Father Brian P. Conrad, a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg for nearly 35 years, died of cancer Feb. 13 in the Carolyn Croxton Slane Residence of Hospice of Central Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. He was 60 years old.

Born in Harrisburg on Oct. 29, 1950, he attended Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament School and Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg and Mount St. Mary’s College in Emmitsburg, Md. He was a 1972 graduate of St. Mary’s Seminary College in Baltimore, and a 1975 graduate of St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pa.

Bishop Joseph Daley ordained Father Conrad a priest on April 24, 1976, at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg.

Religious Center in Kulpmont Adds Relics of Mother Maria Kaupas to Its Collection

By Emily M. Albert
The Catholic Witness

Catholicism, like many faiths, grows from heritage and history. When our mothers’ mothers or our fathers’ fathers immigrated to the United States, they not only brought an extensive background of ethnic food, traditions and language, but they raised their children in their faith.

While working as a housekeeper for her brother, Rev. Anthony Kaupas, in Scranton, Pa., during the late 1800s, Casimira Kaupas, an immigrant of Lithuania, witnessed the plight of the Lithuanian immigrants who were in need of someone to minister to them in their native language.

She decided to pursue the religious life to teach the faith to the Lithuanian immigrants and in 1907 made her profession of vows and received her name, Sister Maria. Bishop John W. Shanahan of the Diocese of Harrisburg sponsored Sister Maria’s new congregation, the Sisters of St. Casmir.

The congregation was founded in Scranton and established a Motherhouse in Chicago in 1911, but not before constructing an education to preserve and develop the faith life for Lithuanian immigrants at Holy Cross School in Mount Carmel.

Father Raymond Orlofski talks about an image of Mother Maria Kaupas, whose belongings are on display at the St. Pauline Center in Kulpmont.

The Joy of Vocations

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In 2010, the Diocese of Harrisburg continued to devote significant resources to the prevention of sexual abuse of minors as well as to provide assistance to victims and their families, according to Msgr. William J. King, Vicar General for the diocese and director of its Youth Protection Program.

The Diocesan Youth Protection Review Board recently met with Bishop Joseph P. McFadden to review all activity related to youth protection during 2010. Msgr. King provided the overview at that meeting. "Although Review Board members are involved in every new case as it happens," according to Msgr. King, "the annual review gives us the opportunity to look at everything once again and determine how to improve our response to victims."

In September 2010, the diocese underwent its annual audit of youth protection programs. This is conducted on-site in the diocese by an independent audit firm engaged by the United States Bishops’ Office of Child and Youth Protection. The audit includes a thorough review of records as well as interviews with diocesan staff, legal counsel, parish staff, review board members, civil authorities, and even one or more victims. As a result of the week-long audit, the diocese was found to be in full compliance with the requirements of the bishops’ Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

The diocesan Youth Protection Office has an annual budget of $69,500. One of the highlights of 2010 activities was the distribution of 13,000 badges to more than 14,000 employees and volunteers who successfully completed the training and screening requirements of the program. Wearing the ID badge is required of any adult in a youth-serving ministry at all times when in the presence of minors. Parents and youth should look for the badge on volunteers and staff when they are participating in any event, and should question any adult who is not wearing one.

Nearly 1,800 adults successfully completed the diocesan on-line Safe Environment training last year. In the three years since this training program was developed by the diocese, approximately 14,000 persons have viewed the 30-minute program and successfully completed the accompanying quiz. Similar vigorous activity was seen by the Youth Protection area of the diocesan website which during 2010 logged over 187,000 visits from almost 137,000 visitors.

Development continues on a brief on-line video training program for teenagers who help out in youth ministry or volunteer in youth-serving activities in parishes or schools. The focus will be on maintaining a safe environment for ministry and how to respond if a child reports suspected abuse to them. The Diocesan Review Board is now reviewing the final draft of the script.

In 2010 the diocese received three new allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor. Two were found to be substantiated. One allegation involved a diocesan priest who was deceased. The activity related to the diocese had occurred in the early 1960’s. Of the remaining two allegations, one could not be verified after an investigation which included interviews of several persons, including the victim. The other allegation involved a priest belonging to a Religious Order who had not served in the Diocese of Harrisburg for more than 14 years. The report was filed but was not active in the initial report.

The report was made to the diocese toll-free reporting hotline by a family member who chose not to identify the victim. The diocese’s policy is to provide assistance to a person belonging to a Religious Order who had not served in the Diocese of Harrisburg for more than 14 years. As a result of the week-long audit, the report was turned over to the priest’s Order. Despite the fact that the alleged abuse took place between 20 and 50 years ago they were all reported to the appropriate civil authorities.

According to Msgr. King, “The Diocese of Harrisburg recognizes the terrible tragedy of sexual abuse of minors in our society. It is an appalling sin and a heinous crime and it has no place in the Church. We have zero tolerance for it. Our primary commitment is to respond effectively to an allegation of abuse and to assist the victim in recovery and healing.” He added, “In tandem with that effort, we constantly strive to maintain a safe environment for ministry with youth throughout our 15 counties.”

Msgr. King noted that an updated version of the Diocesan Youth Protection Program is in final drafting stage and will soon be sent to the Review Board members for editing and approval.

At its recent meeting, the Diocesan Review Board suggested several changes in policy, including changes to the criminal history checks required for all clergy and employees, and for all volunteers in youth-serving programs. These changes will be reflected in the new policy, said Msgr. King.

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden was saddened by the contents of the recent Philadelphia Grand Jury report and reiterated what he said at his Installation as Bishop of Harrisburg, “In the name of the Church I apologize for this terrible injustice that was committed against you. The way that it was dealt with in the Church was wrong and we are sorry. I assure you, the victims, that you have my deepest love and concern and I will do all in my power to see that no such tragedy occurs again in the Church. I do have an image that I want to convey to you and it is the image of the Sorrowful Mother Mary holding her bcluded and beaten Son after the terrible crucifixion that he endured. Though He was innocent He was our Sufferer. Please know I desire to convey to you and Mary how she too endures. I pray that in time you will experience the Resurrection in your own life and that your wounds will be healed.”

Those who abuse children betray their vows and betray the mission of the Catholic Church. They have no place in ministry. In accord with the U.S. Bishops’ Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the longstanding policy of the Diocese of Harrisburg is to immediately and permanently remove from ministry any priest, deacon, employee or volunteer who has committed even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor, whenever it occurred, as soon as we learn of that abuse. The Diocesan promptely relays every report of suspected child abuse to the appropriate civil authorities.

The primary concern of the Diocese of Harrisburg is for the spiritual welfare of the victim and the victim’s family. To help with that, the diocese has a Victim Assistance Coordinator. He is Dr. Mark Totaro, who receives all reports of the Diocesan toll-free abuse hotline, 1-800-626-1605. Anyone who has been a victim of abuse is urged to contact the Diocese and the PA Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-932-0313. Dr. Totaro helps the victim determine what pastoral or spiritual assistance may be most beneficial and offers help in locating appropriate resources.

According to Totaro, “The first role of the Church is to offer moral assistance, doing what a Church does best, offer prayer and the compassionate Grace of Jesus Christ.” He remains in contact with victims and families, often for several years after the abuse is first reported.

The diocese realizes that healing is a long process. With that in mind, victims are provided with a variety of services with the goal of providing help so that we can create hope for their future. All victims are offered spiritual, pastoral and mental health assistance regardless of their ability or willingness to pay. Counseling services are available to qualified individuals and professionals.

Depending on specific circumstances, victims may also be offered material assistance as needed for basic living expenses, which may include health insurance as well as tuition assistance for the children of victims who attend Catholic schools. In 2010 the diocese assisted six victims. Costs totaled $30,700. The Diocese has helped 39 victims since 2002, providing $1,300,000 in assistance.

According to Msgr. King, when monetary settlements are made with victims, the amounts are determined by analyzing the real-world needs of the victim. “Diocesan resources are limited, but in charitable ways, to determine with the victim what their real needs are so that they may receive the necessary resources to meet their basic needs as they face the challenges of emotional and spiritual recovery.” During 2010, the diocese settled three claims with victims. These out-of-court settlements totaled $84,000. None of the monies used for victim assistance in 2010 were reimbursed or covered by insurance, but came from the diocesan loss retention fund which is budgeted annually.

