Bishop Rhoades Comes Home To Lebanon Parish

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, a native son of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Lebanon, returned to his home parish on the Feast of the Assumption to celebrate the closing Mass for the parish’s bicentennial celebration. “I learned here to have Mary as a part of my life,” Bishop Rhoades told The Catholic Witness. See page 16.

Msgr. Rost Remembered as a Faithful Servant

Msgr. George W. Rost, a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg for more than 61 years, died at St. Anne’s Retirement Community in Columbia on Aug. 15, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was 87.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Bishop Joseph P. McFadden Aug. 21 at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Conewago. Burial was in the Conewago Chapel Cemetery.

Priest friends of Msgr. Rost spoke of him as a kind and generous priest who was faithful to duty.

“He was a very quiet man. He wasn’t given too much to conversation, but was pleasant and served the people well,” said Msgr. Thomas Smith, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Lancaster and a distant cousin of Msgr. Rost.

“He was very faithful in the liturgy. He had strong opinions on...
St. Joseph School
Opens Doors for 85th Year

Peggy Snyder, principal of St. Joseph School in Dallastown, waited at the student drop-off, anticipating the arrival of the first students for the first day of school on Aug. 22.

“I’ve been here for 33 years,” Mrs. Snyder said while waiting. “I have a lot of history here. We are teaching students of parents who I’ve taught.”

This year marks the school’s 85th anniversary. The students, families and community will be celebrating all year, and started on Friday August 24 with a picnic for the students and their families.

“1979 was my first year. Things have changed, but the kids are basically the same. We have good kids and a loving family atmosphere,” Mrs. Snyder said.

She recalls a young girl from the first third grade she taught, who then came back in the 90s to teach first grade. She now teaches in Lancaster.

Even as students arrived, Mrs. Snyder would say with a brilliant smile, “I taught her mother,” or “Her aunt went to school here.”

This long legacy of families is what makes a school like this so special. Every student arriving in the morning came with a smile, a hug for their beloved principal and excitement for the day. Before students were sent to their classrooms, they participated in their daily morning tradition of a prayerful song with Mrs. Snyder playing guitar, Morning Prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance and every student proudly standing hand-over-heart singing the National Anthem. Mrs. Snyder shared with The Catholic Witness that she much prefers the students praying together in person rather than over the intercom.

After their time together, the students quietly and orderly lined themselves into their grades and were off to begin a new year of faith, knowledge and love for their school.

(For information about St. Joseph School and its 85th anniversary celebrations, visit www.stjoesdallastown.org or call 717-244-9386.)
In many places around the globe, the Catholic Church struggles to be a visible sign of Christ’s peace. These places include poor dioceses where many depend on the Church for social and pastoral support; regions where Catholics are persecuted and must be helped discreetly; and nations overloaded with refugees or victims of war and natural disasters.

For many, the Peter’s Pence Collection – which will be taken up in parishes in the diocese on Sept. 8 and 9 – provides the peace they might not otherwise know.

The Peter’s Pence Collection gives us an opportunity to extend a sign of peace to the Body of Christ around the world. Our gifts to this annual collection help the Holy Father support victims of poverty, disaster, war and oppression and others in urgent need of assistance. Pope Benedict XVI uses the Peter’s Pence Collection to strengthen dioceses, religious orders and struggling communities of faith when they need it most.

Examples of programs funded by the Peter’s Pence Collection include:

- The Hospital of St. Vincent de Paul, a health institution in Sarajevo staffed by religious
- Nazareth Orphanages in Mbaro, Rwanda, which takes in abandoned orphans who are victims of genocide and civil war
- Casa di accoglienza Giovanni Paolo II Opera Don Orione, a residence that gives free shelter and specializes in helping special-needs pilgrims travel to Rome

“Our participation in the Peter’s Pence Collection gives us an opportunity to extend a sign of peace to the Body of Christ around the world,” said Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Dallas, chairman of the Committee on National Collections of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The theme of this year’s collection is, “Cast the peace of Christ upon the world.”

For additional information, visit www.usccb.org/nationalcollections or call the USCCB Office of National Collections at 202-541-3346.
Life Issues Forum:
Forty Years of Abortion and the Year of Faith
By Tom Grenchik
Special to The Witness

In our country we will observe a sad anniversary, marking 40 years of a “No” in the tragic Roe v. Wade decision that unleashed widespread abortion on our land. Well over 53 million children have been lost and their parents and families dramatically affected. How do we even begin to fathom the impact to our nation, and to our Church? A long time ago, God allowed the Israelites to wander in the wilderness for forty years—as a punishment, and also as a test of their faithfulness because they could enter the promised land. These last forty years have certainly tested our faithfulness. But they have also strengthened the resolve of many Christians across our country, especially young people, who are now more determined than ever to enter the promised land of the “culture of life.”

As the Israelites prepared to enter their promised land, they were given a final challenge to show their faith in God and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him” (Dt 30:19-20). Even after reaching the promised land the Israelites had to endure many battles before they could freely occupy the land that was promised. All this was to strengthen their faith in God and affirm their total reliance on Him. How do we strengthen our faith today, as our nation emerges from forty years in the wasteland of the culture of death? Providentially, Pope Benedict XVI has declared a worldwide Year of Faith, beginning on October 11, 2012 and concluding on November 24, 2013. In introducing the Year of Faith, the Holy Father spoke of the grave difficulties of our time, and the need for the Church to lead people out of the desert and to clasp sinners to its bosom. He suggested a path of penance and renewal, and he called for authentic conversion and a witness to charity so the Church might be the visible community of God’s mercy.

The fortieth anniversary of Roe v. Wade lands squarely within the Year of Faith. It is as if the Holy Father has given the Church in the United States a focused time to acknowledge the great sin of abortion in our nation, to embrace a time of penance and conversion, and to become a loving witness to God’s forgiveness and mercy. How should we respond to this great opportunity?

The Year of Faith calls each of us to study the teachings of our faith and to strengthen a personal relationship with our Lord. While the Year of Faith emphasizes the Catechism of the Catholic Church as foundational for our reflection, it also calls our attention to the beautiful teachings in the pro-life encyclical Evangelium Vitae, the Gospel of Life. So for Americans, the Year of Faith can be a time of reflection and preparation to answer 40 years of the culture of death with the inspiring response of the Holy Father’s encyclical.

For information, resources and diocesan events during the Year of Faith, visit www.hbgdiocese.org.)

Many of us have hidden fears and hesitations when it comes to dealing with persons with severe disabilities. Their unfamiliar gestures, behaviors, and limitations can challenge us and infringe on our comfort zones. We may be tempted to apply a different standard when we deal with them. Even very young children with disabilities may suffer discrimination through denial of care as newborns, or through abortion in utero.

