This month marks the golden anniversary of The Catholic Witness, which published its founding subscribers’ edition on January 13, 1966. Iconic images from the past 50 years are featured in this anniversary edition, as well as the founding letter from Bishop George Leech, and a congratulatory letter from Bishop Ronald Gainer. We’ll continue to celebrate our anniversary throughout the year with reprints of photos as well as interviews with former staff members. We thank our readers for their loyalty, and celebrate this milestone with you!
Dear Friends in Christ,

Today we of the Diocese of Harrisburg inaugurate our own newspaper. You see readily why it bears the name of The Catholic Witness. . . . On the part of all of us, please God, The Catholic Witness will be of personal and practical help as we try and keep on trying to be loyal and true witnesses for Christ in our daily living, spiritual and temporal, in private and in public. Godspeed The Catholic Witness on its errand of truth and love.

These words, taken from the letter of Bishop George Leech, introduced the diocese to its new diocesan newspaper. Bishop Leech explained that the purpose of Catholic Witness was to do to the best of our ability the task the Bishop has entrusted to us. We are not interested in creating sugar-coated religious stories, or to produce artificial gentility that does not exist. We are not interested in creating editorial features between the church and the faith. We are interested simply in doing our job as witnesses.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer

Print your own sewing patterns! To preserve in text and photos the events, programs and activities of the diocese, parishes, schools, families and individuals – reporting and preserving the ways we in the Diocese of Harrisburg sanctify, celebrate, evangelize, educate and serve in the name of Christ.

The Catholic Witness has been faithful to its mission to spread the Gospel and to present the latest in text and cartoon form, events, programs, parishes, and values. The Catholic Witness is to be an organ of information, instruction, education and service in the name of Christ. The first heralds of the Good News were angels, then the Catholic Witness.

The Church as a whole and America as a whole; the diocese, the parish, the family, the school, the individual soul; the Commonwealth, the town, the individual citizen and neighbor – all these The Catholic Witness embraces in Christ within the scope of its interest and concern.

The Church as a whole and America as a whole; the diocese, the parish, the family, the school, the individual soul; the Commonwealth, the town, the individual citizen and neighbor – all these The Catholic Witness embraces in Christ within the scope of its interest and concern.

Bishop of Harrisburg

Vol. 1 No. 1 January 18, 1966 Harrisburg, Penna.

‘Doing Our Job as Witnesses’

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

A turn through the fragile pages of the founding edition of The Catholic Witness quickly reveals a newspaper style common to the 1960s era.

Editorials – in text and cartoon form, from staff, syndicates and readers – focus on peace efforts and the earliest fruits of the Second Vatican Council. Black and white photo essays span full pages to depict the people and places of the diocese. Advertisements extend the latest in ladies’ fashion (Print your own sewing patterns!) and offer solutions to male baldness. Furniture ads placed among social justice editorials, and local news stories running alongside national columnists made for editions that sometimes looked a bit jumbled – but that points to the past-upward world of the day, when photographers and design staffs literally assembled the newspaper by hand.

There certainly are vast differences between The Catholic Witness of January 13, 1966, and The Catholic Witness of January 22, 2016. Yet, those differences are in style and method, not in mission and values.

There’s an interesting read in the inaugural edition: The Catholic Witness “Statement of Policy.” It’s a set of guidelines denoting the purpose of the diocesan newspaper and what readers could expect of it.

Within this “Statement of Policy,” we find that the values of this newspaper’s founders are still closely held today.

The function of The Catholic Witness, they write, is to be an organ of information, instruction, opinion and service in the diocese. This does not mean that news of the community, nation and world are to be excluded from the pages of The Catholic Witness. Far from it.

“With the cooperation of the people of the diocese, we intend to do the best of our ability to keep the Bishop informed and the Bishop has entrusted to us. We are not interested in creating an ‘image,’ in political labels, in sugar-coated religious stories, or in wrangles among columnists. We are interested simply in doing our job as witnesses.”

That last line struck a chord with me, as I considered the people who laid the foundation of our newspaper and forged the path for it to continue today. It sums up perfectly the responsibilities that we have as today’s staff: simply do our job as witnesses.

Would those founding staff members – and others who have served this newspaper over these past 50 years – have imagined how it would grow and continue to develop? Today, in addition to being mailed to some 78,000 households, The Catholic Witness is available digitally via e-mail, and its photos and stories are posted on the diocesan Web site and Facebook page. And, to celebrate our golden anniversary, we’ve established an Instagram account to bolster our social media and engage younger generations.

Many have left their mark on this newspaper: the late Msgr. Leo Bereschmidt, first executive editor; the late Carl Balcerak, first managing editor; Charlie Bluhrusch, renowned photographer from the first edition until his retirement in 1997; Paul Cullen, talented writer from 1972-1999; and the late Father T. Ronald Haney, executive editor from 1975-2006, to name a few.

And the current staff, with Bishop Ronald Gainer as publisher, managing editor Jennifer Reed; photojournalists Chris Heisey and Emily M. Albert; and administrative assistant/circulation coordinator Susan Hamburger.

We’ve all left our marks on our diocesan newspaper. Whether in photography, in written word, in editing or in ensuring that the newspaper and its message of evangelization is shared far and wide, we are simply doing our job as witnesses.
Celebrating 50 Years
**The Mystery of Mercy**

By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC

Special to The Witness

Many years ago, when I was a postulant, I learned the importance of being aware of the needs of others in a very real way. I was standing in a very long checkout line in a local pharmacy. It was late July, and it was pouring rain outside. The rain that was pouring on the roof of the store could be heard within the building. As the checkout line neared the cashier, I began to watch. I was amused by the reaction of the people coming out of the summer rain into the store through a revolving door. They would stand briefly in front of the door, shake their umbrella and try to dry themselves before experiencing the coldness of the air conditioner. People were coming in to the store in this manner, and those leaving it were obviously dreading the inevitable as they donned their raincoats, opened their umbrellas and jumped into the deluge.