According to Msgr. King, additional training is planned for clergy, employees, and volunteers in 2011. In March all priests in the diocese are required to attend a session which will deal with professional boundaries and sexual harassment in the workplace. Training in state-mandated reporting of child abuse is conducted throughout the year for youth ministers, educators, and clergy. On May 19, the diocese will sponsor a day-long symposium on the use of social media in ministry. Msgr. King noted, “This symposium will help to identify new areas for ministry, evangelization, and education through the internet but it also helps us understand the legal and moral issues which set the boundaries for including these tools in the environment of ministry.”

Msgr. King added a final note, “The suffering of the Body of Christ continues in the lives of the victims of sexual abuse, no matter their age. But we are a Church born from the Cross and we Herald hope in the midst of pain, because Christ has ultimately triumphed over the darkness of sin and its tragic consequences. This is our mission, to walk people from the Cross to the empty tomb, and pray with them as we offer spiritual and pastoral assistance.”
**Annulment Presentations Scheduled**

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Harrisburg will offer presentations concerning divorce and annulments from the Catholic perspective in the coming months. These presentations will be helpful for divorced Catholics, divorced people who wish to marry Catholics, parish leaders involved in the RCIA process and those who have a vested interest because of family or friends. Presentations will include a question-and-answer session and an opportunity for private conversation with Tribunal staff and representatives. For more information, call 717-657-4804 or send an e-mail to tribunal@hbgdiocese.org.

- **March 2** – Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg, 7 p.m.
- **March 28** – St. Joseph Church, York, 7 p.m.
- **May 10** – St. Joseph Church, Danville, 7 p.m.
- **June 9** – St. Patrick Church, Carlisle, 7 p.m.

**Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat**

April 1-3 in Etters

For those suffering the grief of an abortion

A Rachel’s Vineyard weekend is a chance to get away from all the daily pressures of work and family, and focus on this painful time in your life through a supportive and non-judgmental process. The time away provides an opportunity to deeply enter the grieving process and identify all the ways your abortion may have affected you. There is no judgment, only mercy and compassion. Register early as space is limited. Totally Confidential – Contact Joy at 717-788-4959 or RVpamd@gmail.com or visit www.rachelsvineyard.org.

**Catholic Perspective Radio**

Feb. 27: The poor often do not get the respect for their dignity that they deserve. This week listeners will learn about a ministry that does just that when they hear an interview with Louise Pennertz. In spite of her battle with multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, the after effects of several strokes and a visual impairment that has rendered her legally blind, Louise works tirelessly with Wings of Peace, a ministry in Phoenix that feeds the poor with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

In our Ask a Franciscan segment Father Don Miller, O.F.M., answers the following ethical questions: How can someone control his or her anger? Do suffering and death come from God? How can one overcome the pressures of work and family, and focus on this painful time in your life through a supportive and non-judgmental process? The evening begins with arrival at 6:30 p.m., the speaker at 7 p.m., questions and answers at 8:45 p.m. and socializing at 9 p.m. For information, contact Mary Ellen Reitmeyer at 717-394-1035 or youth_ministry@hbgdiocese.org or Elise Grignon at egrignon@gmail.com. Or, find Young Adults of St. Leo’s on facebook or visit www.totallancaster.com.

**Grant Applications are being accepted**

January 1 through March 30.

Anyone can apply for a grant provided the project or program for which funding is requested is sponsored by a specific parish, and pastor approved. The program should also address basic survival needs of food, clothing, and shelter.

**Local Church News**

**Sign up for the Diocesan E-news Letter**

Keep up to date with the speed that e-mail can offer by signing up for the diocesan e-news letter. It will come to you monthly or as needed and will feature updates and reminders on happenings and matters of interest and importance concerning our local Church. A link to sign up can be found on the home page of the diocesan Web site, www.hbgdiocese.org.
No stranger to death and dying, this nurse had assisted countless other pa-
tients with pain, air and hunger man-
gagement. During her mom’s final hours, she had significantly increased mor-
phine doses per hospice protocols, but with little or no apparent relief. Her
mother’s death ended up being very hard. Reflecting on it afterwards, she
realized that she had not been both a healthcare professional and a person
who trusted deeply in God, she would have, been to use her own words, “out
of my mind with horror.”

Real suffering engages a lot of com-
plex emotions. We may worry that our
creations will be mastered by sin. We
may not see how our sufferings could
really have any value or mean-
in. In the end, suffering can make it
better or it can make us better, depend-
ning upon how we respond to it and use
it to draw us into deeper union with
the Lord who suffered and died a hard
dead.

I’m reminded of a story I once heard about a priest in Poland who taught
at the seminary. Each year, there had been
fewer candidates entering the semi-
inary, rarely more than 8 or 9, and it
was becoming a serious concern for
the seminary and the diocese. One day,
this priest learned he had a terminal illness, with only a few months to live. Shortly
afterwards, he turned to God and said:
“Lord Jesus, I will do my best to offer up the sufferings that lie
ahead of me, whatever they may be, but I would ask that you send
us 18 new candidates for next year’s incoming class.”
The good priest died a hard death, but a few months later when the can-
didates started showing up at the
seminary, there were exactly
18 new students in the class.

His story speaks of how suffering has
made people more willing to offer
re-
demptive sufferings of Christ. Our suf-
ferings and struggles are an important,
alter, temporary, part of our journey.
They are a harbinger of a greater desti-
nation and a promise of our transforma-
tion. Pope John Paul II once described it this
way: “The cross of Christ throws a
vivid light, in a most penetrating way,
on man’s life... the cross reaches man
together with the resurrection.”

Our experience of suffering and death, even a very hard death, offers us mysterious
and dramatic graces, with the reassur-
ance that God himself is ever near to
those who carry their cross.

(Rev. Tadeusz Tadziszko, Ph.D.
earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and is spiritual work
at Holy Cross. He is a priest of the
diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the
Director of Education at The National Catholic Bio-
tech Center in Philadelphia. See
www.nchbc.org)

A Life of Miracles

By Father Tad Pacholczyk
Special to The Witness

Caregivers and health care profes-
sionals can often do greatly assist
those who are suffering and dying.
Even with careful pain management
and comfort measures, however, the
dying process can still be agonizing
and difficult. Each death has a unique
characteristic, and the most difficult and unpleasant deaths of
often have powerful graces and remark-
able opportunities for growth mysteri-
ously interwoven into them.

Some time ago, I corresponded with
a registered nurse about her mother’s
final battle with lung cancer. She de-
scribed the unexpected shifts in her
mother’s condition that had taken place
over a period of eight days: “… pass-
ing through a day of Cheyne-Stokes respirations [a pattern of deep breath-
ing, followed by stoppage of breathing, followed by repetition of the cycle],
atop a day of Cheyne-Stokes respirations. That was followed by a day of
no urine, then urine again, emerge from
tivity perfusions coming and then going,
stable, signs of diminished extrem-
itutin, two days where the smell of imminent death was de-
tectable, signs of diminished extrem-
ity perfusions coming and then going,
coming and then going, day after day,
no urine output, then urine output, then
urine output, then urine output, emerge from
this state and embark upon three hours of
increasingly severe respiratory dis-
tress culminating in a violent respira-
tory arrest.”

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Special to The Witness

The otherwise inexplicable cure of a
French nun suffering from Parkinson’s
disease was accepted in early January
by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and Pope Benedict XVI as the
confirming miracle that clears the way
for the beatification of Pope John Paul
II on May 1, Divine Mercy Sunday.

John Paul II’s life was a life of mir-
acles—a life in which radical open-
ness to God’s grace opened channels
of grace for others. In April 1990, the
new president of then-nely-liber-
ated Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel,
called this dimension of John Paul’s
remarkable life when he memorably
welcomed the pope to Prague in these
stirring terms:

“I am not sure I know what a miracle
is. In spite of this, I dare say that, at
this moment, I am participating in a mir-
cle: the man who six months ago was
arrested as an enemy of the state stands
today here as the president of that state,
and bids welcome to the first pontiff in
the history of the Catholic Church to
set foot in this land….”

“I am not sure that I know what a miraculous
life is. In spite of this, I dare say
that at this moment I am participating in a
miracle: in a country devas-
tated by the ideology of hatred, the
messenger of love has arrived;
in a country devastated by the
government of the ignorant, the
living symbol of culture has arrived;
in a country that, until a short time ago,
was devastated by the idea of confrontation
and division in the world, the mes-
senger of peace, dialogue, mutual
tolerance, esteem and calm understand-
ing, the messenger of fraternal unity in
diversity has arrived.

