The Church on Intimate Love: Healthy Soul, Healthy Body

The Catholic Witness presents in this edition “The Church on Intimate Love: Healthy Soul, Healthy Body,” a special insert on the Church’s teachings on love, marriage and childbearing. The educational tool, found on pages 9-12, features materials on Church teaching regarding contraception; the transcript of a roundtable discussion with obstetricians and gynecologists at Holy Spirit Hospital’s Center for Women’s Health; and information regarding Natural Family Planning.

The insert was produced in conjunction with the Diocesan Offices of the Vicar General, Respect Life Activities, Family Ministries and Religious Education. Materials from this special insert will also be available online at www.hbgdiocese.org.

Churches Become Centers for Aid, Prayer after Widespread Tornado Damage

Catholic News Service

As one of the few buildings in town to come through intense storms March 2 nearly intact, St. Francis Xavier Church in Henryville, Ind., has become a natural staging area for relief efforts, community organizing and prayer.

Four days after a devastating tornado hit, volunteers and professionals used St. Xavier, the nearby Henryville Community Church and a community center as bases for people trying to put their lives back together.

The town of about 1,600 was one of several in the region to be largely destroyed by a wave of storms that created dozens of tornadoes across 11 states March 2 and 3.

At least 39 people were killed, including one in Clark County, where Henryville and nearby Marysville took direct hits. Deaths also were reported in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Ohio. Substantial damage dotted those states as well as Georgia, North Carolina, Illinois, Mississippi, Virginia and South Carolina.

Tracy Guernsey, the staff nurse at Henryville’s public school complex, was among about 40 people still in the building when the tornado hit. She told Catholic News Service in a March 5 phone interview that if classes hadn’t been dismissed early in the face of the advancing storm, the death toll in Henryville would have been dramatic.

She said she and about 15 other people emerged from her office to find the whole second floor of the school had been ripped off. Inside, the papers on her desk were undisturbed.

The tornado hit at the normal dismissal time of 3 p.m., Guernsey said. “The bus drivers were the heroes here. If they hadn’t sent the buses out early, it would’ve been a different story.”

Also reeling were parishioners of St. Luke Catholic Church in Salyersville, Ky., which was destroyed by another tornado in the same weather front. There, parishioner Helen Pennington was working in the church basement as the twister approached. Two carfuls of people passing through the area asked to seek shelter and joined her in safety while the structure above was flattened.

Six buildings – the church, the rectory, an outreach
Pennsylvania Bishops Call for Fasting for Religious Liberty

The bishops of Pennsylvania have declared Friday, March 30, 2012, as a day of prayer, fasting and abstinence for the preservation of religious liberty. The text of the Bishops’ statement announced in a special letter to priests below, and available online at www.bhdiocece.org/conscience and www.pacatholic.org with a host of materials on religious liberty.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The assault by the federal government on constitutionally guaranteed religious liberty is a clear attack on the faith of Christians and other adherents of religious belief. It arises from a mandate of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) which punishes the Church for its firmly held beliefs and consistent teaching. This mandate – published in the federal register without change, despite claims of “accommodations” – would force Catholic employers to pay for abortion-causing drugs, sterilization and contraception.

Some falsely suggest that the HHS mandate is about contraception. This is primarily about religious liberty and our First Amendment rights to the free exercise of our religion. Make no mistake about it – this government mandate is a step which will inevitably lead to other mandates that continue to strike at the heart of our Faith and the institutional liberties we have been guaranteed. The mandate cannot stand – it must not stand!

This same mandate also, alarmingly, purports to tell churches what type of activities the government thinks are religious. Catholic schools, hospitals, nursing homes and Catholic charities do not qualify for a religious exemption. Why? Because they serve non-Catholics. Under the government’s view, Jesus and his disciples would have been deemed not religious enough. We have entered dangerous territory – the government is defining religion and limiting its practice. This is an unprecedented and gross infringement on our religious freedom. We did not pick this fight, but neither will we run from it.

Religious liberty does not belong to the Democrats or Republicans, it belongs to all Americans. Long before these mandates were issued, the bishops in the United States worked for health care reform and universal coverage that respects all human life from conception to natural death and includes language to protect religious conscience and practice of all citizens. Our fervent entreaties were answered with promises that we had nothing to fear. We cannot now sit idly by and let this happen. We cannot, as a Church, be silent because some have sought to politicize our plight. Please visit www.pacatholic.org to send a message to your legislators in support of conscience rights. Our voices and yours must be heard. The mandate must be rescinded. Our freedom and liberty must be preserved. And in this effort, we must remain steadfast.

