Church Leaders Alarmed at Health Mandate; Edict Will Force Catholics to Violate Conscience

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Church leaders are criticizing and calling unconscionable a ruling by the Obama Administration to continue to demand that all employers pay for health care that includes sterilization, contraception and abortion-causing drugs.

“Never before has the federal government forced individuals and organizations to go out into the market-place and buy a product that violates their conscience. This shouldn’t happen in a land where free exercise of conscience ranks first in the Bill of Rights,” said Harrisburg Bishop Joseph P. McFadden.

“As Americans, we hold the freedom of one’s conscience as an inviolable right. We cannot allow this administration to get away with such a blatant attack on this fundamental freedom.”

— Bishop Joseph P. McFadden, Bishop of Harrisburg

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Bishop McFadden issued his statement Jan. 20, the same day that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandated that contraception and sterilization be included among “preventive services” coverage in virtually all health care plans.

Bishop McFadden is urging all citizens to tell their elected officials that they want their religious liberty and rights of conscience restored, and that the mandate be rescinded. Elected officials can be contacted on this issue via links on the Diocesan Web site at www.hbgdiocese.org and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference posted in an article on its Web site at www.pacatholic.org.

“In this ruling, you and I were told that we can call the decision ‘literally unconscionable,’” Bishop McFadden issued his statement Jan. 20, the same day that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandated that contraception and sterilization be included among “preventive services” coverage in virtually all health care plans.

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“Echoing the assertion of the U.S. Catholic bishops in calling the decision ‘literally unconscionable,’ Bishop McFadden issued his statement Jan. 20, the same day that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandated that contraception and sterilization be included among ‘preventive services’ coverage in virtually all health care plans. Bishop McFadden is urging all citizens to tell their elected officials that they want their religious liberty and rights of conscience restored, and that the mandate be rescinded. Elected officials can be contacted on this issue via links on the Diocesan Web site at www.hbgdiocese.org and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference posted in an article on its Web site at www.pacatholic.org.

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In January 20, just days before the thirty-ninth anniversary of the Roe V Wade decision, the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services announced that almost all employers, including Catholic employers, will be forced to offer their employees’ health coverage that includes sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs, and contraception. Almost all health insurers will be forced to include those “services” in their health policies. And almost all individuals will be forced to buy that coverage as part of their policies. This governmental action is a direct violation of the protections of the First Amendment and the protections given to the Church to engage freely in her mission.

Efforts by the bishops to secure conscience exemptions were disregarded. As a result, unless the rule is overturned, we Catholics will be compelled to either violate our consciences, or to drop health coverage for our employees (and suffer the penalties for doing so). The Administration’s sole concession was to give our institutions one year to comply. We cannot – we will not – comply with this unjust law.

Our opposition to this mandate is not a matter of opposing increased access to healthcare for the poor and needy, for which the Bishops are working. This is an edict directing every citizen to pay for these morally abhorrent services with their tax dollars while ordering the Church, through her institutions, to distribute contraceptives and provide sterilization. It is an unprecedented mandate to violate conscience.

As Americans and people of faith, we cherish our religious liberty and freedom of conscience preserved and protected by the Bill of Rights. As Pennsylvanians, we are conscious of our long history of safeguarding the rights of believers, whether the Amish, Quakers, Jews, and Catholics, just to name some.

Therefore, I am asking that you prayerfully and respectfully make known your objection to this intolerable ruling and insist that your rights of conscience as a Catholic citizen be restored. As a community of faith, we must commit ourselves to prayer and fasting that wisdom and justice may prevail, and religious liberty restored. Please visit www.usccb.org/conscience or www.pacatholic.org to learn more about this assault on religious liberty, and how to contact Congress in support of legislation that would reverse the Administration’s decision.

May God bless you for your faith, courage, and resolve.

Sincerely Yours in the Lord,

Most Reverend Joseph P. McFadden
Bishop of Harrisburg

The following is the text of a letter released to the diocese Jan. 27 from Bishop Joseph P. McFadden regarding the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s mandate on employers’ health care coverage of sterilization, contraception and abortion-inducing drugs:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write to you concerning an alarming and serious matter that poses the greatest threat to religious liberty in our lifetimes. It negatively impacts the Catholic Church in the United States and strikes at the fundamental right to religious liberty for all citizens of any faith. Our federal government, which claims to be “of, by, and for the people,” has dealt a heavy blow to almost a quarter of those people – the Catholic population – and to the millions more who are served by our Catholic faithful.

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Most Reverend Joseph P. McFadden
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of New York and President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. “To force American citizens to choose between violating their consciences and foregoing their healthcare is literally unconscionable,” he said. “It is as much an attack on access to health care as on religious freedom. Historically this represents a challenge and a compromise of our religious liberty.”

The only religious organizations that would be exempt from the mandate would be those that meet four specific criteria: “(1) has the inculcation of religious values as its purpose; (2) primarily employs persons who share its religious tenets; (3) primarily serves persons who share its religious tenets; and (4) is a nonprofit organization.” Catholic Church leaders and organizations call that exemption too narrow. Calling the HHS mandate “a direct shot at religious freedom,” Dr. Mark Totaro, CEO of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Harrisburg, pointed out that 92 percent of the diocesan organization’s clients and 70 percent of its employees are non-Catholic.

“The mandate illustrates a lack of respect for life and the rights of those who uphold the dignity of all people,” Dr. Totaro said. Daughter of Charity Sister Carol Keehan, President and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, said “The challenge that these regulations posed for many groups remains unresolved. This indicates the need for an effective national conversation on the appropriate conscience protections in our pluralistic country, which has always respected the role of religions.”