During his presidential campaign, former Pennsylvania Sena- tor Rick Santorum and his wife Karen were often asked by people on the campaign trail about their daughter Bella, who was born with Trisomy 18, a severe genetic defect caused by an extra chromo- some. Such children tend to have shorter lifespans, with 90% dying during the first year of life. Nevertheless, with proper care, some children can live well into their teens, and even into their 20’s or 30’s. Bella became known to the public during her father’s candidacy in part because of several memorable moments during the TV debates where Rick powerfully described how Bella’s birth and struggles strengthened his family.

Early on, Rick and Karen struggled with the Trisomy 18 diagnosis, and with the way physicians labeled it a “lethal diagnosis” and “incompatible with life.” Because they had already lost another child at birth, Rick, almost unconsciously, re- membered emotionally during his debate with Obama during the first few months of her life. He focused on being a pillar of strength for the family through the storm. He later described it during one of the public presidential debates this way: “I decided that the best thing I could do was to treat her differently and not love her… because it wouldn’t hurt as much if I lost her.”

Several years prior to Bella’s birth, Rick had sponsored the partial-birth abortion ban in Congress. He had spent long hours on the Senate floor lobbying to protect children who were discovered to have “problems” before birth, rather than allowing them to be targeted for late-term abortions. When Bella was 5 months old, she became critically ill and was rushed to the emergency room. Rick grasped her little finger on the gurney where she was lying. “I remember holding that finger,” he said, “and looking at her, and realizing what I had done. I had been exactly what I had said that I had fought against at the partial birth abortion [hearings]: I had seen her as less of a person because of her disability.”

His candor is a reminder of the challenges we all face in caring for and loving those with disabilities and physical limitations. Having learned many valuable lessons from their daughter, Rick and Karen now serve as even more vigorous advocates for children with disabilities. They realized they had to immerse themselves in the world of special needs, which Rick described as “a different world,” and one where children like Bella “do not get the care they need unless the parents fight for it.”

I recently had the opportunity to meet Rick and Karen. Karen described how Bella’s situation was exacerbated by health care professionals who would not treat her with the same dignity and respect as normal children. Surprisingly, some doctors did not even address Bella by her name. Rick and Karen soon found an exceptional team of physicians who would not discriminate against those with disabilities who should be allowed to gain a foothold in the medical profession, nor be allowed to guide public policy. The Holy Father’s encyclical called for authentic conversion and a witness to charity so the Church might be the visible community of God’s mercy.

The Catholic Witness
OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG
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Loving Those with Disabilities
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Special to The Witness

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In China, Bishop McDevitt Grad Explores Business and Culture through Immersion Program

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

As Alessandro DiSanto commences his sophomore year at the University of Notre Dame this fall, he carries with him a broader understanding of business relationships and world cultures, as well as stronger conviction about his Catholic faith.

A 2011 graduate of Bishop McDevitt High School, Alessandro spent a month in China this summer, gaining insight into the Chinese people, culture, history, politics and economy. The college-credit program is offered to students whose parents are members of the Young Presidents’ Organization, which unites business leaders from more than 120 countries.

The China Abroad Program offered Alessandro and some 30 other students from 17 different countries a number of lectures and hands-on experiences in the world’s most populous country.

The goal of the program was to expose students like Alessandro – who has a double major in finance and economics, with a minor in Italian – to a culture in which they will likely do business some day.

“Traveling and learning another culture outside of your own is useful because it humbles you in a way. People from other places think differently, and when you’re forced to explain to people why you do what you do or why you believe what you believe, you also ask that question of yourself,” Alessandro told The Catholic Witness. “This forces you to justify who you are to yourself.”

Alessandro and his peers were immersed in Chinese culture, and spent a good deal of time in Beijing and Shanghai. They attended a press conference with the lead spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met the president of NBA China, and toured the facilities of Dow Corning.

Along the way, they learned practical tips about business there: There are no fixed prices in China, every purchase is negotiated. When you are given someone’s business card, you are expected to receive it with both hands and give it considerable examination.

This business etiquette is part of what Alessandro described as the country’s “face culture.” “They’re very focused on building relationships. They want to communicate with you,” he said. “They want personal interaction.”

Relationship-building was a prominent focus of the program, not only with regards to the Chinese people, but also among the program participants.

Spending several weeks with more than 30 of his peers from around the world gave Alessandro an even greater appreciation for world cultures, perspectives and religious beliefs.

“What was great about this program was interacting with the other students. I learned just as much about other countries as I did about China, and it gave me a lot of different viewpoints,” he said.

“You get all these different people from different places in the world. I went to Catholic grade school and high school, and now I go to Notre Dame. Then you run into someone who doesn’t believe what you believe. This gave me an opportunity to hear about other religions in a free and open environment,” he said. “Some of my peers in the group had ridiculous views of the Catholic Church, and so I was forced to articulate my beliefs. I think that strengthened my own faith while I was in China. I feel I have a much better appreciation for other faiths, and also a greater understanding and commitment for my own.”

“I’m not going to say that I changed anyone’s mind in discussions we had about our beliefs,” Alessandro remarked, “but I think just being able to have those conversations was very useful. It allows you to reflect on yourself and your convictions.”

With several years of studies ahead of him, Alessandro’s path in the business world is yet to be revealed. But he’ll certainly approach it with respect and understanding.

“If you’re going to do business anywhere, you need to understand the culture so that stereotypes can be broken and an amicable relationship can be formed,” he said.

“What I’ve learned the most from these interactions with different people,” he remarked, “is that you have to open yourself up to as many opportunities as possible and then take advantage of whatever comes your way.”

Annulment Presentations Scheduled

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Harrisburg will offer presentations concerning divorce and annulments from the Catholic perspective in the coming months. These presentations will be helpful for divorced Catholics, divorced people who wish to marry Catholics, parish leaders involved in the RCIA process and those who have a vested interest because of family or friends.

Presentations will include a question-and-answer session and an opportunity for private conversation with Tribunal staff and representatives. For more information, call 717-657-4804 or send an e-mail to tribunal@hbgdiocese.org.

Schedule of Presentations:

- September 13 – Cardinal Keeler Center Room 103, Harrisburg, 7 p.m.
- October 11 – St. Philip the Apostle Parish, Millersville, 7 p.m.
- October 15 – St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Annville, 7 p.m.
- October 18 – St. Joseph Parish, Hanover, 7 p.m.
- November 15 – Cardinal Keeler Center Room 103, Harrisburg, 7 p.m.

‘Beginning Experience’ Weekends for Those Suffering the Loss of a Spouse

The Beginning Experience Team for the Harrisburg Diocese has booked two upcoming weekends, Nov. 9-11 2012, and April 26-28 2013. The weekends will take place at Camp Hebron, located at 957 Camp Road in Halifax.

