Eighty youth from the Diocese of Harrisburg join 23,000 peers in faith-filled experience at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis. See pages 8 and 9.
All Must Remain Vigilant in Commitment to Preventing Abuse

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Recognizing the tragic prevalence of child sexual abuse, the Diocese of Harrisburg continues to encourage an ever-vigilant commitment to its Youth Protection Program, which employs strict guidelines and procedures designed to prevent the sexual, physical and emotional abuse of minors.

The diocese maintains a zero tolerance policy for abusers in ministry, in volunteer service or in employment, and dedicates itself to the healing and reconciliation of victims.

“Recent national attention focused on the issue of child sexual abuse has helped us all once again to recognize the seriousness of this issue in our society,” said Msgr. William J. King, Vicar General for the diocese and director of its Youth Protection Program.

“The Diocese of Harrisburg remains committed to addressing this issue with firm resolve, and takes this opportunity to ask people to pray for and support victims of abuse in any form. No person who has been abused in the context of the Church should hesitate to report that abuse,” he said.

In fulfillment of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People – adopted by the United States bishops in 2002 – the diocese’s Youth Protection Program includes outreach to victims and their families, prompt reporting of anyincr incident, and education and screening.

Phone calls to the diocese’s toll-free number for reporting suspected abuse of a minor directly reach the Victim Assistance Coordinator under the Youth Protection Program. Victims and their families are offered immediate connection to counseling services. Upon receiving notification of possible abuse of a minor, the diocese begins an investigation and immediately reports the matter to law enforcement authorities. Reports to civil authority are made even if the law does not require it.

Completion of the diocesan online Safe Environment Training Program and multiple criminal record checks are required for all employees and volunteers who work with minors. The diocese also requires all persons who work with youth in Church-related ministries to wear a diocesan-issued identification badge when in the presence of minors. The badge indicates that the wearer has successfully completed all of the diocese’s youth protection requirements, including criminal record checks.

Regarding education of youth, the Diocesan Secretary for Education oversees a safe environment curriculum for all students in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. The program is a required component of the Youth Protection Program.

“The sexual abuse of minors is a horrific and terrible sin. This tragic occurrence affects every part of society, cutting across all denominations and occupations. Therefore, we must be ever vigilant in protecting children,” said Bishop Joseph P. McFadden.

“What is needed is education and reflection in looking at what can be done to prevent child sexual abuse,” he said. “We want to be able to say that nobody does more than the Catholic Church to ensure that the sexual abuse of minors doesn’t happen again.”

The Diocese of Harrisburg continues to make improvements to its Youth Protection Program. A wealth of additional information about the program and efforts to prevent child sexual abuse can be found online via the “Youth Protection” link at www.hbgdiocese.org.

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Catholic Perspective
Radio

December 4 - This week’s edition of Catholic Perspective features an update on the issue of school choice in Pennsylvania. This legislation, sometimes referred to as Senate Bill 1, is supported by the Church as it would give parents the opportunity to choose the school they prefer for their children via two initiatives. These include a small test study of vouchers and increased funding of the popular Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. The measure has passed the Senate and is expected to be voted on in the Pennsylvania House. More information is available at www.PaCatholic.org.

Father Luis Rodriguez, Pastor of Mary, Mother of the Church Parish in Mount Joy, shares the story of his vocation to the priesthood with listeners.

An explanation of the season of Advent is offered by Father William Weary, Pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Lewistown and St. Jude Thaddeus, Mifflintown.

Listeners will hear the inspirational story of how one young man uses his Catholic faith to overcome the challenges of cerebral palsy in his everyday life. Catholic Perspective is produced in cooperation with the Office of Communications of the Diocese and WHFY AM 720. This new radio ministry has many needs and opportunities for volunteers. Find out more by calling 717-525-8110 or visiting www.yourholyfamilyradio.com.

The program is heard Mondays and Fridays at 12 noon on WHFY AM 720 and on Sunday mornings on WLM-AM 1390, Lancaster at 7:30 a.m.; WHYF-AM 960, Carlisle, at 8 a.m.; WHVR-AM 1280, Hanover; at 8 a.m.; WKOK-AM 1070, Sunbury, at 6:30 a.m.; WIEZ-AM 670, Lewistown, at 8 a.m.; WWSM-AM 1510, Lebanon, at 7:30 a.m.; and WVEC-FM 88.3, Elizabethtown, at 9:30 a.m. It is also available online at www.OldiesRadio1620.com at 6:30 a.m. for download at the www.hbgdiocese.org.

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Heart of Mary Pregnancy Support Services

Baby Pantry Wish List

The Heart of Mary Pregnancy Support Services, located in the former convent building of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in York, is in great need of the following items for its emergency baby item pantry:

- Size newborn, size 3 and size 4 diapers
- Baby wipes
- Gerber Good Start Gentle Plus Formula (12-ounce powder cans)
- Baby wash
- Gently used size 12-18 month girls’ clothing
- Gift cards to Wal-Mart, GIANT or Weis

All items can be dropped off at their office at 26 East College Avenue in York. Call 717-843-7986, ext. 229 prior to dropping off donations.
Annual Collection Supports 34,000 Retired Sisters, Brothers, Priests in Religious Orders

From the National Religious Retirement Office

The 24th annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will be taken up Dec. 10-11 in the Diocese of Harrisburg. Sponsored by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) in Washington, D.C., the appeal asks Catholics to Share in the Care of more than 34,000 women and men religious past age 70.