In the midst of this flurry of activity was an elderly woman with an arm in a cast from her fingertips to her shoulder. She was trying to juggle her casted arm, a very large umbrella as well as a paper bag filled with various items and her purse. As she stood in front of the revolving door, in the midst of the stream of people coming in and going out, she tried to keep her purse from falling away. I watched as she spun around and around because of her inability to carry everything in addition to the movement of people around her. I began to wonder why no one stopped to help her. Could they even see her and her struggle?

After I paid for my items, I went up to her and asked, “Do you need any help? Where are you going?” She looked at me with a glance that pierced my being. I knew that look. She was thinking, “Who is this young woman? Why should I trust her?” Apparently, I passed the test because she stammered, “I’m going to the post office,” which was only a block away. I took her package and held the umbrella over her. I loved walking through summer rain, and this was a wonderful experience. As I walked down the block, I asked her, “After the post office, where are you going?” She responded by saying that she was going to the town’s senior citizens’ center for lunch. She was going to take the bus to get there. The rain was still coming down. I told her, “Wait for me here. Let me get my car. You can’t get on the bus in this rain with your package, your casted arm and umbrella.”

Turning around, I walked the several blocks back to my car. When I arrived at the post office, the woman was waiting for me. I opened the car door, got her into it, put the seatbelt around her and got back into the driver’s seat. She turned to me and time seemed to stand still. She fired, trying to understand, “Who are you really? Why would you do this for me? Why do you care?” Choking back the tears, “Are you my angel?” Chuckling, I explained to her that I was a postulant; that I was going to be a Sister; that I was from three towns away. I told her my name and gave her my card. She shared with me her sacred story.

Mary Orlando was 85 years old, and lived in a senior apartment building in town. She had no children and was never married. She was her parents’ only child, and upon her dad’s death when she was 20, lived with and took care of her mother. She had worked as an administrative assistant to one of town’s CEOs that had their corporate headquarters there. Her mom had only recently died and lived well to a ripe old age of 105 because of care she had given her. She said that she took care of her mom her entire life and was wondering if it was all a waste. She had lost all hope because life had become unbearably lonely. She said that she was a “God fearing woman” but began to doubt that God loved her any more.

As I drove her to the senior citizens’ center, I held her hand, cried and laughed with her. When we arrived at our destination, I turned off the car so that she could finish her prayers. I asked her to keep her prayers and promised her that we would again see each other; if not on this side of eternity, we would meet on the other side. As I helped her out of the car, we stood and she said to me, “You have given me a tremendous gift. You have renewed my sense of hope. I have never met you before, but you feel as if I have always known you. You have been a blessing for me this day!” I wiped the tears falling from her eyes and held her. I traced the sign of the cross on her head and kissed her and said goodbye. We never saw each other again. But the memory of her has been etched into mine. For me, she has become the epitome of what the mystery of mercy looks like. Let me explain.

In the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy Pope Francis declares: “Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.”

How often do we find ourselves in a similar situation that Ms. Orlando faced: broken and casted, alone and lonely, spun around, wet with tears, cold and sorrowsome. We often do call out to anyone who might hear us, “Are you really there?”

In a society that could make anyone and all of us invisible, during this Year of Mercy, see the individual that is near you and incarnate God’s love to them. Go out! You can do it!

1 http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html

**Lenten Retreat Day for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

Saturday, March 5 • Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Registration and Refreshments
10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Workshop/Activity
12 p.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch
2 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Small Group Activity
2 p.m. – 3 p.m. Prayer Service

Deacon Bill Fleming will be the retreat presenter. He is the Director of the Office of Disabilities Ministry in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He holds a Masters Degree in Special Education from Johns Hopkins University, is a board member of the National Catholic Parish on Disability, and coordinator of the Special Religious Education Program at St. John the Evangelist Church in Baltimore. The retreat is free of charge, and lunch is included. RSVP by February 26.

To register, contact Kate Neri at 717-657-4804, ext. 317, or kneri@hbgdiocese.org.
Father Raymond Orloski, a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg for 53 years, died January 11 at his home in Kulpmont. He was 79.

Provincial Superior of the U.S. Province of the Society of St. Sulpice.


Father Kemper, in his homily during the funeral Mass, reflected on Father Orloski as a just man and a respected priest who responded to his vocational calling.

“A total of 30 spaces are still available for youth and young adults who wish to join Bishop Ronald Gainer on the World Youth Day pilgrimage to Krakow, Poland, in July of this year. The international World Youth Day celebration will be highlighted by spiritual offerings, cultural activities and Mass celebrated by Pope Francis. The 2016 celebration will take place in the home see of St. John Paul II, who initiated World Youth Day in 1985. The theme for World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow, selected by Pope Francis, is “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7).

The 2016 celebration will take place in the home see of St. John Paul II, who initiated World Youth Day in 1985. The theme for World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow, selected by Pope Francis, is “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7).

Spaces Remain for World Youth Day 2016 Pilgrimage to Poland

World Youth Day festivities will begin July 26, and conclude with a Mass celebrated by Pope Francis on July 31. Prior to the international gathering, pilgrims from the Diocese of Harrisburg will participate in a retreat experience with Bishop Gainer and diocesan priests July 24-26 in Warsaw, Czeszowucha, Auschwitz and Wadowice.

The Diocese of Harrisburg’s World Youth Day pilgrimage is open to youth who will be ages 16-18 at the time of the trip and their chaperones, and to single and married young adults ages 18-35. The diocesan pilgrimage is an undertaking of the Diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

The Sacraments, wrote of “the Year of Consecrated Life. Bishop Gainer will be the celebrant.