Beginning Experience weekends are an approved Roman Catholic program designed for those suffering the loss of a spouse through death, divorce or separation. Hundreds of persons have been helped to move towards successful, productive, happy lives by attending one of these weekends.

Check the diocesan Web site at www.hbgdiocese.org and visit the “Marriage and Family” link in the “Family Life” menu, or check www.beginningexperience.org. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Harrisburg Beginning Experience Team at 717-512-2718 or harrisburgbe@gmail.com.

The weekend is led by persons who have lost a spouse through death or divorce and are trained in facilitating a weekend. Each Beginning Experience Team is certified by the International Beginning Experience Organization.

A number of persons have indicated interest in attending a weekend. Please get your application in so that the team can adequately plan for those who want to take advantage of this program of support, healing and encouragement. A weekend is often most helpful after about six months following a loss of a spouse or marriage. Many have attended a weekend after a much longer period has elapsed and found the weekend most helpful. Grief has no schedule. Please contact the Team to explore when a weekend might be most helpful to you.
Msgr. Rost
Continued from 1

nearly everything, and it was a very well-informed opinion. He was a deep thinker, and when he drew his conclusions, they were usually reasonably infallible," he said.

Msgr. Marcinio Fregapane, a retired priest of the diocese and a classmate of Msgr. Rost, said that “Whenever I needed any help, he was there to give a helping hand.”

Their friendship grew as they served parishes in neighboring towns – Msgr. Rost at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lebanon and Msgr. Fregapane at Mary, Gate of Heaven in Myerstown.

“He was a great servant of the Church,” Msgr. Fregapane said. “He was generous and kind. He was a great priest and a good friend.”

Msgr. Rost was born in 1924 in Columbia to the late Martin F. and Marion A. Smith Rost. He attended St. Peter’s School in Columbia, Columbia High School, St. Charles College in Catonsville, Md., and St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore. Bishop George E. Leech ordained him to the priesthood on May 19, 1951, at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg. He was named an Honorary Prelate with the title of Monsignor in 1970.

Msgr. Rost served as assistant pastor at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Lancaster (1951-1953); Vice Chancellor and Secretary to Bishop Leech (1953-1960); founding pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Harrisburg (1960-1968); and pastor of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Lebanon (1968-1980) and Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Catonsville (1980-2000).

During his 20 years at Sacred Heart of Jesus, he had a great devotion to Mary, and I am sure that his faithfulness to the Church, and said “Life is about fruitfulness. It’s not about how much we have, it’s about how much we give away. I’m convinced that’s what led him to embrace the priesthood, embrace the life of service, especially the life in which he gave himself in love and obedience to the Church and the people he served.”

Msgr. Rost is survived by two nephews and three nieces and their spouses, and by several great-nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and by two sisters and a brother.

Letters of condolence by may sent to his nephews: Marc Rost, 102 Bellows Way, Lansdale PA 19446, or Jason Rost, 445 Stonegate Court, Millersville PA 17551.

You Can Help Your Marriage
Retrouvaille Weekend September 14-16

Twenty-five percent of surveyed couples say they are “happily married.” For everyone else, there is Retrouvaille.

Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue, or have just stopped talking to each other? Does talking make it even worse? Retrouvaille helps couples rebuild their relationships.

For information, or to register for the Harrisburg program beginning with a weekend on September 14-16, call 1-800-470-2230 or visit the Web site at www.HelpOurMarriage.com. The program is sponsored by the Diocesan Family Ministries Office.

Vietnamese Catholic Community Welcomes Bishop Joseph Nguyen Chi Linh

More than 500 Vietnamese Catholics in the Harrisburg area gathered at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church in Harrisburg earlier this summer to welcome Bishop Nguyen Chi Linh of the Thanh Hoa Diocese in Vietnam. He visited the community and installed nine council members of the “Mother of God” Vietnamese community of Harrisburg during a special Mass.

The concelebrants included Father Hoa Nguyen, Father Paul Fisher, pastor of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish, two other priests from the Thanh Hoa Diocese and Father Paul Thuong Nguyen, who is the current religious administrator of the Harrisburg Vietnamese community.

The community was established in 1975 by a small group of Vietnamese Catholic refugees who arrived in this area. They have been a tight knit community and have upheld their traditions in both religious practices and culture. Over the years, many more Vietnamese refugees have come to the area and have created the largest Vietnamese Catholic community within the Harrisburg Diocese.

The community has chosen “Mother of God” as their patroness for the greater Harrisburg area. Weekly, the community celebrates Mass every Friday evening, Saturday evening and Sunday at noon at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church in Harrisburg.

Blessed Sacrament Church, located at 2211 N. 3rd Street in Harrisburg.

For many years, this community has been cared for by both Father Hoa Nguyen and Father Tri Luong. Father Hoa Nguyen is now a special minister for other Vietnamese Catholics in Lancaster, York and Lebanon, and Father Tri Luong is now pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Dauphin. The community is grateful for the pastoral care that was provided by both Father Nguyen and Father Luong.

This historical visit by Bishop Nguyen and the installation of the council members opened a new chapter for the Vietnamese Apostolate of Harrisburg and brought jubilation to all. Bishop Nguyen Chi Linh and Bishop Joseph P. McFadden signed an agreement in which the Diocese of Thanh Hoa will assign priests from Vietnam as needed, and with the approval of the Harrisburg Diocese, to shepherd the Vietnamese flock in the Harrisburg area. Bishop Nguyen Chi Linh is the first priest assigned to Harrisburg under this agreement. After Mass, everyone gathered in the social hall to celebrate the special occasion with traditional foods and an entertainment program that included performances by the Vietnamese choirs, the Vietnamese Catholic Women’s club, altar boys and girls and the youth group.

(Article submitted by Father Paul Nguyen.)
Nellie Gray, 86, Dies; Was March for Life Founder and Emcee

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

Nellie Gray, who started the annual March for Life to pro-test the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion nationwide, has died at age 86.

She was found dead in her home Aug. 13 in Washington's Capitol Hill neighborhood by a March for Life staffer, Gene Ruane.

The March for Life has grown into one of the signature events of the pro-life movement. After the first march in 1974, Gray, a Texas native, established the March for Life Education & Defense Fund to sustain it.

Each year in her remarks, Gray exhorted pro-lifers to promote and adhere to a series of "life principles" that would eliminate abortion and enhance life, to which she said there should be "no exception! No compromise!"

Ruane, an administrative assistant with the March for Life, told Catholic News Service Aug. 14 that leadership of the organization would be assumed by Terrence Seanlon, who has been its vice president "since the beginning."

Gray was a member of St. Mary, Mother of God Parish in Washington.