Those who mediated, the Spirit was
banished from our country. I have
the honor of witnessing the moment in
which its soil is kissed by the apostle of
spirituality.”

“We welcome to Czechoslovakia, Your
Holiness.”

In its witness to the miracle of Karol
Wojtyla’s life, Vaclav Havel’s elo-
quence was matched by the untutored
economic realities of the
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“The Catholic Witness
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Jennifer Reed
Managing Editor
Chair
Santo Hezlety
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Council of Catholic Women Celebrates Nine Decades of Service, Spirituality and Education

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

“We are no longer the gray-haired ladies baking cookies.”

That’s what Peg Clissa, a lifelong member of the Council of Catholic Women, says of the ladies in the 91-year-old organization.

“I think a lot of people have that image in their minds when they think about what we do, and it’s up to us to get out there and change that mindset,” she said during a roundtable interview with members of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

A look at the activities taken on by council members reveals a litany of various social and moral concerns: Distributing clothes to the needy. Providing meals to laborers at local horse tracks. Promoting religious vocations. Sponsoring spiritual retreats. Working to give people in developing countries access to clean water. Communicating with legislators on issues surrounding the sanctity of life, care of immigrants and the protection of marriage.

This is the work of the ladies involved in the Council of Catholic Women at the parish, district, diocesan and national levels.

Every Catholic woman is considered to be a member of the CCW. Today, the National Council of Catholic Women consists of more than 4,000 affiliated Catholic women’s organizations in parishes and dioceses, representing hundreds of thousands of members.

“Our mission is to support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service, to inspire and promote moral Gospel values in a constantly changing world,” explained Bonnie Onomastico, current president of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

Foundations

In March 1920, at the encouragement of the U.S. bishops, some 200 Catholic women gathered in the nation’s capital to form a national organization that would strengthen, inspire and unite them in spreading Gospel values and addressing the social concerns of the day. The National Council of Catholic Women was born.

Three years later, Harrisburg Bishop Philip McDevitt sent York native Anna Dill Gamble to Washington to examine the workings and activities of the national council. The Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women was established on May 6, 1924. Miss Dill Gamble was elected its first president.

The diocesan council quickly set to work, hosting its first conference in October 1924 and focusing on efforts to distribute Catholic literature to the faithful. Projects in the council’s early years included an institute to help address problems in labor and industries, Christmas contributions for those arriving at Ellis Island, campaigns against pornography, and financial donations to parish schools. During World War II, activities expanded to the adoption of war-torn families, supplying religious and educational articles to the chapel at military camps, and volunteering with the Red Cross.

The ladies petitioned legislators to support group homes for women, pensions for blind people, and state aid for hospitals. And they continued to grow in faith, taking part in diocesan Masses and retreats, and embarking on pilgrimages.

“I remember a pilgrimage to Mount St. Mary’s before there were good paths and places to sit,” Marian Sneeringer, a member of the CCW since 1952, recalled of the trip to the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Emmitsburg, Md. “We climbed that mountain, we were good...”

“Just seeing people’s appreciation of what we do is gratifying, and it makes you want to continue,” Mrs. Kulp said. “We’re hoping that by virtue of our work, we’re drawing people closer to God or enriching them spiritually.”

Mrs. Kulp and Joyce Scott, Chair of the Diocesan Scholarship Committee, are two of the founding members of the CCW at St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Mechanicsburg.

“Forming the council there was very fulfilling because everything was a first,” Mrs. Scott said. “Anything that was held at the church, we were involved in.”

They recall the first parish picnic, the first Christmas celebration, and the challenges of finding working appliances for social events. They also recall how they came together as a group.

“The first thing you have to do is to believe that you can do it,” Scott said. “Just believe that you can do it.”

As a member of CCW, you can work with the Red Cross, volunteering with the Hispanic Apostolate/Migrant Ministry Commission.

“We are concerned not only about local issues but about worldwide issues as well,” said Stella Kulp, Diocesan Chair of the Family Concerns Commission. “I think of our promotion of Fair Trade items and our financial donations to Catholic Relief Services. Through works of peace we try to help people in developing countries become entrepreneurs.”

With a focus of diocesan commissions that focus on spirituality, service and leadership, women can work in areas in which they are most interested.

Today, activities of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women include projects for the protection of life, marriage and the environment, prayer shawl ministries, support of the Hispanic Apostolate, and scholarships for diocesan students.

“As a member of CCW, you can work within your niche, or you can explore different areas,” Mrs. Sneeringer said. “I think the Council of Catholic Women can do nothing but grow and continue to move forward because of the gifts that women bring.”

Fruits of their Labor

For all that the ladies of the CCW do in spreading the Gospel message in word and deed, they receive much in return: growth in spirituality, camaraderie, leadership skills and a sense of humility and joy in knowing that they’ve helped those in need and enriched the lives of others.

“We get much more than we give. There are so many benefits to being a member of council,” said Harriet Glass, Diocesan Chair of the Hispanic Apostolate/Migrant Ministry Commission.

“Just seeing people’s appreciation of what we do is gratifying, and it makes you want to continue,” Mrs. Kulp said. “We’re hoping that by virtue of our work, we’re drawing people closer to God or enriching them spiritually.”

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They recall the first parish picnic, the first Christmas celebration, and the challenges of finding working appliances for social events. They also recall how they came together as a group.

“Being a new parish and a young parish, a lot of the women really weren’t aware of what CCW does. Fortunately there were some who had been previously involved in CCW, and it was through their mentoring that we got it going,” Mrs. Kulp said.

Ladies who are interested in joining a council can do so at their parish (or via a neighboring parish if their parish does not have one) or by becoming an individual member of the National Council of Catholic Women. See the accompanying box for information.

“Whatever the council is involved in, be it in spreading the Gospel message in word and deed, or in providing scholarships, or in some other way, we’re very much involved in helping people.”

Members of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women gather at the annual convention in Lancaster, circa 1952.

© the national council of catholic women

Ladies of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women gather with diocesan priests for their annual convention in Lancaster, circa 1952.

© the diocesan archives

Save the Date

86th Annual HDCCW Convention

May 2 at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg

The day will include a keynote address, a Mass concelebrated by the priests of the diocese, lunch, an afternoon workshop on the theme of the convention, “Spirituality, Service and Leadership,” and a closing prayer service. There will also be exhibits, Fair Trade and religious items for purchase, collections and raffles.

Additional information will be available from your parish Council of Catholic Women and The Catholic Witness.
Children who have been diagnosed with diabetes are invited to attend Camp Pauline in Kulpmont this summer. The day camp is a ministry of the Mother Pauline Visintainer Religious Foundation. The camp will provide children with juvenile diabetes an opportunity to meet and interact with one another, and will provide information on diabetes nutrition, lifestyle and presentations by health care professionals. Camp Pauline is located on the grounds of the St. Pauline Complex in Kulpmont. It will be staffed by experienced health care professionals. While children participate in activities, adults can attend diabetes awareness sessions. Staff will work with parents to obtain funding through private resources or via donations and scholarships. The day camp will be offered June 6-10, July 11-15 and Aug. 8-12. Children and adults can attend more than one day.

For a detailed brochure about the camp, or to make reservations, call 570-373-3350 or e-mail info@saintpaulinecenter.org. Information about the Mother Pauline Visintainer Religious Foundation can be found at www.saintpaulinecenter.org.
Faith and Life

From Hot Wheels to Holy Orders:
New Freedom Native Trades Show Car for Religious Vocation

By Jon Reed
The Catholic Witness

Fifteen years ago, Joshua Zeller was sinking a few thousand dollars a year into his souped-up Honda CRX, working at a hardware store, attending parties, and maybe going to Mass two or three times a year.

Today, as Brother John Paul Mary of Divine Mercy, the 34-year-old New Freedom native is living the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and studies at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary for eventual priestly ordination as a Franciscan Missionary of the Eternal Word.

His journey from a 20-something non-practicing Catholic to a 30-something in a religious habit yields an extraordinary story about the presence and power of God – especially when it’s least expected.

Growing up Catholic in New Freedom, young Joshua attended Mass every Sunday with his parents and his brother.