All religious order priests, brothers and sisters, lay associates and members of secular institutes are especially invited to attend, and will be seated in the center/reserved pews. This Mass is open to all the faithful to celebrate consecrated men and women. A light reception will follow.
Local Catholic and Lutheran Leaders Laud ‘Declaration on the Way’ Document Underscores Agreements, Maps Steps to Full Unity between Churches

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

An ecumenical document that summarizes 50 years of Catholic-Lutheran dialogue aims to inspire both churches to continue working toward full Christian unity.

“Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry and Eucharist” expresses the consensus of Catholics and Lutherans on three specific and central topics, while mapping out remaining differences and suggestions to move forward.

Released this past fall, it was prepared by a joint task force of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

It’s a particularly timely document, released in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Catholic-Lutheran dialogue that commenced from the Second Vatican Council, notably Uniatia Redintegratio, the council’s document on ecumenism and the restoration of Christian unity.

The focus that the “Declaration on the Way” gives to 32 points of consensus between the Catholic and Lutheran churches celebrates the communion and lends inspiration and credibility to efforts to continue on the journey toward unity.

This observation was echoed by Father Paul R. Fisher, Director of the Diocesan Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and pastor of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Harrisburg, and Pastor Darlis Swan, Ecumenical Representative for the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and interim pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in New Bloomfield.

What stands out in the ‘Declaration on the Way’ is the reminder that, as Catholics and Lutherans, our conversation begins from the fact that we share a common faith,” Father Fisher remarked. “Yes, there are divergences in practices and in some aspects of the faith, but we don’t start there. We start with the Creed, with what we affirm together.

A total of 32 Statements of Agreement form the bulk of the declaration, drawn from international and regional dialogues from the past 50 years.

Among them:
• (From “Agreements on the Church”) – “Catholics and Lutherans agree that the church on earth has been assembled by the triune God, who grants to its members their sharing in the triune divine life as God’s own people, as the body of the risen Christ, and as the temple of the Holy Spirit, while they are also called to give witness to these gifts so that others may come to share in them” (DOTW, Section II, No. 1).
• (From “Agreements on Ordained Ministry”) – Lutherans and Catholics affirm together that ordained ministry is of divine origin and that it is necessary for the being of the church. Ministry is not simply a delegation from below, but is instituted by Jesus Christ” (DOTW, Section II, No. 15).
• (From “Agreements on the Eucharist”) – “Catholics and Lutherans agree that Eucharistic Communion as sacramental participation in the glorified body and blood of Christ, is a pledge that our life in Christ will be eternal, our bodies will rise, and the present world is destined for transformation, in the hope of uniting us in communion with the saints of all ages now with Christ in heaven” (DOTW, Section II, No. 31).

“What I really value about this document is the way that it went back to the findings, research and declarations of former dialogue at a worldwide level,” Pastor Swan said.

Reading through a Lutheran lens and an ecumenical lens, she said she “celebrates the commonalities on the Eucharist, and the real presence of Christ in the sacrament. The document lifts up the importance of the mystery of the faith and the Eucharistic meal as a value,” she pointed out.

Following the 32 points of affirmation, the “Declaration on the Way” moves into 15 particular areas of unresolved matters. The differences are not presented with the intent to divide, but rather to illustrate where efforts toward reconciliation are not yet finished. Among those differences:
• Who can be ordained – While many Lutheran churches ordain women, the Catholic Church does not consider itself authorized to do so.
• The nature and limits of church teaching – The Catholic Church teaches that its leaders can “articulate the truth of the gospel in doctrinal affirmations that express or interpret divine revelation.” Lutherans, however, see the church’s ministry and decisions as liable to error, and so believe that they must be examined by the people of God.
• Joint reception of the Eucharist – The Catholic and Lutheran churches have different regulations regarding the invitation to receive Communion. Most Lutheran congregations invite baptized believers to the table, while in the Catholic Church, only those in full communion with the Church are invited to receive the sacrament.

This difference in Eucharistic fellowship has “lamentable effects” in the lives of Christians, the declaration acknowledges, including those in Lutheran-Catholic marriages, as spouses cannot receive Communion in each other’s congregation.

This pain was highlighted in words in November, after a Lutheran woman asked Pope Francis what she and her Catholic husband could do to share Communion together.

In a pastoral response, the pope encouraged the couple to pray, study and act according to their consciences. “I would never dare to give permission for this because it is not in my authority,” the Holy Father said.

Reflecting on the circumstance, Father Fisher pointed out that “The goal of all ecumenical dialogue is the Breaking of the Bread. However, it’s not where we are yet, and this is what Pope Francis was saying in answering a pastoral question.”

The churches do indeed have an understanding and appreciation of their common beliefs.

“These realizations tend to surface around Christmas and Easter, when people bring their extended families to church or come together to celebrate,” he said.

“When I spoke about the ‘Declaration on the Way’ in the parish I’m serving now, people expressed how hopeful and excited they were about what it could mean to meaningfully share Communion with relatives or good friends who are members of the Catholic Church,” she said.

Father Fisher said that when he considers individuals who are lamenting the absence of Eucharistic fellowship or questioning the Church’s restrictions about it, he acknowledges that they are “expressing that deep desire for unity. The ‘Declaration on the Way’ offers the path. It shows us where we are, and the path to continue together.”

“The Lutheran and Catholic churches do wonderful things together,” he said. “There are joint food pantries, efforts to help the poor, events to bring us together in music and camaraderie. But being nice to each other so that we can be nice to other people is not the heart of Christian unity. Rather, it is about one Lord, one faith, one baptism. The declaration reminds us of that. We are called to take care of each other not merely because it’s good to do, but because of Jesus, who calls us to be together as one Church. The goal is to be fed together by the Eucharist.”

