My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Behold the Virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, God is with us.” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23)

As we gather with family and friends this Christmas to celebrate the birth of our Savior, we know that the Church throughout the world is celebrating a Year of Faith. This Year of Faith calls us to a deeper reflection and contemplation of the basic tenets of our Catholic faith and what it is that we truly believe as Catholics. It is in this context that I address to you my annual Christmas message with the hope that this coming year will mark a new awakening in the lives of all the faithful in the Diocese of Harrisburg to the great gift that was given to us over 2,000 years ago: “Wonderful, indeed, is the mystery of our faith, Christ was manifested in the flesh.” (cf. 1 Timothy 3:16)

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, constantly reminds us that the center point of our faith is an authentic encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. In this encounter we find the satisfaction and joy that each of us seeks in the recesses of our hearts. Jesus is the fulfillment of our deepest hopes and desires. For, as Saint Augustine reminds us, “Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in you.”

It is no secret that our world is in a very restless state and that many people are anxious and concerned about their future. Many have fallen prey to the intoxicating materialism of our society and the insatiable appetite for more and more things in the hopes of fulfilling their need and desire for happiness. Unfortunately, in doing so, too many of our brothers and sisters have marginalized God and placed Him on the perimeter of their lives, rarely turning to Him or seeking His presence. They forget the very One from whom all true happiness comes.

This Christmas, all of us are invited to listen more carefully to the story of the Child born in Bethlehem and to the revelation that He brings to the world. It is in Jesus that God fully reveals Himself to humanity and invites us to share in His new creation that is centered in Christ. In Jesus, God unfolds the reality of His deep love for every man and woman, inviting fallen humanity into a deep communion with the three persons of the Blessed Trinity for all eternity. This communion is realized through our faith in Jesus and our participation in His divine life, found especially in the sacramental life of the Church.

It is precisely in the celebration of the Eucharist that we encounter Jesus who continues to be present in the world. He is truly “God-with-us.” Just as He humbled Himself to take on our human nature revealed in His birth as the babe of Bethlehem, the Lord continues His humble presence among us under the species of bread and wine that has been changed into His Body and Blood to nourish us for our journey through life.

It is my prayer that, as the Catholic community gathers to celebrate the Holy Eucharist this Christmas, our eyes will be opened anew to the real presence of the Lord in our midst. As we celebrate His birth in time, may we be ever mindful of His enduring presence each and every time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. May the Year of Faith help us to understand the “wonderful mystery” we celebrate on Christmas Day and inspire us to a greater participation in the Sunday Eucharist on a weekly basis, where we can find the Christ Child ever present in our midst.

I pray that the Lord will bless all the faithful in the Diocese of Harrisburg with His peace and shower you with many graces in the New Year.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph P. McFadden
Bishop of Harrisburg
No Words’ Can Describe Shock, Sadness

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

As the community of Newtown, Conn., braced itself on a dank and dreary Dec. 17 for the first funerals of the 27 victims of the horrific school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary, educators at St. Theresa School in New Cumberland, Md., knew schools across the nation’s 19,000 Catholic parishes and Diocesan Schools — including 44 in Bridgeport, Conn. — were offering support through prayer.

“We had the opportunity this morning to come together as educators to mourn and to grieve,” Matthew Shore, principal of St. Theresa’s, said of an early morning prayer service for faculty and staff.

“We’re a very close community here — we have three daughters at the school, and a number of students and staff have children at this school,” he said.

“As an educator and a parent, you look at these kids every day and you just can’t imagine that anything like this would happen,” he added.

Since receiving word of the horrific Dec. 14 tragedy, Mr. Shore and his teachers set out to reassures from Catholic Charities to 8,000 students, as well as parents, on the safety measures taken to secure the school building. They also focused on best practices to help parents talk to their children about the tragedy.

St. Theresa’s routinely practices safety drills, including one that addresses what the school would do if an intruder entered the building, he said. And, the school has implement ed the most updated suggestions from the FBI, professional response teams and the local police department. Last month, security procedures were a focus of the school’s in-service meeting.

“We’ve taken every precaution necessary to keep our school safe,” Mr. Shore remarked, “and we continue to pray for the students and the staff who died, and for the families who are mourning their loss.”

On the day of the school shooting, Bishop Joseph P. McFadden offered words of solace and encouragement to everyone to thank God for the gift of children and pray that the world will grow in its respect for human life.

“I am deeply hurt and deeply saddened by the tragic events that took place in Newtown, Conn. In times such as these we also have hope in the goodness of the Lord and in the resurrection,” he said.

“When we are faced with such an unspeakable tragedy, we know there are no human words that adequately explain this senseless act nor words to console the families of the victims. However, as people of faith, we must hope that our trust in God can comfort and guide us through this difficult time,” he continued.

“With the understanding that there are no words to console the families of the victims of this devastating tragedy especially the parents of the victims, asking God to give them the grace and strength to bear the heavy cross that has been given to them,” he said.

Father Edward J. Quinlan, Diocesan Secretary for Education, told The Catholic Witness that diocesan schools are designed in such a way that access to the buildings are strictly limited.

“Even our older school buildings have systems where access is limited and visitors must be specifically identified to be admitted,” he said. “All our schools require all visitors to come in to the office before going through the building as necessary. All of these measures are done to control access to the school as much as humanly possible.”

Father Quinlan is also pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Harrisburg. He spoke with teachers at Holy Name School as students returned to their classrooms after the weekend.

“What I was detecting from the teachers was that the students have a sense that they really feel safe in the school, and that the teachers are very concerned about what is happening,” he said.

At Masses he celebrated throughout the weekend after the school shooting in Connecticut, Father Quinlan invited parishioners to recognize the sense of communion that exists within the Church.

“We are really joined spiritually with those suffering families in Newtown, and our prayers aren’t just empty gestures, but a sign of spiritual solidarity with that community,” he said.

“Our Lord will take care of the children and the staff members who were lost. Everything that we know about Heaven and about God and his salvific will for us keeps saying that they’re going to be at peace and know joy that is utterly unimaginable in Heaven,” he said.

He also said that the Chesapeake tragedy had a huge impact on not only local churches but parishes throughout the nation.

“We don’t have any magic words or magic formulas to make that pain go away.”
Lourdes Regional Receives More than $240,000 in Tuition Assistance

By Emily M. Albert
The Catholic Witness

The gymnasium at Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School, Coal Township, was filled with students, faculty, staff, and parents Dec. 17. Everyone was anxious to celebrate together the generous donation of $246,216 raised by local business leaders under the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit program, EITC.

The EITC program provides scholarships to students to attend the school of their choice. Recognized as a national model, Pennsylvania’s EITC program provides businesses with a tax credit for donations made to organizations that provide scholarships for students.

Since its establishment in 2001, the EITC Program has annually allowed more than 40,000 students to attend the school of their choice. Some 360,000 students have received EITC scholarships, thanks to more than $510 million contributed by businesses.

An alumn of Lourdes, Tony Varano, visited with Bishop Joseph P. McFadden last March to discuss ways in which alumni and others in the Coal Township community could help Our Lady of Lourdes, which, at the time, was facing financial challenges. As a result of the meeting, the school

A student bows her head in prayer as the school community offers prayers for the victims of the horrific tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.

community decided to learn more of the logistics of the EITC program and found out how easy the program actually works for businesses and schools.

“There are a lot of us [alumni] out there that feel the same way I do. I absolutely love this school,” shared Mr. Varano. “A lot want to help, and we found it rather easy to talk to alumni about EITC opportunities.”

Mr. Varano continued, “Even though it seems like a no-brainer, it took a personal touch to talk to people about it. That is where Paul Sandri helped. He is a local business man who has been a part of EITC for years.”

Mr. Sandri, who owns Keystone Tax Associates, has been working with the EITC program for almost six years. He too is an alumn of Lourdes and currently has two children attending the school. He commented that not only was he greatly affected by the school but he is watching firsthand how the school is constantly developing and leaps and bounds it has taken over the years.

“Anyone in the community is curious about EITC, I am happy to talk to them about it!” he offered. He already helped many in the community realize how beneficial the EITC program is to business owners, and how important it is for parents to be able to make the decision of what kind of education is best for their child.

Bishop McFadden was invited to accept the check and to lead prayer for the school community and visitors. He also took a few moments to thank all those involved in making the grant possible for Lourdes. He spoke of how important it is for parents, the first teachers of children, to have a choice of education for their children.

“When you go home this evening, say thank you to your parents,” Bishop McFadden told the students in attendance.

Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School includes grades pre-k to 12, and principal, Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Margaret Ann Quinn, commented that “This grant provides wonderful opportunities for students to remain at Lourdes, increases enrollment and allow students who couldn’t afford the opportunity to attend Lourdes.”
**Feliz Navidad**

By Father Paul CB Schenck

**Special to The Witness**

“Feliz Navidad,” Jose Feliciano’s Christmas song, is one of the most popular in the U.S. and around the world. The Spanish greeting literally means, “Happy Nativity.”

In the new translation of the Roman Missal, Christmas is formally called “The Solemnity of The Nativity of The Lord.” The “Nativity Scene” with the Babe in the manger, surrounded by a serene Blessed Mother and a careful St. Joseph, is a familiar, cherished and enduring image of the observance of Christmas. The carols of Christmas exult, “Christ is born today, Christ is born today!”