Throughout history, Catholics in times of need have turned to God through prayer and fasting, as these practices allow us to grow closer to the Lord, inspire us to Do His will and invoke His protection in answer to our prayers. During the Fridays of Lent, the faithful are obliged to abstain from eating meat. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics are also asked to fast – eating only one full meal, and, if necessary, two much smaller meals – to aid our spiritual life.

Recognizing the efficacy of prayer and fasting as well as the challenges we face in overcoming the recent attack on our religious freedom, we, the Bishops of Pennsylvania, request that all Catholics dedicate the regular Lenten Friday practice of prayer and abstinence as well as the additional practice of fasting on Friday, March 30, to the preservation of religious liberty. On that day, offer your sacrifice for the cause of religious liberty, that the Church may be granted the basic right to practice what she preaches, and that it may be extended to all their adherents to the rights of all Americans, including those of faith. We will join with the over 3 million Catholics in Pennsylvania to mark this day of prayer, fasting and abstinence for religious liberty.

As we continue on our Lenten journey, we know the Lord walks with us during times of trial and concern. Let us do all that we are able – prayer, fasting, abstinence and the exercise of faithful citizenship – to uphold the freedoms of Christ’s Church and to grow closer to Him.

By Victoria Laskowski
Special to The Witness

Fasting for Religious Liberty

The ongoing flurry of debate over issues related to healthcare may have obscured the Church’s long-held support of comprehensive health care reform. So here is a review.

Jesus Christ was our earliest and best model and advocate for health care. Indeed, the Church’s participation from its earliest days in health care has been motivated by the example and teaching of Jesus.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops reflected on this in their 1981 document, Health Care for All: “Jesus used this power in a very personal and concrete way. He touched them and there- by brought them health and wholeness. He cured the sick (see Mt 8:1-4) gave sight to the blind (see Mt. 9:27-31) and enabled the lame to walk (see Lk. 5:17-26). On these and numerous other occasions, Jesus dramatized the miraculous nature of healing in His action. He relieved sufferings and cured all who were afflicted” (Mt. 8:16).

Jesus did not simply heal the person, he healed the soul. “Through his life and min- istry he proclaimed the kingdom of God on earth and reached out to touch and to heal our wounded humanity. He came to the world to make all human, to help us to realize our human dignity as creatures made in the image of God. He came to bring the fullness of life” (Jn. 11:25-26).

In light of Jesus’ healing ministry and in consideration of many earlier writings on so- cial justice, Health Care for All went on to set these guiding principles for health care policy: “Adequate health care is a human right; pluralism of resources (public, private, voluntary, religious and non-profit) is essen- tial; health care is part of our common responsibility as citizens; health care should be a reason- able choice of providers; uniform standards are an essential element of the health care system; and finally, resources are not always necessary.”

The Bishops went on in their 1981 docu- ment to call for a universal health insurance program to guarantee access to basic health care for all. They stated that Catholic health care systems had been and would continue to fulfill a “prophetic role” in the area of health care.

What was a government initiative for health care reform begin in 1993, the Bishops issued Comprehensive Health Care Re- form and restated their ongoing support for such an effort: “Our approach to health care is shaped by a simple but fundamental principle: Every person has a right to adequate health care. This right flows from the sanctity of human life and the dignity that belongs to all human persons, who are made in the image of God.”

Health care is more than a commodity; it is a basic human right, an essential safeguard of human dignity and life. We believe our peo- ple’s health should not depend on where they work, how much their paycheck is, or where they live. Our constant teaching that each human life must be protected and hu- manity must be sustained leads us to insist that all people have a right to health care. This right is explicitly affirmed in Pacem in Terris (Pope John XXIII, 1963) and is the founda- tion for the Church’s advocacy for health care reform.

In their statement, the Bishops also set clear guidelines that continue to be a blueprint for their current efforts.

“We believe that the reform of the health care system that is under consideration and yet to be enacted must be rooted in values that reflect the essential dignity of each person, ensure that basic human rights are protected, and recognize the unique needs and claims of the poor.”