(Learn more about the ‘Declaration on the Way’ and download a copy of it by visiting the Web site of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/lutheran/declaration-on-the-way.cfm)

Vespers for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Sunday, January 24 at 3 p.m. • Prince of Peace Episcopal Church, 20 West High Street, Gettysburg

This annual event provides an opportunity for Lutherans, Anglicans and Roman Catholics of Central Pennsylvania to gather in prayer with our bishops for the restoration of full communion among all Christians so that all the baptized will soon be able with one voice to “proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord, whose mercy endures forever.

For information about the Vespers, or to learn more about ecumenical events and efforts, contact Father Paul Fisher, Director of the Diocesan Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, at 717-657-4804 or pfisher@aghldiocese.org.
Dialogue, Remembrance, Peace Highlighted as Pope Visits Synagogue

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

While the Catholic Church affirms that salvation comes through Jesus, it also recognizes that God is faithful and has not revoked his covenant with the Jewish people, Pope Francis said.

Interrupted repeatedly with applause at Rome’s main synagogue Jan. 17, the pope said the Church “recognizes the irrevocability of the Old Covenant and the constant and faithful love of God for Israel.”

The statement, which he already had made in his 2013 exhortation, “The Joy of the Gospel,” was repeated in a recent document by the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. The document reaffirmed Pope Benedict XVI’s teaching that the Church “neither conducts nor supports” any institutional missionary initiatives directed toward Jews.

While frigid winter temperatures finally arrived in Rome, Pope Francis received the warmest of welcomes at the synagogue.

The visit featured an exchange of standing ovations. Members of the Jewish community greeted the pope on their feet applauding and bid him farewell the same way; he stood and applauded with the congregation when honor was paid to the survival of survivors of the Nazi Holocaust who were present for the event.

Their sufferings, anguish and tears must never be forgotten,” the pope said. “And the past must be a lesson for us for the present and the future. The Shoah teaches us that maximum vigilance is always needed in order to intervene quickly in defense of human dignity and peace.”

Pope Francis was the third pope to visit the Rome synagogue and Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni, the chief rabbi of Rome, said that in Jewish tradition “an act repeated in a recent document by the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. The document reaffirmed Pope Benedict XVI’s teaching that the Church “neither conducts nor supports” any institutional missionary initiatives directed toward Jews.

The rabbi said he hoped Pope Francis would make some public reference to “The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable,” a statement issued in December by the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews. The statement provides for a recognition that all people are children of the same God, who calls them to praise him and to work together for the good of all.

While he said, the relationship between Christians and Jews is unique because of Christianity’s Jewish roots. “Therefore, Christians and Jews must see themselves as brothers and sisters united by the same God and by a rich, common spiritual heritage.”

In his speech, Rabbi Di Segni said the Rome Jewish community was welcoming the pope “to reaffirm that religious differences, which should be maintained and respected, never however be a justification for hatred and violence.”

“The Near East, Europe and many other parts of the world are besieged by wars and terrorism,” the rabbi said. “After decades in which Nazism, communism and other totalitarian ideologies led to such suffering, now violence has come back and it is fed and justified by fanatic visions inspired by religion.”

Dialogue and respect are the answer, he said, and the pope’s visit to the synagogue is a sign of that.

Synagogue Visit is Chapter in Rome’s Unique Catholic-Jewish History

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

History and geography have combined to make Catholic-Jewish relations in Rome unique, both negatively and positively – a fact highlighted by modern papal visits to the city’s main synagogue just two miles from the Vatican.


The city’s Jewish community existed before Jesus was born “and the Christians who arrived here were [originally] Jews themselves so this place has an enormous symbolic meaning,” said Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni, the chief rabbi of Rome. But, “the persecution we suffered, persecution by the Church” for centuries, including the 300 years when popes forced the city’s Jews to live in a ghetto, also makes Rome unique.

The main synagogue “was built on the ruins of the ghetto,” the rabbi told Catholic News Service Jan. 14 as he and his staff prepared to welcome the pope.

Especially since the Second Vatican Council, the general trend in relations between the popes and Rome’s Jewish community, like between Catholics and Jews elsewhere, is “good relations, friendship” and the possibility of confronting with frankness any problems that arise, Rabbi Di Segni said.

The rabbi has met with Pope Francis several times and has had telephone conversations with him as well, “there is always an open line in case of necessity.”

This visit is important because it gives two important signals: The first signal is continuity, demonstrating that “the route opened by John Paul II and followed by Benedict XVI is now going forward,” he said. The second signal is a recognition of the importance of mutual respect and dialogue at a time of increasing “violence inspired and sustained by distorted visions of religion.”

“We are a kind of symbolic center, due to our history and position,” he said, for demonstrating to the world that dialogue and peace are possible even between communities with a painful history and that centuries of denying or demonizing the other’s beliefs can come to an end.

The rabbi said he hoped Pope Francis would make some public reference to “The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable,” a statement issued in December by the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews. The statement provides for a recognition that all people are children of the same God, who calls them to praise him and to work together for the good of all.

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Dialogue and respect are the answer, he said, and the pope’s visit to the synagogue is a sign of that.
A Pilgrimage Site for the Year of Mercy

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Fairfield

Situated on a vista overlooking the town of Fairfield in southern Adams County, Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary offers a spiritual and serene setting on its several acres, and rich history surrounding the parish and the founder of the order of priests who serve there.

The parish traces its roots to the early 1800s, when priests from St. Joseph Parish and Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., traveled to Millerstown (Fairfield’s original name) to care for the Catholics there and celebrate Masses in their homes. The cornerstone for a church was laid in 1852; Father Crane, a priest from Mount St. Mary’s, collected money to start the construction and named the church “Our Lady of the Snows.” St. John Neumann, as bishop, confirmed 29 young adults during a visit in 1855.