Birth is defined in Webster’s as, “the process or circumstances of being born.” Birth is a process, rather than a single, isolated event. Biologically, birth does not “produce” a child. The child, already present and very much alive, only transfers from one place, his or her mother’s womb, to another – outside his or her mother’s body. Neither does the birth process produce a person; the person already exists, simply moving from one place to another, and one status to another, from pre-born to born.

The Christ Child was already the Incarnate second person of the Holy Trinity before his birth. He was already “true God from true God” and Savior before he was born. In every way, Jesus Christ was himself, before and after his nativity.

What then do we celebrate at Christmas, “the solemnity of the Nativity of The Lord?” We celebrate our Lord and Savior reaching his birth day, emerging from the Tabernacle of his Mother’s womb as Emmanuel, “God with us.” We receive him as he already is, and for whom he already is – Son of God and Son of Man, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christmas then is a paradigm, an example of how we should receive every child – before, at, and after birth. Just as birth did not produce The Christ Child, or give him his personhood, so birth does not make any child or give him personhood. Each and every child is herself or himself fully a human person, from the very first moment they come into existence at conception. The birth of a child is the celebration that she or he has reached their birth day and emerged from their mother’s sanctuary and is now among us.

This should cause us to celebrate a blessed solemnity of the Nativity of The Lord, a very Merry Christmas and a very happy birthday! (Father Paul CB Schenck is Diocesan Director of Respect Life Activities and chairman of the National Pro-Life Action Center in Washington, D.C.)

---

**Send a Message In Support of a Pro-Life Insurance Exchange**

**Pennsylvania Catholic Conference**

Governor Tom Corbett announced Dec. 12 that Pennsylvania will not set up its own health insurance exchanges under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). In his statement, the governor said, “Health care reform is too important to be achieved through haphazard planning. Pennsylvania taxpayers and businesses deserve more. They deserve informed decision making and a strong plan that responsibly uses taxpayer dollars.”

The Catholic Church has long and consistently advocated for the reform of the American health care system. Access to health care is fundamental and necessary for human dignity. Yet concerns raised during the health care reform debate about conscience protection and coverage of elective abortion are not resolved. Without a state exchange, Pennsylvanians who qualify will be enrolled in the federal exchange, which will cover elective abortions.

If Pennsylvania had created its own exchange, it would have been able to opt out of this abortion coverage. As Pennsylvanians work with the state and federal government to address issues of cost and flexibility, we must also be concerned about taxpayers supporting the flawed and damaging federal exchange. Basic health care.

The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, with other pro-life organizations, is exploring every option to avoid the federal elective abortion provision. In consultation with the USCCB and other pro-life groups after yesterday’s announcement, it appears that a legislative remedy can be found to assure that the federally administered insurance exchange can exclude elective abortion coverage.

The PCC will continue to monitor the developments on this issue and will post updates as they are available. Visit www.pacatholic.org to send a message to your representatives in support of legislation that removes taxpayer funded abortions from health insurance exchanges.

---

**The Witness Returns January 18**

The December 21 edition of The Catholic Witness is the final one for 2012. Our first issue of the New Year will be January 18, 2013.

During our hiatus, we invite you to stay in touch with news from the diocese by visiting the diocesan Web site at www.hbgdiocese.org or by checking out its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/DioceseofHarrisburg.

As parishes, schools and organizations plan their event calendars for the New Year, we take this opportunity to let you know that our schedule of issue dates and submission deadlines for 2013 is now available. You can find the Publication Schedule and information on how to submit items to us by clicking on the “Catholic Witness” link at www.hbgdiocese.org. If you would prefer to receive the Publication Schedule and Submission Guidelines via e-mail or standard mail, contact us at witness@hbgdiocese.org or 717-657-4804.

We send you best wishes for a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year!

---

**Donations to Hurricane Victims Top $364,000**

In response to the call for financial help for the victims of Hurricane Sandy, the people of the Diocese of Harrisburg generously contributed $364,065.85 in special collections taken up in the parishes. Harrisburg Catholic Administrative Services, Inc., submitted the total from the collection to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office of National Collections on Dec. 13.
The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

By Rev. Joshua Brommer, STL

Special to The Witness

After much discussion and lively debate, the bishops gathered in the ancient basilica of St. Peter’s Basilica to give their final votes on the first document of the Second Vatican Council, Sacrosanctum Concilium, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. The day was December 4, 1963, the final day of the Second Session of the Council, the five-hundred years to the date when the bishops at the Council of Trent in 1563 made major and fundamental changes to the reform of the Sacred Liturgy in 1563. Like five-hundred years earlier, the mechanics of liturgical reform would be entrusted to the curia of Bishops who would call experts from around the world to form a “consilium” of theologians, liturgists, and liturgical reformers (the directives of the Council Fathers).

The Constitution was overwhelmingly clear: 2,147 bishops would mark “placet” (yes) on the small slips of paper provided for their decision; only 4 bishops marked “non placet” (no). To quote one of the liturgical experts called upon to take up the reform of the Sacred Liturgy, “It was an emotional moment, a historic turning point for liturgical reform had been a long time in the making. Its roots can be traced back to the Reform century with the reform of the European Benedictine monastic life along with the production of critical works of early Church writings, and the works of great Fathers of the Church as Saint Justin Martyr (d. 165) and Saint Hippolytus (d. 235). Scholarly circles had been laying the foundation for what would lead to the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council about a century. Their principal concern was in the recovery of the form and spirit of the ancient Church celebrated by the ancient Church.

What most of us know about the liturgy today is that every change has been given down to us: the wider use of our own language, the simplification of the Order of Mass, the wider participation of lay people, and the restoration of the rites of Christian initiation for adults. But when the Council Fathers presented Sacrosanctum Concilium to Pope Paul VI for promulgation, they presented to him and the whole Church more than just a list of things to spruce up. They gave the Church a new exchange of grace, a new way of living in light of the reality of the Church as the Mystical Body, joined to Christ Her head, worshiping God the Father through the Holy Spirit. For the first time, the teaching of the Council put into relief the Second Person of the Trinity. The Church can never be separated from the act of sacrificial worship, the offering of Christ to God in the person of the priest who is seated at the Father’s right hand in glory. As Father Ratzinger wrote in the document in 1968, “The text implied an entire ecclesiology and thus anticipated (in a degree that cannot be too highly appreciated) the main theme of the entire Council – its teaching on the Church.”

Every word and action that occurs when the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, a child is baptized, a wedding person is solemnly anointed, our Morning Prayer of the Church is prayed, reveals who the Church is and what it is all about. The Liturgy is the “mystery of faith” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 1). For this reason, the most significant parts of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the Liturgy are not the practical implications of indicating the reform of part or another of the Liturgy, but those paragraphs which explain the doctrine. The Constitution grounds any reform of the Church’s prayer and worship. A liturgical action is not a reform of the Church if the Liturgy is to become a “true form of the mystery of Christ” (SC 103). “No other action of the Church is to be undertaken without a reform of the Liturgy” (SC 104). The Constitution states that the Liturgy must go on to expound on what the Lord said to the Apostles after He ascended into glory: “I am always with you.” The Sacred Liturgy is first and foremost and part of the work of God because God is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical actions. Christ is at work in the person of the priestly minister, so much so that when a priest baptizes, “it is really Christ Himself who baptizes.” Christ is present in the proclamation of His Word, “since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church” (SC 105). Christ is present when we pray together in Latin those parts of the Mass that the Constitution calls Sacred, “Christ is present when the Church prays and sings” (SC 106). The Church says the Church is to sing! In our prayer and song, God is glorified. We celebrate the Liberating and fulfilling of our sins and the fulfillment of the promises of God. Too often we feel the effects of our judgments and debates about the liturgy. But it is through the celebration of the Liturgy that we are given the “immutable elements,” which are to “preside over the conduct of divine service” (SC 107). Each of these aspects reveals the very tension in which we Christians find ourselves. Sometimes, too often we feel the effects of our judgments and debates about the liturgy. It is through the celebration of the Liturgy that we are given the “immutable elements,” which are to “preside over the conduct of divine service” (SC 107).

In the biblical language of the Old Testament, “The Christian people, as far as it is possible, should be able to understand [the texts and rites] with ease and take part in them fully, actively, and as a community” (SC 21). Undeniably the fulfillment of the whole of the liturgy is not a sudden and subsequent reform that it inspired has not been easy in the Church these last five decades. The Sacred Liturgy, which is meant to manifest outwardly the “wondrous sacrifice of the whole Church” (SC 5) as the privileged place of communion and reconciliation, a foretaste of heaven, has not been immune from internal debates and squabbles. Unfortunately, too often, well-intentioned members of the Church did precisely what Sacrosanctum Concilium expressly forbids, “No person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority” (SC 22). In these circumstances, the Liturgy became a matter of the individual, rather than about the work of God that brings to birth the Church. The Year of Faith and the upcoming fiftieth anniversary of this document provide a great occasion to reredit to it. In some cases, our judgments and debates about the Sacred Liturgy are based on our own presumptions or prejudices. Rereading the document could surprise us. For example, did Vatican II remove Latin from the Liturgy? In §35 the document states, “The use of the Latin language … is to be preserved.” While the “wider use” of the vernacular is recommended particularly for “in readings, directives, and in some prayers and chants.” Later on we read, “Care must be taken to ensure that the faithful may also be able to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them” (SC 54). This topic alone tends to draw a lot of lively discussion. And, there are certainly other parts of this document which have been less contentious and very successful, like the wider use of Sacred Scripture in the Liturgy (SC 51), the permission granted to receiving communion under both kinds (SC 55), and the development of the RCIA (SC 64). Other directives, such as the wider participation in the Liturgy of the Hours (SC 108) and the reform of sacred music (SC 112-113), might not have been fully realized yet.