In light of this, the Bishops cited eight criteria for health care reform:

Health care reform must preserve and en- sure the sanctity and dignity of human life and human dignity. Any health care system must show a prior- ity concern for the poor.

There must be universal access to compré- hensive health care for every person living in the United States.

Health care should be comprehensive and provide preventative care, treatment of dis- eases and palliative care for the chronically ill or dying.

Health care must allow for pluralism and ensure respect for religious and ethical val- ues in the delivery of health care for con- sumers and for individual and institutional providers.

Health care should be of high quality. Any health care system must have a method for cost containment and controls.

Health care should be delivered and fi- nanced equitably based on ability to pay.

When the current conversation about health care began in 2009, the Bishops re- framed these guidelines in their Labor Day message, as delivered by Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Center. Health care must reflect these principles:

It must be universal and respect life and human dignity.

It must be accessible to all with a special concern for the poor.

Any new system must pursue the common good and “preserve pluralism including free- dom of conscience and variety of options.”

It must contain costs and be provided equi- tally based on ability to pay.

Speaking in November 2010 to the Pontifi- cal Council for Health Care Ministry, Pope Benedict XVI taught clearly, “It is neces- sary to work with greater commitment at all levels so that the right to health is rendered effective, favoring access to primary health care.” He also cautioned, “In our time we witness on one hand a care of health that risks being transformed into pharmacologi- cal consumerism, medical and surgical, be- coming almost a cult of the body, and on the other, the difficulty of millions of persons to access medical conditions of minimal subsistence and indispensable medicines to be cured.”

Benedict XVI went on to say that “...an integral part of each one’s existence and of the common good, is to establish a true dis- trIBUTIVE justice that guarantees to all, on the basis of objective needs, adequate care. Con- sequently, the world of health cannot be sub- tracted from the moral rules that should gov- ern it so that it will not be a cult of the sick.”

Although the words of the message have varied slightly over the years, the message has remained the same. The Church will con- tinue its ongoing commitment to universal health care that respects life and human dignity while preserving freedom of conscience for all people of faith. This is a cornerstone of the Gospel message. (Victoria Laskowski is the Diocesan Dir- ector of the Office of Family Ministries.)
St. Monica School in Sunbury to Close

Diocesan Press Release

St. Monica School in Sunbury will close at the end of the current school year. This decision was made by the pastor, Father Donald W. Cramer, after consultation with his parish advisory groups including the Board of Education, Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council. A review of the school operations began three years ago at the request of then-Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden granted his permission to close the school, in response to a letter from Father Cramer. The bishop’s permission is required when a parish is considering the closure of a school because of the responsibility the Church has in the formation of young people in the faith. Every effort is made to keep Catholic education as widely available as possible to the faithful of the diocese. Catholic schools must be unfailingly Catholic, academically excellent, and realistically affordable, not only to the parents but to the entire parish.

In his letter, Father Cramer said, “St. Monica School has been a blessing to our parish and to the School has been a blessing to our parish and to the School has been a blessing to our parish and to the entire parish. Not only to the parents but to the entire parish.

The combination of a poor economic environment and a generally declining population, specifically of school age children, are at the root of the situation. There are not enough school-age children in the parish or surrounding area to make the school financially viable.

According to Mrs. Susan Bickhart, School Administrator, “Everyone has worked very hard to give us this excellent educational program. We have a wonderful school community of staff, volunteers and parents. The decision to close is no one’s fault. It is about being realistic.”

Consideration was given to alternative structures such as the school be a primary school or middle school or become regionalized with other parishes. It was determined that such an adjustment would still not change the demographic and economic conditions the school is experiencing. Enrollment would not be increased and would only serve to spread the debt that was being created.

The school and the Diocesan Education Office will work with the families of current students to help them transition to other opportunities for a Catholic education. St. Joseph School in Danville and Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School in Coal Township are alternatives for many of the students now enrolled at St. Monica. Open houses and informational meetings at these schools will be announced in the near future.

The diocesan offices will be coordinating details that are needed to end operations of a parish school program, as well as assisting school staff members during this difficult time of transition.

Diocese Thanked for Contributions

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden has recently received a letter of thanks from Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State, for the $136,505.10 that the people of the Diocese of Harrisburg contributed to the 2011 Peter’s Pence Collection.

The Peter’s Pence Collection supports the pope’s philanthropy by giving the Holy Father the means to provide emergency assistance to those in need because of natural disaster, war, oppression, and disease.