According to a press release from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic hospitals serve one out of six people who seek hospital care annually. Cardinal-designate Dolan urged that the HHS mandate must be overturned. “The Obama Administration has now drawn an unprecedented line in the sand,” he said. “The Catholic bishops are committed to working with our fellow Americans to reform the law and change this unjust regulation.”
Vespers Highlight Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

A Solemn Vespers service to mark the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity drew Christian Church leaders and faithful to Holy Name of Jesus Church Jan. 22.

The week, observed each year from Jan. 18-25, “demonstrates the respect that we have for one another,” Bishop Joseph P. McFadden told The Catholic Witness. “We continue to reach out to our brothers and sisters to work toward full unity.”

The prayer service was led by Bishop Joseph P. McFadden of the Diocese of Harrisburg; Bishop B. Penrose Hoover of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Bishop Robert L. Driesen of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Father Joseph Seville, representing Bishop Nathan D. Baxter of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, who was unable to attend due to a death in the family; and Deacon Clark.

The service was filled with Psalms, antiphons, prayers, a Scripture reading and intercessions. Bishop Hoover delivered the homily, in which he spoke about Christians hearing and answering the Lord’s call. Biblically speaking, God’s call “is not a thunderbolt of sudden conversion to faith,” he said. Rather, “it is a call to new responsibility in a fledgling faith that is already there.”

Bishop Hoover remarked that in order to hear God’s call, we must cultivate our faith, and said that we must be grounded in our own faith to appreciate others in theirs.

If we nurture the faith and listen to God’s call and to one another, “the God who called us into being, who began a good work in us, will bring it to completion in the day of Jesus Christ,” he said.

Deacon Charles Clark, Director of the Diocesan Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, said the Vespers Service “is a testimony to the desire of people of different faiths to come together in recognition of the prayer of Jesus — in John 17:21 — in which he prayed to the Father ‘that all may be one as you and I are one.’”

Bishop McFadden cautioned that as Catholics engage in dialogue with members of other Christian denominations, they not compromise the truths of the Catholic faith. “Catholics need to understand that our faith is a life-style. It’s not simply about going to church on Sunday, it’s about embracing the truths of the Gospel and living them out and working to become better witnesses to the Gospel, with the hope that that witness draws others closer to Christ,” he said. “There are doctrinal issues which are a source of division, but there are certain things that we can do with our brothers and sisters who are Christian — pray for one another, work together to make our society a better place, and join in with those of other Christian faiths in doing works of charity that really reflect the love of Christ.”

(For information on ecumenical and interreligious events and opportunities, contact Deacon Clark at 717-637-4804, ext. 263, or dcclark@hhbdiocese.org.)

| Local Church News |

‘That All May Be One’

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Christian clergy lead a congregation at Holy Name of Jesus Church in Harrisburg in prayer during Solemn Vespers for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. From left are Father Joseph Seville, Deacon Charles Clark, Bishop Joseph P. McFadden, Bishop B. Penrose Hoover, and Bishop Robert L. Driesen.

Clergy Appointment

Effective February 2, 2012

The Reverend William Kauffman to Parochial Vicar, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Parish, Harrisburg.
Women’s Right to Know Act: Informed Pregnancy Decisions

By A.B. Hill
Special to The Witness

On the day that thousands of pro-life supporters were marking the anniversary of Roe v. Wade by marching in Washington, D.C., state legislators in Harrisburg were urged to reflect theological advice in the law to protect women’s health.

The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) supports the Women’s Right to Know Act. In 2012, ultrasounds are a common sense and even expected part of many medical evaluations and procedures. Without this bill, a double standard will remain whereby women in their time of need are not given complete information. Women should have the right to view their full medical records, and the technology exists and is already present in abortion clinics. The Women’s Right to Know Act addresses this disparity.

Past abortion laws probably would have included ultrasound access, but the technology didn’t exist as it does today – The Women’s Right to Know Act updates the law to reflect current medical advances.

Helen Cindrich of the People Concerned for the Unborn Child organization in Pittsburgh expressed her support for the Women’s Right to Know Act over the telephone while marching on the Mall in Washington, D.C. “The reason we’re here is to protect women and children,” said Cindrich during the press conference. She supports the proposal that would help women “at the brink of making a serious decision.”

Francis Viglietta, director of PCC’s Social Concerns Department, notes that “the need to pass legislation giving a pregnant woman the option to view her ultrasound and to see or hear the heartbeat of her unborn child is long overdue in Pennsylvania. It is an idea whose time has come and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference calls upon the state legislature to pass HB 1077 quickly and send it to the governor for his approval.

“Ultimately, no one’s position on abortion, we can all agree that it is a serious issue that a woman cannot take back or undo. We have an obligation to give these women, in their moment of need, all of the information necessary to make the right decision so that she does not look back and say, ‘If I had only known...’”

The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference urges quick passage of this pro-life bill. Pro-life supporters are encouraged to contact PACatholic.org to send a message in support of The Women’s Right to Know Act.


The Body of Christ

By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC
Special to The Witness

Several years ago, I was traveling in a car with a family whose daughter had just received her First Communion. As a child communicant, she understood, on a heart level, that she received Jesus in a unique way. As we traveled to a restaurant for the family’s celebration, she spied another girl from a different parish also in her First Communion dress. Upon seeing another first COMMUNION ceremony, she began to weep frantically, opened up the window, and called out, “Hi there!” Chuckling, her dad reminded her that she did not know this girl and inquired why did she did what she did. She retorted, “Dad, don’t you understand? We both received Jesus for the first time today! Because we did that, we are forever united. She is my sister since she is also a part of many other families.”