In the end, not one of the billion Catholics throughout the world today can admit they have not been affected by the placet votes of those 2,147 bishops that December forty-five years ago. The liturgical reform called for continues. So does the discussion and lively debate, as we seek to live out what it means to be what the Sacred Liturgy makes of us, the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church.

(Father Brommer is the Administrative Assistant to the Bishop and Liturgy Coordinator for the Diocese of Harrisburg. During this Year of Faith, he is contributing this series of articles on the Second Vatican Council to The Catholic Witness.)

Bishops attend the second session of the Second Vatican Council in 1963. Between 2,000 and 2,500 bishops attended the Council session inside St. Peter's Basilica. The council produced 16 landmark documents that transformed the Church.
Will You Help a Seminarian Become a Priest for Our Diocese?

Since 2004, the number of Harrisburg seminarians has tripled in size. This year, 41 men are discerning and studying for the Diocese of Harrisburg. The average annual cost to fund a seminarian is $40,000. As the numbers of seminarians grow, the cost to educate them drastically increases. These men, who may be your future priests, need your help. Please consider offering your financial support. We are trying to secure an increase of priestly vocations and your prayers are being answered. Please help. For more information, contact the Office of Vocations at 717-657-4804.

A Profile of Tyler Mentzer

Describe your faith journey.

I have been a life-long parishioner of St. Ignatius Loyola in Buchanan Valley. It has been a great blessing for me to have grown up in such a loving and supportive family of faith, and our parish community has been very influential in my spiritual development. It has also been a blessing for me to be able to attend Catholic schools within the Diocese of Harrisburg, and these educational experiences have contributed significantly to my academic and spiritual formation as a disciple of Jesus Christ. I currently attend St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, and I am beginning my first year of formation for the diocese as a Pre Theology I seminarian.

What excites you about the priesthood?

It is very exciting to know that God desires to be close to His people. So close, in fact, that He gives Himself to us in the form of His Eucharistic presence! It is truly an amazing gift and He wants us to make present this gift, in a special way, through the hands of His priests. To be able to bring people to God, and God to His people is a very exciting and humbling prospect, and the love and humility of Our Lord never ceases to inspire and amaze me.

What do you most look forward to in serving the Church and her people?

I would imagine it to be a great joy to be able to share God’s life with His people. By helping others find salvation in the sacraments especially Holy Eucharist, a priest is able to share God’s presence in a very tangible way with others; through Baptism and Holy Matrimony, he welcomes into and more closely unites God’s family with one another; through both the daily joys and struggles of life, a priest is able to participate in a wide variety of life circumstances in the lives of God’s family of faith. It must be a truly unique and humbling vantage point from which to view, experience, and share God’s life with His people.

What gifts, talents or abilities do you have that you can bring to the priesthood?

I feel that God has generously gifted me with both a supportive and nurturing church family, as well as a loving and encouraging immediate family, as well as Christ-like examples I will look to emulate and bring into my potential ministry in the priesthood. I feel that God has graced me with a firm sense of faith and of obedience, and also a great desire to share these gifts with others. I also have several talents and interests that are related to the arts, music, athletics and academics that could prove to be beneficial in priesthood.

Describe your prayer life, and how that has assisted you in your formation.

During these first few weeks and months of my formation, I have been growing steadily more and more devoted to Our Blessed Virgin Mother Mary. Through daily recitation of the Rosary as well as through total consecration to Jesus through Mary as set forth by St. Louis de Monfort in “True Devotion to Mary,” her presence, graces, and maternal guidance have been especially evident, and increasingly important in my prayer life. Also, participating in daily Mass as well as making daily visits in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and being / praying / reflecting / listening / meditating in the Lord’s presence has been of paramount importance. Another significant component has been incorporating “Shorter Christian Prayer” or, most recently, “The Liturgy of the Hours,” into my daily prayer life. This particular method of prayer has been very fruitful because it has made me more aware of God’s presence throughout the entirety of my day.

How has the financial support of the people of the diocese specifically helped you in your formation?

I am very, very grateful for the generosity of the people of the diocese specifically. Your financial support has assisted me in my formation in several ways. It has allowed me to attend a seminary education that gives me the knowledge I need to be able to lead God’s people in the sacraments. It has also provided me with more time to focus on prayer and other spiritual formation activities. Your financial support has also provided me with the opportunity to live in community with other men who are being formed for the priesthood. Thank you so much for your generosity; it is greatly appreciated!


Bishop Joseph P. McFadden marks the Epiphany of the Lord on Jan. 6, 2013 with his personal reflection on the Gospel with a special message during this edition of Catholic Perspective on the first Sunday in the New Year. Listeners will enjoy this full half hour of teaching and preaching by Bishop McFadden.

Catholic Perspective is produced in cooperation with the Office of Communications of the Diocese and WHFY AM 720. The program is heard Mondays at noon and Wednesdays at 3 p.m. on WHFY AM 720 and on Sunday mornings on WLAN-AM 1390, Lancaster at 7:30 a.m.; WHYL-AM 960, Carlisle, at 8 a.m.; WHVR-AM 1280, Hanover, at 8 a.m.; WKOK-AM 1070, Sanbury, at 6:30 a.m.; WIZE-AM 670, Lewistown, at 8 a.m.; WGHK-AM 1510, Lebanon, at 7 a.m.; WECE-FM 88.3, Elizabethtown, at 9:30 a.m. It is also available on line at www.OldiesRadio1620.com at “Oldies Radio” and at www.WELI480.com on Sunday at 11 a.m. or for download at www.hbgdiocese.org.

High Holy Family: Radio: Listen online - During the fall and winter months of the year, WHFY AM 720, Holy Family Radio is required by federal law to broadcast shorter hours. They sign on later in the morning and leave the airwaves earlier in day, at sun rise and sun set respectively. They ask for your understanding and remind everyone to listen to the station online via audio streaming 24 hours a day at www.yourholyfami-lyradio.com. A mobile device app is also available on the same website free of charge.

In order to receive your federal tax credit for your 2012 Bishop’s Annual Lenten Appeal pledge, all payments must be received at the Diocese on or before Friday, December 28th 2012.

2012 Federal Tax Credit

2012 Federal Tax Credit
If There is a Worse Place than Hell

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

Lincoln, the movie, is a masterful film brought to the screen this fall by a cast of artists so rich in talent that it is difficult to imagine a better biopic production ever being done. Lincoln, the president, makes for good drama and the though the film only centers on the last few months of his life, Lincoln is so poignantly portrayed by Daniel Day Lewis that this small period of time provides a very real slice of Lincoln’s entire being. The movie’s precise focus on the political machinations of passing the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery is a fascinating glimpse into how messy politics is and how important personality and leadership is in life. The movie depicts Lincoln so genuinely — loved and respected, loathed and feared — gentle but angry. When Mary Todd Lincoln (Molly), his wife, tells him that no man has ever been loved more in America than he, well, that’s a fib that a wife tells to make herself feel better. There is overwhelming evidence that Lincoln, the man, was not wholly loved, but rather hated. Lincoln’s approval rating, though long dead, is back to soar. Polls after poll count him as our best president and while he has his detractors amongst historians, most all in the profession cite Lincoln as our best commander-in-chief.

With this movie picks up the show in January 1865, the context of the 1864 re-election is all but lost. Without Lincoln’s presence, it’s hard to imagine how McClellan would have fared. McClellan, on November 7, 1864, it seems highly unlikely that the great events of 1864 and 1865 would have occurred.

Almost 150 years ago, Abraham Lincoln won re-election in what was seemingly a landslide. His Electoral College win was 212-2 and his only real loss was in Delaware and New Jersey — the home of his challenger, George B. McClellan.

 McClellan, a native Pennsylvania, having grown up in Philadelphia, was an aristocrat, and even before he graduated second in his class. A man of immense privilege, McClellan was an aristocrat, and even before he lived the rich lifestyle in elegant manner. After serving in the Mexican War as an Army Engineer, McClellan went back to private life as an executive in the booming railroad business in the 1850s to make more fortune.

The election of 1864 in the midst of a Civil War remains one of this country’s most fascinating contests and it was much tighter if you look more closely at the numbers. In 1860, Lincoln won the presidential election in a four-way contest as there were four candidates that split the vote, especially so with the northern establishment barely getting 40 percent of the popular vote, Lincoln’s election stunned the nation. His election prompted so much anxiety about the states to secede from the Union with South Carolina leading the way by a state legislature vote of 11 to 5. But on December 19, 1860, just a month after Lincoln’s win.