Last year, the Diocese of Harrisburg contributed $290,694.03 to this collection. In 2011, the Sisters of Sts. Cyril and Methodius received financial assistance made possible by the national appeal. In addition, the Diocese of Harrisburg, in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Allentown, also distributes funding to local religious communities to support retirement needs.

“As a result of the 2010 collection, which garnered $26.7 million, the NRRO was able to distribute $23 million to religious communities to help support the day-to-day care of senior members,” said Sister Bader. “Nearly 5,000 religious required skilled care. At the same time, however, religious communities strive to minimize costs. In fact, the NRRO reports that the average cost of care for religious past age 70 dropped slightly this year.”

For more information, visit www.retiredreligious.org.
By Father Paul CB Schenck
Special to The Witness

Recently I dropped into the convenience store to buy a cup of coffee. Next to the checkout counter was a “half-price” shelf with day old doughnuts, pancake syrup and, condoms. I asked the clerk, “Do you have any young people coming in here?” “Yes” she said, “especially after school.” I pointed to the condoms and told her it sent a terrible message to them – and everyone – cheapening and trivializing the most important human relationships that exist.

By this time, six or seven customers were lined up behind me, and some were grumbling. “I know she said, “but there’s nothing I can do about it.” So I bought all the condoms, the other customers waiting while she wiped each packet, which gave me the opportunity to explain to them what this meant. Then I told her to throw them into the garbage bin behind her, which she did. I like to think it made an impression on at least some of those customers.

Many people, even many Catholics, wonder why the Church considers the use of contraceptives to be immoral. After all, isn’t the decision to have a child a personal one? And too, isn’t responsible to limit children, especially in difficult economic times? The Church affirms the use of natural family planning, the responsible spacing of children, but not the out and out rejection of the fertility of the child.

The Catechism tells us: “God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion: creating the human race in his own image… God inscribes in the heart of every person the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion.” (2351)

Each and every human being is conceived in love. But wait, you say, what about casual sex? Unloving sex? What about rape? The love that brings every human being into existence is not first human love – but rather God’s love. Love is the divine impulse that gives existence to everything and most especially everyone. That God is existence itself, in other words, without God nothing at all would exist, is only half the story. Love is at the core, the “essence” of existence because “God is Love” (1 John 4:7-8). Saint Augustine tells us that love always seeks to be united with the beloved. So God brings every person into existence because He loves that person with limitless love. That a child may be conceived even from a rape contradicts that loveless act and redeems the crime by bringing forth a person who is the product of God’s love, not man’s hate.

Contraception subtly teaches us to reject the other person, to be divided from others, rather than united. It fosters fear and suspicion of the other person as a threat to me, and my resources and comfort. It teaches me to “hold back” and I will have from the other person to withdraw myself from the other person and push them away from me. It undermines and degrades the bonds of love and concern that unite us, not divide us. Just think of the contraceptive vocabulary; “did you use protection?” “are we safe?” Protection from a baby? Safe from your own child?

The Church respects, cherishes and treasures the bonds that unite people. A contraceptive culture fosters fear, suspicion and division. A culture of life fosters openness and acceptance of others through mutual giving and sacrifice. These help to form the foundation of a civilization of love.

(Father Paul CB Schenck is Director of the Diocesan Respect Life Office and Administrator of Our Lady of the Blessed Assumption Parish. A married Pastoral Provision priest, he and his wife Rebecca have eight children.)

Hollywood Discovers Abortion’s Aftermath

By Susan E. Wills
Special to The Witness

The often painful emotional aftermath of abortion – marked by intense grief, sadness, and remorse – has been treated only obliquely, if at all, in Hollywood films.

Sally Bowles in “Cabaret” (1972) regretted anything about her abortion, it was only having to sell her fur coat to pay for it. Stacy Hamilton in “Fast Times at Ridgemont High” (1982) quickly bounced back with a new and better boyfriend after only a twinge of sadness.

Penny of “Dirty Dancing” (1987) nearly died from an illegal abortion, but we learn nothing of struggles. The screenwriter-coproducer stated that she wanted to portray abortion as a non-event (except for the physical risks from the back-alley variety).

“Cider House Rules” (1999), winner of two Academy Awards, was hailed as “courageous” for portraying “a sympathetic, caring doctor” who also aborted babies. In every case, the abortion aftermath was uneventful.

Then came two mainstream films out of Hollywood, released the same day (October 7), in which the often ideological grounds – elites like those missed by pro-choice intelligentsia on viewed studies describing the mental negative impact of abortion. Some of also a credit to the researchers, aca - are remarkable.

Doubters need not go to the medi - by the grace of God and ministries by the Harrisburg Catholic Publishing Co. Other subscriptions: $3.00 Mailing: Send address changes to: The Catholic Witness, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17112-3701. Periodicals postage paid at Harrisburg, PA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Catholic Witness, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17112-3701. Simply reading the stories women have posted of their experiences of pain and loss on websites like www.hopeafterabortion.org and www.afterabortion.com... should convince anyone that abortion victimizes women along with their children.

But the good news is that God’s merciful love is available to anyone with a repentant heart. Every day women are being healed from the pain of abortion by the grace of God and ministries like the Project Rachel Ministry of the Catholic Church. If you have had an abortion, you need not suffer any longer. Contact the Project Rachel Min - understated. It fosters fear and suspicion of the other person to be divided from others, rather than united. It fosters fear and suspicion of the other person as a threat to me, to my resources and comfort. It teaches me to “hold back” and I will have from the other person to withdraw myself from the other person and push them away from me. It undermines and degrades the bonds of love and concern that unite us, not divide us. Just think of the contraceptive vocabulary; “did you use protection?” “are we safe?” Protection from a baby? Safe from your own child?