The story also reminds me of the third essential mark of a Catholic school: A shared vision of Faith and Community according to The Holy See Teachings on Catholic Schools by Bishop J. Michael Miller, CBB, (Solidarity Association, 2005). This concept is the bedrock, I believe, of what our Catholic schools give to the Church and to society at large.

Anyone can readily understand that any educational institution is a community. Our public and charter school counterparts profess that they are united communities that serve. This can be true but, the scope of “community” that Archbishop Miller describes is rooted not in a sociological ideal, as our public school counterparts stress it, but rather as a theological concept. He echoes the teaching of several Church documents: Gravissimum Educationis written by Pope Paul IV in 1965, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School and The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium. All of these documents can be found on the Vatican website (www.vatican.va) or you Google the titles.

You might be thinking, “A theological concept? What does that even mean in regards to this?” Allow me to explain this through an image that is familiar to so many of us. So much of our lives, as humans, are centered a round a table. My childhood kitchen table was always a source of action; the amazing snacks and meals my mom cooked, homework assignments, many art projects, or words of wisdom from the elders of my family and the neighborhood community. This table, the center of our family as a life, was supported by four sturdy legs. Each of these legs can represent community as a theological concept: teamwork, cooperation between educators and bishops, interaction of students and teachers, and the school’s physical environment. Each of these legs supports the table top and can transform the ordinary kitchen table into the Eucharistic Table found in the center of Catholic Church. The kitchen table, as a center of our home, becomes an extension of the liturgy lived out daily in our lives.

The four concepts listed above are pillars that make community and communion within Catholic schools a reality. They are the unique aspects only found in Catholic schools. Clergy and bishops, administrators, educators, parents, and students form a team that make the school a living, breathing entity that echoes 1 Peter 2:4-6:

... you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.

This teamwork allows the teacher within the classroom to reiterate the words of the teaching Church; the bishop, who echoes the sacred words of the Divine Teacher, Christ. The bishop relies on the teacher to be true to the teachings and traditions of the Church. As religion is taught, lived and expressed in Sacrament, within Catholic schools, the mystical union of the people of God and Christ is strengthened and renewed. As such, the interaction of teacher and student become sacred when Christ is the truly the reason for the school’s work, the unique bond that gives place to the Church as the Model for the faculty and the Inspiration for the students. Finally, this reality can be seen tangibly in the school environment. Statues, religious art, religious projects and written prayers completed by students convey the hallways and the classroom. A visitor should have no doubt that the place he or she has entered is holy not only because of the physical environment but also through the faith that is expressed in word and action.

Because Christ is the center of a Catholic School, my young friend was so right. The members of a Catholic school are forever united as “family”. This family goes beyond town, diocese and country. This family is worldwide and joined within the heart of Jesus Christ! (Christian Charity Sister Geralyn Schmidt is the School WBN Coordinator for the Diocese of Harrisburg.)
Happy Valley turned to tears with the death of legendary Penn State football coach Joe Paterno, who passed away Jan. 22 at the age of 85. Students, alumni and fans far and wide flocked to the statue of Paterno outside Beaver Stadium in the wake of his death, leaving rosaries, flowers, notes and Nittany Lion memorabilia in tribute.

Thousands continued to descend upon the university campus that week for public viewings and a public memorial service.

Bishop Mark L. Bartchak of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown said in a news conference at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona that Paterno will be best remembered in the diocese as “a good Catholic, a family man and a friend to many.”

“Joe’s commitment to prayer, family and faith was a great example to the students at Penn State,” and will leave a lasting impact.

The funeral Mass was celebrated Jan. 25 at the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center on the campus of Penn State. Burial was in State College.

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden will offer a Memorial Mass for Joe Paterno Feb. 15 at 4 p.m. at Saint Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg. All are welcome to attend.
Catholic Schools: Faith, Academics and Service

My Testimony: Peg Rizzuto, Principal of St. Rose of Lima School

Principal, Testing My Faith…

Realizing that I have probably lived over half my life on this earth, I have come to the realization that I need to take more time to listen to God’s Word and to what he is calling me to do. You see, I want to get it right because I want to make things right and not just go through the motions. I have to accept the job as principal at St. Rose of Lima School. I had always said I didn’t want to be a principal, that I loved the classroom too much. I have learned from this experience that you should “never say never,” as you may eat those words such as I did.

My family had always said that I should be a principal. When I look back, it was the Holy Spirit working through them and I didn’t want to hear it. Well, finally I heard it and said yes, making all family members happy, and myself wondering what I was getting into.

Serving as principal is truly a humbling experience. The more you do it, the more you realize there is so much more to learn. My first year serving as principal, my husband died unexpectedly. There they were, every student, every parent, every parishioner and my pastor, my St. Rose of Lima. They were all there in support of me and my needs. I knew what I had to do. You see, the night my husband died I knew it, but didn’t realize I knew it until about two days later. You see, our time is different from Jesus. I believe this is why we are required to go through the pain. Realizing that I have probably lived over half my life on this earth, I have come to the realization that I need to take more time to listen to God’s Word and to what he is calling me to do. You see, I want to get it right because I want to make things right and not just go through the motions. I have to accept the job as principal at St. Rose of Lima School. I had always said I didn’t want to be a principal, that I loved the classroom too much. I have learned from this experience that you should “never say never,” as you may eat those words such as I did.

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The love from this school community of which I am a small part helps me to see Jesus every day. They are here not only for me, but for one another. My second year as principal, I lost my father-in-law and once again they were there. During my third year, I moved into a new home. A family donated their time and talents to mow my lawn. Another one blessed me with plants and planting them in my yard. As I began my fourth year as principal, like many in the surrounding communities, my home was affected by flooding. There they were, an entire team of parents helping to remove carpet and damaged wall paper, running board walls and removing wet carpet to get to the bottom. One day, a house that I just bought moved without my permission.