Born June 25, 1926, in Texas, Gray served as a corporal in the Women's Army Corps during World War II. She later earned a bachelor's degree in business and a master's in economics. She worked for the federal government for 28 years at the State Department and the Department of Labor, while attending Georgetown University Law School. Gray later practiced law before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a 2010 profile, Gray said she wasn't a Catholic as a child, but "I had elements of the Catholic faith in my life." As a young woman, she encountered a priest who brought to light what the Catholic Church was about, and he tutored her until she joined the Church.

Gray did not see Roe overturned in her lifetime, the movement she helped build — out on behalf of unborn children, who have no voice of their own. While Miss Gray "mobilized millions to protest the injustice of Roe v. Wade and to speak out on behalf of unborn children, who have no voice of their own. While Miss Gray did not see Roe overturned in her lifetime, the movement she helped build — especially its young members — will not rest until the right to life is restored once and for all," said Deirdre McCauley, assistant director for policy and communications at the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, in an Aug. 14 statement.

Gray is survived by three nieces and one nephew, all of whom live in Texas.

Renowned educator and best-selling author Christopher West will offer a special, free talk at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Mechanicsburg Sept. 10 from 7-9 p.m.

Christopher West is a renowned educator, best-selling author, cultural commentator and popular theologian who specializes in making the dense scholarship of the late Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" accessible to a wide audience. His extensive global lecturing, his numerous books and articles, and his multiple educational programs have sparked an international groundswell of interest in the late pope's teaching across denominational lines.

He has been teaching graduate and undergraduate courses on the Theology of the Body and sexual ethics since the late 1990s, having served on the faculty of St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, and as a visiting professor of the John Paul II Institute for with Saint Catholic Church in Denver, the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, and as a visiting professor of the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne, Australia. Since 2004, he has served as a research fellow and faculty member of the Theology of the Body Institute near Philadelphia. His courses there continue to draw priests, religious and lay people from around the globe. He also serves as a visiting faculty member of the Saint Theresse Institute of Faith and Mission in Bruno, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Christopher West is founder of The Cor Project, a global outreach devoted to cultural renewal through the "new evangelization." Millions have seen him on Fox News, ABC News, MSNBC, EWTN, or heard him on national radio shows. Of all his titles and accomplishments, Christopher is most proud to call himself a devoted husband and father. He lives near Lancaster with his wife Wendy and their five children.

West recently released his first book in three years, "At the Heart of the Gospel: Reclaiming the Body for the New Evangelization." (For information about Christopher West's upcoming talk at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Mechanicsburg, contact the parish at 717-697-8716. Find more information about Christopher West at www.christopherwest.com.)

Gray also spoke of the march's origins. "I received a call from the Knights of Columbus," she recalled. "I didn't even know who they were, but they explained their stance against abortion and needed a place to meet to discuss plans for a march. That place was my living room. About 30 people gathered there and they asked if I could help get speakers for the event since I knew Capitol Hill well."

"What I couldn't get was a master of ceremonies for the event," she added. "Politicians didn't want to get involved in a march, and people at that time weren't interested in marches after the civil rights movement and other things. That left the emcee job to me."

Tributes to Gray poured in as news of her death spread. "The indelible mark she has left in this world can be seen in the generations of lives saved as a result of her dedicated work on behalf of the unborn," said an Aug. 13 statement from Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life. "As we approach the tragic 40th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, we are confident her legacy of pro-life activism will continue to inspire and effect change."

"She had a fierce heart that valued all people — born and unborn — fearlessly working to create a picture worth a thousand words — the sight of hundreds of thousands of peaceful Americans calling on their courts and their legislators to defend life in law," said an Aug. 14 statement from Charmaine Yoest, president of Americans United for Life.

Gray "mobilized millions to protest the injustice of Roe v. Wade and to speak out on behalf of unborn children, who have no voice of their own. While Miss Gray did not see Roe overturned in her lifetime, the movement she helped build — especially its young members — will not rest until the right to life is restored once and for all," said Deirdre McCauley, assistant director for policy and communications at the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, in an Aug. 14 statement.

Gray is survived by three nieces and one nephew, all of whom live in Texas.
Camp Kirchenwald Memories

By Emily M. Albert
The Catholic Witness

Camp Kirchenwald finally arrived for two anxious campers, Jason Bilger and Becky Maurer, who were excited to spend time with their friends, create arts and crafts, play cards, participate in daily events such as a therapy dog visit and a visit from state police with their horses, and take part in so many other activities around the camp’s grounds and lake.

They shared laughter and fun with their cabin and bunk mates, spent time catching up with the counselors who they only see once a year, but many stay in contact with each other through Facebook and other social media. Most of the counselors have been participating for more than 15 years, coming back every August to work with familiar faces.

The weeks’ activities concluded with a talent show, where Jason received the “Biggest Kind Heart Award,” and Becky, who had visits from her new niece, was awarded the “Best Aunt of the Year Award.” As the evening came to an end, Jason and his bunk mate shared their musical talent, singing and creatively dancing to “Proud to be an American” by Lee Greenwood. Campers held hands and swayed along to the musical duet.

Becky and Jason were gracious to The Catholic Witness, sharing not only their time before camp but also time during camp. The following photographs share the joy and excitement of camp and surely explain why these two campers and many others begin their countdown to next year as soon as they get home.
Handbook of Winning

Book Review

By Chris Heisey

The Catholic Witness

In the last week or so, the air has had a slight shift. It seems lighter, less humid and has a hint of the smell of fall in it. Night comes almost two hours earlier than back in June and I’ve even seen some Halloween decorations out at the stores already. Now, I’m not entirely fooled, I know summer still has a few hot days to throw at us, but we are so close to my favorite time of the year – football season!

Initially as a child this was exciting because it meant watching the Notre Dame game with dad every Saturday. As I got older and reached adolescence, I picked my own team to root for, University of Michigan, “Go Blue!” We had and still have a healthy rivalry when the two teams play.

I was never really into pro football, until I met my husband. Here I was a committed Michigan fan, never missed a game on Saturday and he a diehard Eagles fan, also unlikely to miss a Sunday game. At first I continued to have no interest, but as I figured how much I actually liked, maybe even loved this man, who began accompanying me to plays and other art events I knew he didn’t have much interest in, I thought, “How much different from college football can this be?”

I watched one game and was hooked! Just the way I fell head over heels for Michigan because of watching one player, Charles Woodson, now of Green Bay. This past year he picked off Kyle Orton in the first quarter in Week 4, giving him his eleventh career interception return for a touchdown, placing him second all-time behind Rod Woodson.

Running back Brian Westbrook, a Villanovna grad, hooked me on Eagles football. He was drafted in the third round of the 2002 season and saw limited time, but made his mark in 2003, the same year I began watching, with a fourth quarter punt return for a touchdown to defeat the New York Giants 14-10. According to Wikipedia, “the play managed to turn the Eagles’ season around as they went to the NFC Championship Game.” Watching Westbrook play was exciting, and I finally understood pro football. I always had a misconception that it was about money for these guys. I would make a comparison that college players play harder because they have something to work for, but these guys play with just as much heart or with more heart than any college player!