“Sunday Mass was just a part of our life. Mom taught us to pray, and took us to CCD every week,” Brother John Paul Mary said. “Every time we went to Mass, I knew it was very important it was to receive Communion.”

But after he was confirmed in eighth grade, Joshua’s attendance at Mass began to dwindle. By the time he was in high school practicing the faith took a back seat to his interest in skateboards, roller rinks and bikes.

After high school graduation, he took a full-time job at True Value Hardware. The money he earned went straight to his “trophies on wheels,” a 1991 red Honda CRX.

For Joshua, life revolved around the car and showing it off at car shows from Connecticut to North Carolina.

“The car became a sort of god, something that consumed my life,” he said.

“I was pumping $2,000-$3,000 a year into it. I’d be happy for six months because of what I’d do with it – paint jobs, ground effects, chrome wheels, a big motor,” he said.

“My goal was to have a car that not only you and I would gawk at, but that 60-year-old street rodders would turn to see. It was all about ego, all about ‘Look at me.’”

But one encounter with the Lord would change all that, literally overnight.

“I Knew in an Instant”

Brother John Paul Mary of Divine Mercy

Fifteen years ago, Joshua Zeller was sinking a few thousand dollars a year into his souped-up Honda CRX, working at a hardware store, attending parties, and maybe going to Mass two or three times a year.

“It was the first time in a long time that I prayed,” Brother John Paul Mary recalled. “No sooner did we finish that prayer that there was this overwhelming sense that someone was watching over us.”

The next morning, he realized it was time for his life to change. He began attending Mass and was awakened to the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. He spent hours of prayer in the parish’s perpetual adoration chapel. He read the Bible and the Catechism.

In 1998, four years after high school graduation, Joshua was accepted to attend DeVry University in Columbus, Ohio. Sev- eral weeks before the start of the fall semester, he attended a men’s retreat at Mount St. Mary’s with his grandfather. There, he met Paul Clark (now Father Clark), who was just getting ready to enter the seminary to become a diocesan priest. The two became fast friends.

“It was really the first time that I had someone my age to talk with about the faith,” Brother John Paul Mary said. “On that retreat, we talked about the Eucharist, the Blessed Mother, the Church. We were up at the groto and Paul asked me if I thought I might be called to the priesthood. It threw me back, and then it ignited a fire and a curiosity in my heart.”

Joshua completed his studies at DeVry, and as his classmates applied for jobs, he applied to become a seminarian for the Diocese of Harrisburg. He was accepted and went to the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus in August 2000.

Sweet Home Alabama

While in his second year at the seminary, Joshua joined several classmates on a semester-break retreat to the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament and “EWTN Land” in Alabama. Joshua’s experience with the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word was his first real look at a religious order, and it caught his attention.

“I felt a peace there with the friars, seeing their joy and enthusiasm. I felt it was something I wanted, and I had a sense that I was at home there,” he remarked.

The following summer, he returned to Alabama to spend a month with the friars. It was during his final year of college seminary in 2004 that he decided to join the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word.

“It wasn’t an easy decision to leave the diocese,” he said, “but I was drawn to this simplicity of life.”

The charism of the order – founded by Saint Mother Angelica – is to evangelize through modern means of the media. Reaching out to fallen-away Catholics and offering hope to the suffering are among their focuses.

Brother John Paul Mary made his first profession on Aug. 2, 2006, and professed perpetual vows on Aug. 14, 2010. His diaconate ordination will be in May 2012, with priesthood ordination the following year.

When he looks at his path from fast cars to a religious life, Brother John Paul Mary points out that “God calls ordinary men to lead extraordinary lives,” and that “every profession requires sacrifice.”

“I saw the positive in giving myself up for others. It was a great burden lifted off my shoulders, because I knew that if the Lord was calling me, he would give me the grace to live that vocation happily,” he said. “For me, I had this desire to give up everything to follow the Lord Jesus.”

And that includes the suped-up Honda, which he sold while he was in college seminary for half of what he invested in it.

Fifteen years ago, Joshua Zeller was sinking a few thousand dollars a year into his souped-up Honda CRX, working at a hardware store, attending parties, and maybe going to Mass two or three times a year.

Today, as Brother John Paul Mary of Divine Mercy, the 34-year-old New Freedom native is living the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and studies at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary for eventual priestly ordination as a Franciscan Missionary of the Eternal Word.
Ever since Ronald Reagan was president, the faithful at St. Leo the Great School, Rohrerstown, have been hosting a Vocations Day, which not only shows the parish’s commitment to promoting religious vocations, but also shows the vibrant spiritual life the parish has been able to foster for many years running.

Bishop Joseph McFadden made a pastoral visit to the school during the day and he shared his unique, fascinating journey to his priestly vocation. “God calls us every day,” Bishop McFadden said. “He wants us to help build his kingdom…. I want you to tell the world about Jesus.”

After the bishop spoke to the entire student body and faculty in the Father William Sullivan gymnasium – named in honor of the retired priest who served at St. Leo’s for 27 years as pastor – the bishop celebrated Holy Mass in the church. Several priests from the diocese and a number of visiting priests who participated in the vocation day concelebrated Mass, and Father Peter Hahn, pastor, served as master of ceremonies.

Prior to the bishop’s visit, the students heard from more than 15 visiting priests and sisters who visited each grade during the morning hours to discuss the importance of listening for God’s call. Later, the students and faculty participated in a creative trivia game exercise dubbed “Who wants to be a Catholic-Heir,” which pitted several grades against one another. The theme was “Doctors of the Church” which demanded the students recall factoids about the Church’s 33 saintly doctors. Father Hahn has spent the year teaching the students about these saints, including the 5th Century pontiff, St. Leo.

The day-long Vocations Day was the first established in the diocese and according to Alan Schwartz, the school’s development director, the day would not be possible without the faculty, and numerous volunteer efforts of many of the parish’s faithful, who have given their time and talents for the past quarter of a century.

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness
Coach and Me

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

For those of us who played sports in our youth, we had all types of coaches influence and affect our lives. No doubt you know a certain coach you had years ago who was tough as nails and intimidated you. At the time, you dreaded their gruff demeanor and spitful instincts. It’s only human nature, but over the years you develop a certain mystical nostalgia that numbs you to the past. What you remember, instead, is the great coach that gave you that needed push or prod at the right time. Discipline and toughness breed true grit the old school says.

Of late, I have had the misfortune of being in the company of seasoned people who harken back to the good ole days when discipline was swift and just. These days were good because kids feared the belt and the tongue lashing that came with the string, so the story goes. I had my share of coaches who governed the old fashioned way. I thought them tyrants then and no amount of nostalgia is going to numb me to feel good now. I’ll never forget my sixth grade public school English teacher who was also my baseball coach later, beat a kid named Daryl with a paddle three times across his rear for stealing something petty out of a school locker. It was 1976, our nation’s bicentennial, and I remember it as if it were yesterday when Daryl was made to pull his pants down in front of the whole class for three mighty swats. Still hear the crack and scream. Often wonder where Daryl is these days.

Just saw that teacher in the doctor’s office a few weeks ago as I was sitting with my infirmed dad waiting for an appointment. That teacher and coach did not remember me and understandably so, as I was just a pee-wee back then. But I surely do not forget him. That gruff and tough stuff never gave me true grit or rosy memories of the good old days either. He seems happy in the winter of his life.

Funny thing is just a few days later, I saw my junior high basketball coach buying a newspaper with his grandson in a convenience store. Seems to have mellowed in his old age and his role is more the dotting grandpa rather than tough guy on the hardwood. He did not recognize me either, as 35 years tends to soften you up some. Sure do remember him because you never forget getting drilled in the side of your head with a basketball when you’re not looking or getting an elbow to the chin when you forgot to box out. I had a few other coaches who were idols as well in my young days growing up in small town Central PA. I survived despite facing the stupid abuse and petty beliefs that breeds this behavior. Do me this favor, the next time you wax poetic or sing praise of the good old days, don’t forget or the wall hard enough that it hurts. Helps you remember too.

Good thing my story does not stop here.

In my first week at college, I met a man who changed my life. Though it took me days to get up the courage to seek him out, I finally got the gumption and bravery required to talk to Millersville University’s golf coach, Dr. Smart.