The families here live their faith every day. You see, Faith, Academics and Service, is more than a Catholic Schools Week theme. It is who we are; it is what we are about. It is St. Rose of Lima School.

(Peg Rizzuto is Principal of St. Rose of Lima School in Thomasville.)
By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

When 16-year-old Margaret “Dixie” Dugan took her friend’s place on a retreat from Mount Carmel to the Monastery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Lancaster, little did she know where she would live her consecrated life.

It was October 1958. Some 25 girls from Mount Carmel were to be readying for a retreat hosted by the Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary some two hours away.

But the football team from Our Lady of Mount Carmel High School was playing in a big game that weekend, and so most of the girls – including Dixie’s friend – decided to withdraw from the retreat at the last minute.

Dixie’s father asked her to accompany them to the rectory at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish to tell the priest she wouldn’t be making the weekend trip. When he told him her decision, the priest invited Dixie to come along instead.

She received her parents’ permission and said yes. Her life was about to change.

Some 54 years later, now Sister Margaret Pius, she sits in the parlor at the Monastery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, separated from visitors by a half wall and a grill. She smiles as she recalls the day she first entered the monastery’s doors with a handful of schoolmates and several women from her home parish.

“I often wonder if I would have found myself here if not for that retreat. What if my friend had not asked me to go with her to the rectory that day? What if Father Zimmerman hadn’t asked her to come along? I’m here because this is where God wants me to be,” she says.

Sister Margaret Pius is nearing the end of a yearlong celebration of her Golden Jubilee, a year of grace that has, among other things, given her cause to reflect on her life’s journey and her call to consecrated life.

Once a self-described tomboy who climbed trees and enjoyed sports, she is the oldest of the Dugan siblings. They were raised in the Church by parents with a strong Catholic faith.

“Since fifth grade, I had wanted to be a religious sister; I just didn’t know where,” Sister Margaret Pius said.

Her aunt had been a member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the Dugan family lived not far from the Carmelite nuns whose monastery was in Mount Carmel before their move to Elysburg.

Praying the rosary was common in the Dugan household, and young Dixie embraced it. By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

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Praying the rosary was common in the Dugan household, and young Dixie embraced it.$\text{South}^\text{East}^\text{West}^\text{North}$

Harrisburg Diocesan Guild of the Catholic Medical Association invites all Catholic physicians, healthcare workers, medical students and residents to attend their Annual Lenten Reflection

**MARCH 3, 2012**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Diocese of Harrisburg

4800 Union Deposit Road

Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710

Speaker: Reverend Paul CB Schenck, Director, Respect Life Office and Administrator for Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish

Topic: “Human dignity and the interior life”

(The reflection objective will be: the total dignity of human life at all its stages from conception to natural death (and beyond to eternity) and how, as medical professionals, we might promote that dignity through our ministries.)

The morning includes Mass, confessions, adoration and light refreshments.

For Planning purposes please visit: CathMedHugan.com by March 1, 2012

A free will offering will be accepted.
As pro-life advocates prepared to turn their attention to Washington, D.C., for the annual March for Life, Bishop Joseph P. McFadden gathered diocesan faithful at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg Jan. 22 for a Pro-Life Mass.

“God endowed us with our human sexuality in order that we may participate in one of the greatest gifts that the Creator could ever give: the power to give life and to bring life into our world,” the bishop said in his homily. “In our society today, the view of human sexuality has been distorted and perceived as simply a biological function and to give pleasure to man. It’s often separated from its purpose.”

He urged the congregation heed the call “to embrace the message of Jesus, and to proclaim to the world the truth about life in God’s design, and how it is to be lived, and how it is to be respected. We must do this because God has placed in the heart of every man and woman the ability to hear and to understand the truth.”

“We know that it can be difficult to speak to people about the truth about life. We also know that we are afraid sometimes that people will reject the message,” he said, and encouraged the faithful to spread the message anyway. “We should not be surprised if people embrace the truth when it is effectively proclaimed to them and they understand clearly what life is about.”

Balloons carrying a pro-life message soared over New Freedom Jan. 22 as members of St. John the Baptist Parish there released them into the sky in witness to the sanctity of life. Balloons carried the word “Life” and the name of a child lost to abortion. Names of the babies were provided by parents who have attended Rachel’s Vineyard retreats, a weekend for post-abortion healing, noted Joy Crimmins, director and facilitator of the retreats in the Harrisburg Diocese. After Mass, members of the Knights of Columbus and the parish’s Women’s Council and Respect Life Ministry handed balloons to parishioners, including youth like Anthony Tufano, pictured. Following a prayer service led by Father Sylvan Capitani, pastor, parishioners spoke the name of the child on their balloon before releasing them skyward.
As Catholics, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we must stand as a people unequivocally committed to the sanctity of human life. We are our brother’s keeper. Whether our brother or sister is a tiny baby in the mother’s womb or a child suffering from malnutrition in Africa, a teenager who has been drawn into a drug addiction or an elderly and lonely person in a nursing home, we are called to recognize each person as our neighbor, as our brother or sister…. God also entrusts to us women who have had abortions, women who suffer such deep wounds, psychological and spiritual problems, resulting from the abortion of their babies, as well as the unborn children’s fathers who may also suffer. We are called to reach out to them with the love and mercy of Jesus.”

The defense of the faith and service to those who suffer are the guiding principles of the Order of Malta, first lay order of the Catholic Church. So it proved fitting that the order’s Lancaster Region hosted a Sanctity of Life Mass to proclaim the pro-life message.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and former Bishop of Harrisburg celebrated the Mass at St. Leo the Great Church in Rohrerstown Jan. 20.