I guess everyone has their own catch or tradition as to why they root for a specific team, but for me it was always more about one or two players. I still like to catch a Packers game every now and again, just to see Woodson play. I think this is why I began playing fantasy football. Not only is it a fun way to be social during the fall, but it gives you a chance to play the game with all your favorite players [if you’re lucky enough to get an early round pick].

My league is made up of 12 players I’ve been playing with these guys and girls for three years now and honestly, I’m not very good. But this year I’ve decided to be proactive. My husband is the competition and it would be nice to build a goodhearted rivalry in our home. I pick second; he has the third, which means my first player, if I play my cards right, could make him have to change his plan. The decision is, do I take McCoy who has been my running back for the last two years and is my favorite player, or do I go with a solid quarterback like Drew Brees [despite the Saints being in trouble this year?] And let’s factor the last two years and is my favorite player, or do I go with a solid quarterback

My other debacle is who to take in the later rounds. These are the guys you can sometimes get gems out of, or use for trade. Again after watching pre-season, I’d say Foles, back up for Vick looks like a good choice-if he can get playing time. My league is made up of 12 players I’ve been playing with these guys and girls for three years now and honestly, I’m not very good. But this year I’ve decided to be proactive. My husband is the competition and it would be nice to build a goodhearted rivalry in our home. I pick second; he has the third, which means my first player, if I play my cards right, could make him have to change his plan. The decision is, do I take McCoy who has been my running back for the last two years and is my favorite player, or do I go with a solid quarterback like Drew Brees [despite the Saints being in trouble this year?] And let’s factor the last two years and is my favorite player, or do I go with a solid quarterback

In that McCoy is on all the pros’ pick as third or fourth; maybe it’s time to try

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The book is available at Amazon.com, and there is an accompanying blog that has fine resources and prayer guidance at sportsinthespirit.com.
Catholic Perspective

September 2: People of faith stand with people who’ve been left behind and should seek economic renewal that makes workers and their families a central concern, according to the annual Labor Day Statement from the U.S. bishops that this week in Catholic Perspective, the holiday is explored in depth with a segment that begins with a look at the recent statement issued by the U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Millions of Americans suffer from unemployment, underemployment or are living in poverty as their basic needs too often go unmet. This represents a serious economic and moral failure for our nation,” said the bishops in their statement.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Villa Rossello Chapel in Newfield, N.J., on Sept. 13, 6:30 p.m. at the Pieta Cemetery on the grounds of Villa Rossello.

STEELETON – Prince of Peace: Louis Swoger.
TREVORTON – St. Patrick: Irene Smolko.

CHAMBERSBURG – Corpus Christi: 
LANCASTER – Holy Angels: Charles Olenik.
 Mount Carmel – St. Jude Thaddeus in Mifflintown,  shares a Perspective on the Faith when he talks about the influences on his decision to follow a vocation to the priesthood.

The Mass of Remembrance. You may also call Connie Heppenstall at 717-329-0691 or e-mail your child’s name to 915mass@gmail.com.

Catholic Perspective is produced in cooperation with the Office of Communications of the Diocese of Harrisburg. It is sponsored by the Office of Development and Advancement and is supported by the generosity of our donors. To support Catholic Perspective, send a gift to the Diocese of Harrisburg, 100 South 2nd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101. Catholic Perspective is distributed at no charge by mail to area Catholic organizations, schools, and parishes.

If you have ideas or suggestions for future programs or would like to share an idea, please contact the Catholic Perspective Office at 717-214-6100.

For more information, or to request the program, contact the Pennsylvania State Extension office in Cumberland County at 717-240-6500. Go to http://extension.psu.edu/ cumberland for additional StrongWomen information.

Senior Adult Ministry Mass and Banquet Planned

The 39th annual Harrisburg Diocesan Senior Adult Ministry Mass and Banquet is scheduled for Oct. 14 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg. Mass will begin at 11 a.m., followed by a catered lunch, door prizes and entertainment by Eric Delaurato, International Frank Sinatra Idol Vocalist Competition champion. This year’s theme is “Thanks for the Memories.”

Members of all diocesan senior clubs are members of the Senior Adult Ministry. All members and guests are invited to attend. Registration tickets are available through local senior club officers. Tickets are $55 per person. Reserved seating for 10 is available for $500. Exclusive sponsorship levels are available for businesses to show their community involvement. Proceeds from this special event will benefit Lebanon Catholic School in a fun and exciting way for the community to come together in support of Catholic education.

The program was developed to help individuals increase their strength, bone density, balance and energy and help them look and feel better. Participants will meet two times a week for one hour sessions. There is a $55 fee for this program.

Participants want to provide their own hand weights and ankle weights. The morning classes will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9-10 a.m. at St. Katharine Drexel Parish, 1 Peter Drive, Mechanicsburg. The evening classes will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Parish in Camp Hill.

For more information, or to register for the program, contact the Pennsylvania State Extension office in Cumberland County at 717-240-6500. Go to http://extension.psu.edu/ cumberland for additional StrongWomen information.

For the benefit of Lebanon Catholic School, a USO-style Dinner Show and Fundraiser will begin with a social reception at 5 p.m. with a cash bar. A delicious World War II canteen-inspired dinner will be served at 6 p.m. by Executive Chef Ann Hanner, a 1982 alumnus of Lebanon Catholic School. The curtain goes up for the live musical performance by the Hershey Symphony Big Band at 7 p.m. Special guest singers will pay tribute in jazzed three-part harmony from favorite melodies made popular by the Andrew Sisters. Throughout the evening, there will be a silent auction and raffles that will offer a variety of appealing prizes. A donation station will be collecting items for “comfort kits” distributed in the American Red Cross for our United States Servicemen who are still serving in Afghanistan.

To complete the USO experience, 1940’s fashions and military uniforms are encouraged. Prizes will be awarded for best dressed couples.

A benefit for Lebanon Catholic School will capture the swinging sounds of the 1940’s in a USO-style dinner show at All About You Catering in Lebanon Nov. 10 when the special event will be held to support Lebanon Catholic School. The event will begin with a social reception at 5 p.m. with a cash bar. A delicious World War II canteen-inspired dinner will be served at 6 p.m. by Executive Chef Ann Hanner, a 1982 alumnus of Lebanon Catholic School. The curtain goes up for the live musical performance by the Hershey Symphony Big Band at 7 p.m. Special guest singers will pay tribute in jazzed three-part harmony from favorite melodies made popular by the Andrew Sisters. Throughout the evening, there will be a silent auction and raffles that will offer a variety of appealing prizes. A donation station will be collecting items for “comfort kits” distributed in the American Red Cross for our United States Servicemen who are still serving in Afghanistan.