In his letter to Bishop McFadden, Cardinal Bertone wrote, “His Holiness is grateful for this charitable donation and for the sacrifice which is required. He thanks you and your people for this expression of your devotion to the Successor of Peter and your desire to cooperate in the works of his ministry.”

Rosary for Religious Freedom

Friday, March 23 at Noon

Pray along with Bishop Joseph P. McFadden on this special live broadcast.

Tune to: Holy Family Radio WHYF AM 720
www.YourHolyFamilyRadio.com

To report suspected abuse of a minor, call the toll free PA Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-932-0313
To report suspected abuse of a minor by a church official, employee or volunteer, also please call the diocesan toll free hotline: 1-800-626-1608

Scout Training

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) Region 3 is providing basic training for new and existing diocesan leaders, committee members, parish youth ministers, catechists, BSA professionals and unit leaders who would like to learn more about how Catholic Scouting can enhance religious programs and grow new Scouting units.

For more information, go to the Diocesan Catholic Scouting webpage at www.hbgdiocese.org/youngchurch, e-mail August Pfeifer at oyyam@hbgdiocese.org or call him at 717-657-4804, 327.
Some $233,000 Given in EITC Scholarships

Several area schools — including Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg, Trinity High School in Camp Hill and St. Patrick School in Carlisle — were among the recipients of $233,535 in EITC scholarships given during two recent presentations.

Bridge Educational Foundation and its donors — Aegis Security Insurance, M&T Bank, Noving'er’s, Rent-A-Center and Schaedler Yescos — presented $209,420 in scholarships for Harrisburg area families Feb. 22. The scholarships will help families with children attending several Harrisburg schools, including Bishop McDevitt High School.

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden and State Secretary of Education Ron Tomalis attended the Feb. 22 presentation to show their support for the EITC program. School officials and families attended the event and thanked the business donors and the state officials for their support of the EITC program.

Peter Gleason, Chairman of the Bridge Educational Foundation, remarked, “School choice is once again a hot topic in Harrisburg. For the last decade the EITC program has successfully partnered parents and the business community to provide school choice through scholarships. EITC scholarships, like the ones announced here today, provide parents and the state officials for their support of the EITC program.”

On March 8, M&T Bank, working with the Bridge Educational Foundation, presented $24,115 in EITC scholarships to three Cumberland County Schools, including Trinity High School and St. Patrick School. School officials and students attended the event, which was held at St. Patrick School.

Students from St. Patrick School in Carlisle express their appreciation for EITC scholarships presented to their school.

Education is a crucial component for building the future, so investing in today’s students is really an investment in the future. We are pleased to have the opportunity to participate at a greater level this year,” said Tom Earley of M&T Bank. “Through these scholarship grants, students will experience educational opportunities they might have missed otherwise. And that makes for a brighter future.”

Pennsylvania’s EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit) program allows businesses to claim a state tax credit for scholarship donations made to foundations and organizations. Information about the EITC program can be found on the Web site of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference at www.pacatholic.org or on the Web site of the Diocese of Harrisburg by clicking “Giving/Development” and then “Neumann Scholarship Foundation.” Information on the Bridge Educational Foundation can be found at www.bridgeedcu.org.

HHS Mandate: The More It Changes, The More It Stays the Same

By Joelle Shea

Special to The Witness

Since the announcement of the Department of Health and Human Services mandate that would force religious employers to violate their consciences and pay for abortion-causing drugs, sterilization and contraception, much misinformation has been bantered about regarding health care, Catholic Church teaching and the impact this new regulation will ultimately have.

On February 10, the Obama Administration announced some “accommodations” to the original rule, but, by the end of the day, the original rule was published without change. Promises were made that more regulations might be developed, but the “accommodations,” if made, will still force religious employers to pay for abortion-causing drugs, sterilization and contraception – either directly or through money paid to an insurance company.

Further, the vast majority of Pennsylvania’s dioceses and Catholic Charities agencies are self-insured, meaning they are both the employer and insurer. Despite the fact that the Church raised this issue throughout the debate dating back to July 2011, the clear violation of conscience for self-insured religious institutions was not addressed in the “accommodations.” Therefore, most of Pennsylvania’s dioceses and Catholic Charities agencies will be required to directly pay for procedures that violate their religious beliefs.