In his homily, he spoke of the story of the first murder, Cain killing his brother Abel.

“It is a page rewritten daily here in the United States of America where there is an average of 42 homicides each day and over 3,000 abortions each day,” Bishop Rhoades said.

“As we mourn the loss of over 50 million unborn lives since the Roe v. Wade decision, we do not grieve as a people without hope. Christ is our hope. We face the challenges of the culture of death with faith in the blood of Christ,” he remarked. “We must not shirk from our responsibility to promote and to serve the Gospel of life. This is our sacred responsibility.”

Patrick Whalen, Hospitaller for the Lancaster Region of the Order of Malta, told The Catholic Witness that “Hearing Bishop Rhoades’ message is inspiring to me as a Catholic that we are members of the one true faith that is a beacon to the world about the principles of life.”

Proceeds from the offertory collection taken during the Mass were to be given to A Woman’s Concern, a pro-life pregnancy resource clinic in Lancaster; and Hospital Sacre Coeur, a hospital in Milot, Haiti, run by the Order of Malta.

For more information on the service work and planned events of the Lancaster Region of the Order of Malta, visit www.orderofmalat Lancaster.com.
By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

Butler Bulldogs head coach Brad Stevens said something last year after making the men’s basketball Final Four for the second straight year that should strike a chord. “Everyone knows what it takes to win; it’s just are you willing to do what it takes to win.” Sounds simple, and the revelation is nothing profound in nature.

Doing what it takes to win is what Coach Patti Hower has been doing at Lebanon Catholic School since the Carter Administration when gas shortages and the economy were a drag. Much has changed over the span of her 34-year coaching career as the Beavers’ girls’ basketball coach. Gone for now are the days when she had a much bigger talent pool of students to find young ladies who wanted to do what it takes to play winning basketball. And gone too are the days when players in a small city like Lebanon hit the playground courts where you put your honor on the line against rivals and friends alike. Times are different.

When she started coaching in the late 1970s the PIAA had just added girls’ basketball as a sanctioned sport, which gave girls’ programs a home to play in leagues, districts and states.

“I was blessed to start out with a nice group of athletes who loved basketball and who were passionate to be better basketball players and learn,” Coach Hower said in an interview in the small confines of her humble office next to the gym on the line against rivals and friends alike. Times are different.

In her office with the old-time radiator blasting heat in noisy fashion, Coach Hower has a few photo mementos of past glory that speaks to the great success she has brought to this school. She’s won nearly 630 games, 15 District 3 Class A titles and two state championships back in 1992 and 1995. You would be hard pressed to find a better résumé in a state which has pro-
duced a number of legendary coaches.

Coach Hower was recently inducted into the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame at the 49th annual ceremonial dinner where she was inducted into the ranks with the likes of Pete Carril, former Reading High coach who later guided Princeton’s great success in the Ivy League for many years, or Bo Ryan, who guides the badgers of Wisconsin nowadays. That’s great company Coach Hower can keep.

Great coaches are above all else great teachers. Watching Coach Hower on the sideline and bench is a good study. Perhaps it sounds trivial, but a great coach can be spotted by noticing the little things along the way. Do her players give her eye contact in a huddle or when they are pulled from the game? Over 34 years, these eyes have watched her players’ eyes and the answer is yes. Also she can be calm, assertive with a referee when he or she blows a call, and she’s more dean than professor when mak-
ing her point with the folks in stripes. She’s going to get a listen.

There’s a respect that she commands that’s truly tangible, and she admits in discussing that fact that she’s been very fortunate to have had great talent play for her over the years. It takes talent to win, but there are plenty of teams out there with more talent that don’t win. Hard work and a commitment to playing sports seriously is what it takes to win. And she acknowledges that she’s been blessed with players who have brought that commitment to the floor for her. Moreover, she is grateful to all the parents who have supported her throughout the years.

Every season is a new and exciting venture and that’s another mark of a great coach. Sure there’s nostalgia for great teams in the past, but one thing that strikes you is her dedication to keeping things fresh. She prepares a playbook every year that is rather meaty in scope and throws in a few new wrinkles every year designed to bring out the strengths of the new and old faces on the bench.

Speaking of the bench, it arguably says a great deal about Coach Hower without having to say it. She’s flanked by longtime assistant Mike Mohl, who has been with her all 34 years. In her Pennsylvania Hall of Fame acceptance speech, she indicated that she shares this award with him and told him publically that “he really is the best.” Down the bench a little you will find her dad, Edward Werth, who helps as an assistant, and to whom she credits a commitment to playing sports seriously and to having that commitment to the floor that has brought that commitment to the floor for her. Moreover, she is grateful to all the parents who have supported her throughout the years.

And now there are four generations in the gym who help as an assistant, and to whom she credits a commitment to playing sports seriously and to having that commitment to the floor that has brought that commitment to the floor for her. Moreover, she is grateful to all the parents who have supported her throughout the years.

On the other end of the bench is her daughter, Becky, who is also an assistant who played for the Beavers in the early 2000s when she was a stand-out player for a number of District 3 title teams. And now there are four generations in the gym with the arrival of Becky’s daughter, Mya, last summer. Coach Hower says that the most special time of her 34 years was having the opportunity to coach her daughter, Becky.

Without her husband Lonnie, she feels that nothing accomplished could have been possible without him and his continuous support over the years.

Maybe everyone does know what it takes to win. If you are humble enough to admit that you don’t, give Coach Patti Hower at Lebanon Catholic a study. She’s certainly willing to teach you what it takes.