Still, Lincoln won to win the 1864 election, it meant picking up a sizeable portion of the electorate even though the numbers were raw and they were not voting this time. What made the election so intriguing was that Lincoln was running against a man he had hired, fired, hired and fired as general-in-chief all within 18 months in 1861 and 1862. McClellan loathed Lincoln and saw him as a “stupid man from the frontier” and did not view him as a countryman like himself given he was from the western Illinois prairies where style and substance had not yet reached, it was thought by well-to-do Easterners. Lincoln’s lego cabin up bringling and humble schooling never impressed George B. McClellan, whose rich roots and outward nobility earned him the sobriquet Young Napoleon, though not for his military prowess, but for the pompous snout he spewed. More than once in letters to his wife, McClellan called Lincoln an “ape” an “original gorilla” and an “idiot”. His letters, which are preserved for posterity for all to read, are gross examples of bombast, and he most certainly would be embarrassingly mortified to know that his intimate writings with his wife are on such public display today. Always write with tomorrow in mind, we might preach today. McClellan was true, red state Democrat, and he made no secret of his stripes — he backed the time’s conservative party, which held that slavery was an issue best kept to the individual state’s handling. But the Civil War split the Democratic Party — not in philosophy but in tactic as Southerners felt their only recourse was to leave the Union and go to war. Northern congressmen believed in Union, though they wanted no part of messing with the slavery issue.

The only thing on which McClellan disagreed with his fellow Southerners was that the Union should be preserved and restored. Southerners should stay in the political fight and strive to obtain expanded majority rights in the Senate (i.e. filibuster rules and amendment procedures). To McClellan, the war was about conserving the South’s rich planters into seeing the error of their hot-headed ways. Fights a limited war, one that meant meandering and capturing and area not destroying armies and killing men.

Lincoln, of course was the liberal, a member of the infant Republican Party that saw slavery in a more negative light. The expansion of the institution into western territories was out of the question, and housed within the party were radicals who felt the abolition of slavery was needed for the country to be a just one. Lincoln was no abolitionist, fearing the upheaval such uncontrollable emancipation of four million slaves meant to the country. He, however, loathed the institution of slavery. Lincoln walked the tightrope during his first years in office as his hire, McClellan, dithered, dwelled and delayed. Lincoln was a man of few words. Lincoln’s approval rating, though it has its detractors, makes for good drama. It would seem a McClellan landslide election victory was the only offering.

But just like 2012, there were winning states. And if you look at the numbers and numbers rarely lie in elections unless you choose to ignore — you see how easily Lincoln could have lost. Lincoln won 102 Electoral College votes by a total of 84,961 votes out of 2.2 million votes cast in swing states, such as Connecticut, New York, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania. He won New York by 6,000 votes. Pennsylvania he won by one percentage point. It was a bumpy ride home. Just a few thousand votes in New York and Pennsylvania would have swung 59 votes to McClellan.

The demographic that propelled Lincoln was the army’s vote. Soldiers, who once loved their General McClellan, found him lacking for a per cent margin. If McClellan would have merely won 35 percent of his former allies he would have won the election. The 13th Amendment abolishing slavery for good was passed by two meager votes in the House before representatives by states and states have not created any economic interest in slavery. The Civil War remains one of this country’s most fascinating contests and it was a McClellan landslide election victory was the only offering. And the Civil War split the country and saw slavery in a more negative light. The expansion of the institution into western territories was out of the question, and housed within the party were radicals who felt the abolition of slavery was needed for the country to be a just one. Lincoln was no abolitionist, fearing the upheaval such uncontrollable emancipation of four million slaves meant to the country. He, however, loathed the institution of slavery. Lincoln walked the tightrope during his first years in office as his hire, McClellan, dithered, dwelled and delayed. Lincoln was a man of few words. Lincoln’s approval rating, though it has its detractors, makes for good drama. It would seem a McClellan landslide election victory was the only offering.

Almost 150 years ago, Abraham Lincoln won re-election in what was seemingly a landslide. His Electoral College win was 212-2 and his only real loss was in Delaware and New Jersey— the home of his challenger, George B. McClellan.

McClellan, a native Pennsylvania, having grown up in Philadelphia, was an aristocrat, and even before he graduated second in his class. A man of immense privilege, McClellan was an aristocrat, and even before he lived the rich lifestyle in elegant manner. After serving in the Mexican War as an Army Engineer, McClellan went back to private life as an executive in the booming railroad business in the 1850s to make more fortune.

The election of 1864 in the midst of a Civil War remains one of this country’s most fascinating contests and it was much tighter if you look more closely at the numbers. In 1860, Lincoln won the presidential election in a four-way contest as there were four candidates that split the vote, especially so with the northern establishment barely getting 40 percent of the popular vote, Lincoln’s election stunned the nation. His election prompted so much anxiety about the states to secede from the Union with South Carolina leading the way by a state legislature vote of 11 to 5. But on December 19, 1860, just a month after Lincoln’s win.

Still, Lincoln won to win the 1864 election, it meant picking up a sizeable portion of the electorate even though the numbers were raw and they were not voting this time. What made the election so intriguing was that Lincoln was running against a man he had hired, fired, hired and fired as general-in-chief all within 18 months in 1861 and 1862. McClellan loathed Lincoln and saw him as a “stupid man from the frontier” and did not view him as a countryman like himself given he was from the western Illinois prairies where style and substance had not yet reached, it was thought by well-to-do Easterners. Lincoln’s lego cabin up bringling and humble schooling never impressed George B. McClellan, whose rich roots and outward nobility earned him the sobriquet Young Napoleon, though not for his military prowess, but for the pompous snout he spewed. More than once in letters to his wife, McClellan called Lincoln an “ape” an “original gorilla” and an “idiot”. His letters, which are preserved for posterity for all to read, are gross examples of bombast, and he most certainly would be embarrassingly mortified to know that his intimate writings with his wife are on such public display today. Always write with tomorrow in mind, we might preach today. McClellan was true, red state Democrat, and he made no secret of his stripes — he backed the time’s conservative party, which held that slavery was an issue best kept to the individual state’s handling. But the Civil War split the Democratic Party — not in philosophy but in tactic as Southerners felt their only recourse was to leave the Union and go to war. Northern congressmen believed in Union, though they wanted no part of messing with the slavery issue.

The only thing on which McClellan disagreed with his fellow Southerners was that the Union should be preserved and restored. Southerners should stay in the political fight and strive to obtain expanded majority rights in the Senate (i.e. filibuster rules and amendment procedures). To McClellan, the war was about conserving the South’s rich planters into seeing the error of their hot-headed ways. Fights a limited war, one that meant meandering and capturing and area not destroying armies and killing men.

Lincoln, of course was the liberal, a member of the infant Republican Party
At St. Joseph in Hanover, Catholics Honor the Patroness of the Americas

Native dancing, flowers and an abundance of images of Our Lady of Guadalupe radiated the spirituality of the Mexican people throughout St. Joseph Church in Hanover Dec. 12, as faithful gathered to celebrate the feast of the patroness of the Americas.

The parish’s annual celebration – offered fully in Spanish – drew a capacity crowd that evening. As Mass began, faithful processed with national flags and in native garb. And during the liturgy, they brought forward a plethora of statues and paintings of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as well as a variety of flowers, which were then blessed by Bishop Joseph P. McFadden.

On Dec. 9, 1531, Mary, under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, appeared to Juan Diego, a simple Aztec peasant, on a hill in the Tepeyac desert near Mexico City. She instructed him to build a church where they stood.

When Juan Diego told the local bishop of the apparition, the bishop asked for proof. Juan Diego returned to the hill, where Mary appeared again and instructed him to collect the roses growing there, though it was winter. He gathered the flowers in his cloak, and when he presented them to the bishop, an imprint of the Blessed Mother appeared where the flowers had been.

The apparition and Mary’s messages to Juan Diego inspired the growth of the Christian faith in Mexico, South America and throughout the world.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is intimately associated with Mexico and forms part of the Mexican identity. She was declared patroness of the Americas by Pope John Paul II in 1999.
Catholic Culture

The Spirit of Father Christmas

By Emily M. Albert
The Catholic Witness

Papai Noel, Pere Noel, Weihnachtsmann, Kanakaloka, Kris Kringle, Father Christmas – no matter what you call him, Santa Claus brings a smile around the world.

Father Keith Carroll, parochial vicar at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Harrisburg, has a plethora of Papai Noel. He started collecting Santas and Nativity sets several years ago, around the time he began seminary studies, but more recently has made an effort to increase the collection.

“I’ve always enjoyed Christmas. It was big in my family and decorating always reminds me of being a kid,” Father Carroll shared.

In case Father’s Carroll’s words don’t quite fully express his fondness of Christmas, the two rooms filled with shelves of well over 100 Santas and Mrs. Clauses, over 50 Nativities of every size and medium, and numerous snow globes will certainly give you a good idea of his favorite holiday.

There are Santas of every theme imaginable. One of Father Carroll’s favorite is his country-and-western Mr. and Mrs. Claus. He has always enjoyed country music and it reminds him of his visit to Nashville. But it isn’t just the Santa’s that vary; the beautiful Nativities vary from one made of olive wood to a set given to him that was made in Poland, and his favorite, the Nativity he would set up as a child.

This will be an ongoing collection for Father Carroll, and one day when he is pastor of a parish, he hopes to be able to do the decorating as a parish so people can come and look at them and share the joy of the season.

“The most important part of Christmas is the birth of Christ, and truly for me, the more I give, I receive, not monetary, but the joy.”

The City of Harrisburg kicked off its Christmas celebrations with the annual lighting of the Christmas tree Dec. 4 on the steps of the state Capitol.

This year marks the first since the 1960s that the Christmas tree has been placed on the steps outside of the Capitol. In his introductory welcome to those gathered for the ceremony, Governor Tom Corbett said the tree was placed there to share the “spirit of peace and friendship with the people of the city and the many visitors” who come to Harrisburg.