The “accommodations” have changed nothing for them. Fixes for this problem could come in the form of legislative correction via The Respect for Rights of Conscience Act (SR 1467 and HR 1179), litigation that overturns the mandate or a change in the rule by HHS.

On March 1, a vote was taken on the “Blunt Amendment,” which contained the text of the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act. Both Senator Toomey and Senator Casey voted to uphold religious liberty. However, with a final vote of 51-48, the amendment did not pass. Next, HR 1179 will be considered in the House, and it has already nearly 220 co-sponsors. A strong vote in the House will help advance the cause of religious liberty. Please consider contacting Senator Casey and Senator Toomey to thank them for their vote, and contact your congressmen and women to ask for their support and co-sponsorship of HR 1179.

You can contact your legislator via www.pacatholic.org or www.hbgdiocese.org/cons/city or by calling the capital switchboard at 202-224-1112.

Do not be confused: religious liberty now and for the future is at stake in this debate. Will you stand up for our first amendment right to exercise freely our religion both on Sunday and at Mass AND the rest of the week?

(Shea is Outreach Director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference – the public affairs arm of Pennsylvania’s Catholic bishops and the Catholic dioceses of Pennsylvania.)
For Diocesan Pilgrims, World Youth Day 2013 Will Commence with Pilgrimage to Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

For a majority of the nearly 225 diocesan youth who journeyed to World Youth Day in Spain in August 2011, a highlight of the faith-filled pilgrimage was a retreat in Lourdes, France, prior to their days in Madrid.

The retreat—where pilgrims visited the Grotto where the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Bernadette—offered a blessed opportunity for reflection and catechesis prior to the World Youth Day festivities.

With that in mind, the diocese’s World Youth Day pilgrimage to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in July 2013 will commence in similar fashion—with a retreat at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe and its surrounding spiritual sites in Mexico.

Like the retreat in Lourdes, spending time in Mexico “will be a good opportunity for our young people to again be where the Blessed Mother has appeared, and to ask her to help us appreciate more fully the gift she has given us,” said Bishop Joseph P. McFadden, who will lead diocesan youth on the pilgrimage. “Then, when we get to Rio de Janeiro, we will be able to recognize more fully Jesus present in our midst.”

Initiated in 1985 by Blessed John Paul II, World Youth Day brings together Catholic youth from across the globe, for days of prayer, worship, catechesis and camaraderie. It is celebrated in a different country every two to three years.

“It is important that we recognize the great gift we have in being followers of Jesus, and our need to come together in expression of that,” the bishop said of World Youth Day. “It’s important for our young people to see others from different cultures and different countries, to realize they are not alone in trying to be disciples of the Lord.”

The Diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry is currently accepting registrations for World Youth Day, July 20-29, 2013.

Experiencing the Story

The Virgin of Guadalupe first appeared to Juan Diego, an Aztec peasant, on Dec. 9, 1531, on a hill in the Tepeyac desert near Mexico City, instructing him to build a church where they stood.

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

The image from Juan Diego’s cloak is displayed in the modern Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe (built next to the still-standing historic one). According to several scientists and photographers who have inspected the image, the eyes of Our Lady reflect an image of Juan Diego.

The grounds surrounding the Basilica feature numerous chapels, statues, walking paths and markers indicating the Blessed Mother’s appearances to Juan Diego, who was canonized in 2002 and is buried in a chapel there.

Virginia Pereira, Associate Director of the Diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, traveled to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe earlier this year as part of an educational trip hosted by the Mexican Tourism Office and Regina Tours, and was spiritually moved by her experiences there.

“You could feel the presence of our Blessed Mother everywhere you went. You could feel and hear the story of her appearance to Juan Diego,” she said.

Mrs. Pereira said that diocesan pilgrims will be able to experience the deep faith of the Mexican people, and the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patrons of the Americas and the Protector of the Unborn. Bishop McFadden remarked that World Youth Day will give young people an opportunity to grow in their faith and in their knowledge of God.

“Hopefully, as they prepare physically and materially for the pilgrimage, they are also preparing spiritually to encounter the Risen Lord among his people,” he said.

“We’ll have opportunities before World Youth Day to pray together and celebrate the Eucharist so that we encounter the Lord on our journey.”