Longtime Lebanon Catholic Basketball Coach Inducted into the Pennsylvania Hall of Fame

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS
Obituaries

The names of the following deceased persons have been submitted by their parish:

BRECKWICK - St. Joseph: Maria Vezendy.

BLOOMSBURG - St. Columbia: Judith W. Hanson.

CAMP HILL - Good Shepherd: Danielle Munsberger, Hermine Reid.

CHAMBERSBURG - St. Louis: Edward Braun, Veronica "Ronnie" Shatzer.


DANVILLE - St. Joseph: Ray Vella.

ELIZABETHTOWN - St. Peter: Jerome F. Shultz.

HANOVER - St. Joseph: Bernard Klinski, Catherine Mathews, Catherine Renczewicz, Mary Jane Shearer, Gabriella Sicard, Earl Sipking, Kevin Warewine, Margaret Yaeck.

HARRISBURG - Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick: Florence Farago; St. Catherine Labouré: Michael DeFilippo; St. Margaret Mary: Mary Rose McCormick; St. Mary Betty: Santor, Marian Suchanik, Jane Wilson.


MACHACNSBURG - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton: Phyllis Connors; St. Joseph: Jeanne B.; BERTHALST.

MIDDLETOWN - Seven Sorrows BVM: Dorothy Cross.

MILLERSVILLE - St. Phtep the Apostle: Winfield S. Moser.

MOUNT CARMEL - Divine Redeemer: Clara Waskiewicz.

NEW RIEDELD - St. John the Baptist: Richard E. Radecke, Cecilia Webster, Shirley Winkler.

NEW ULM - Immaculate Conception BVM: Kevin Warewine.


SELINSROVE - St. Pius X; Catherine Fritz.

SIBLEYON - Prince of Peace: Carl Benko, Frances Rossi.

WAYNESBORO - St. Andrew: Hetty Boland.


Sister Ann Elizabeth Dicher

Christian Charity Sister Ann Elizabeth Dicher died at the Holy Family Convent in Danville Jan. 10. She was 87.

Born in Williamsport, Pa., in 1924, she attended St. Boniface School and St. Mary High School there and entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Christian Charity at Mallickrodt Convent in Mendham, N.J., in 1940. She earned a B.A in Education from Marywood College and an MA in Administration from Seton Hall College.

Sister Ann Elizabeth's religious life was dedicated to teaching in the various schools of the community in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and North Carolina. In addition to her role as teacher in the middle, upper and high schools from 1943-2000, she also served as principal and superior in several convents and schools. She moved to Holy Family Convent in July.

She is survived by two brothers and two sisters, including Christian Charity Sister Celia of Holy Family Convent, as well as nieces and nephews.

The funeral Mass was celebrated in the convent chapel. Burial was in St. Joseph Cemetery, Danville.

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By Mark Zimmermann

Catholic News Service

A Washington pastor told 17,000 exuberant teenagers and young adults gathered at a pro-life rally and Mass in the Verizon Center Jan. 23 that he wondered if they knew “what an encouragement you are.”

“I am so glad for your joy … your joy is the greatest evidence Jesus rose from the dead,” said Msgr. Charles Pope, pastor of Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian Parish, said in his homily.

The Mass and rally that morning, he said, were “about praising God and thanking him for the gift of life.”

The annual Youth Rally and Mass for Life there and a second rally and Mass for another 10,000 young people at the D.C. Armory were sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington and each year precede the March for Life.

Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, main celebrant at the Verizon Center Mass, smiled as he processed into the arena, preceded by about a dozen other bishops, nearly 180 priests and 30 deacons.

“I welcome you as we renew our commitment to the value and dignity of all human life,” the cardinal said.

Acknowledging the large crowd, he said, “There would be even more if it weren’t for the fact we had great storm warnings, and schools and bus lines were closed. … I think the Lord did that to say to us, ‘For decades you’ve been persevering – continue to persevere.’”

Archbishop Vigano read a letter on behalf of Pope Benedict XVI, who thanked the youths for “this outstanding annual witness to the Gospel of Life.”

In an interview with reporters before the Mass, Cardinal Wuerl spoke about how inspired he is each year to encourage you are.”

During his homily, Msgr. Pope said that Scripture makes it clear, “You’re somebody, your life is sacred, and it’s part of God’s plan. … No one is a mistake, accident, surprise or inconvenience.”

The priest, who writes a popular blog for the Archdiocese of Washington’s website, encouraged the youths to make a daily choice for chastity, charity, courage and constancy.

An estimated 85 percent of abortions are performed on women who are married, according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“Dress modestly, act modestly and avoid situations [involving] temptations for marriage,” the priest said.

“Chaste and pure and save sexual relations for marriage,” the priest said.

Regarding constancy, the parish priest said the struggle to end abortion continues 39 years after the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion. He noted polls that show a majority of Americans, and a growing number of young people, oppose abortion.

“We’re going to get there. We will win the hearts and minds of people in our country. … We’re heading to that promised land where people respect life from conception to natural death,” he said.