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden was invited to offer the opening and closing prayers at the ceremony. Students from surrounding Catholic schools came with their parents to share this special occasion.

After the tree was lit, the air was filled with foamy bubbles that looked like snow. It was a surprise and treat for all the youth and adults who gathered to watch lighting of the 22-foot Douglas fir.

Above: Simulated snow swirls around the state Capitol in Harrisburg Dec. 4 during a Christmas tree lighting ceremony hosted by the governor.

Left: Bishop Joseph P. McFadden greets Alexander Giorgione of St. Catherine Laboure School in Harrisburg near the Christmas tree on the steps of the Capitol. The bishop offered the invocation and benediction during the tree lighting ceremony.

Right: Children frolic in simulated snow that added to a festive atmosphere at the lighting of the state Capitol Christmas tree.
McDevitt’s Soccer Star Shares Credit for All-American Selection

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Throughout his stellar career as a striker and midfielder for Bishop McDevitt’s boys’ soccer team, senior Connor Maloney has amassed quite a bit of goals (110 total) and an assortment of accolades, including All-State tags, recognition as the Mid-Penn Conference Player of the Year, and selection to academy teams and the Eastern Conference Starting 11.

And, just recently, his high school career reached its pinnacle with the announcement that he’s been named a high school All-American by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

Humbled by the assembly of awards and achievements, Connor is quick to credit his McDevitt teammates and coaches — including his head coach and dad, Terence Maloney — for helping him achieve success.

“My teammates have been a really big part of my career and accomplishments. The success came because we were all doing our jobs on the field,” he said.

The honors and accolades have “definitely been a lot to take in at once, but they’re certainly a great honor,” said the affable and humble student-athlete, who also played kicker for McDevitt’s football team. “I couldn’t have done it without my teammates and my coaches. My perspective on this has always been to stay humble.”

Looking back on his stint on the Crusaders’ soccer team, Connor counts among his most memorable experiences the team’s division title win during his junior year, and its first playoff run — signs of the coaches’ efforts to build the program.

Away from the Crusaders, who played home games on City Island, Connor’s soccer experiences have taken him to play at PPL Park in Philadelphia — home to the Philadelphia Union soccer team — and to Alabama-Birmingham’s West Campus Field, where he played in the All-American Game Dec. 8. He played a different position than usual in that game, taking on the role of defensive midfielder, but still played a solid game.

Connor says he’s enjoyed the challenge of playing against opponents at that level of caliber. “You don’t have much time on the ball, and it forces you to think faster and play smarter,” he said.

Connor’s collegiate career will find him on the roster of the Penn State Nittany Lions, while he pursues a major in sports management.

“The coaching staff and the atmosphere there drew me to the Penn State program,” he said, adding that he knows several of the current players from academy and high school matches.

When Connor moves on from Bishop McDevitt this spring, he’ll leave behind an All-American legacy, along with his jersey number 7, which the school has retired. It’s yet another honor for Connor, who hopes that his efforts will inspire others who will follow him.

“I consider my strengths to be good endurance, intensity and heart,” said Connor, whose goals include the U.S. national team and professional play. “I work hard to motivate other players to work even harder, and I hope I can inspire others to give their best.”

McDevitt’s Soccer Star Shares Credit for All-American Selection

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

High school All-American Connor Maloney tallied 110 goals and a plethora of honors over his soccer career at Bishop McDevitt. The senior, who has verbally committed to play soccer for Penn State, credits teammates and coaches for his on-field success.

Crusaders Fall Short in State Semifinal

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

Two seasons ago, the Crusaders of Bishop McDevitt trailed Erie Cathedral Prep by 18 points heading into the second half before rallying to stun the Ramblers with 21 unanswered points to win the PIAA State Class AAA semifinal.

This year, the Crusaders ran into the Ramblers again, and with the score tied 3-3 late in the first half, McDevitt suffered a crucial turnover with just over a minute left in the half which resulted in an Erie Cathedral Prep touchdown. And this time it was all Ramblers in the second as the Crusaders were unable to establish a consistent run game (36 yards on 23 carries). The Crusaders were outscored in last year’s final and this season’s semi by a 90-3 margin. Yet, no team has one more football games in Class AAA in the past three seasons than Bishop McDevitt.

Though the curtain closes on the sterling careers of quarterback and wide receiver Alec Werner and Brain Lemelle, going into the state’s record books as the most successful tandem ever, the future is bright for the Crusaders as they return double digit starters surely ready to play on the new digs at the soon to be opened Bishop McDevitt High School just outside Harrisburg.
The names of the following deceased persons have been submitted by their parishes:

BERWICK – Immaculate Conception
BVM: Joseph Kondrchek; St. Joseph: Paul Orlando.
BONNEAUVILLE – St. Joseph the Worker: Thomas Gardner.
CARLISLE – St. Patrick: Mary Jane Vinette.
CHAMBERSBURG – Corpus Christi: Charlotte Brunner, Joseph Lucas, Sr.
COLUMBIA – Holy Trinity: Ruth Grab, Paul Stein.
ELIZABETHTOWN – St. Peter: Sandra Hawthorne.
GETTYSBURG – St. Francis Xavier: Mary Chudovan, Frances Lane.
HARRISBURG – Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick: Francis Bacon, Elaine Witmer; St. Catherine Labouré: Donald R. Decker; St. Margaret Mary: Elaine Witmer; St. Catherine Labouré: Parish of St. Patrick: Francis Bacon, Elaine Witmer; St. Catherine Labouré: Parish of St. Patrick: Francis Bacon, Elaine Witmer.
HERSHEY – St. Joan of Arc: Thomas Brinkach, Vincent Martin, Margaret Werthwright, Eugene Thomas Brinkach, Vincent Martin, Margaret Werthwright, Eugene Thomas.
KULPMONT – Holy Angels: Catherine Nagar, Thomas Stankiewicz.
MIDDLETOWN – Seven Sorrows BVM: Ada Smerick.
MILLERSVILLE – St. Philip the Apostle: Herbert Zankl.
NEW CUMBERLAND – St. Theresa: Pauline Nelson.
NEW FREEDOM – St. John the Baptist: Henry Hoffman, Francis “Frank” Owens.
ROHRRSTERSTOWN – St. Leo the Great: Joseph Dyer, Eugene Jennings, Joan Weidinger, Eugene Weisser.
STEELTON – Prince of Peace: Eugene Kostelac.
WAYNESBORO – St. Andrew: Andrew Zeigler, Sr., John Zelninski.
YORK – St. Joseph: Seraphina Lazarr, Marie “Sue” Maflatt, Barbara Trouland.

### Obituaries

**Sister Mary S. Bayer**

Franciscan Missionary of Mary

**Mary S. Bayer**

Died Nov. 29 at the Saint Antoine Residence, North Smithfield, R.I.

She was 92.

Born in York, she was a graduate of St. Mary’s elementary school and York Catholic High School, where she was the 1938 Class Valedictorian. She entered the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in Providence, R.I., in 1939. She graduated from St. Anne’s School of Nursing as a registered nurse in 1950, and from the Boston School of Occupational Therapy in 1950, as registered occupational therapist.

During her years of ministry from 1950-1986, Sister Mary was supervisor of the Occupational Therapy Department at Franciscan Children’s Hospital, then known as Kennedy Memorial Hospital. She was in charge of the Sisters’ Infirmary in North Providence, R.I., and Health Coordinator and registered nurse at Divine Providence Shelter in New York City and at Cardinal Hayes Home in Millbrook, and then Administrator at Cardinal Hayes Home. She also worked in a drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program at Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill, under the auspices of the Sisters of Christian Charity.

From 1986-2001, Sister Mary served as coordinator of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary communities at Franciscan Children’s Hospital in Boston, Cardinal Hayes Home in Millbrook, and Queen of Peace Community in Providence. She also volunteered at a soup kitchen and day shelter for the homeless organized by the Franciscan Fathers in downtown Boston. From 2001-2011, Sister Mary was a retired resident of the Assisted Living Community in North Providence, R.I. She was preceded by her parents, Frank and Mary, and by her sister, Margaret, and is survived by a number of first, second and third cousins. Condolences may be sent to David Schneider, Sr., 35 Garrison Road, Falls Church, VA, 02540.

### Seminarians Installed to the Ministry of Acolyte

Two seminarians of the Diocese of Harrisburg were among eight to be installed to the Ministry of Acolyte last month by Bishop William J. Walterscheid, Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh, in the Archabbot Basilica at Saint Vincent in Latrobe, Pa.

Father Donald H. Bender, Jr., of Lancaster, is the son of Donald H. Bender, Sr., and Theresa Bender of Ephrata. He is a 1989 graduate of Ephrata Senior High School and received a bachelor of science degree in education from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh.

Father Ryan Michael Fischer is the son of Michael and Margaret Fischer of Lancaster. He graduated from Lancaster Catholic High School in 2003. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy and theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, in 2009.

Shown from left in the submitted photo are Saint Vincent Archabbot Douglas R. Nowicki, O.S.B., Bishop Walterscheid, Donald Bender and Ryan Fischer, and Very Rev. Timothy Whalen, Seminary Rector.

### Knights of Columbus

Council Provides Aid to Family

It was about a year ago when Brian Yohe first showed signs of a rare autoimmune liver disease. Brian is the son of Sacred Heart parishioners Bob and Jo Ann Yohe in Spring Grove.