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The often painful emotional after -
“Who is the greatest in heaven?” questioned Jesus’ followers. Christ, according to the Gospel of Saint Matthew, then called a little child to come to him. Jesus stood the child before his followers and then said, “I tell you the truth. You must change and become little children in your hearts. If you don’t do this, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. The greatest person in the kingdom of heaven is the person that makes himself humble like this child. If a person accepts a little child like this in my name, then that person accepts me.”

Remembrance is a spiritual gift that we are given to confront profound grief. When you remember with true fondness, something very good can come out of the terrible pain. The pain remains, but we are given the grace to treat it, lessen the ache and do great good if we choose.

And that is what appears to be happening in the Brezitski family. On Saint Patrick’s Day 2011, an accident happened that saddened the entire Harrisburg area community when 8-year-old Owen Brezitski, a student at Holy Name of Jesus School in Harrisburg, was struck and killed by a car. He was leaving Bishop McDevitt High School in the darkness with his mother and grandparents after they had attended one of his sister’s music concerts.

On a chilly November afternoon eight months later, the family, Owen’s parents Karen and Mark along with sisters MaKenna and Kyla and grandparents, gathered at the scene with students from Bishop McDevitt, Holy Name of Jesus School and other local schools to unveil two new signs that will warn drivers coming up and down busy Market Street that a school crossing is bisecting the road midway on the hill’s crest. It’s a dangerous city thoroughfare.

The two new blinking crossing signs were donated through a partnership with the City of Harrisburg, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and with business support. The solar powered signs have LED blinkers to warn drivers that students or visitors can be crossing Market Street both day and night.

The Brezitski family wanted something very good to come out of their immense grief. At the dedication ceremony for the signs – more than a hundred students and friends gathered – Karen Brezitski, with remarkable composure and poise, spoke of Owen’s legacy. Above all, they want drivers to understand the peril of distracted driving. They want all drivers to slow down, be alert and save a life. It’s a mantra they not only share for Owen’s sake, but for all other innocent victims that distracted driving claims.

If you are on a hand-held cell phone, you are distracted. Texting is folly waiting for collision and fumbling with items in a vehicle is not safe driving. The Brezitski family wants to make that abundantly clear as they celebrate the short life that Owen beautifully lived. In a short interview after the sign unveiling, Karen Brezitski spoke of her cherished son in heartwarming fashion. Earnest in every detail, she recounted that fateful March 17. It was a day that Karen remembers as being filled with grace. Owen had come home from school happy. His prayers had been answered as his sick classmate was back in school that day. “Mommy, it was the best day ever,” he said. He was wearing a shamrock pin given to him by a teacher who admired his goodness. Though Owen’s favorite color was orange, green fit him well also.

As mom and Owen sat down to have pizza together before the concert, Karen was able to tell him how much she loved him, how proud she was of him for his politeness and self-control and what a gift that he was to everyone. “I was given so much grace that day,” Karen said. “To be able to tell my son what a gift he was that day was such a blessing. I was able to tell him that he was the best “O” ever, and what a great brother he was and what a great son he was. I have no regrets.”

When dad came in the door, he was able to join in the conversation, and he listed a few items that made Owen a great Owen.

In our society we seem to place greatness on fallen adults rather than on children. This little boy makes you want to argue that greatness lives in the young, too.

The next day baseball practice was to begin. Owen was a dandy player, and he loved his uniform, he loved the game, and he was so looking forward to getting on the field. It was spring – it was baseball season – it was time to play ball.

But, he had a concert to go to first. During the concert, he used his family’s newly bought video recorder to record snippets of the concert, of his classmates, friends, his family and of himself. When the theme to Star Wars was played as the finale, he hummed the tune and showed his childlike joy that is forever burned into that treasured keepsake digital file.

Moments later, Owen stepped onto the road. There, where bright signs alert us now, you just know and feel that Christ called this little child to Him to show his followers how to Him to show his followers how to be great - and what a great brother he was and what a great son he was. He was such a blessing. I was able to tell my son what a gift that he was that day was such a blessing. I was able to tell him that he was the best “O” ever, and what a great brother he was and what a great son he was. I have no regrets.”

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Moments later, Owen stepped onto the road. There, where bright signs alert us now, you just know and feel that Christ called this little child to Him to show his followers how to enter the kingdom of heaven.
Local Church News

Are Catholic Schools Academically Accountable?

By Joelle Shea

Special to The Witness

Now that Senate Bill 1 has passed the Senate and been sent to the House of Representatives, parents of Pennsylvania students are hearing false arguments from those opposed to giving parents the ability to choose the best school for their child. One of these tired “red herring” arguments is that Catholic schools are not academically accountable. In fact, Catholic schools diligently monitor teacher and student achievement in a variety of ways, and have been doing so consistently for decades. If the question is academic accountability, Catholic schools already make the grade.

Catholic schools across the state of Pennsylvania already use academically rigorous nationally normed standardized tests. These test results provide measurements to help schools evaluate the progress of students, the effectiveness of teachers and the efficacy of curriculum. Further, Catholic schools test students every year beginning in grade 3, this is not required in state law for non-public or public schools, but Catholic schools have found that testing in every year provides the most complete picture of educational progress. Taking tests doesn’t solve anything – it’s the action that follows from these tests that creates positive progress and increased success for the students. Catholic school teachers act on plans based on their students’ test results. Not only do Catholic schools test their students, they also act upon the results, which is the most critical part of the accountability process.