I wasn’t ready for a positive experience. Wonder why? I was welcomed in warm fashion, though my skill level as a walk was badly known. I was encouraged to attend practice. Though the course was two miles from campus I was invited to play a practice round that September night. I had no ride to the course but the man made me want to go. If I had waited another day to see him, I suspect my life would not be the same.

I cut out of philosophy class early, grabbed my golf bag and made the 2.5 mile walk to the course. Shot 37 on the backside of Conestoga Country Club and then hit some practice puts with some team members on the green as the sun set on a perfect September day.

That day in 1982 has always ranked as one of the best days of my life. Sure playing well helped, meeting new friends was special, but I knew then that Coach Smart was a genuine person who I wanted to be associated with for the rest of my life. He never asked me how I got to the course. It wasn’t important.

For the past five Januarys, I have been blessed to make the 1,100 mile trek to his retirement home near Tampa, Florida. We used to play golf all day and talk life just like the good old days. These days instead, we photograph birds in swamps and in seaside links that challenge the photographer to see anew. He loves birds, he loves learning photography, and it’s so much the joy to teach him my craft which I have worked at since graduating 25 years ago this year.

And while I learned the game of golf from Coach, I learned much more. Like how you treat people, and that tough has nothing to do with gruff. He taught me how to be a life-long learner and that I matter. Sure I can shoot in the 60s in golf, but I learned from him that it’s no different than shooting 80. You go to work every day and work no matter your score. While playing tournament golf, he taught me how to be a focused photographer who sees opportunity, not obstacle. Golf was the vehicle to teach me more important things.

One time just after I was named captain, Coach needed a package dropped off in Lancaster. “Take my car,” he said. It was a ’72 Dodge Colt, manual transmission with a rusted out floor board. Fred Flintstone would have been able to pedal the car with his feet. “Coach, I can’t drive stick,” I said. “Sure you can, just use the clutch when you shift. Reverse sticks a little, but you’ll figure it out.”

Bucked and stalled my way all the way through Lancaster city. Only once during the harrowing journey did I need a push to get my tail out of a fix. I just about died of anxiety until I got back safely on campus. I knew I was going to die.

Several days later, he asked me how it went. “Never doing that again, Coach” I said. “Ahh,” he replied in his Yankee New England drawl. “Sure you will. You already did it once so next time will be a piece of cake. The tough part is over.”

“Get a better car,” I quipped back. “Maybe then I’ll do it.”

“I don’t need a better car, you need a better attitude.”

Just got back from Florida not long ago – drove 3,066 miles – chasing and photographing birds with a man I truly thank God for every day. When I came back north driving through a harrowing ice storm from seeing that old fashioned Yankee, I felt stress and fear was real. But I made it home with my nostalgia intact and a better attitude once again.

He knows how to coach.
50 Years of Religious Liberty Advocacy

By Phil Murren, Esq.
Special to The Witness

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishments of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

These First Amendment words express the “wall of separation between church and state” idea that Thomas Jefferson penned in a letter to persecuted Baptists in Connecticut in 1802.

The freedom of religious entities and Church members to practice their faith without undue government interference is an essential element of the delicate church-state relationship. Yet the modern trend is for government to continually insert itself into all aspects of human endeavor, including those historically the concern of churches. Church-state conflicts are the inevitable result of the expansion of governmental authority and regulation.

PCC has remained vigilant in its efforts to deter governmental interference with the free exercise of religion. For example, for over 40 of its 50 years, PCC has waged an ongoing struggle with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) over that agency’s determined attempts to influence the curriculum and developmental goals of the Church’s ministries to pre-school children. That struggle has flared in all three branches of government: legislative, executive (administrative agencies) and judicial. The ultimate outcome is still uncertain.

After closely observing the struggles in other states between religious schools and government education regulators, PCC and its allies worked to achieve the adoption of the Religious Schools Act in 1986. That statute assured the freedom of religious schools to choose their own teachers and curricula, a freedom that is still being fought for with respect to church pre-school programs. In a declaration that serves as a charter of religious liberty for the Church, the 1986 statute stated:

It is the policy of the Commonwealth to preserve the primary right and the obligation of the parent … of a child to choose the education and training for such child. Nothing contained in this Act [i.e., the Public School Code] shall empower the Commonwealth … to approve the course contract [i.e., the Public School Code] shall empower

Training for such child. Nothing contained in this parent … of a child to choose the education and educational freedom, the 1986 statute stated:

A declaration that serves as a charter of religious liberty, with respect to church pre-school programs. In 1986, the Supreme Court – severely devalued the First Amendment and regulation. But in a case decided by a 5-4 majority, the Court held that the government does not need much of a reason to burden the free exercise of religion. That decision produced a storm of legislative activity among religious liberty advocates across the nation, including here in Pennsylvania.

In 2002, PCC prevailed upon the legislature to pass a law protecting religious freedom. The proposed Religious Freedom Protection Act had strong bipartisan support from political leaders. In the State Senate, the Republican President Pro Tem and the Democratic Minority Leader were the primary sponsors of the bill. In the House of Representatives, the Republican Majority Whip and Democratic Minority Whip championed the legislation. The PCC ultimately achieved a legislative victory with the Religious Freedom Protection Act, which restored the applicability of the “compelling state interest” standard to actions by the Pennsylvania government that placed a burden on religious liberty.

PCC fought to preserve the right of religious liberty when it has been threatened in court actions as well. PCC counsel successfully intervened in court cases that sought to impose governmental supervision of labor relations in church-schools. Another case attempted to apply laws that would have outlawed the granting of religious preferences in admissions to church-schools. Yet another case sought to prevent the application of religious standards to the conduct of church ministerial employees. PCC has also been successful in aiding dioceses from being overridden by the civil courts in critical areas such as the selection of clergy and the ordering of church property tenure.

New areas of concern are always manifesting themselves. PCC continually battles to preserve the rights of conscience of religious health care facilities and personnel in the areas of abortion and contraception services. Advocates for homosexual rights have been particularly active in advancing legislation that would outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, without regard for the rights of conscience of churches, church agencies and church members.

PCC is ever mindful of the words of Thomas Jefferson; but James Madison, another founding father, in his famous Memorial and Remonstrance, warns us about the danger of government imposition on religion and the indefensibility of justifying such impositions. He states authoritatively:

If it is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. … The freemen of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise, and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. (Marren is a partner in the Ball, Marren & Connell law firm, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference legal counsel.)

Tending the “Inner Light” of Those with Alzheimer’s – A Panel Discussion

A Program for Practitioners, Caregivers, Family Members of Loved Ones with Alzheimer’s

Saturday, March 19, 2011
9:45 AM - 3:00 PM $40.00 offering

Panelists:

Marlene Paruso
Sister Jean Marie, SS.C.M.
Sister Rosaline Drab, SS.C.M.
Lois Landis Miller
Sister Dr. Marie, SS.C.M.
Prayer Leaders:

Joan Liebler
Judith Bayer

Register online at www.sscm.org or call 570-275-3581. Deadline to register: March 11, 2011

MIDDLETON — Seven Sorrows: St. John, Philip, Michael, William, James, John and Paul.

MOUNT CARMEL — Divine Redeemer: Mary Vezo.

NEW CUMBERLAND — St. Theresa: Shirley Arct, Edward Bianco.

NEW FREEDOM — St. John the Baptist: Daniel Keeler, Joseph Holkert, Dorothy McDuff, Mary Semenic, Sophie Tracey.

NEW OXFORD — Immaculate Conception BVM: Teresa Beaud, Marian Winner.

PALMYRA — Holy Spirit: Joseph Winter.

ROARING CREEK — Our Lady of Mercy: Leonard Butela, Fred Whitensight.

SELINGROVE — St. Pius X: Maryann Thomas.

SHAMOKIN — Mother Cabrini: Louis Barba, John Mazur, Frank Pelfiunck, Florence Sears, Mary Vezo.

SPRING GROVE — Sacred Heart of Jesus: Frank DeCello.

STEELTON — Prince of Peace: Raymond Hilinski, Adaline T. Intreri.

YORK — Immaculate Conception BVM: Sarah Scharni, St. Rose of Lima: Charles Sabold.