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Student Wins “Bright Idea” Contest

Zachary Yaninek, a student at Good Shepherd School in Camp Hill, was a winner of the Bright Ideas 2012 Energy Efficiency Poster Contest sponsored by PPL Electric Utilities. Zachary’s entry, which couples a superhero with a renewable energy theme, was a winner in the Grades 3-5 category. For his efforts, Zachary won a pizza party that was enjoyed by his classmates in Mrs. Dorothy Oliver’s room.

World Youth Day, July 20-29 2013 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

‘Go and make disciples of all nations’ - Matthew 28:19

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden invites you to join him and our Holy Father at World Youth Day 2013 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The spiritual pilgrimage will include a two-day retreat experience in Guadalupe, Mexico, and the World Youth Day activities in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Diocesan group will be limited to 200 pilgrims within the ages of 16-17 (youth) and their parish group leaders and chaperones; young adults ages 18 (high school graduates)-35; priests, seminarians and consecrated individuals. For information on our wonderful spiritual pilgrimage, please contact the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at 717-657-4804 ext. 327, or oyyam@hbgdiocese.org or visit our Web site at www.hbgdiocese.org/youngchurch.

Michael, Gabriel and Raphael

September 29

These archangels, messengers sent by God, are the only ones named in the Bible. In the Book of Daniel, Michael is called “the great prince”; in the Letter of Jude, he argues with the devil over Moses’ body; and in the Book of Revelation, he leads the battle against Satan. He is the patron of the sick, radio astronomers and mariners. Gabriel explains Daniel’s visions to him in the Book of Daniel, and in the Gospel of Luke announces to Zachariah and Mary the births of their respective sons. He is the patron of messengers and telecommunications and postal workers. Raphael guides Tobiah in the Book of Tobit; he is the patron of the blind, physicians and travelers. The church created their joint feast after the Second Vatican Council.
Changes to the Mass schedule at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Gettysburg began the weekend of Sept. 1-2. The Parish office at 717-652-5918 or info@xaverianparish.net.

**Dioecesan Notebook**

Compiled by Jen Reed

**Spiritual Offerings**

The Diocese of Harrisburg is announcing changes to the Mass schedule at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Gettysburg began the weekend of Sept. 1-2. The Parish office at 717-652-5918 or info@xaverianparish.net.

**Educational, Enrichment & Support**

**Harrisburg area singles' group "Winnow" invites widowed, divorced and single men and women to join other singles each month at different parishes. It is open to discussion, conversation, and a chance to make new friends. Open to all ages and all faiths. Sponsored by Father Charles Persing, pastor of St. Margaret Parish in Harrisburg. Call Julia for more information at 717-652-8306.

**The Oblates of St. Benedict in Lancaster will have a Day of Recollection at St. Joseph's College, OSE, 4019 Newlin Rd., Newlin.** All are welcome. Mass at 9 a.m. in the Holy Family Chapel. The Day of Recollection will begin after that. For more information, contact the Oblates at 717-693-7600 or office@oblates.org.

**Theology on Tap** will be held Sept. 12 at Ceats in Harrisburg. Our speaker will be Bill Donyghy – back by popular demand! Arrive by 6:30 p.m., presenta-

**A bereavement support series is being offered at Holy Spirit Hospital in Harrisburg.** Those interested should call 717-972-4672 or 717-972-4673. Our program is by the Pastoral Care Team at Holy Spirit. This is a 3 session series starting Sept. 17 and running through Oct. 1.

**The Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Diocese of Harrisburg will host a Day of Recollection Sept. 15 from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg.** The day’s presenter will be Father Charles Persing, pastor of St. Margaret Parish in Harrisburg. Call Julia for more information at 717-652-8306.

**Diocesan Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (DCDCGF):** Adults interested in assisting Girl Scouts to earn religious emblems are invited to attend a training session Sept. 15 at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. The Office for Religious Education is offering two sessions. To register, call 717-657-4037 x 432 or campfire@hospicecentralpa.com.

**Family Chapel at St. Joseph Church, followed by coffee/donuts. Our**

**Fundraiser Schedule**

** keyed families**

** Sacred Heart Jesus Parish Council of Catholic Women in Williamsport is taking orders for a "Sticky Bun Sale" made by Mrs. John H. Oberg and the Sacred Heart Altar Society. Croissants Buns are $6 per dozen; with nuts OR raisins $6.50 per dozen; AND raisins are $7 per dozen. Orders due are by Sept. 3 with a delivery date of Sept. 21. Contact Dawn Drum at 717-981-7024 or urologyofcentralpen@verizon.net.**

**St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Williamsport is hosting a bus to the Sept. 29 annual Blue Mass Celebration in Washington, D.C. Cost is $30. Contact Donna Sullivan at 717-433-5045 for more information or to register.**

**St. Patrick Parish in York is hosting a bus to the Sept. 29 diocesan pilgrimage in Washington, D.C. Cost is $30. Contact Donna Sullivan at 717-433-5045 for more information or to register.**

**Eyes on the Prize**

** Sacred Heart Parish in South Williamsport is holding its next**

**Eden, Pennsylvania**

**Catholic Witness - August 31, 2012 - THE CATHOLIC WITNESS - 13**

**The Knights of Columbus #4057 will host the 10th annual Blue Mass.** Where: Saturday, Sept. 29 from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. This year’s annual Blue Mass event will include a Fun Walk, games, crafts, food, music, and spiritual opportunities such as Mass, Reconciliation, and a Rosary for Life. The Fun Walk will raise funds for our diocesan Pro Life Services and Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats. Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, contact Ed Koczerling at 717-783-0919 or kocgering@yahoo.com. Visit www.prayn4life.com or contact Ed at 717-783-0919 or ejvans@verizon.net.
Appeals Panel OKs Federal Funding of Embryonic Stem-Cell Research

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien
Catholic News Service

A three-judge federal appeals panel has affirmed a lower court ruling that the U.S. government can fund embryonic stem-cell research despite a federal ban on funding any research that harms or destroys human embryos.

Chief Judge David B. Sentelle of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia said the National Institutes of Health’s interpretation of the Dickey-Wicker amendment was “reasonable” in permitting funding of embryonic stem-cell research using cells derived using private funds.

The amendment, approved annually by Congress since 1996, bars the use of federal monies for “the creation of a human embryo or embryos for research purposes” or “research in which a human embryo or embryos are destroyed, discarded or knowingly subjected to risk of injury or death greater than that allowed for research on fetuses in utero.”

Sentelle said the funding guidelines promulgated by NIH in 2009 correctly and legally allowed funding only on stem cells derived from embryos created for artificial insemination and donated to scientists after the parents decided to discard them. Embryonic stem cells are also known as “ESCs.”