After several consultations with liver specialists, it was learned that Brian would need a partial liver transplant. Since that time, Brian has required frequent treatments to keep the disease, Primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC), at bay until a donor is found. Hearing of the Yohe family’s distress, the membership of the Sacred Heart Knights of Columbus Council #14349, led by Grand Knight Chuck Becker, provided a grant of $2,000 to the family’s medical foundation to help defray the medical costs required to battle the disease.

The Yohe family has expressed their gratitude for the gift. They have also requested help from the community in locating a donor who could provide a portion of their liver for the required partial transplant.

The Knights of Columbus Sacred Heart Council #14349 was established approximately five years ago. The Council has a membership of about 35 men, many of whom are parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish in Spring Grove. The council is active in providing charity along with opportunities for fellowship within their parish and town communities.

### San Juan Bautista Spreads Holiday Cheer

The after-school program at San Bautista Juan Parish in Lancaster recently spread some cheer to the residents of St. Anne’s Retirement Community in Columbia. Students, like Alyssa Rivera, shown in the photo, sang and danced, and presented residents with care packages of toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap and washcloths.
By Emily M. Albert

Three teachers from Corpus Christi School in Chambersburg will experience the unique opportunity of riding on a reduced gravity flight through NASA Explorer Schools. But before this day arrives in April, fourth- and fifth-grade teachers Amanda Blough, Amy Fetteroff, and Kelly Hockensmith will perform several experiments in their classrooms with their students that will then be brought on the flight to be performed.

For Mrs. Blough, it was the first NASA workshop at Cocoa Beach Florida that she and Mrs. Fetteroff attended in 2007 that piqued her interest in space. And they have been making strides ever since to bring their knowledge to the students in the classroom.

“NASA is so much more than space shuttles, and I want to share that with our students,” explained Mrs. Blough. She and the other teachers went through several training steps and applications to be accepted into the NASA Explorer School program, and Corpus Christi is one of six schools in the nation and the only school in Pennsylvania to participate in this program. Through the program, NASA shares educational videos, holds live web chats between astronauts and students, and provides teachers with guides to incorporate into lesson plans. The latest experiment that the students completed was a projectile launcher.

The students began the experiment by discussing a hypothesis and used several of Newton’s Laws of Motion in their discussion. They then conducted experiments and tallied the information that will be shared in a live chat with a NASA representative.

The difference between the experiments being conducted at Corpus Christi and those that will be conducted in flight will be the amount of gravity. “As we stand here in the classroom, we are 1G,” explained Mrs. Fetteroff. “When we are on the flight and are free falling, we will be 2G.”

Mrs. Blough has found it interesting to watch the students think outside the box. They discuss together how the experiments will be different at 2G.

“One student asked if the equipment will be bolted down, or in a confined box while we are falling,” said Mrs. Blough, “and that is a really good question. We don’t even know what to expect when we get there.”

For the students, this project has been a hands-on experience to learn difficult science vocabulary. In the classroom, it is evident that they have embraced the challenges their teachers have brought to them. They are excited to learn, and the experiments have opened dialogue and discussion among peers.

Fifth grade student Isabelle Kollar said that her former school never did anything like this, and she feels it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“It has piqued my interest in science and I like sharing it. I have a cousin who just went to college and they were learning about Newton’s Laws of Motion and I explained what I had already learned!” said Isabella excitedly.

“The students want to use the terms we are learning, they want to sound knowledgeable in front of the astronauts when we have our live chats,” said Mrs. Blough. She continued to talk about how parents have commented that they never knew so much about NASA and how excited the kids get when they see something related to the classroom on TV.

Mrs. Blough hopes that there will be a possibility for the teachers to have a live chat with the students when they are at the Houston Johnson Space Center in April. “I want the students as involved as we are,” she said.
St. Jude Thaddeus Church in Mifflintown will host its next monthly healing Mass on Jan. 3 at 6 p.m. Father William Weary, pastor.

The next monthly pro-life Mass will be celebrated at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church in Harrisburg Jan. 5 at 8 a.m. by Father Paul Fisher, pastor.

The Epiphany Irish Mass - Epiphany of the Sino- gregorian Season will offer sessions for its Bereavement Program on Jan. 27, 30, and Feb. 6 from 7-8:30 p.m. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity.

The faculty of Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., will be the principal celebrant and homilist. For more information or to register, call 717-745-9200.

Mass in the Polish language will be celebrated at St. Catherine Laboure Church in Harrisburg Jan. 20 at 1 p.m. by Deacon Tom Aumen from St. Andrew the Apostle, Waynesboro, in the school cafeteria. For more information, call 717-763-2218 or visit delonecatholic.org.

**Retreats & Pilgrimages**

A Men's Discernment Retreat led by Father Raymond Lalonde, will be held Feb. 15-17 at St. Clement Mission House in Ephrata. The retreat is offered free of charge to men ages 18 and older. For information, or to register, call the Diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at 717-657-4949, ext. 282 or vocations@hbgdiocese.org.

A retreat for parish youth ministry leaders and adults who work with youth will be offered at St. Patrick Church Activity Center Jan. 26 at 11 a.m. Jacks Godfrey, a singer/songwriter and worship leader from Orange County, Calif., will lead the retreat titled "Recognizing the Love of Jesus." For many in ministry, we frequently don’t take the time to receive the love and mercy that God has for us in store for us. For others, while we might be able to receive the love and mercy of others, we don’t feel able to receive ourselves. Join in this opportunity explore these questions and be filled with the love of Our Lord. Cost is $25 per person. For more information, contact Father Joe Goetz at goodman@stpatrickchurch.org or 717-873-8772.

The Diocesan Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire invite Sisters from Brownies through Ambassadors to order their Girl Scout Pilgrimage in the Holy Land. Sister Alexandra, Vasa Sacred Heart, will be the speaker. He will talk about developing the relationship of the Sacred Heart with Made in Love, Made for Love, Made to Live.

Women’s Afternoon of Reflection will take place Jan. 5 at 1 p.m. at St. Andrew the Apostle, Waynesboro, in the school hall. Topic is The Sacred Roman Jesus: Jealous Love For Me. For more information, contact the school social worker.

Sisters are invited to attend a meeting of the Diocesan Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (DCCGF) at 2 p.m. in the Xavier Center, Harrisburg. For more information, contact the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at oymay@hbgdiocese.org or 717-763-2223.

The Epiphany Italian Mass will be celebrated at St. Andrew the Apostle, Waynesboro, in the school cafeteria. For more information, visit www.orderofmaltalancaster.com.

Holy Spirit Health System offers a free support group for cancer patients, family members, caregivers, or anyone who has lost a loved one, or faced the death of a child. "Child of My Heart" meets on the second Monday of each month from 6:30-7:30 p.m. The support group is led by a nurse practitioner from Holy Spirit Hospital's Behavioral Health Department. For more information or to register to attend, please call 717-763-2275.

Scout Leaders are invited to attend a meeting of the Diocesan Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire on Jan. 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the Xavier Center, Harrisburg. Information about Delone Catholic is welcome to visit and ask questions. For more information, contact Deacon Aumen at 717-632-1794.

The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, on Jan. 6, is celebrated in the Catholic Church to commemorate the visit of the Magi to Jesus. Each year a special Blue Mass is celebrated for police, fire fighters, and emergency medical personnel.

Epiphany of the Lord Masses will be celebrated at Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Lebanon Jan. 5 at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.; and at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in York Jan. 6 at 8 a.m. in English and 10 a.m. in Spanish.

Father Bernardo Pistone, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Gettysburg, will be the principal celebrant and homilist. For more information or to register, contact Deacon Aumen at 717-632-1794.

The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord Masses will be celebrated at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Gettysburg Jan. 6 at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. and at the Xavier Center, Harrisburg Jan. 7 at 8 a.m. in English and 5 p.m. in Spanish.

The Epiphany Italian Mass will be celebrated at St. Andrew the Apostle, Waynesboro, in the school cafeteria. For more information, visit www.orderofmaltalancaster.com.

Three days in Assisi

Rome, Assisi and Florence: Three days in Assisi and 5 days in Rome. $1,195 per person/double occupancy. For complete details, please call 800-566-7499 or visit DeloneCatholic.com.

To the Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel, Saint Paul Outside the Walls, St. Peter's Basilica, and Camp Fire leadership.

Delone Catholic High School in McSherrystown is seeking volunteers who are able to handle the duties of a Lion’s Den Lion. Lions are responsible for selling raffle tickets, collecting money and keeping the books for the Lion’s Den. Please call Deacon Tom Aumen at 717-632-1794 or visit www.orderofmaltalancaster.com.

Delone Catholic High School in McSherrystown will be open to prospective families, alumni, friends and the community for open school tours led by student ambassadors Jan. 17, 22 and 27 from 1-4 p.m. Information about Delone Catholic is welcome to visit and ask questions. Enter the school from the lobby doors on South Street where you will be greeted by staff.

Parish, School & Organization News

Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School has started a 20 Week Club. $50 prizes will be awarded each week between Dec. 21 and May 3, and $100 prizes will be awarded at the end of the year. For more information, contact Mrs. Mary Weier.

A Day at the Beach. Three days in Assisi for $259 per person. For additional information, contact Joe Goodman at 717-763-3049.