Father Conrad

Continued from 1

In his years of service to the diocese, Father Conrad was assistant pastor at St. Theresa Parish in New Cumberland (1976-1980) and at St. John Neumann Parish in Lancaster (1980-1981). He then served as assistant to the principal at Bishop McDevitt High School (1981-1982), and as principal at Lebanon Catholic High School (1982-1986) and Trinity High School in Camp Hill (1986-1991). Father Conrad served as parochial vicar at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Millersville (1991-1992), and as pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Camp Hill (1992-1995) and St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Bonner Springs (1995-1998). While serving at St. Joseph’s, he was also the Catholic campus minister at Gettysburg College.

Father Conrad returned to St. Philip the Apostle Parish in 1998 and served as pastor there until the time of his illness.

“Brian was certainly hard working and very conscientious and caring in his ministry,” said Father Samuel Housser, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in York, who knew Father Conrad from the time the two entered the diocese’s seminarian program in 1968.

As young priests, Father Houser and Father Conrad served together at St. The- resa Parish in New Cumberland from 1979-1980.

“When we were together there, he put us in charge of things. We would spend time with people, and be there for them in their time of need,” Father Houser said. “He was so patient in that regard, in responding to people.”

“He had a calming effect on people,” he said. “He could listen attentively and pa- tiently, and could offer good direction to people because of that.”

Father Conrad remained lighthearted with people, and be there for them in their time of illness.

“She was lighthearted about things, and could offer good direction to people,” said Deacon James Sneeringer. “Father Conrad was a true gentleman.”

In celebration of the Lenten season, an hour of contemplative prayer on the theme “Carrying My Cross with Jesus” will be held March 16 starting at 10:45 a.m. and concluding with Mid-day prayer at 12:10 p.m. at the Monastery of the Dominican Nuns of St. Perpetual Rosary, on Little Pike in Lancaster.

Participants will be invited to reflect on the words of Jesus, “My God, My God,” as he carried his cross, and then in turn reflect on their responses to the crosses in their own lives. The presentation also will draw from the thought of Blessed Theresa of Calcutta, Blessed Teresa of Avila, Henri Nouwen, and Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. A replica of the holy Shroud of Christ will be available to deepen the participants’ experience.

Sister Maria DeMonte, OP, MDiv, will be the presenter. Sister Maria is a Dom- inican Sister of the Congregation of St. Catherine de’ Ricci. Presently she min- isters as a spiritual director, retreat guide, and leader of contemplative prayer mornings at the Dominican Monastery.

Contemplative harp music will be provided by Cass Jendzur- ski, a therapeutic musician and the founder and direc- tor for Songs for the Journey, a Lancaster-based volunteer organization that provides music at the bedside of those passing from life into death. She is a member of the Fraternity of St. Dominic.

The morning of prayer is open to women and men of all faiths. A free-will of- fering is requested. Registration is required. To register or for more information, contact Sister Maria at 717-285-4536, ext. 717, or rmdomeont09@gmail.com.

St. John of Arc Parish Launches YouTube Site

St. John of Arch Parish recently launched a YouTube site at www.youtube. com/SJAHershey. The first video program is a seven-part series of videos from “Scenes from Christmas Eve Mass — St. John of Arc Catholic Church — Hershey, PA.”

Father Philip G. Burger, pastor, was the celebrant of the Mass that is available online. Assisting at Mass were: Father Chuckubwiken Okpechi, O.F.P. and Deacon Rodrigo Mortel, M.D. Beth Palmer, Director of Music Ministry, was also present. The St. John of Arc Parish Choir and Orchestral Ensemble provided singing and instrumental music. Video recording, editing and computer adaptation was made by Bill Parks.

A variety of Christmas Carols were sung and a variety of instruments were played during parts of the Christmas Eve Mass in an attractively decorated church which featured a nativity scene of Christ’s birth. Visit the video site at www.youtube.com/SJAHershey.

CCW Member Celebrates 90th Birthday

Mary Sponseller has been a member of St. Joseph Parish since 1940 and is still active in many Church projects. In celebration of her 90th birthday on Feb. 7, Carolyn Sponseller suggested that members of the Parish Council of Catholic Women do something to honor her mother-in-law. Members responded with a card of birthday cards and a pink shawl made by a member of the CCW’s Prayer Shawl Ministry. As the shawl was wrapped around her shoulders, Mary said she was very touched at being chosen to receive it and that she felt all the love and prayers that it represented. She added that she’ll be wearing it each day as she prays her rosary.
Laucks currently studies saxophone with Charles Johnson. He is the son of Samuel and Jeanne Schumann, and has also previously studied with Al Thaddeus Stevens High School and

THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

laucks of Dallastown. According to Charles Johnson, he is the son of Samuel and Jeanne Schumann, and has also previously studied with Al

The Catholic Woman’s Club of York is seeking applicants for its annual scholarships. Applicants should be Catholic girls graduating in 2011 from a York County high school within the York Deanery. A strong commitment to the Catholic faith, a good academic record, financial need and the pursuit of a baccalaureate degree are the qualifications being sought. Application forms are available at your high school guidance office or by calling CWC Scholarship Chairperson Mary Anne Burnside at 717-840-7857. The deadline for completed applications is March 31.

Prepare for Holy Week

Lenten Retreat for Boys and Girls

Ages 10-18

March 12 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Katharine Drexel Parish, Mechanicsburg

This year’s theme is “The Battle of Lent, Putting on the Armor of God” Speakers will be priests, deacons and religious of the Diocese of Harrisburg

The retreat is sponsored by St. Joseph Squires and Squirettes of Mary. Cost is $5 ($3 for Squires/Squirettes)

For more information, or to register by March 6, contact Michael Yakubick at 717-329-2725 or CentralPA@acol.com.

St. Catherine of Bologna

1413-1463

Feast Day March 9

As a girl, Catherine de’Vigri was a maid of honor at the ducal court in Ferrara, in Italy. Well educated at court, she joined a group of Franciscan tertiaries who later became Poor Clare nuns. In 1456, she went back to Bologna as abbess of a new convent. From an early age, she had experienced visions, some of which she judged to be temptations. But, she effectively led her convent, while also exploring a talent for calligraphy and painting miniatures. Her Bologna convent still has a breviary she penned and ornamented, along with some of her unpublished writings in prose and verse. (CNS SAINTS)

The St. Katharine Drexel Parish, Mechanicsburg

Youth Band, Unforgettable

Youth Band, Red Lion-Felton Band, Unforgettable.

You can see the best junior high basketball around.

You can eat some great food in the Dio Diner.

You can buy a great T-shirt ($10 on pre-order, $12 at the tournament).

Great entertainment for a great price. $3 for adults, $2 for students.

COME SEE THE FINAL 8 CYO GIRLS AND BOYS BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT!

Lancaster Catholic High School and Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology

Friday March 11 – Sunday March 13

Schedule as follows:

Friday March 11 @ Stevens Tech
Girls games starting at 6,7,8,9 PM.

Friday March 11 @ LCCHS
Boys games starting at 6,7,8,9 PM.

Saturday March 12 @ LCCHS
Games at 9,10,11 AM and Noon.
Boys Championship game at 3,4,5,6,7,8 PM.

Sunday March 13 @ LCCHS
Girls Consolation game at 1.
Girls Championship game at 2:15.
Boys Consolation game at 3:30.
Boys Championship game at 4:45.

You can see the best junior high basketball around.
You can eat some great food in the Dio Diner.
You can buy a great T-shirt ($10 on pre-order, $12 at the tournament).
See logo above. Email cholt0411@gmail.com for details and an order form.

MUSICAL ADVANCEMENT

Joseph Laucks, a senior at York Catholic High School, was chosen by audition to participate in the Lower District 7 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Region 5 State Band Festival scheduled for March 24-26 at North Schuylkill High School in Ashland.

Laucks was one of only six alto saxophone players chosen from the 15-county region, which encompasses eastern and central portions of Pennsylvania. Laucks participates in the York Catholic Marching Band, Concert Band, Jazz Band and Pit Orchestra. In addition, he plays in the St. Joseph Catholic Church Youth Band, Red Lion-Felton Band, Unforgettable Big Band, and the Dockenspeilers German Band. Laucks currently studies saxophone with Charles Schumann, and has also previously studied with Al-foster Johnson. He is the son of Samuel and Jeanne Laucks of Dallastown.