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Diocesan World Youth Day

Celebration on Palm Sunday

For High School Aged Youth

Sunday, April 1, 2012

3:00pm - 7:00pm

Mass, Dinner, Concert

Capitol Steps/Saint Patrick Cathedral/Strawberry Square

For more information contact:

Lentretreat@comcast.net

Sponsored by

Mary Regina Coeli Circle

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Prepare for Lent

By Attending a Lenten Retreat

For Boys and Girls aged 10 – 18

February 18, 2012 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)

At Saint Joseph Brindle Hall,
Mechanicsburg

Cost is $7 (family discount available, please call for information)

Retreat will be lead by Diocesan Clergy & Laity

LENTEN THEME:

“The Four Pillars of Our Faith”
Morning Speaker Father David Hereshko Afternoon Speaker Father James Lease

Activities include directed talks, lunch, fun competitions and Way of the Cross/Mary’s Way of the Cross

For more information or to register by February 12, Contact Michael Yakubick at (717) 329-2725 or e-mail LENTRETREAT@comcast.net

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Dioscean Notebook

Compiled by Jen Reed

Spiritual Offerings

Mass with prayers for healing will be celebrated Feb. 7 at 6 p.m. at St. Peter Parish in Harrisburg, with Father Paul Helwig. The Mass is sponsored by the Pilgrims of Praise and Life in the Spirit prayer groups. For more information, contact K. Vinski at 717-563-2090 or k. vinski@hbgdiocese.org.

Heal a Heart with Roses for Remembrance. The St. Peter's Center in Kutztown will host a remembrance service for the deceased on Feb. 12 from 2-4 p.m. All are invited to place one of your loved ones with a memorial silk rose to be blessed and placed in an arrangement on the altar of St. Peter’s. Remembrance and prayer cards will also be available to purchase. A donation of $5.00 per rose will be collected to aid the church. Lift Your Spirits performing art group will provide music and refreshments.

Irish language will be celebrated by Father Walter Sempeck Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. at St. Catherine Laboure Church in Harrisburg. Anyone wishing to help with the St. Valentine's Day dinner in Annville, to the Holy Land Nov. 7-15, 2012. To make a reservation or to make a donation, contact St. Mark’s Church at 717-947-0742.

Travel with the Sacred Heart Basilica Pilgrimage Choir on a ten-day pilgrimage of Majestic Italy, June 19-29, 2013. The pilgrimage will be a wonderful experience of faith, cultural exploration and camaraderie. Highlights include: Vatican, Assisi, Siena, Florence, Pisa, Venice, and Rome. For more information, contact Sister Dorothy Zivic at 717-775-7600 or d.zivic@sacredheart.org.

Sponsor and candidates can contact Steve Forjan in the diocesan office at 717-563-2002 or stjncath.org or contact Mary Jane Waro in the parish office at 717-563-3102 for more information.

For more information, contact Peggy at pegpritch@aol.com. For more information, call August Pfeifer at oyyam@hbgdiocese.org or call him at 717-563-2090.

Retreats & Pilgrimages

The Cursillo Movement of Harrisburg will be holding their winter weekends at St. Pius X in Seligrove. For more information, contact the Cursillo Movement at 717-855-1607 or visit www.cursilloharrisburg.org.

The World Youth Day Pilgrimage of 2013, sponsored by the Diocese of Harrisburg, will be March 8-11. For more information, contact the Youth Department at 717-868-1772 or by email: youth@hbgdiocese.org.

The Our Lady of Lourdes, New Holland Knights of Columbus Council 13457 is hosting a chicken BBQ feed Sat. from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Hall. All proceeds will go to the Church of the Divine Mercy in Carlisle. For more information, call 717-533-2854 or drzotto@stjohnhershey.org.

A silent auction to benefit Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Harrisburg will be held Fri. Mar. 8 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Parish Hall. All proceeds will go to the Parish Hall. For more information, contact Kim Homan at 717-563-9728 or call 717-774-8789 or on-line at www.oxfordhall@aol.com. The event is sponsored by Oxford Hall Celtic Shop and the Cathedral Gift Shop, for First Communion children, parents and grandparents. For more information, call 717-774-8871 or email: ourladyoflourdes@hbgdiocese.org.

Parish & Organization News

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCOS) is a resource for content and material that is useful to today’s Catholic Scouting leaders and their units. NCCOS is committed to providing Scout leaders with ideas that can enhance religious programs and grow new Scouting units. For more information, go to the Diocesan Scouting Foundation web site stjohnhershey@comcast.net. View upcoming events at www.augustinepilgrimage.net.

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Shining Light Thrift Shop, a ministry of the St. St. Peter Church in Grantville, is taking orders for a Small Appliance Bingo (blender, toaster, slow cooker, etc.) Feb. 13 at Divine Mercy Parish in Grantville. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. and the theme is “Big Buckets.” All who play will receive a ticket to play and to enter and be accompanied by a paying adult. Door Prizes will include a gold tone stainless steel blender, Tupperware, and a variety of other household items. Food will be available for purchase. For more information, call Mary Ann at 717-564-7709.

Holy Spirit Parish in Columbia is holding its 89th annual fastnacht bake this Lent. Fastnachts must be pre- ordered. Orders can be made beginning Feb. 13 by calling 717-567-4705. Fastnachts can be picked up at the rectory starting Apr. 2. For more information, contact the Fastnacht Committee.

St. Richard Parish in Manheim will have a spaghetti dinner Fri. Feb. 11. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6 p.m. $10 per adult, $6 per child. For more information, call Roseanne at 717-665-2469.

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Life, Liberty at ‘Core of Our National Character,’
House Speaker Tells Rally

By Julie Asher
Catholic News Service

Americans “as a people are pro-life” because life and liberty “are intertwined and form the core of our national character,” House Speaker John Boehner told the crowd gathered on the National Mall Jan. 23 for the 39th annual March for Life.

“So God gave us life and liberty,” he said, “and it’s just who I am.”

And he and other members of Congress who spoke at the rally said they were proud they had passed the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act and the Protect Life Act and voted to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and defend Planned Parenthood.

But now, said U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., “we must work to change the Senate and reclaim the White House, which not only obstructs pro-life legislation but has for the past three years advanced abortion in so many ways.”

Smith, a Catholic who is chairman of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, told the rallygoers that they were “an important part of the greatest human rights movement on earth – the self-less struggle by prayer, fasting and works to defend and protect all weak and vulnerable persons from the violence of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia.”