There is also accountability in Catholic school curriculum. All of our public schools and most of our elementary schools are accredited with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Additionally, nearly all teachers in Pennsylvania’s Catholic schools are public school certified. At times, Catholic schools look for professionals with a specific expertise and advanced degrees, rather than certification. Catholic schools require their highly qualified teachers to complete continuing education, take part in lesson plan evaluations, and participate in the professional development that is included as a regular part of the academic calendar.

If opponents still aren’t convinced about the accountability in Catholic schools, there are additional safeguards built into Senate Bill 1. The legislation requires all non-public schools to administer at least one of eight nationally normed standardized tests as part of their already existing tests. The school is also required to share the voucher student results with parents (our schools already do this for all students, not only those who receive tuition assistance).

And we can’t argue about the results. Catholic school students typically score well above national averages on their SATs and complete hundreds of hours of community service. Many of our Catholic high schools sending nearly 100% of their graduates onto post-secondary studies, gleaning millions of dollars in scholarships for our students. Catholic school students, teachers and staff pack the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg Nov. 15 in support of school choice. During the rally, they advocated for legislation that includes a voucher program and an increase to the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.

School Choice Rally Energizes Capitol

By Joelle Shea

Special to The Witness

Nearly 50 Pennsylvania Catholic schools were represented at a rally in the Capitol Rotunda Nov. 15 in support of school choice. Hundreds of students, teachers and school staff advocated for school choice legislation that includes a voucher program and an increase to the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.

Catholic schools have long been advocates of parental choice in education, seeing it as an issue of social justice because low-income families are often treated inequitably.

Governor Tom Corbett opened the press conference by clearly stating his support for school choice. He pointed to the two chambers saying, “I believe (Senate Bill 1) is a great first step in education reform. We’ve gotta move it from this end of the building [the Senate] to that end of the building [the House].” The energy in the rotunda was high as hundreds of students repeated the rallying cry of “SB 1! SB 1!” in unison. On Oct. 26, the Senate passed Senate Bill 1, the Opportunity Scholarship Act, by a vote of 27-22. Senate Bill 1 was then sent to the House Education Committee. It is currently unknown if the House will use Senate Bill 1 or another piece of legislation to pass education reform that includes vouchers and an increase to EITC.

Dr. Ronald Bowes, Assistant Superintendent for Public Policy and Development, Diocese of Pittsburgh, said “Education should not be left to chance; it should be left to choice!” Bowes also gave the attendees of the rally a homework assignment: visit your representatives in person as soon as possible to voice your support for school choice.

(Joelle Shea is the Director of Outreach and Assistant Director of Communications of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference – the public affairs arm of Pennsylvania’s Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania.)

School Choice for Special Needs Students

By A.B. Hill

Special to The Witness

In the school choice debate, some opponents say that students with special needs will be left out. Supporters of school choice know this is not true.

Senate Bill 1 would create a voucher program and significantly expand the EITC, allowing many more students, including those with special needs, to get scholarships to non-public schools.

The Catholic school system is the largest provider of nonpublic education in Pennsylvania. Catholic schools view their role as partners in fulfilling parents’ role as primary educators as well as their moral obligation to educate their children. Admission to a Catholic school involves collaboration with parents to define a student’s individual needs and a plan to meet those needs as best as the school is able. Many Catholic schools provide special education or assisted education through specific programs, specially certified staff and/or entire buildings designed to educate those with special needs.

Catholic schools coordinate instructional support through local Intermediate Units and other state and federally funded programs. All diocesan schools have policies to place transfer students who are behind where they should be academically into an appropriate grade level to get them on a reasonable timeline for high school graduation.

Catholic schools work with parents to determine what the best course of action will be for the child to succeed, thus educating the total person with dignity.

Financial realities prevent many parents from having any educational choices for their children, especially when students have special needs. Parents who pay their school taxes deserve some benefit from those taxes, in the form of some assistance in the exercise of their right to choose a nonpublic school, if that is best for their children. A school choice program that includes both vouchers and an increase in EITC scholarships is a step in the right direction toward expanding those opportunities to more families.

Catholic schools across Pennsylvania put significant effort into providing a nurturing environment based on dignity and respect for every student. Parents – Catholics and non-Catholics alike – desire this experience for their children with special needs. Only they can determine if this is best for their child. School choice will empower parents to make this choice, not the state.

(A.B. Hill is Communications Director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference – the public affairs arm of Pennsylvania’s Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania.)

Contact Your Representative!

It’s a critical time for school choice advocacy. School choice legislation – the Opportunity Scholarship Act – has passed in the Senate. For school choice to become a reality, it must also pass in the House of Representatives.

Call or visit the office of your local State House of Representatives. It’s a critical time for school choice advocacy. School choice legislation – the Opportunity Scholarship Act – has passed in the Senate.

...
Beginning the Church's liturgical year, Advent is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to Christ's second coming at the end of time and also to the Lord's birth on Christmas.

Marking the start of the Advent season, Bishop Joseph P. McFadden celebrated Mass at Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Fairfield, where he also blessed recent renovations to the Adams County church.

In his homily, the bishop spoke of the period of waiting and preparing our hearts and minds for the coming of the Lord.

"We are called to be watchful because he comes each and every day to us," he said.

"God is a potter. He is constantly fashioning and constantly refashioning us," the bishop said. "Hopefully in Advent you can examine your lives. It's time to be watchful and time to reach out for reconciliation, to view our faults and sins in the sacrament."