World Youth Day, July 20–29 2013 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

‘Go and make disciples of all nations’—Matthew 28: 19

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden invites you to join him and our Holy Father at World Youth Day 2013 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The spiritual pilgrimage will include a two-day retreat experience in Guadalupe, Mexico, and the World Youth Day activities in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Diocesan group will be limited to 200 pilgrims within the ages of 16-17 (youth) and their parish group leaders and chaperones. Young adults ages 18 (high school graduates)-35, priests, seminarians and consecrated individuals. For information on this wonderful spiritual pilgrimage, please contact the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at 717-657-4804 ext. 327, or oyyam@hbgdiocese.org, or visit our Web site at www.hbgdiocese.org/youngchurch. Please be advised that seating is limited, and first round of deposits are due by May 31, 2012.

“Go and make disciples of all nations” Matthew 28:19

For more information or to register visit www.MensConference2012.com

Open to men ages 18 and older, to allow all participants the freedom to discuss Catholic Men’s Conference 2012

“BE THE MAN GOD INTENDED YOU TO BE” APRIL 21, 2012 – 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Marriott Lancaster Convention Center – Registration $30 (including lunch)

Being a Catholic Man is difficult today – Rediscover what God wants you to know and how He is calling you to live.

Fr. Larry Richards Keynote Speaker

Robert Rogers Guest Speaker

www.TheReasonForOurHope.org

www.MghtlynTheLand.com

For more information or to register, visit www.MensConference2012.com

Open to men ages 18 and older, to allow all participants the freedom to discuss

“The Same Divine Calling”

A Mass Celebrating the Gifts of People with Disabilities

Saturday, April 14 at 5 p.m.
St. Peter Church, 1840 Marshall Drive, Elizabethtown

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden, Principal Celebrant

St. Peter Church is accessible to persons with physical disabilities. A sign language interpreter and assistive listening devices are available. Requests for materials in Braille and large print and other accommodations should be made to Kate Neri at 717-657-4804, ext. 317 on or before April 1.
Permissive attitudes toward sex, cohabitation before marriage and acceptance of same-sex marriage can damage individuals and are harmful for society, Pope Benedict XVI told a group of U.S. bishops at the Vatican.

“It is in fact increasingly evident that a weakened appreciation of the indissolubility of the marriage covenant, and the widespread rejection of a responsible, mature sexual ethic grounded in the practice of chastity, have led to grave societal problems bearing an immense human and economic cost,” the pope said March 9.

Meeting the bishops of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, who were making their “ad limina” visits to report on the status of their dioceses, the pope said ignorance of or challenges to Church teaching on marriage and sexuality were part of the “intellectual and ethical challenges” to evangelization in the United States today.

The pope did not focus on current tensions between the U.S. bishops and the Obama administration, particularly over health care coverage of contraception and other practices that violate church teaching. But at the beginning of his speech, Pope Benedict reiterated his concern about “threats to freedom of conscience, religion and worship which need to be addressed urgently so that all men and women of faith, and the institutions they inspire, can act in accordance with their deepest moral convictions.”

Concentrating his remarks on the need to promote and explain church teaching on sexuality, the pope said the Church’s key concern is “the good of children, who have a fundamental right to grow up with a healthy understanding of sexuality and its proper place in human relationships.”

Acknowledging the clerical sexual abuse scandal, the pope said, “It is my hope that the Church in the United States, however chastened by the events of the past decade, will persevere in its historic mission of educating the young and thus contribute to the consolidation of that sound family life, which is the surest guarantee of intergenerational solidarity and the health of society as a whole.”

The moral virtues espoused in the church’s teaching on sexuality are “the key to human fulfillment,” he said, because they promote sexuality as “a source of genuine freedom, happiness and the fulfillment of our fundamental and innate human vocation to love.”

“The richness of this vision is more sound and appealing than the permissive ideologies exalted in some quarters,” which are “powerful and destructive,” he said.

One of the first steps, he said, must be to help the faithful “recover an appreciation of the virtue of chastity,” which forms the human heart to love in the most authentic way.

Pope Benedict told the bishops he was aware of the “powerful political and cultural currents seeking to alter the legal definition of marriage” so that it would include same-sex couples.

“Defending traditional marriage is not simply a matter of Church teaching, he said, it is a matter of ‘justice, since it entails safeguarding the good of the entire human community and the rights of parents and children alike.”

Pope Benedict praised the U.S. bishops’ 2009 letter, “Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan,” and he asked them to continue reviewing and strengthening both religious education materials and marriage preparation programs.