He also told the crowd he had a message for President Barack Obama: “The violent destruction of children in the womb – killing babies – is not an American value.’


And this fundamental right of women to make their own decisions must remain “committed to protecting a woman’s right to choose and this fundamental constitutional right. While this is a sensi-tive and often divisive issue – no matter what we view it – we must stay united in our determination to prevent unintended pregnancies, support pregnant women and mothers, reduce the need for abortion, encourage healthy relationships and promote adoption.”

In his remarks, Smith accused the Obama administration of “not even attempting to appear to be working to make abortion ‘rare’ and offering support to women to choose life.”

On the way to the Supreme Court, thousands of young people who attended two youth rallies sponsored by the Wash-ington Archdiocese joined the March for Life as it headed up Constitution. A couple dozen supporters of keeping abortion legal were on the sidewalk in front of the court, shouting at the pro-lifers, but their voices were easily drowned out by the chants of the pro-lifers.

Many marchers carried banners identifying their Catholic schools – grade schools, high schools, universities and colleg-es. But nonsectarian universities were represented, too; one of the most prominent was Harvard University’s student respect life group.

March for Life events cover a three-day period and include a convention and the annual Rose Dinner. There also is an annual pro-life essay contest, and this year’s winner was Becca Ken-nedy, an eighth-grader from Seton Catholic School in Farley, Iowa, in the Dubuque Archdiocese. She came to Washington with her mom and dad, Laura and Brian, who said it was re-freshing and energizing to see so many people who support the pro-life cause.

Winning the contest confirmed “that what I was thinking is what other people are thinking, that I was in the right mindset,” Becca told CNS. Coming to the rally and march, she added, shows “the public how many people believe abortion is wrong.”

She called for Roe to be overturned “without any exception” and urged unity “on the life principles” she and her organiza-tions have espoused since the Roe decision.

Just as the Nuremberg trials after World War II “taught us genocide is a crime against humanity,” the federal government must understand that abortion is “a crime against humanity,” said Gray.


“They are the ones who didn’t and the ones who did. They are the ones who’s never been in Congress, and the ones who have been in Congress. It’s just who I am.”

Cantor said. “Millions of Americans agree with us. We must stop the government assault on innocent life.”

In a message marking the Roe anniversary, Obama said he remained “committed to protecting a woman’s right to choose and this fundamental constitutional right. While this is a sensi-tive and often divisive issue – no matter what we view it – we must stay united in our determination to prevent unintended pregnancies, support pregnant women and mothers, reduce the need for abortion, encourage healthy relationships and promote adoption.”

Smith, a Catholic who is chairman of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, told the rallygoers that they were “an important part of the greatest human rights movement on earth – the self-less struggle by prayer, fasting and works to defend and protect all weak and vulnerable persons from the violence of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia.”

He also told the crowd he had a message for President Barack Obama: “The violent destruction of children in the womb – killing babies – is not an American value.”


The pro-life demonstration marks the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that legal-ized abortion across the nation.

Feme Fund, the group that organizes the march.

She told the crowd that their consistency in showing up in such great numbers each year “shows we love our country and what other people are thinking, that I was in the right mindset,” Becca told CNS. Coming to the rally and march, she added, shows “the public how many people believe abortion is wrong.”

By Julie Asher
Catholic News Service

Americans “as a people are pro-life” because life and liberty “are intertwined and form the core of our national character,” House Speaker John Boehner told the crowd gathered on the National Mall Jan. 23 for the 39th annual March for Life.

“So God gave us life and liberty,” he said, “and it’s just who I am.”

And he and other members of Congress who spoke at the rally said they were proud they had passed the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act and the Protect Life Act and voted to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and defend Planned Parenthood.

But now, said U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., “we must work to change the Senate and reclaim the White House, which not only obstructs pro-life legislation but has for the past three years advanced abortion in so many ways.”

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Catholic Schools Week at St. Monica School in Sunbury was highlighted by a pastoral visit from Bishop Joseph P. McFadden Jan. 31, and the students welcomed him for Mass and classroom visits.

Preschool through eighth grade students in the Northumberland County school assembled at St. Monica Church with faculty, staff and members of the community for Mass celebrated by the bishop. Students offered their time and talent during the Mass, proclaiming Scripture and leading hymns. Following the solemn Mass, students interacted with the bishop as they welcomed him into their classrooms.

“We are honored and thrilled to have the bishop here. It’s Catholic Schools Week, and this year’s theme of ‘Faith, Academics, Service’ is what we’re all about,” St. Monica School principal Susan Bickhart told The Catholic Witness.

Other Catholic Schools Week events included forensics presentations by students in grades 5-8, Vocations Appreciation Day, a presentation on Internet safety and anti-bullying, and a food drive for local ministries.

“There is such a special feeling here between the families, the children, the faculty and the staff. I feel it every day when I walk in, and I hear it from people who come and work with the children,” Mrs. Bickhart said. “It’s very much a family atmosphere here. You just know that Jesus is present in this school.”
Cheering wildly for the Hershey Bears and for Catholic schools, some 1,200 students, families and teachers, like those from St. Catherine Laboure in Harrisburg, left, attended the annual gathering at the GIANT Center to kick off Catholic Schools Week. A number of students donned school sweatshirts and others, like those from St. Joseph School in York, enjoyed sweet treats. The annual event offers a fun family outing and an opportunity for students to showcase their talents by singing the national anthem. This year, the choir from Lebanon Catholic School performed The Star-Spangled Banner, accompanied on the ice by Bishop Joseph P. McFadden.

EMILY M. ALBERT, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS