one another, especially for survivors of sexual abuse and their families. Please know that you are in my prayers every day.

Sincerely in Christ,

*+ Mark L. Bartchak*

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

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# The Catholic Register

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