The bishop's focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent was an especially pertinent encouragement to the faithful of the Fairfield parish, whose pastor is Father Michael Messaro, a priest of the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

The founder of Father Messaro's religious order, St. Gaetano Errico (1791-1860), worked tirelessly to bring the faithful to the confessional to help them find healing and a deeper spiritual life.

In honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, Bonnie Polk and Ina Clair Darby, Rosary makers from St. Patrick Parish in Carlisle, visited the fifth grade class at Holy Family School in Harrisburg, and with lots of love and patience, taught the students how to make rosaries. The ladies shared their love and devotion of the Rosary as they helped the students unravel knots and forgotten beads of Hail Marys or Our Fathers to their rosaries. Mrs. Polk and Mrs. Darby are part of a group of people who make Rosaries for missions overseas, shut-ins in nursing homes, and for the troops overseas. Mrs. Darby told the students that they have made more than 100,000 rosaries during the last 20 years. The students treasure their rosaries, which were blessed by Father Robert Yohe, pastor of Holy Family.

St. Joan of Arc School in Hershey held a special prayer service for all new moms and moms-to-be as part of the conclusion of the school's observance of the 40 Days for Life program. Also as part of the program, each class prayed part of the rosary every day for 40 days. Students gathered with Sister Eileen Marie McGowan, DM, principal; and second-grade teacher Joyce Huber to present funds collected for their baby bottle campaign to Morning Star Pregnancy Services representative Leslie Moyer.

Lord our God,
We praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:
He is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,
He is the Wisdom that teaches and guides us,
He is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God,
Let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath.
May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.
May He come quickly and not delay.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen!
NCYC 2011

Youth Called to Glory, Growth in Faith

By Emily M. Albert
The Catholic Witness

NCYC, the National Catholic Youth Conference, was held in Indianapolis Nov. 17-19 at Lucas Oil Stadium, and some 80 youth from the Diocese of Harrisburg joined 23,000 of their peers in the conference.

Each day the youth woke early, boarded a bus and participated in Morning Prayer with concerts and keynote speakers. After Morning Prayer, the youth could pick out their favorite speakers and attend seminars on such topics as friendship, peace and justice, prayer and dating. Also included in the seminars were Bishops’ Roundtable Discussions, where 30 or so youth could ask questions to a bishop assigned to their room.

A special prayer service for diocesan members of the group traveling from the Carlisle War College was offered at St. John Catholic Church, the oldest Catholic Church in Indianapolis. The local chapter of the military ministry led the prayer service and asked the youth and chaperones to share how they help people in need in their own community, just as their deployed loved ones help those in other countries. The group from Carlisle shared experiences of their work with the Amish community that allows them to pick up fallen fruit to share with the local hungry.

Rebecca Brown and Caitlin Thomas shared their thoughts about having a parent in the service; they both participate in Project Share by distributing food to families who cannot afford groceries. Rebecca said that last month while working, an elderly woman handed her a small cross with a pink rose in the middle.

“Touched me, just wanted to give too,” Rebecca said. Rebecca has lived in ten different cities. Her mother has never been deployed but is away for work about 20 days out of the month. “I’m really close to my mom and it is hard when she leaves. I really cherish our time together,” she said.

Watching Rebecca and Caitlin at the prayer service and observing the inner strength of both girls, it is clear they have a strong relationship with their families and with God. They both agree that attending Mass has helped ease the pain of being apart from a parent. They pointed out that whenever their family is together, they sit down as a family and have dinner, play games together and pray together.

“When a parent is away for a long time you ask God why? But I know through God it will be ok. My faith in God keeps me strong,” Rebecca said.

What stood out the most during the four days at NCYC was the strong faith of so many of the youth. It is important the youth have an outlet and room to grow in their faith, and in so many ways NCYC and World Youth Day events give the youth this opportunity. NCYC 2013 will be in Indianapolis again, and anyone interested should contact the Diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry via e-mail at oyyam@hbgdiocese.org. You can also find more info by visiting the “Youth and Young Adults” link at www.hbgdiocese.org.
Diocesan youth and chaperones joined The Catholic Witness photojournalist Emily M. Albert in blogging about their experiences during the National Catholic Youth Conference. Read their posts and see more photos by checking out the blog on the "Youth and Young Adults" link at www.hbgdiocese.org.

“It was only within the last three months that I truly became Catholic. I was baptized as a baby, but never really believed. NCYC has only served to strengthen my new faith and strength in Jesus. The speakers challenged us to be open; just open ourselves up to the unfailing love of Jesus. As a senior, I am trying to figure out what to do next year and with my life. The speakers reminded me that God knows what I am supposed to do and that his path for me is the one that will bring ultimate happiness. It is not my job to decide what my path is, but only to listen to God and then, as Mary did, say, ‘Let it be done.’ NCYC reminded me that to love God means we trust him and ‘all things will work together unto good.’”

~ Maura Manning, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Mechanicsburg

NCYC emcee ValLimar Jansen, a cantor, recording artist and speaker, engages the audience with her inspirational voice.

Some 23,000 participants came to the youth conference in Indianapolis, some from as far away as Hawaii.

Youth from the Diocese of Harrisburg share stories as they swap hats during the conference.

Leaders traveling with diocesan youth from Carlisle participate in a special prayer service led by those involved in military outreach in Indianapolis.
Poverty in the Midst of Plenty: Hunger Persists in the United States

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

As U.S. nutritionists cringe over the prospect of an overweight nation indulging in a two-week binge of "stress eatings" – from Halloween candy to Thanksgiving dinners to Christmas feasts to New Year’s festivities – millions of Americans who aren’t sure they’re going to get enough to eat this day or the next.