BROTHER BARNABAS AWARD

The St. Joseph Columbian Square Circle 5102, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus St. Joseph Council #12788 of Mechanicsburg, has earned the Brother Barnabas Award for the fraternal year 2009-2010. The Brother Barnabas Award is an international competitive award bestowed on 25 Circles of the 1,477 Circles worldwide by the Knight’s Supreme Council in New Haven, Conn. The Brother Barnabas Award was presented to the Squires by Father Chester Snyder, pastor, following a recent Mass.

The Circle event that won the competition was working with FertilityCare Practitioners of Holy Spirit Hospital who are all trained in the Creighton Model of NFP and held their International Convention in Harrisburg. The Circle’s fundraising helped make the event a success. From the Squires’ perspective, the true award was at the close of the convention: Squires from Circle 5102 were altar servers for the Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

St. Joseph Circle 5102 is the only circle in the state of Pennsylvania to receive the award in 2010. The Squires of St. Joseph Circle 5102 were awarded the Corps’ Elite award for the second consecutive year. The Corps’ Elite award is similar to the star council award for the Knights of Columbus and is non-competitive based on fulfilling all Supreme requirements. The Squires of St. Joseph Circle 5102 consist of boys and young men between the ages of 10 and 18 and are members of the following parishes: St. Joseph, St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, St. Theresa in Mechanicsburg, Good Shepherd in Camp Hill and St. Theresa in New Cumberland.

ANNA DILL GAMBLE/SUSAN WAGMAN GLATFELTER SCHOLARSHIP

The Catholic Woman’s Club of York is seeking applicants for its annual scholarships. Applicants should be Catholic girls graduating in 2011 from a York County high school within the York Deanery. A strong commitment to the Catholic faith, a good academic record, financial need and the pursuit of a baccalaureate degree are the qualifications being sought. Application forms are available at your high school guidance office or by calling CWC Scholarship Chairperson Mary Anne Burnside at 717-840-7857. The deadline for completed applications is March 31.

COMING UP

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St. Catherine of Bologna

1413-1463

Feast Day March 9

As a girl, Catherine de’Vigri was a maid of honor at the ducal court in Ferrara, in Italy. Well educated at court, she joined a group of Franciscan tertiaries who later became Poor Clare nuns. In 1456, she went back to Bologna as abbess of a new convent. From an early age, she had experienced visions, some of which she judged to be temptations. But, she effectively led her convent, while also exploring a talent for calligraphy and painting miniatures. Her Bologna convent still has a breviary she penned and ornamented, along with some of her unpublished writings in prose and verse. (CNS SAINTS)

Prepare for Holy Week

Lenten Retreat for Boys and Girls

Ages 10-18

March 12 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Katharine Drexel Parish, Mechanicsburg

This year’s theme is “The Battle of Lent, Putting on the Armor of God” Speakers will be priests, deacons and religious of the Diocese of Harrisburg

The retreat is sponsored by St. Joseph Squires and Squirettes of Mary. Cost is $5 ($3 for Squires/Squirettes)

For more information, or to register by March 6, contact Michael Yakubick at 717-329-2725 or CentralPA@acol.com.

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Compiled by Jen Reed

Spiritual Offerings

Mass in the Croatian language will be celebrated at 7:30 a.m. on February 26 at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church in Belleville.

St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish in Carlisle will have a Parish Dinner on Friday, March 11 from 6-8 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Sisters of the Child Jesus and the Catholic Daughters will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults and $4.00 for children.

St. John the Baptist Parish in Hummelstown will have a Parish Dinner on February 19 from 5-8 p.m. at the Parish Hall. Sisters of Mercy will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children. Reservations are required, please call 717-594-5298.

St. Joseph Parish in Mount Union will have a Parish Dinner on February 19 from 6-8 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Sisters of Mercy will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children.

St. John the Baptist Parish in Lebanon Catholic School will have a Parish Dinner on February 12 from 5-8 p.m. in the Dining Hall. Sisters of Mercy will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children.

St. Joseph Parish in Hanover will have a Parish Dinner on March 5 from 5-8 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Sisters of Mercy will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children.

St. Mary Parish in York will have a Parish Dinner on March 9 from 5-8 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Sisters of Mercy will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children.

St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish in Carlisle will have a Parish Dinner on February 26 from 5-8:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Sisters will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children.

St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish in Carlisle will have a Parish Dinner on March 4 from 5-8 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Sisters will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children.

St. John the Baptist Parish in Lebanon Catholic School will have a Parish Dinner on March 9 from 5-8 p.m. in the Dining Hall. Sisters of Mercy will be serving spaghetti, meatballs, breads, dessert, and beverages. Cost is $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children.

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USCCB Official Has Mixed Reaction to HHS Conscience Rule Revision

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien
Catholic News Service

Although the U.S. bishops’ pro-life spokeswoman expressed disappointment at the Obama administration’s partial rescission of a federal regulation protecting the conscience rights of health care workers, she said there are “reasons for hope” in the new education and outreach effort announced by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, was commenting Feb. 18 on the final rule issued earlier that day by HHS to rescind elements of a December 2008 rule on conscience protection. The 2008 rule came down in the final days of the administration of President George W. Bush.

“It is very disappointing that the [Obama] administration has chosen to eliminate much of the existing regulation on conscience issued in December 2008,” Ms. McQuade said.

“Among other things, the final rule issued today eliminates important clarifications that would have helped in interpreting and enforcing longstanding federal statutes protecting the conscience rights of health care providers,” she said. “It also eliminates a regulatory requirement that recipients of federal funds certify compliance with those statutes. However, it is welcome news that the administration is giving it its best shot to increase awareness of the conscience statutes, work to ensure compliance with them, and require that all government grants make clear that compliance is required,” she added.

In its announcement of the final rule, HHS officials stressed that the partial rescission has no effect on existing conscience laws protecting the conscience rights of health care providers.

“It is clear that health care providers cannot be compelled to perform or assist in an abortion,” the announcement said. “The rule being issued today builds on these laws by providing a clear enforcement process.”

HHS said parts of the 2008 regulation had “caused confusion and could be taken as overly broad.”

The 41-page final rule summarized and responded to the major themes of the more than 300,000 comments received by HHS to the proposed rescission.

More than 97,000 individuals and organizations supported the move to rescind, with most saying the 2008 rule “unacceptably impacted patient rights and restricted access to health care, as it conflicted with federal law, state law and other guidelines addressing informed consent,” HHS said.

Nearly 187,000 comments opposed the administration’s rescission, expressing the conviction that “health care workers should not be required to perform procedures that violate their religious or moral convictions” or that rescission “would violate the First Amendment religious freedom rights of providers or the tenets or the Hippocratic Oath, and would impact the ethical integrity of the medical profession.”

“While the department carefully considered these comments, why do we not specifically address them because this partial rescission does not alter or affect the existing federal health care provider conscience protections,” the HHS final rule said.

It cited the Church amendment, section 245 of the Public Health Service Act and the Weldon amendment as the “federal health care provider conscience protection statutes” that collectively “prohibit recipients of certain federal funds from discriminating against certain health care providers based on their refusal to participate in health care services they find morally objectionable.”

Both the Church and Weldon amendments, named for former members of Congress, have to be passed annually as part of the appropriations bill for HHS and the departments of Labor and Education.

In its final rule, HHS expressed concern over the number of comments that reflected “a lack of understanding that the statutory protections are in effect irrespective of department regulations or the 2008 final rule.”

“The department fully intends to continue to enforce all the laws it has been charged with administering,” it added.

The HHS Office for Civil Rights, which is charged with enforcing the existing conscience protection laws and regulations, will begin a “new awareness initiative for our grantees ... to ensure they understand the statutory conscience protections and the enforcement process for those who believe their rights have been violated,” HHS said.

Ms. McQuade said she hoped the administration would now “place its full support behind efforts in Congress to clarify conscience protections and make them more secure by endorsing such initiatives as the Protect Life Act (H.R. 358), the No Taxpayer Fund for Abortion Act (H.R. 3) and the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 361).”

Permanent End to Taxpayer Abortion Funding Called Long Overdue

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien
Catholic News Service

The effort to make permanent a ban on federal funding of abortion is both long overdue and widely supported by Americans, an official of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops told a House subcommittee.

Richard M. Doerflinger, associate director of the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, was one of three witnesses testifying on the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, H.R. 3, before the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on the Constitution.