“Research as used in Dickey-Wicker may reasonably be understood to mean a ‘discrete endeavor’ that excludes the initial derivation of ESCs,” he wrote. “Under that interpretation, Dickey-Wicker permits federal funding of research projects that utilize already derived ESCs—which are not themselves embryos—because no ‘human embryo or embryo’ are destroyed’ in such projects.”

Circuit Judges Karen LeCraft Henderson and Jane Rogers Brown concurred with Sentelle’s conclusion but each wrote separate opinions.

The lawsuit had been initiated by researchers Theresa Deisher of AVM Biotechnology in Seattle and Dr. James Sherley of the Boston Biomedical Research Institute, who said the Obama administration’s decision to expand federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research would harm their chances of obtaining funding for their own adult stem-cell research.

The Catholic Church opposes any research that harms the human embryo and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has backed the goals of the lawsuit against federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research.

Philadelphia Archdiocese, Foundation Sign Pact on School Management

By Lou Baldwin
Catholic News Service

Philadelphia’s 17 archdiocesan high schools and its four schools for special education are officially under new management.


It is believed to be the first time a diocese has achieved with its lay leaders “is unlike any agreement that a diocese has achieved with its lay leadership.”

“The willingness of lay leaders with a love for Catholic education to step forward is encouraging. The commitment made by the foundation—a commitment to professional excellence in management, guided by a strong and faithful identity—will serve our high schools and schools of special education well,” the archbishop said.

“We have seen the momentum that the foundation has been able to generate and we are confident that this agreement will lead to an even stronger school system for the children of the Philadelphia region,” he added.

Under the agreement, which initially is for five years, the archdiocesan Office for Catholic Education, which previously oversaw the schools, will become a division of the Faith in the Future Foundation, reporting directly to the foundation’s CEO.

Hanway, a former chairman and CEO of Cigna Corp, will temporarily fill the post until a CEO is hired.

The Office for Catholic Education will continue to focus on curriculum and standards; academic and spiritual development of students; extracurricular and cocurricular programming; and professional development of teachers.

The presidents and principals of the schools affected by the agreement will continue to report to the education office, and the teachers remain employees of the archdiocese.

Direct ownership of the schools themselves will remain with the archdiocese, with the exception of Roman Catholic, Philadelphia’s Baphomet Catholic high school. The school is operated by the archdiocese but the building owned by the Cahill Trust, established under the will of Roman founder Thomas Cahill, who died in 1878.

While the makeup of the foundation board has not yet been set, and will not be announced until the fall, Hanway estimated it will have about 15 members, with the archbishop appointing only one-third of them.

Philadelphia Auxiliary Bishop Michael J. Fitzgerald, who oversees Catholic education for the archdiocese, will be a board member.

“The independence of the Catholic secondary system, with the schools of special education, was critical to our ability to more fully address the fundraising and enrollment needs of our schools,” Hanway said. “With capacity available to educate an additional 15,000 students we intend to grow.”

He called it a groundbreaking approach to educating our children” and praised Archbishop Chaput and other archdiocesan leaders for being “willing to make such a bold decision in reaching this agreement with the foundation.”

“I am confident that the foundation can and will serve as a model for Catholic education across the nation as we infuse and employ an entrepreneurial approach to managing these 21 schools,” Hanway said.

Hanway reported registration for the fall class of freshmen in the archdiocese is now at 106 percent of earlier projections.

Whether that is because of the initial efforts of the Faith in the Future Foundation or the publicity surrounding the near-closing of four high schools might be impossible to say.

Registration at 11 of the 17 schools is over projection. At three schools, the incoming freshmen class will be the largest in the school.

St. Hubert’s was chosen as the venue for the press briefing, because of the success of its fundraising campaign, which relied mostly on small donors and community support.

Although Hanway declined to put a figure on the expected deficit this year, he estimated it is half of the original estimate because of the increase in enrollment.

“I will say to you stabilizing enrollment is only a first step, the objective is to grow,” Hanway said.

A major part of the foundation’s work will be recruitment, development and fostering of innovative programs.

“Our mission is to transform Catholic schools,” Hanway said. “Good enough isn’t even good enough. We want to be excellent in every facet of our schools.”

While the current agreement focuses on secondary and special education, both Archbishop Chaput and Hanway gave assurances the concerns of elementary schools will be part of the mission of the foundation.
Cardinal to Plan Treatment with Doctors after Tests Show Cancer Cells

By Joyce Duriga
Catholic News Service

For the second time in his 75 years, Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago is facing the cross of cancer.

On Aug. 17, the Archdiocese of Chicago released a statement announcing that two days earlier, Cardinal George underwent a procedure at Loyola Medical Center during which doctors found cancerous cells in his kidney and on the liver.

"Today he met with his doctors who reviewed with him test results which showed there were cancerous cells in the kidney and in a nodule, which was removed from the liver," the statement said. "His doctors will work with the cardinal to plan a course of treatment."

In an Aug. 20 statement, the archdiocese said the cardinal rested at home over the weekend and was "actively engaged" in several administrative duties. It said in the coming week he would receive additional medical tests, participate in a retreat at Mundelein Seminary with bishops from Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana and "maintain his previously scheduled public commitments."

"After the cardinal meets with his doctors regarding a plan for a course of treatment, further information about his upcoming public schedule will be announced," the statement said. "Until further information is available, Cardinal George has asked for continued prayers for all affected by cancer and the doctors and medical staff that work with patients and their families, as well as for himself."

The archdiocese will continue to provide updates about the cardinal on its website, www.archchicago.org. People also can leave greetings for him at the site as well.

On July 27, 2006, when he was 69, the cardinal underwent a five-hour operation at Loyola University Medical Center to remove his bladder, prostate gland and sections of his ureters — the tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

He had a successful recovery from that surgery and made his first public appearance after surgery Sept. 20, 2006, at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome in February.

Cardinal Francis E. George, who fought bladder cancer in 2006, learned Aug. 17 that the disease has returned to his liver and kidney, said the Archdiocese of Chicago in a statement issued that day. Cardinal George is pictured as he concelebrates Mass with bishops from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome in February.

Pope Addresses Laiety in Advance of Anniversary of Second Vatican Council

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

As Catholics prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, all Church members need to make a renewed effort to ensure laypeople are aware of their responsibility for the Church and are allowed to exercise it, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Co-responsibility requires a change of mentality, particularly regarding the role in the Church of the laity, who should not be considered ‘collaborators’ of the clergy, but people who truly are co-responsible for the being and action of the Church," the pope wrote in a message to the assembly of the International Forum of Catholic Action.

The Aug. 22-26, 2012, meeting in Iasi, Romania, brought together representatives of Catholic Action groups from around the world. The international forum promotes lay involvement in parish and community life, particularly through studying and acting on the principles of Catholic social teaching.