The problem is made worse by lack of access to nutritious food, as residents of America’s poorest cities and neighborhoods have little choice but to make do with fast food or convenience stores that don’t stock fresh produce.

Even if they were the food-savviest consumers in the country, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – the new name for food stamps – doesn’t stretch far enough, according to a report issued Nov. 22 found that 88 percent of its member agencies participated in the WIC (Women, Infants and children and their mothers who now participate in the WIC) program – the new name for food stamps. The number of people at risk of hunger increased from 36.2 million in 2007 to 48.8 million in 2010. Charities and food assistance programs are feeling the strain with these increased numbers.

Hardship in the US

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The nation and American Catholics both can help keep Iraq from sliding into chaos once U.S. troops leave the country at the end of the year, said two U.S. bishops who accompanied Bishop Kicanas to Iraq.

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Beckmann said a new farm bill should get rid of agricultural subsidies in favor of revenue insurance, thus freeing up more funds for nutrition assistance in a country where federal statistics show that close to 46 million people are living in poverty.

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Bishops, Back from Iraq, Suggest Ways Catholics, Americans Can Help

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

The nation and American Catholics both can help keep Iraq from sliding into chaos once U.S. troops leave the country at the end of the year, said two U.S. bishops who visited Iraq for four days in October.

The U.S. withdrawal of combat troops does not reduce the obligation to help, principally to protect Iraqis and provide assistance, said Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., chairman of the board of Catholic Relief Services. During a Nov. 15 press briefing during the U.S. bishops' fall general meeting in Baltimore.

It would be extremely important for our government to participate in an orderly transition. ... The great fear right now is if the troops leave, the violence will intensify,” Bishop Kicanas said.
Sister Mary Armella Scolic
Adorers of the Blood of Christ Sister Mary Armella Scolic died Nov. 11 at St. Anne’s Retirement Community in Columb-ia. She was 99 years old.


The funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 16 in the chapel at St. Joseph’s Convent in Columbia. Burial was in the Adorers’ cem-etry in Columbia.

Sister Ignatia Tice
Christian Charity Sister Ignatia Tice died at Holy Family Convent in Danville Nov. 10. She was 94.

Born Marie Tice in Allentown, Pa., she attended Holy Trinity School in Hazleton, Pa., and entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Christian Charity in Menden-ham, N.J., in 1931. Her entire religious life was dedicated to teaching in the primary grades of the community in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Sister Ignatia arrived at Holy Family Convent in 1997 for general help. The funeral Mass was celebrated in the convent chapel in Danville. Burial was in St. Joseph Cemetery there.

**Obituaries**

**HARRISBURG**

**MOUNT CARMEL**

**MIDDLETOWN**

**LANCASTER**

**LEWISTOWN**

**KULPMONT**

**CARLISLE**

**NEW Freedom**
The Crusaders of Lancaster Catholic are making it a tradition of sorts to play big football games the day after Thanksgiving at Hersheypark Stadium. And it seems that every year standing in the way of district gold and a state playoff berth are the Spartans of Wyomissing – a very well coached team that uses a variety of deceptive running looks out of the Wing T to baffle defensive fronts.

But heavily favored Lancaster Catholic was able to do what great football programs always seem to do when the chips are down. Coming back from a 14-7 halftime deficit, the Crusaders entered the final 7:14 knotted at 14 after scoring early in the third quarter to even things. With the ball on their own 13 and 87 yards to paydirt, it was now or never for the Crusaders, who last year were upset by these same Spartans in the Class AA semis.

Without disguise, the Crusaders lined up and rammed the ball right down Wyo’s throat with senior Brandon Hollister carrying the load. The brawny tailback finished the game with 169 yards on 18 carries, but it was his consecutive runs of 13, 29 and finally a nifty 34-yard dash off left tackle out of the wildcat formation that put the Crusaders ahead, 21-14. It was nothing fancy – more like Pickett’s Charge than a stealthy flank attack – but it worked with a little heart adding to the brute.

It was the fourth district gold for Bruce Harbach’s team in the last seven years and now their eyes are set on notching their second state championship, but not before having to better storied programs like Mount Carmel, West Catholic or the Quips of Aliquippa to notch their second state title.
Diocesan Notebook
Compiled by Jen Reed

**Spiritual Offerings**

Mass with prayers for healing will be celebrated by Father John Peck on Sundays at 10 a.m. at Christ the King Parish in New Columbia Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. The Mass is sponsored by the Pilgrims of Praise and Life in the Spirit prayer groups. For more information, call 717-671-9256.

**Advent Opportunities**

- **Advent Saturdays** – The liturgy of the Saints for this Advent OFC, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Sacred Heart School in Hanover. Sponsored by the Oblates of St. Mary, OP. For more information, call 717-848-7403.
- **St. Joseph’s Soup and Sweets** – Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday-Saturday at St. Joseph’s School in Hanover. Sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor. For more information, call 717-848-7403.

- **Open to All**

  - **Advent Retreat** – Days of Remembrance and Restoration, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the St. Francis of Assisi Youth Center in Hanover. Sponsored by the Oblates of St. Mary, OP. For more information, call 717-848-7403.
  - **Light Brisket** – 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., at the Sacred Heart School in Hanover. Sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor. For more information, call 717-848-7403.