“H.R. 3 is a well-crafted and reasonable measure to maintain long-standing and widely supported policies against active government promotion of abortion,” he said. “It consistently applies to all branches of the federal government the principle that government can encourage childbirth or abortion through its funding power, and that it should not coerce anyone’s involvement in abortion.”

In his testimony, Mr. Doerflinger cited past surveys showing that the Hyde amendment – attached to annual Department of Health and Human Services appropriations legislation since 1976 – has “consistently had the support of the American people,” with many wrongly assuming that it already fully protected all Americans at all levels of our federal government.

“The fact is that Congress’ policy has been remarkably consistent for decades, but the implementation of that policy in practice has been piecemeal, confusing and sometimes totally inadequate,” he said.

Gaps and loopholes have been found that allowed or could have allowed for the funding of abortions through the Indian Health Service, state Medicaid funding to HMOs and Medicare reimbursements for nonelderly disabled people, he added.

He urged Congress to “finally put a stop to this un-science-driven private providers to give them what they want.”

Mr. Rosenbaum, who testified that H.R. 3 would have adverse effects on the tax treatment of health insurance and health care expenditures, also spoke at a Feb. 9 hearing on the Protect Life Act before the House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Subcommittee on Health.

Other witnesses at that hearing were Helen Alvare, an associate professor at George Mason University School of Law and Ms. Ruse’s predecessor as the USCCB pro-life spokeswoman, and Douglas Johnson, director of federal legislation for the National Right to Life Committee.

The bill on which they were testifying would make changes in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to ensure that there is no federal funding of abortion and the conscience rights of health providers are protected.

Ms. Alvare focused her remarks on the conscience protection aspects of the legislation, saying that conscience-driven health care providers and the patients they serve, particularly the most vulnerable women.”

The nation can and should respect conscience-driven health care providers, and deliver to the most vulnerable Americans the health care their human dignity requires,” she told the subcommittee.

Those who oppose conscience protections “are only attempting to force the government and conscience-driven private providers to give them what the market has steadfastly refused to do,” Ms. Alvare said. “If opponents of conscience believe this to be too few abortions, current law leaves them free to provide more abortion services.”

Wendy McVey
Catholic News Service

The Vatican’s ambassador to Egypt said he hoped the country’s future would include greater social justice and greater freedom for all of the country’s people.

In an interview with Vatican Radio Feb. 11, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald said he hoped the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which is running Egypt, would follow the direction of constitutional reform and “will also respond to the hopes of its citizens and the population with regard to social justice and with regard to political liberties as well.”

Archbishop Fitzgerald, the Vatican nuncio in Cairo, said that even before President Hosni Mubarak resigned Feb. 11, the Egyptian leader had given his vice president the task of studying various articles of the constitution with a view of amending them in response to protesters’ demands for greater democracy.

Mubarak’s promises of reform were not enough for protesters, and he was forced to hand over power to the military and step down.

As Mubarak left the capital and the military took over, the nuncio told Vatican Radio, “We are still in an uncertain position, but the people are very happy — they are rejoicing — and we hope that this euphoria will produce a moment of solidarity for the people in this country.”

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces announced Feb. 13 a series of steps needed for a democratic transition, including the dissolution of Mubarak’s parliament, a suspension of the constitution with the promise of establishing a committee to rewrite it, and the promise of elections in six months.

North American Prelates Get Extra Assignments

Pope Benedict XVI named U.S. Cardinal Raymond Burke and Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet to the council of cardinals and bishops advising the Vatican Secretariat of State on diplomatic matters, and he named Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City to the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers. The appointments were announced at the Vatican Jan. 29. Cardinal Burke, who heads the Apostolic Signature, which is the Vatican’s supreme court, and Cardinal Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, were named to the advisory council along with Cardinal Peter Erdo of Esztergom-Budapest, Hungary, and Cardinal Fortunato Baldelli, head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, another Vatican court. The council of cardinals and bishops advises the section for relations with states of the Vatican Secretariat of State. In other appointments, Pope Benedict named Bishop Wester, former chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration, to be a member of the pontifical council that promotes the pastoral care and rights of migrants, refugees, seafarers and others who are far from home.

Vatican Announces Pope John Paul II Beatification Events

The Vatican released a three-day schedule of events for the beatification of Pope John Paul II, and warned against people selling counterfeit tickets to the beatification liturgy, which is free and open to all. Pope Benedict XVI will preside over the beatification Mass at 10 a.m. May 1 in St. Peter’s Square, the Vatican said. Immediately after Mass, the faithful can pray before Pope John Paul’s mortal remains, which will be set in front of the main altar in St. Peter’s Basilica. The venerations will continue until the flow of faithful ends,” it said.

Distributing the program Feb. 18, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, said the deceased pope’s remains will be in the casket in which he originally was buried in 2005 and will not be visible. The casket will be reinterred in the Chapel of St. Sebastian on the main level of St. Peter’s Basilica in a “private” ceremony, which will occur only after the large crowds have stopped coming to pay their respects, Father Lombardi said. The night before the beatification, a prayer vigil will be held in the grassy open space that was the ancient Circus Maximus in Rome, the Vatican said. The morning after the beatification, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican secretary of state, will celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving in St. Peter’s Square, the Vatican said.

U.S. Archbishop James M. Harvey, prefect of the papal household, which organizes the non-liturgical side of papal events, also issued a statement Feb. 18 emphasizing the fact that tickets will not be required to attend the beatification. The archbishop’s statement, distributed in six languages, said he had been “informed of the existence of unauthorized offers by some tour operators, especially on the Internet,” claiming that for a fee they could help people get tickets to papal events, particularly the beatification Mass. “For the beatification Mass of Pope John Paul II, as made clear from the outset, no tickets are required,” the statement said. And for events that require tickets, such as the pope’s weekly general audience, the tickets “are always issued free of charge and no person or organization can request any kind of payment,” it said.

Church Must Offer More Encouragement, Support for Vocations, Pope Says

Catholics must be more courageous in highlighting and fostering vocations, Pope Benedict XVI said. “Every Christian community, every member of the church needs consciously to feel responsibility for promoting vocations,” especially in an era when God’s voice “seems to be drowned out by ‘other voices’ and his invitation to follow him by the gift of one’s own life may seem too difficult,” he said in his message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Those who experience a clear call to priestly or consecrated life need encouragement, support and the possibility of feeling “the warmth of the whole community as they respond ‘yes’ to God and the church,” he said. The papal message for the day of prayer, which will be observed May 15, was released Feb. 10 at the Vatican. The 2011 theme is “Proposing Vocations in the Local Church.” In his message, Pope Benedict said proposing vocations on the local level means “having the courage, through an attentive and suitable concern for vocations, to point out this challenging way of following Christ which, because it is so rich in meaning, is capable of engaging the whole of one’s life.”
Bishop Joseph P. McFadden anoints the forehead of a young girl as he administers the sacrament of anointing of the sick at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg Feb. 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

Soon after Pope John Paul II was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 1991, he decided to create the World Day of Prayer for the Sick as a feast day to coincide with the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Feb. 11. What the Holy Father wanted was a “special time of prayer and sharing, of offering one’s suffering to the Lord.” And by tying the two feasts together, Pope John Paul spoke not only to the loving grace of Christ, but to Mary’s unfailing love.

One hundred fifty two years ago, it was Mary who appeared 18 times to the young peasant girl Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, France, which today is a great place of pilgrimage for those who suffer with human sickness and frailty.

On the 19th anniversary of the First World Day of Prayer for the Sick, Bishop Joseph P. McFadden celebrated Holy Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, Harrisburg, during which he performed the sacrament of anointing of the sick for more than 40 faithful. Several other priests of the diocese also assisted in administering the sacrament, which includes the laying on of hands followed by the anointing of the forehead and palms with the oil of the sick blessed at last year’s Chrism Mass.

In his homily, Bishop McFadden told those gathered that “It is in this sacrament that the Lord comes to strengthen us, to comfort us…. Jesus was afraid of the cross – we tend to forget that. Jesus had his agony… Jesus took on human nature so he felt what we feel.” The bishop also spoke to the Gospel message of John 2:1-11, which recounts the wedding feast at Cana. “Go and do whatever he tells you to,” Mary tells the servants as Christ prepares to turn water into wine. “That’s good advice for all of us…,” Bishop McFadden said. “We are never by ourselves in our suffering.”