According to parish history, a priest there in 1905 wrote a document stating that the church, built in 1854, was named the Church of the Immaculate Conception. He filed the document at the chancery office, and so the name became official.

The original church was located on Main Street. Shortly after the first pastor arrived in 1910, a new rectory was built, necessitating that the cemetery be relocated. Parishioners moved their beloved dead individually by wagon to the new burial site.

St. Rita Church in nearby Blue Ridge Summit was established in 1920, and both churches have shared the same pastor since that time. In 1993, the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary arrived to staff St. Mary’s and St. Rita’s; Father Michael Messaro was the first pastor from that congregation to serve the two parishes, and was succeeded by Father Robert Malagesi last year.

A statue of St. Gaetano Errico is displayed in the church, along with one of his relics. He is the founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, who have served Immaculate Conception Parish since 1993. The current church was built in 2000, and incorporates spectacular stained-glass windows from the original Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish.

The church is open every day from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. The church is open five days a week for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

He founded the order because he felt that the Father revelation of the Father’s love awaited those who would be aware of it, and to teach us how to respond to that love.

Christ came to reveal the Father’s love for us, and to teach us how to respond to that love.

A relic of St. Gaetano Errico, even at his beatification, was called a martyr of the Confessional, where God extends his mercy to us.

Immaculate Conception Church is filled with images of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and St. Gaetano, including a relic. On the sloping hillside above the church stands the St. Gaetano Errico House of Studies, which is home to an adoration chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed five days a week.

“I consider my priesthood as doing the work of Christ,” Father Malagesi said. “Christ came to reveal the Father’s love for us, and to teach us how to respond to that love. That’s what I would hope for Catholics to understand in this Year of Mercy: to be aware of the Father’s love, and to learn how to respond to that love.”

(Article by Jen Reed, The Catholic Witness.)

The Holy Door for the Year of Mercy at Immaculate Conception Church in Fairfield is a replica of the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica. The panels depict scenes from throughout Scripture.

Make a Visit

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church is located at 256 Tract Road in Fairfield. From Main Street (Route 116) in Fairfield, turn on McGinley Drive, and follow the road up to the several acres on which the church and the house of studies stand. The church is open every day from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Priests are welcome to bring parish groups to celebrate Mass, or for days of reflection. Arrange in advance by contacting Father Malagesi at 717-642-8815.

Learn more about the parish at http://www.stmarysfairfieldpa.org/.

Above: The St. Gaetano Errico House of Studies, which includes an adoration chapel, sits on the hillside above the church.

Left: The adoration chapel at the St. Gaetano House of Studies adjacent to Immaculate Conception Church is open five days a week for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.
By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

The miracles of Jesus of Nazareth presented in the Gospels reveal that Jesus is God, and illustrate that he came to bring an abundance of joy, grace and life to his people, Bishop Ronald Gainer told those gathered for the diocesan Pro-Life Mass and prayerful witness to the culture of life in York on Jan. 17.

The Mass, celebrated at St. Patrick Church in York, drew individuals, families and students in celebrating life from the moment of conception until natural death, and was followed by a Rosary procession and prayers at the Planned Parenthood clinic several blocks away.

Reflecting on the day’s Gospel reading about the miracle Jesus performed at the wedding feast at Cana, Bishop Gainer pointed out that, though the Lord first indicated that it wasn’t yet his time to reveal his power, Mary had intuition.

“Mary shows a confident, firm trust in her son,” the bishop said. “Not only does she know he has the power to do something, but she believes he has the will to act, the will to change this situation for the better. So she tells the staff, ‘Do whatever he tells you,’ and Our Lord gives instruction.”

When Jesus changes the water into wine, he doesn’t provide just an adequate amount suitable for the celebration. Rather, he provides “a super abundance, an excess,” the bishop pointed out. “He came to renew and transform this original covenant through his death and Resurrection to bring a super abundance of joy and grace and life to the chosen people.”

Mary’s confidence in her son at the wedding feast can be a model for those in the pro-life movement, Bishop Gainer noted.

“She had that confident trust in the power of her son, and in the will of her son to act,” he said. “In this tragic anniversary of the legalization of abortion, Jesus continues to have the power to make this change in the minds and hearts and laws of our land, and he wills to do so. We are his instruments…. Mary and her confident trust in her son can really be our model. She did not get discouraged. She knew he would do something, and he does. That confidence, that hope and that faith must be ours too, and we can ask our Mother Mary to intercede for us that we will have that confident trust in the power of her son.”

In his homily, the bishop prayed for the continued passion for the faithful in continuing to be convincing witnesses to the sacredness of life.

He also prayed for legal protection for human life, and for those who have had an abortion or who are involved in the industry.

“We pray too in a very special way during this Jubilee of Mercy…that they might come to know the truth and the mercy of God,” he said. “No one is beyond God’s forgiveness and God’s healing power, and in this Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, you and I need also to truly communicate in convincing ways that message of God’s love and mercy for all of us.”
Dear Friends in Christ,

Founded by the Venerable Pauline Jaricot, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith seeks prayers and alms for the world’s missions. There are over 1,150 mission dioceses in Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands, and in remote regions of Central and South America which depend upon the subsidies received from the Propagation of the Faith to grow and continue to preach the Gospel.

The assistance missionaries receive through Membership Sunday supports the care of missionaries in a real and practical way. It provides for pastoral and evangelizing programs, for catechists and catechetical work. It helps with building churches and chapels, and gives aid to religious communities for health care and education and for communication and transportation needs.