**Other Events**

- **Monday of the Way** – St. Leo the Great Parish in Rohrerstown. For more information, call 717-867-1525.
- **Pilgrimage to Fatima and Lourdes** – Pilgrims will depart from the St. Francis, the Vatican Museum and Vatican City where an ecumenical Mass will be celebrated. The tour includes: Daily Mass at holy sites, guide, accommodation in first class hotels (five nights in Jerusalem, three nights in Tel Aviv), and all meals. For more information, contact GesSEL International Tours, 800-566-7499 or www.gessetravel.com.

**Catholic Italy** – Our Lady of Lourdes Parish will host a 10 day pilgrimage to Italy beginning Nov. 29. The tour departs from JFK Airport on Sept. 4, 2012, the cost of this tour is $3,290 double occupancy. This price does not include a $100 tax. Contact Karen Kline, a member of the tour group, for more information.

**Diocesan Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire** – Adult Girl Scout Leaders are invited to attend a meeting of the Diocesan Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (DCCGSFC). Jan. 21 from 10 a.m. to noon in the Cardinal Cooke Social Hall at Sacred Heart School in Hanover. For more information, contact the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at oyya@hbgdiocese.org or 717-657-4824 x27.

**Holiday Bazaars**

- **Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Spring Grove** – A Christmas bazaar will be held Saturday, Dec. 1 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Vendors, homemade pies, soups and good food. A free gift will be given away every hour. Music and Christmas-themed gifts provided. Tickets will be sold for $5 in advance or $6 at the door. For more information, contact the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at oyya@hbgdiocese.org or 717-657-4824 x27.

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Addressing U.S. Bishops, Pope Defends Church Efforts on Sex Abuse

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

In a speech to U.S. bishops, Pope Bene-
dict XVI defended the church’s “honest efforts” to confront the priestly sex abuse scandal as a scandal of transparency, and said its ap-
pologies could help the rest of society respond to the problem.

The church, he said, is “firstly held to high standards, all other institutions should be held to the same standards as they ad-
dress the problem of the abuse of power and proc-
es of sexual abuse, which has become a “scourge” at every level of society, the pope said Nov. 26.

On wider issues, including the institution of marriage, the pope encouraged to bishops to speak out “humbly yet insistently in defense of moral truth.” Responding to the challenges of a secularized culture will first require the “re-evangelization” of the church’s own members, he said.

The pope made the remarks in a speech to bishops from the state of New York, who were in Rome for their “ad limina” visits.

The group was led by Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, who as president of the U.S. bishops’ confer-
ence has spoken of the need to restore the church’s credibility and its evangelizing capacity.

The pope began his talk by recalling his 2008 visit to the United States, which he said took him “at the center of the sex abuse crisis.”

He said he wanted to acknowledge the suffering inflicted upon abuse victims and all the church’s efforts to ensure the safety of children and deal “appropriately and transparently with allegations” of abuse.

“Is it my hope that the church’s consci-
entious efforts to confessor those in search of truth will help the broader community to recognize the true extent and devastating con-
sequences of the abuse, and to be effectively to this scourge which affects the very soul of the society,” he said.

By the same token, just as the church is right held to exacting standards in this regard, all other institutions, without ex-
ception, should be held to the same stan-
dards,” he said.

Pope Benedict’s speech was the first in a series of five talks he is expected to de-
liver in his pontificate. As a group, the pope said, 12 groups of U.S. bishops make their visits to Rome. He said he planned to focus pri-
marily on the urgent task of “new evan-
elization.”

The pope said many of the U.S. bishops had shared with him their concern about the “grave challenges” presented by an increasingly secularized society in the United States. He said it was also interest-
ing to note a widespread worry about the future of democratic society in general, by people who see “a breakdown in the family as the basic cell and moral foun-
dations of social life” and growing insecurity about the future.

He suggested that the church could and should have a key role in responding to these challenges. As well as the church’s efforts to engage the steps leading up to the acceptance of the candidates for ordination to be ordained for U.S. Catholic dioceses. It also allows Anglican parishes to become Catholic parishes. Three have done so and are referred to as “Anglican use” communities, according to the background material.

The “Anglicanorum coetibus” applies to the entire world and allows Anglican communities to be received into the Catholic Church through new ordinaries in stead of through existing dioceses. U.S. Catholics may be familiar with an ordinariate in the form of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, an ordinariate which serves U.S. military chaplains around the world. Its offices are in Washington, and it is headed by Archbishop Lori, of Baltimore.

In addition to the approvals by the Vatican, the back-
ground checks and psychological evaluations, the can-
didates for ordination as Catholic priests also will go through a program of priestly formation approved by the Vatican, Cardinal Wuerl said. The program is based at St. Mary’s Seminary in Houston, on-campus or through the university’s distance-learning program, he said, and should take six to nine months to complete.

Congregations that wish to become a part of the ordi-
nariate will go through a catechesis program based on the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. A great many details remain to be decided about how the ordination will take place and how the parishioners in the ordinariate will have the option of using either “The Book of Divine Worship,” a Vatican-approved liturgi-
cal text based upon Anglican liturgies, or the Roman Missal used in other Catholic churches.

Questions raised by bishops after from the floor Cardinal Wuerl’s presentation touched on issues such as whether the newly ordained priests of the Anglican ordinariate might be able to help out in other par-
ishes, such as for priests in the mission field or whether parishioners of Catholic churches would be free to participate in the Anglican parishes.

The answer to both questions was yes. Priests work-
ing in Anglican ordinariates would be able to receive permission from the bishop or ordinary, as currently is required when priests work in other dioceses, Cardinal Wuerl said.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston suggested that dioceses with priests who are entering into full communion with the church might, for example, offer to have the new priests participate in the dioc-
ese’s health insurance program until the new ordinariate is able to offer such benefits.