Pope Benedict’s message, released by the Vatican Aug. 23, said the Church needs a "mature and committed laity, able to make its specific contribution to the mission of the Church" in a way that respects the different roles and ministries of its members.

The Vatican II dogmatic constitution on the Church, "Lumen Gentium," described the style of relationships within the Church as "familial," the pope said. Viewing the Church as a family emphasizes shared responsibility, mutual support and joint action while, at the same time, recognizing the special role of guidance belonging to the Church’s pastors, he said.

The pope asked Catholic Action members to work with and for the Church through their “prayer, study, active participation in ecclesial life, and [with an] attentive and positive gaze at the world in a continuous search for the signs of the times.”

He asked the members to help with the new evangelization, proclaiming salvation with "language and methods understandable in our age."

In addition, he encouraged them to continue studying and applying Catholic social teaching, particularly with the aim of bringing about a “globalization of solidarity and charity,” which will further the Church’s mission of bringing hope to the world.

Message from Girl’s First Communion Balloon Returned 11 Years Later

By Dan Russo
Catholic News Service

In 2001, Abbie Steger, then in second grade, took part in a tradition that has been going on for decades at St. Mark Church in Edgewood, Iowa.

On the Sunday after Easter, the easiest, lightest,产权’s first Communion class stands on a lawn outside the church and releases balloons. The colors, size and notes vary from year to year, Kerns said.

"It was unbelievable," said Steger. "I was in total shock. I never thought it would be returned." Jody Kerns, the current director of religious education at St. Mark’s whose own son happened to be in Steger’s Communion class, contacted Steger’s mother to let the student know where it ends its journey. The balloons travel far and wide, in some cases bringing people closer to God.

Steger, now a 20-year-old sophomore at the University of Northern Iowa, can attest to that. Recently, about 11 years after her first Communion day, she received word that the parish heard from people who found the note that was with her balloon.

"It was unbelievable," said Steger. "I was in total shock. I never thought it would be returned." Jody Kerns, the current director of religious education at St. Mark’s whose own son happened to be in Steger’s first Communion class, contacted Steger’s mother to let the student know where it ends its journey. The balloons travel far and wide, in some cases bringing people closer to God.

Steger’s balloon had floated onto a farm in Hatfield, Wis. Mark Harwick, who owns the property, called Kerns. "Every Sunday morning he would walk in the woods and pray. He found the note, called Kerns. "It was unbelievable," said Steger. "I was in total shock. I never thought it would be returned." Jody Kerns, the current director of religious education at St. Mark’s whose own son happened to be in Steger’s first Communion class, contacted Steger’s mother to let the student know where it ends its journey. The balloons travel far and wide, in some cases bringing people closer to God.

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Steger’s balloon was returned after the longest time, but some notes are returned every year. The tradition was started more than 20 years ago by the Archdiocese of Chicago during which doctors found cancerous cells in his kidney and on the liver.

"I think it enhances the joy of the day," said Steger. "I look at first Communion as a very joyful occasion. This exemplifies the meaning of first Communion — that feeling of pure joy."
Bishop Rhoades Returns to Home Parish as Bicentennial Closes at St. Mary’s

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

For the past two years, the bicentennial celebration at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Lebanon presented parishioners with unique opportunities to connect with the history of their beloved “Mary’s,” one of the oldest Catholic communities in Pennsylvania. The celebration, which marked the 200th anniversary of the first St. Mary’s Church, focused on the history of the parish, its churches, its parochial school system, its devoted clergy, and its dedicated founders.

Two years ago, the bicentennial opened with a Mass at which Cardinal William Keeler — a native son and school graduate — presided. Appropriately, the celebration concluded this year on the Feast of the Assumption, with a Mass celebrated by another distinguished son and graduate, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

For the former Bishop of Harrisburg, the return sparked fond memories of his upbringing in the Catholic faith.

“Some of my earliest memories are of being with my mom, who was a woman of deep faith. We would never walk downtown without stopping in at beautiful St. Mary’s Church,” he told The Catholic Witness.

Bishop Rhoades, the current Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, received his First Holy Communion and was confirmed at St. Mary’s Church, its parochial school, and Lebanon Catholic High School.

“I learned here to have Mary as a part of my life,” Bishop Rhoades said. “I learned that Mary holds us by the hand and guides us on our pilgrimage of faith. I feel that every day, and I think that began here at this parish.”

Community of Faith

The history of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish can be traced back to the early 1700s, when German and Irish immigrants settled in the area. Its first chapel was constructed in 1831 on the property of Fatima in Jonestown. In 1953, Our Lady of Fatima in Jonestown was established as a mission to accommodate Catholics living in the farmland, is still there.

As part of the bicentennial celebration, parishioners gathered in that cemetery for a special Mass. And, on All Souls Day, they assembled for a blessing at St. Mary’s Cemetery downtown.

“Those two years of celebration were a great opportunity for us to focus on our history, and on the new evangelization,” said Father Michael Reid, pastor. “We wanted to bring an awareness of our parish into the local community, to remind people of the longstanding presence of the Catholic faith in Lebanon.”

Several parishes were formed from Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish over the course of its history. In 1953, Our Lady of Fatima in Jonestown was established as a mission to accommodate Catholics living in the northern Lebanon County.

“Mystery of Hope”

Closing the bicentennial celebration on the Feast of the Assumption, Bishop Rhoades in his homily called Mary’s Assumption was declared “a great mystery of hope.”

“Her Assumption assures us that death is the passage to life, the encounter with God, who is love. Where, like his gone, we hope to follow,” he said.

“In the journey of our earthly life, we can experience sufferings: physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. There can be loneliness, insecurity, anxiety and fear, especially when facing the enigma of death. Every human being is destined to die,” Bishop Rhoades remarked.

“But today, on this feast, like on Easter Sunday, we contemplate that death is not the last word. We know by faith that human life is not extinguished in a handful of dust, but is called to a destiny of eternal happiness,” he continued.

“Mary is the first fruit of this new humanity, the creature in whom the mystery of Christ has already fully taken effect, redeeming her from death and conveying her, body and soul, to the kingdom of immortal life. That is why, as the Second Vatican Council, the Virgin Mary is a sign of certain hope and comfort to us.”

As the members of St. Mary’s Parish move forward from the bicentennial, they carry a renewed understanding of their history and a deeper appreciation of their connection to the community.

“The parishioners are very faithful in their devotion to this parish. They’re concerned about the welfare of the parish and its people,” Father Reid remarked.

He noted parishioners’ faithfulness to daily Mass, Sunday Mass and weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and to monthly collections of food for those in need.

“My hope is that as we enter the Year of Faith, this level of participation will continue,” Father Reid said. “From our community outreach to liturgies and worship, it will continue to be part of what we do at St. Mary’s.”

Virgin Mary Parish

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