Join Father Thomas Rosman and the Catholic Parish of Saint Patrick in Harrisburg for a Year of Faith Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi Oct. 8-17, 2013. We will enter into the spirit of the Year of Faith with a celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office), either the 1-volume or 4-volume set, to be used in the parish for morning and evening prayers. If you have any questions or set prayer times please contact Deacon Aumen at 717-632-1794. To order either set of prayer times please contact Deacon Aumen at 717-632-1794.

**Dioecnse Notebook**

**For Spe-cial Events**

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Berwick will host a Year of Faith program featuring one-hour sessions from Father Robert Barron. The Catholi- cism adult formation program is open to the community. The next session date, Jan. 17, is the second of a two-part ses- sion, “Amazed and Adored – The Revelation of God Become Man.” Future sessions will be held Jan. 24, Feb. 18, May 18, June 20, July 18, Aug. 25, Sept. 19, Oct. 17 and Nov. 24. Watch this section of The Catholic Witness for spec- tacular topics and dates for sessions. Or, for more information, contact the parish at 570-793-8113.

St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Mifflintown will host a free Life in the Spirit retreat on Saturday mornings, 9:30-10:30 a.m., from April 6-May 2. This is a series of classes in which people are taught how to have a stronger spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and use of the charismatic gifts. Sessions will be taught by Father Wil- liam Weary, pastor of St. Jude, and Katrina Molnar-Dietz, a parishioner at St. Bernard Parish, New Bloomfield. To register, email jude.thaddeusrenewal@gmail.com or call Katrina at 717-567-6306 (evenings only). Deadline is February 23.

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Berwick will host a Year of Faith program featuring one-hour sessions from Father Robert Barron. The Catholicism adult formation program is open to the community. The next session date, Jan. 17, is the second of a two-part ses- sion, “Amazed and Adored – The Revelation of God Become Man.” Future sessions will be held Jan. 24, Feb. 18, May 18, June 20, July 18, Aug. 25, Sept. 19, Oct. 17 and Nov. 24. Watch this section of The Catholic Witness for spec- tacular topics and dates for sessions. Or, for more information, contact the parish at 570-793-8113.

Rome, Assisi and Florence: Three days in Assisi and 5 days in Rome. $1,195 per person/double occupancy. For complete details, please call 800-566-7499 or visit DeloneCatholic.com.

The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord Masses will be celebrated at St. Andrew the Apostle, Waynesboro, in the school cafeteria. For more information, visit www.orderofmaltalancaster.com.

Sisters are invited to attend a meeting of the Diocesan Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (DCCGF) at 2 p.m. in the Xavier Center, Harrisburg. Information about Delone Catholic is welcome to visit and ask questions. Enter the school from the lobby doors on South Street where you will be greeted by staff.

Parish, School & Organization News

Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School has started a 20 Week Club. $50 prizes will be awarded each week between Dec. 21 and May 3, and $100 prizes will be awarded at the end of the year. For more information, contact Mrs. Mary Weier.

A Day at the Beach. Three days in Assisi for $259 per person. For additional information, contact Joe Goodman at 717-763-3049.

Join Father Thomas Rosman and the Catholic Parish of Saint Patrick in Harrisburg for a Year of Faith Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi Oct. 8-17, 2013. We will enter into the spirit of the Year of Faith with a celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office), either the 1-volume or 4-volume set, to be used in the parish for morning and evening prayers. If you have any questions or set prayer times please contact Deacon Aumen at 717-632-1794. To order either set of prayer times please contact Deacon Aumen at 717-632-1794.
**Serving Christmas Dinners to Those in Need is Holiday Tradition at St. Anne’s**

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

There’s a Christmas tradition at St. Anne Parish in Lancaster that furthers Cardinal Keeler’s work of welcoming the stranger and feeding the hungry.

For 22 years, the downtown parish has been serving traditional Christmas dinners on the day of the Lord’s birth. The meals are free to all who come to St. Anne’s gym, which is transformed into a great dining room where hot food is served from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Year after year, folks line up at the door as early as 9:30 a.m. Year after year, they’re greeted by a host of faithful volunteers who happily give up their Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to spread tidings of peace to those who can use some extra cheer.

“The people are just so grateful for what we’re doing,” said Keith Kirchner, who facilitates the program and coordinates donations for it.

On Christmas Day, he gives gifts cards to the people as they leave the gym after dinner. The folks who eat there also receive other gifts, such as fruit or pajamas, as well as a visit from Santa Claus and musical entertainment.

“You can’t feel bad about this effort,” Mr. Kirchner said.

Along with Mr. Kirchner, more than 70-80 volunteers who make the project a reality, Mr. Kirchner has been serving at the dinner for 20 years.

The annual Christmas event started as a Thanksgiving dinner in the 1970s, when the parish was seeking a place to cook the annual free meal on that day. It ran annually for 20 years, but as other local groups began to serve Thanksgiving dinners, St. Anne’s elected to focus its efforts on Christmas Day.

The dinner is just one among many of the parish’s outreach efforts. Daily, St. Anne’s brown-bag lunch program feeds 150 people who come to the parish door.

In its first year, the parish served 300 meals, a number that continues to increase, noted Frank Nardo, who coordinates the cooking. He’s been volunteering at the dinner—especially with Christmas Eve preparations—for 20 years.

Last Christmas, St. Anne’s provided 800 meals for the hungry, including those who dined in the gym, those who took meals home, and those to whom meals were delivered, noted Ted Drubinski, committee chairman.

With an assembly of drivers, meals can easily be delivered to the homebound, and those unable to travel to St. Anne’s can be offered transportation.

Volunteers fill all roles associated with the dinner, as hostsesses, servers, cooks, drivers, and a cleanup crew.

Financial support and donations of food come from local businesses and from individuals who wish to lend a hand. For example, Dave Stoltzfus of Clark Equipment assists with prep work and equipment needs, and the turkeys for the 800 meals are prepared by Ray Hottenstein, chef at the Olde Greenfield Inn in Lancaster.

Mr. Hottenstein connected with St. Anne’s Christmas dinner program several years ago when the parish was seeking a place to cook the turkeys during a time of a kitchen renovation. The staff at the Olde Greenfield Inn stepped in to help, and have been preparing the turkeys ever since.

“Our focus all along has been to give the people a high quality meal as possible,” Mr. Nardo said. “This effort wouldn’t be possible without the support of local businesses, St. Anne’s elected to focus its efforts on Christmas Day.

The Great parishes in Lancaster assist with the program by providing the gift cards that are distributed at the end of the meal.

Prep work for the Christmas dinner gets underway in September, as Mr. Kirchner begins seeking donations and Mr. Drubinski starts making a list of volunteers to help before, during and after the event.

“It is such a parish-wide and community-wide effort,” Mr. Nardo remarked. “I personally appreciate everything that everybody does, from the servers, to the trash guy, to the dish washer. They’re all invaluable.”

Year-in and year-out, our volunteers keep coming back,” Mr. Kirchner pointed out. For many families, it’s a Christmas Day tradition of service.

“Mr. son just turned 26, and he’s been part of this effort since he was five or six years old,” Mr. Kirchner said. “He still goes with me on Christmas Eve to pick up some of the donations. He said to me, ‘I don’t know what it would be like on Christmas Eve if we didn’t do this.’ It’s just part of what we do.”

( Monetary donations to help support St. Anne’s Christmas dinner can be mailed to the parish at 929 North Duke Street, Lancaster PA, 17602.)

**Diocesan Institute Winter/Spring 2013 Courses**

The Year of Faith announced by Pope Benedict XVI began on October 11, and concludes on November 24, 2013. Pope Benedict XVI referred to the Year of Faith as “...a summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the one, the Lord Savior of the world” (Porta Fidei). He proclaimed, “To rediscover the content of the faith that is professed, celebrated, lived and prayed, is the task that every believer must make his own, especially in the course of this year” (Porta Fidei 9).

Throughout this yearlong observance, the Diocesan Institute for Catechetical and Pastoral Formation is offering a variety of faith formation opportunities to help you renew your relationship with Jesus Christ and deepen your Catholic Faith. Included are sessions on the content of the Apostles’ Creed, the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

For more information on how the Year of Faith is being celebrated throughout the Diocese of Harrisburg, visit the “Year of Faith” webpage on the diocesan website at www.hbgdiocese.org.

Online registration and payment are now available. You can register and pay online for Diocesan Institute courses and workshops. To access an online registration form and a complete course listing, including the current schedule of offerings, click on the icon at the www.hbgdiocese.org.