When Pauline Jaricot founded the Society in 1822, the very first collection was sent to support the missions in the vast diocese of Louisiana, which then extended from the Florida Keys to Canada, as well as the missions of Kentucky and in China. The Society’s goal was, and is, to support missions worldwide in unevangelized lands. As soon as missions are able to exist on their own the Society discontinues its aid, as the demands are many and resources inadequate for the growing Church throughout the world.

In the Diocese of Harrisburg, there are two yearly collections for the universal missions, namely World Mission Sunday and Membership Sunday. These collections are vital to the ongoing mission work of the Universal Church. Please know that 15,000 Masses are offered each year by missionaries throughout the world for the members of the Society. Your prayers and generosity also sustain missionaries in fulfilling the mandate of Christ to take the Gospel “...to the ends of the earth.”

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Reverend Robert F. Sharman
Diocesan Director

“What are Catholics in the United States looking for? A sense of Mission! They want to put their faith to work.”

~ Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen
National director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith from 1950-1966

“Please Join

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith to pass on the “Good News” of Jesus among those who live without the hope that comes from Christ our Lord!

MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY COLLECTION FEBRUARY 7, 2016

For more information:
Missions Office
4800 Union Deposit Road
Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710

(717) 657-4804, ext. 240
missions@hbgdiocese.org
www.hbgdiocese.org/missions
The time has arrived! Register now for 5th Diocesan Men’s Conference, being held March 12 at Bishop McDevitt High School, Harrisburg. This year we hope to draw 1,000 men. In keeping with the Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis, our theme is: Jesus I Trust in You: Men Called to the Ocean of Mercy. Here are 10 good reasons to attend this year’s conference:

1. Fellowship – Spend the day with old friends and meet new ones. Our attendees are men who experience the same joys and struggles you do. You’ll be able to visit an array of Catholic exhibitors as well as men representing Catholic men’s groups such as the Knights of Columbus and That Man Is You.

2. Be Part of History – This will be our 5th Diocesan Men’s Conference. The conferences have grown every year. Last year we had 852 men attend! Let’s bump it up to 1,000 this year.

3. Feeding Body and Soul – Catholicism is a faith for our spirit and our flesh. At this conference, you will get good food, good music, and good talks and worship to feed body and soul.

4. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – Those who have been to this conference know the power of this hour, when hundreds of men join together to worship our Eucharistic Lord in prayer and song as we adore the Most Blessed Sacrament. Tantum Ergo, anyone?

5. A Clean Slate – In recent years, we have had about 20 different priests hearing Confessions. Whether it has been a month or 50 years since you’ve been to Confession, come and know the healing, cleansing power of this sacrament. There is no sin too big, no amount of sins too many. God’s mercy is inexhaustible!

6. Keynote Speaker, Tom Peterson – Tom Peterson is Founder and President of Catholics Come Home, a national apostolate throughout the country. He is coming from Atlanta. He has appeared on radio, television, and speaks at many conferences. Tom’s talk is entitled, “The World Needs Heroes.” Come listen to his exciting witness of what happens when we give ourselves over to God!

7. Terrific Workshops and Speakers – Our blue-ribbon panel of presenters will be speaking on topics such as Apologetics, Men as Leaders of Our Families, Angels and Demons, The Bible and Prayer, Sports and Life, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Power of Mass and the Eucharist, Mary, Mother of Mercy, Men and the Moral Life, Helping Your Adult Children Come Back to the Church, and much more. Good luck choosing!

8. Father Michael Gaitley, MIC – Father Gaitley is a nationally renowned author, speaker, and television personality, coming from Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Some of his books include: Jesus, Who is the Face of the Father’s Mercy, and Jesus I Trust in You.

9. Mass Celebrated by Bishop Gainer – How wonderful it will be to spend the last part of the day with nearly 1,000 men, with the Chief Shepherd of our Diocese, and most importantly, with our Eucharistic Lord Himself in the greatest reality this side of Heaven—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!

10. Grace Following Upon Grace – You don’t want to miss the torrential outpouring of grace, an “Ocean of Mercy” for all men attending!

Early-bird registration is due by February 23, and is $30 per man. Later registration is a bit more. Registrations are already coming in at a quick pace. You can find the registration brochures at your parish and online and paper registration on the diocesan website at www.hbgdiocese.org/men.

Don’t miss the grace of the Men’s Conference! May Jesus, Who is the Face of the Father’s Mercy, bless our day together!

(James Gontis is the Director of the Diocesan Department for Religious Education.)

**Send Us Your Recipes and Stories!**

Here’s a recipe from the November 16, 1984, edition, a dish certainly applicable for these wintery days. With our “Feeding the Faith” series, The Catholic Witness is looking to support family meal time by sharing family recipes in upcoming editions, as well as scripture and “food for thought.” Do you have a significant dish and memory to share with us? You may mail a copy of the recipe and your thoughts to 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111 or email it to witness@hbgdiocese.org.

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**Warm Beef Stew for a Cold Day**

**Ingredients**

- 2 lbs lean stew beef
- 1/2 cup salad oil
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 small onion, peeled, and cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 stalks celery
- 2 large potatoes, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces
- 3 small can of petite tomatoes, cored and diced
- 2tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste

**Method**

1. Cover beef in 3-inch cubes if not already done.
2. Pour salad oil into a large heavy-bottom pot (a Dutch oven works beautifully).
3. Use high heat, and brown meat well.
4. Add onion and brown onion well.
5. Add flour and brown flour.
6. Add water slowly, stirring to avoid lumps. Beeth should be brown and should be very thin, like water. Add more water if necessary.
7. Reduce heat and simmer gently for 1 1/2 to 2 hours or until meat is tender.
8. Meanwhile, drain the juice of the tomatoes into a small pot and add the celery and carrots. Simmer until tender. Remove from heat. Add water if necessary.
9. Cover potatoes with water and cook until tender. Drain and cool.
10. When meat is tender, add all ingredients. Season with salt and pepper.