World and National News

Cardinal Says U.S. Ordinariate for Former Anglicans to Be Created Jan. 1

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

A new ordinariate – functionally similar to a di-
cese – will be created Jan. 1 to bring Anglicans into the U.S. Catholic Church, Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl said during the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 15.

Cardinal Wuerl told reporters after the session with U.S. bishops that Anglican priests have submitted their dossier seeking ordination in the Cath-
olic Church, and 35 of those have received initial ap-
proval from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

That means they can move to the second stage of app-
proval, which includes a criminal background check, psychological evaluation and recommendations from the Catholic bishop where he lives and from his Angli-
can ecclesiastical authority, he said.

Cardinal Wuerl told reporters after the session with the bishops that Anglican parishies with a total of about 2,000 members have so far asked to become part of the Catholic Church through the process established in 2009 when Pope Benedict XVI issued an apostolic letter, “Anglicanorum coetibus.” Cardinal Wuerl was named by the Vatican to head an ad hoc committee for the constitution’s implementation.

The constitution authorizes the creation of an ordi-
nariate to bring in Anglicans, or Episcopalians as they are known in the United States, who seek to leave their tradition and join the Catholic Church but retain certain elements of the Anglican liturgy and traditions.

The process was established to accommodate whole congregations who choose to join the Catholic Church after they have become disaffected with the Anglican Church over recent changes, such as the ordination of women in the church and blessing of same-sex marriages and partnerships.

Cardinal Wuerl’s announcement in the final hour of the public portion of the annual meeting in Baltimore brought immediate logistical questions, such as the re-
lation between the ordinariate – which will cover the entire U.S. – and the dioceses in which the former Anglican priests will live.

The physical location of its offices will be determined after the ordinariate is erected. Cardinal Wuerl said he assumed that an ordinariate will be named at that time.

“I remain convinced that this ordinariate will be a true expression of the Catholic Church because you will see engagement in the steps leading up to the acceptance of the candidates for ordination and for your involvement in the liturgical and catechetical formation of the con-
gregation seeking membership in the ordinariate,” he said.

“Your involvement is one of the guarantees of the true expression of the Catholic Church because of your engagement in the steps leading up to the acceptance of the candidates for ordination and for your involvement in the liturgical and catechetical formation of the congregation seeking membership in the ordinariate,” he said.

“A great many details remain to be decided about how the ordinariate will go through a catechesis program based on the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. A great many details remain to be decided about how the ordination will take place and how the parishioners in the ordinariate will have the option of using either “The Book of Divine Worship,” a Vatican-approved liturgi-
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ese’s health insurance program until the new ordinariate is able to offer such benefits.
In Africa, Pope Asks Church to Model of Reconciliation

Pope Benedict XVI urged international leaders to reach a credible agreement on climate change, keeping in mind the needs of the poor and of future generations, he said.

The pope made the remarks at his noon blessing at the Vatican Nov. 27, the day before his trip to the southern African country of Benin.

“In a pastoral letter, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference asked people to absorb carbon dioxide, to grow vegetables and by developing the job creation potential of phasing out coal and nuclear production by battling against ‘every form of slavery’ in the world modern world.

On Nov. 19, the pope traveled to the coastal city of Ouagadougou, a former slave trading post on the Atlantic, to sign his follow-up document to the 2009 Synod of Bishops for Africa.

In a brief talk before the signing, the pope said that in the face of Africa’s problems, “a church reconciled within herself and among all her members can become a prophetic sign of reconciliation in society” and help guide the struggle against “every form of slavery” in the modern world.

“Urgent action is necessary. Climate negotiations, providing health care to those with AIDS and stopping global temperatures from rising more must begin in families and schools and by developing the job creation potential of economic imbalance and environmental degradation,” said in a meeting with local residents.

The pope emphasized that “everyone of good sense” understands the need for interreligious dialogue today and rejects the attempt to justify intolerance or violence.

“Aggression is an outmoded relational form which appeals to superficial and ignoble instincts. To use the revealed word, the sacred which appeals to superficial and ignoble instincts. To use the revealed word, the sacred – including many pilgrims who came from the borders of Benin, a small West African country with a population of nearly 3 million Catholics out of a total population of nearly 9 million people,” the pope said.

Later he pulled a rosary from his pocket and asked the young people to learn how to pray, as each child was given a rosary at the end of the brief ceremony.

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On the Feast of Christ the King, the Catholic Church looks forward to a new heaven and new earth, when all will be one in Christ. The solemnity, which marks the last Sunday of the Church’s liturgical calendar, reflects the fulfillment of all the work God is doing for his people in Jesus Christ.

On this year’s feast, Nov. 20, Bishop Joseph P. McFadden blessed the new altar at St. Monica Church in Sunbury. It is on the altar that the memorial of the Lord is celebrated and his Body and Blood given to his people.

St. Monica Parish and its pastor, Father Donald Cramer, worked with Berger’s Trinity Peace in Elysburg to obtain the custom-made pieces, which include the Altar of Repose, an ambo and a celebrant’s chair in addition to the altar.

“It is on this altar that Jesus again offers himself for us. We are dedicating this altar because it is a place of great sacrifice,” Bishop McFadden told the congregation. “Our King came into the world in complete and absolute poverty, not at all like other kings,” he said, reflecting on the solemnity. “Our King came to serve. He came as a shepherd. He came as the Good Shepherd to gather his sheep. He does that still today.”

“Who did Jesus care to associate with? Did he mingle with the rich and powerful? No, he was present with the marginalized,” Bishop McFadden said. “He comes to those who are lost.”