- Mrs. Stacey White
- Mr. Ryan Bolster
- Mr. Joseph Mullen
- Mr. Frank Nardo
- Father Paul Fisher
- Father Paul Clark
- Msgr. Thomas Kajuskovs
- Mrs. Stacey White
- Mrs. Stacey White

**INTRODUCTORY COURSES**

Introduction to Scripture
- 7-9 p.m. Feb. 5, 12, 26, March 5, 19
- Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
- Mr. Matthew Webb
- *Also available via webinar

Introduction to the Sacraments
- 6:30-9 p.m. April 4, 11, 18, 25
- Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
- Father Paul Clark
- *Also available via webinar

Introduction to Morality
- 7-9 p.m. Feb. 18, March 6, 13, 20
- Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
- Father Paul Fisher
- *Also available via webinar

- 6:30-9 p.m. Feb. 25, March 4, 11, 18
- St. Aloysius, Lititztown
- Mr. Ryan Bolster
- *Also available via webinar

- 6:30-9 p.m. March 4, 11, 18
- St. Columba, Bloomsburg
- Mr. Joseph Mullen
- (To register, contact Mr. Mullen at 570-784-8001, ext. 4)

Teaching Methodology, Part I
- 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 2
- St. Joseph, Hanover
- Mrs. Stacey White

Teaching Methodology, Part II
- 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 9
- St. Joseph, Hanover
- Mrs. Stacey White

**ADVANCED CERTIFICATION COURSES OF SPECIALIZATION**

Catholic School Teacher’s Best Friend: The Catechist and the Catholic School Teacher’s Best Friend
- 9-7 p.m. Jan. 8, 15, 29, Feb. 5, 12
- St. Catherine Laboure, Harrisburg
- Mr. James Gontis
- (To register, contact Patricia Roberge at 717-564-1321)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church: The Catechist and the Catholic School Teacher’s Best Friend
- 9-7 p.m. Jan. 8, 15, 29, Feb. 5, 12
- St. Catherine Laboure, Harrisburg
- Mr. James Gontis
- (To register, contact Brenda Weaver at 717-392-3083)

Evangelization and the New Media
- 6:30-9 p.m. April 8 and 10
- Sister Geraldin Schmidt, SCC
- *Only available via webinar

The Catechetical Explanation of the 15 Promises of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Those Devoted to the Rosary
- 7-8:30 p.m. Jan. 31
- St. Margaret Mary, Harrisburg
- Mr. James Gontis
- (To register, contact Brenda Weaver at 717-331-3062)

Survey of the 16 Documents of Vatican II to Commenurate the 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council
- 7-9 p.m. Feb. 28, March 14, 20, 21
- Sacred Heart of Jesus, Cornwall
- Mr. James Gontis
- (To register, contact Becky Brodric at 717-273-2160 or beckybrodric@hotmail.com)

Prayer: The Gassoline for our Spiritual Engines
- 3-5 p.m. March 4
- Resurrection School, Lancaster
- Mr. James Gontis
- (To register, contact Brenda Weaver at 717-392-3083)
Dear Friends in Christ,

I am pleased to share with you the audited Diocesan Financial Report for the fiscal year which ended June 30, 2012. This report reflects our ongoing dedication to sustaining the mission of the Diocese of Harrisburg: proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As members of the Church, the Lord has entrusted to each of us a share in His divine life and His mission. With a careful examination, you will see in this audit the many ways in which we continue to proclaim the gospel throughout the fifteen counties which make up our Diocese. The time, talent, and treasure of so many assist us in these pastoral, educational, and charitable causes. With God’s help, our efforts are bearing great fruit.

As your Bishop, I am grateful for your generous and consistent support of your parish, the Lenten Appeal, the Pentecost Collection, and other special collections throughout the fifteen counties. The time, talent, and treasure of so many assist us in these pastoral, educational, and charitable causes. With God’s help, our efforts are bearing great fruit.

Most Reverend Joseph P. McFadden
Bishop of Harrisburg

4800 Union Deposit Road • Harrisburg • Pennsylvania 17111-3710
bjmcfadden@hbgdiocese.org • www.hbgdiocese.org

Consistent with its policy of providing financial disclosure, the Diocese of Harrisburg is once again presenting the financial statements of its Central Offices and Ministries. The financial statements presented here for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2012 and 2011 were prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and were audited by the independent certified public accounting firm of McGroddy Asbury, LLP. These financial reports do not include the financial status of diocesan parishes and schools or Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg, PA. Each of these enterprises maintains its own set of fiscal records and reports individually to its own particular constituencies.

The complete financial reports for the diocese, together with the independent auditor’s report and notes to the financial statements, are available from Harrisburg Catholic Administrative Services, Inc. (HCAS) upon request.

Diocese of Harrisburg Financial Report

STATEMENTS OF FUND FLOWS
YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011

Cash flows from operating activities

Net gains (losses) on investments $ 419,941 $(4,664,845)

Gain on disposal of property and equipment (9,435) $(270,201)

Other (increase) decrease in receivables 790,278 1,462,623

Interest and dividends 4,439,977 5,410,796

Net cash and cash equivalents provided by (used in) operating activities $ 1,776,643 $ 2,060,207

Cash flows from investing activities

Purchase of property and equipment (1,330,581) (1,019,837)

Proceeds from sale of property and equipment 9,435 457,260

Issuance of notes and loans receivable (12,371,931) (7,624,574)

Proceeds from payments on notes and loans receivable 10,983,363 4,753,612

Proceeds from sale or maturity of investments 25,127,205 86,824,510

Purchase and reinvestment of investments (4,333,198) (68,355,038)

Net gains (losses) on investments (374,660) 4,034,189

Other (increase) decrease in payables 260,132 (82,726)

Net cash and cash equivalents provided by (used in) investing activities 18,084,293 15,035,933

Cash flows from financing activities

Interest and dividends paid (1,144,750) (1,414,958)

Intradiocesan billings, primarily self-insurance premiums 593,168 (82,051)

Other (increase) decrease in payables 655,879 683,265

Net cash and cash equivalents provided by (used in) financing activities 565,879 356,288

Net cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year 5,744,962 5,990,056

Net cash and cash equivalents, end of year $ 48,780,984 $ 56,708,500

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2012 AND 2011

As of December 21, 2012.
The Nativity story’s significance continues to unfold today, Pope writes in latest book

By Carol Glatz and Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

The Nativity story, like the whole story of Christ, is not merely an event in the past, but has unfolding significance for people today, with implications for such issues as the limits of political power and the purpose of human freedom, Pope Benedict writes in his third and final volume on the life and teachings of Jesus, “Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives” (2011).

In the book, Pope Benedict examines Jesus’ birth and childhood as recounted in the Gospels of Sts. Matthew and Luke. His interpretation of the biblical texts refers frequently to the work of other scholars and draws on a variety of academic fields, including linguistics, political science, art history and the history of science.

The book’s publication completes the three-volume “Jesus of Nazareth” series, which also includes “From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration” (2007) and “Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection” (2011). Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said that the three books are the “fruit of a long inner journey.” For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.

The Nativity story is a scandal to the modern spirit, which expects and allows God to act only in ideas, thoughts and the spiritual world, not the material, he writes. Yet it is not illogical or irrational to suppose that God possesses creative powers and power over matter, otherwise “then he is simply not God.”

The pope enriches the Gospel accounts with personal reflections as well as questions and challenges for his readers. For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.

The Nativity story is a scandal to the modern spirit, which expects and allows God to act only in ideas, thoughts and the spiritual world, not the material, he writes. Yet it is not illogical or irrational to suppose that God possesses creative powers and power over matter, otherwise “then he is simply not God.”

The pope enriches the Gospel accounts with personal reflections as well as questions and challenges for his readers. For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.

The Nativity story is a scandal to the modern spirit, which expects and allows God to act only in ideas, thoughts and the spiritual world, not the material, he writes. Yet it is not illogical or irrational to suppose that God possesses creative powers and power over matter, otherwise “then he is simply not God.”

The pope enriches the Gospel accounts with personal reflections as well as questions and challenges for his readers. For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.

The Nativity story is a scandal to the modern spirit, which expects and allows God to act only in ideas, thoughts and the spiritual world, not the material, he writes. Yet it is not illogical or irrational to suppose that God possesses creative powers and power over matter, otherwise “then he is simply not God.”

The pope enriches the Gospel accounts with personal reflections as well as questions and challenges for his readers. For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.

The Nativity story is a scandal to the modern spirit, which expects and allows God to act only in ideas, thoughts and the spiritual world, not the material, he writes. Yet it is not illogical or irrational to suppose that God possesses creative powers and power over matter, otherwise “then he is simply not God.”

The pope enriches the Gospel accounts with personal reflections as well as questions and challenges for his readers. For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.

The Nativity story is a scandal to the modern spirit, which expects and allows God to act only in ideas, thoughts and the spiritual world, not the material, he writes. Yet it is not illogical or irrational to suppose that God possesses creative powers and power over matter, otherwise “then he is simply not God.”

The pope enriches the Gospel accounts with personal reflections as well as questions and challenges for his readers. For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.

The Nativity story is a scandal to the modern spirit, which expects and allows God to act only in ideas, thoughts and the spiritual world, not the material, he writes. Yet it is not illogical or irrational to suppose that God possesses creative powers and power over matter, otherwise “then he is simply not God.”

The pope enriches the Gospel accounts with personal reflections as well as questions and challenges for his readers. For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.

The Nativity story is a scandal to the modern spirit, which expects and allows God to act only in ideas, thoughts and the spiritual world, not the material, he writes. Yet it is not illogical or irrational to suppose that God possesses creative powers and power over matter, otherwise “then he is simply not God.”

The pope enriches the Gospel accounts with personal reflections as well as questions and challenges for his readers. For example, considering the angel’s appearance to the shepherds, who then “went with haste” to meet the child Savior, the pope asked “How many Christians make haste today, where the things of God are concerned?”

A key topic in the book is the role of human freedom in God’s divine plan for humanity. "The only way [God] can redeem man, who was created free, is by means of a free ‘yes’ to his will,” the pope writes. It is precisely “the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience,” such as Mary and Joseph showed when listening to God, “in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made.”

Jesus, too, in his human freedom, understood he was bound to obedience to his heavenly father, even at the cost of his earthly life. The missing 12-year-old, rediscovered by an anxious Peter’s Square after leading vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Dec. 31 of last year.