I have often wondered if Our Lord at this time of year would have been fed with lamb, which was the more common meat at that time in the Middle East. That’s one of the questions I’ll ask him if I should be lucky enough to enter the gates of heaven. Be sure to ask God for all the gifts, including food, that he has blessed us with.

**Chris Elliot, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, has been in the restaurant business 15 years. He is a member of St. Joseph, Hanover.**

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**Conclusion**

Days to Morning Glory and You Did it to Me. He’ll be giving two different workshop presentations.

9. Mass Celebrated by Bishop Gainer – How wonderful it will be to spend the last part of the day with nearly 1,000 men, with the Chief Shepherd of our Diocese, and most importantly, with our Eucharistic Lord Himself in the greatest reality this side of Heaven—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!

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The Beginning Experience Team for the Harrisburg Diocese announces that they have booked Camp Hebron in Halifax, Pa., for a Beginning Experience Weekend, April 29-May 1, 2016. Beginning Experience weekends are an approved Roman Catholic Program designed for those suffering the loss of a spouse through death, divorce or separation. Hundreds of persons have been helped to move towards successful, productive, happy lives by attending one of these weekends. The weekend is led by persons who are widowed, separated or divorced and are trained in facilitating a weekend. Each Beginning Experience Team is certified by the International Beginning Experience Organization.

Beginning Experience is your Church at work to provide help, healing and spiritual restoration. Visit the Diocesan Web site, www.hbgdiocese.org/ and go to marriage and family, or check www.beginningexperience.org. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Harrisburg Beginning Experience Team at 717-512-2718 or harrisburgbe@gmail.com.
Lancaster Catholic to Kick Off Catholic Schools Week with Open House

Lancaster Catholic High School will kick-off Catholic Schools Week with an Open House on Sunday, January 31 by hosting its annual Open House. Students and parents interested in learning more about the education, faith and extracurricular options at LCHS are invited from 1-2 p.m. for tours led by students and teachers, activities in various classrooms, presentations by students in Campus Ministry, a curriculum fair and presentations by students, alumni and current students, faculty and staff. More than 120 LCHS families will take place on Friday.

LCHS will celebrate with events every day during Catholic Schools Week that fills our halls every day with prospective students and their families. The open house is a great opportunity to experience LCHS and meet our dedicated teachers, current students, faculty and staff. Parents will be able to meet and talk with our current students, faculty and staff and learn first-hand about the Lancaster Catholic family.

The energy and excitement of Open House carry over into the school’s week-long celebration of National Catholic Schools Week.

Students and parents interested in learning more about the education, faith and extracurricular options at LCHS are invited from 1-2 p.m. for tours led by students and teachers, activities in various classrooms, presentations by students in Campus Ministry, a curriculum fair and presentations by students, alumni and current students, faculty and staff. More than 120 LCHS families will take place on Friday.

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Father Samson from Assumption BVM Parish in Lebanon is starting a Charismatic Prayer Group, from 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. in the Chapel, 2 North 8th Street, Lebanon. The group will meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month.

Bishop Ronald Gainer will celebrate a Mass of St. Michael the Archangel on Sept. 30th at 7:00 p.m. at St. Michael’s Church, 400 Knoch Road, Mount Carmel. The event will feature the 2016 First Communion Dresses and Suits that will be available for purchase through the First Communion Sponsors Committee. First Communion Sponsors Committee: Father Samson from Assumption BVM Parish in Lebanon; St. Michael’s Parish Choir, Little Flower Club, Jr. Vocations, and Parish Social Council; Food and Drink Committee; and the parish of St. Catherine Labouré in Harrisburg.

A Cake Bake-off Contest will be held Sunday morning after Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Lebanon. Prizes will be awarded for the best works of art, jewelry and much more! A Chili Cook-off Contest will be held on Sept.30-Oct.7, 2016. This missionary pilgrimage is a sponsored event by Pilgrims of Praise and Life in the Spirit Prayer groups.

Visit www.stjude.com/parish for more information or to contact us.

Plans for Lent? If you have not yet decided what you will give up for Lent, consider fasting. Fasting is a time-honored Lenten practice that enables you to grow in self-denial, reflect on what you have been given and increase your compassion for those who are less fortunate. Fasting is a time to work toward spiritual growth and to prepare for the celebration of Easter. The Church encourages the faithful to observe this practice.

In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, the Spiritual Director of the Pauline Fathers, the Fathers of Mercy is encouraging all Catholics to consider fasting during the Lenten season. Contemplative Outreach is a program that focuses on Centering Prayer as it was developed by Thomas Keating. St. Alusvus Church will be providing two ways to fast during the Lenten season. The first will be offered at St. Alusvus Church on Sunday, February 21 from 9 AM to 1 PM in Divine Mercy Hall, 400 Block of West Cherry Street in Mount Carmel. Adults-$7 and Children-$5.

Visit www.stjude.com/parish for more information or to contact us.

Please contact Deacon Matt Atkinson at 717-647-5497 or 717-647-2227. Deacon Matt will be at the parish center on Sundays for anyone considering a profession of faith. If you are interested, you can contact Deacon Matt Atkinson at 717-647-5497 or 717-647-2227. He will be happy to assist you with your faith journey.

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The Holy Year of Mercy announced by Pope Francis is intended to highlight the Catholic Church’s mission to be a “credible witness” to God’s mercy. “At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives,” wrote Pope Francis in Misericordiae Vultus, his introduction to the Jubilee Year of Mercy. The biblical theme of the year is “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36).

For more information and practical suggestions for how to celebrate the Year of Mercy, visit the Vatican’s Jubilee of Mercy website (www.iubilaeum-francis.va) and the USCCB’s Year of Mercy webpage (www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/jubilee-of-mercy/index.cfm).

The 2016 Winter/Spring Session of the Diocesan Institute for Catechetical and Pastoral Formation affords adult Catholics the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the Catholic Faith. All courses and workshops are open to any interested adult, including those who are pursuing catechetical certification in the diocese and those who wish to understand the Catholic Faith better. Learn from home option: Numerous faith formation offerings are also available via webinar, allowing you to participate in “real time” from home or to request recordings to view at your convenience. Webinar offerings are clearly marked.

For information about the Diocesan Institute or obtaining catechetical certification in the Diocese of Harrisburg, contact Ryan Bolster at 717-657-4804, ext. 225, or rbolster@hbgdiocese.org. To view the complete Winter/Spring session schedule, which includes course descriptions and fees, please visit www.hbgdiocese.org.

**COURSES OF SPECIALIZATION**

- **Body, Soul... and Divinity: Saint John Paul II’s Theology of the Body**
  - Tuesdays and Thursdays, April 5, 7, 12, 14, 19 and 21
  - 6:30-8:30 p.m.
  - Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
  - ALSO AVAILABLE VIA WEBINAR
  - Mrs. Ann Koshute

- **Recent Church Documents on Evangelization and Catechesis**
  - Mondays and Tuesdays, May 9, 10, 16 and 17
  - 6:30-9 p.m.
  - Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
  - Mr. James Gontis

- **ELECTIVES**
  - The Parables of Mercy
    - Thursday, February 25
    - 7:00-8:30 p.m.
    - Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
    - ALSO AVAILABLE VIA WEBINAR
    - Mr. Ryan Bolster

  - The Saints in Mercy
    - Thursday, March 3
    - 7:00-8:30 p.m.
    - Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
    - ALSO AVAILABLE VIA WEBINAR
    - Mr. Ryan Bolster

  - The Four Women Doctors of the Church
    - Tuesday, March 8
    - 6:30-8:30 p.m.
    - Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
    - ALSO AVAILABLE VIA WEBINAR
    - Mr. Ryan Bolster

  - The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
    - Thursday, March 17
    - 7:30-8:30 p.m.
    - Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
    - ALSO AVAILABLE VIA WEBINAR
    - Mr. Ryan Bolster
Diocesan Financial Report

Dear Friends in Christ, Once again I am pleased to share with you the audited Diocesan Financial Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. This report reflects the continued and generous financial support from you, the faithful of the diocese, for our overall mission and ministry.

Pope Francis declared a Jubilee Year of Mercy that began on December 8 and will conclude next year on November 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. Merciful like the Father, is the “motto” of this Holy Year. In mercy, we find proof of how God loves us.

In the book of the Prophet Isaiah we read, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to those in captivity; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (61:1-2). This Holy Year will bring to the fore the richness of God’s mercy.

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Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer

Consistent with its policy of providing financial disclosure, the Diocese of Harrisburg is once again presenting the financial statements of its Central Offices and Ministries. The financial statements presented here for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015 and 2014 were prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and were audited by the independent certified public accounting firm McKeon and Asbury, LLP. These financial reports do not include the financial status of diocesan parishes and schools or Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg, PA. Inc. Each of these entities maintains its own set of fiscal records and reports individually to its own particular constituencies. The complete financial reports for the diocese, together with the independent auditor’s report and notes to the financial statements, are available from Harrisburg Catholic Administrative Services, Inc. (HCAS) upon request.

2015 2014
Changes in unrestricted net assets
Revenues and gains
Involvements, primarily self-insurance 34,035,078 28,252,187
Less: Gifts received 18,468,120 18,184,843
Cemetery sales 1,580,108 1,491,612
Program service fees 1,731,688 1,598,170
Rental income 275,478 247,162
Other 27,740 18,286
Total unrestricted revenues and gains 36,416,020 29,874,097
Net assets released from restrictions 808,226 700,990
Total unrestricted revenues, gains, and other support 37,224,246 30,575,087
Revenues and losses
Supporting services
General administration 628,878 613,808
Temporizations:
Plant operations 1,563,706 1,655,805
Other administrative support 2,177,488 2,184,526
Program activities:
Fund raising 336,417 259,465
Financial support to Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg 3,549,617 3,623,017
Cemetery operations 1,557,089 1,537,997
Insurance 16,557,923 16,465,059
Programs:
Education 909,309 830,148
Clergy and religious life 1,900,468 2,006,066
Catholic life and evangelization 1,220,766 1,132,903
Seminarians 1,374,586 1,408,237
Catholic education 2,028,758 1,908,426
Commissions 884,646 877,043
Pensions 337,375 339,308
Interest - deposits payable 1,788,792 1,131,037
Other 633,956 633,956
Total expenses and losses 37,224,246 30,575,087

2015 2014
Total liabilities and net assets 169,002,136 151,850,147
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg invites you on an 11-day pilgrimage with Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer, Bishop of Harrisburg, PA

- Rome: Four major basilicas, Catacombs, the Vatican area including the Sistine Chapel. Be in Rome for the potential canonization of Blessed Mother Teresa and/or the Angelus with Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, in St. Peter’s Square.
- Assisi: Sites associated with Sts. Francis & Clare
- Orvieto / Lanciano: Eucharistic Miracles
- Loreto: The Holy House of Nazareth
- San Giovanni: Sites associated with Padre Pio
- Monte Sant’ Angelo: St. Michael’s cave
- Montecassino: The Abbey
- And so much more!

Travel by:
PO Box 280
Batesville, IN 47006
800.713.9800
tavel@pentecosttours.com

Early registration price $2,999 + $639* per person from JFK if deposit is paid by 5-19-16
Base price $3,099 + $639* per person after 5-19-16
*Estimated Airline Taxes & Fuel Surcharges subject to increase/decrease at 30 days prior