“Pope Benedict did not suggest specific norms or provide guidance on how insistent priests should be in convincing their flock to marry in the Church, but rather that they be present by word and example.”

Archbishop John C. Nienstedt of St. Paul and Minneapolis, speaking on behalf of the bishops, thanked Pope Benedict for announcing a special Year of Faith, which will begin in October.

“The proximity of the Church to the local people matters,” the archbishop said. “It is in fact increasingly evident that a weakened appreciation of the indissolubility of the marriage covenant, and the widespread rejection of a responsible, mature sexual ethic grounded in the practice of chastity, have led to grave societal problems bearing an immense human and economic cost.”

~ Pope Benedict XVI
ministry, a storage building, groto and picnic shelter – previously stood on the parish grounds. After the storm, only the locked door of office manager Beneficentine Sister Jan Barthel’s office and its adjoining wall were left standing atop the church’s basement foundation.

Father Bob Damron, pastor of St. Luke in Salyersville and St. Martha in Prestonsburg, reminded his parishioners as they gathered for Mass on the weekend that the Church is a community of people, not a building. He said St. Luke parishioners will meet for Mass in one another’s homes until a new church is built.

Catholics from neighboring parishes – St. Martha; St. Michael, Paintsville and St. Francis, Pikeville – gathered Saturday morning and afternoon to salvage what they could.

Tabernacle was found with the Eucharist safely en- closed in the ciborium, even though the church’s roof, its windows, doors and icons were destroyed. Altars were found with the Eucharist safely en- closed in the ciborium, even though the church’s roof, its windows, doors and icons were destroyed. Altars were found with the Eucharist safely enclosed in the ciborium, even though the church’s roof, its windows, doors and icons were destroyed.

Aside from damage to the base- ment kitchen and some damage to the church’s roof, the only damage from the torna- do largely un- accounted for was the organ.

Just 24 hours af- ter Tom Nolot and his family, along with churchgoers, were told to take shelter from the approaching tornado, Nolan and his wife, Joyce, were back – try- ing to set up the fish to rescue workers and crews from the Indiana National Guard, the Clark County Sheriff’s Of- fice and other rescue workers and vol- unteers.

In the Diocese of Lexing- ton, Ky., Prince of Peace Church in wild-hit West Liberty lost the roofs of both the rectory and the church, re- ported Thomas V. Sheehan, director of com- munication services, director and edi- tor of Crossroads, its newspaper.

In the Diocese of Covington, Ky., three parish communities were seri- ously affected by the March 2 torna- does, the Church of the Holy Cross and the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

Father Michael Barth, pastor of As- sisi Parish in Denver, Colo., said the church was “spared to- day” after the tornado passed but noted, “We have a roof but also a lot of work to do.”

The church was “spared to- day” after the tornado passed but noted, “We have a roof but also a lot of work to do.”

Father Michael Barth, pastor of As- sisi Parish in Denver, Colo., said the church was “spared to- day” after the tornado passed but noted, “We have a roof but also a lot of work to do.”

Father Michael Barth, pastor of As- sisi Parish in Denver, Colo., said the church was “spared to- day” after the tornado passed but noted, “We have a roof but also a lot of work to do.”

At Sunday Mass at St. Francis Xavi- er March 4, Father Stephen Schafflin, pastor of St. Francis Xavier, said St. Mary was “a place to be a symbol of hope and also to walk the talk. We’re praying here. That’s our first work. But underneath is the food, the clothing that will help sustain the community in the months ahead.”

New Albany, Ind., which included Henryville. Aside from damage to the base- ment kitchen and some damage to the church’s roof, the only damage from the torna- do largely un- accounted for was the organ.

Just 24 hours af- ter Tom Nolot and his family, along with churchgoers, were told to take shelter from the approaching tornado, Nolan and his wife, Joyce, were back – try- ing to set up the fish to rescue workers and crews from the Indiana National Guard, the Clark County Sheriff’s Of- fice and other rescue workers and vol- unteers.

In the Diocese of Lexing- ton, Ky., Prince of Peace Church
Virtual Conversations on Virtue:
High School Seniors Join Bishop for Lenten Series

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

York Catholic High School senior Christopher Campo says he didn’t recognize himself as a virtuous person – that is until he heard Bishop Joseph P. McFadden speak on the subject.

Christopher and his classmates assembled as a live audience for the first of the bishop’s five-part series of Lenten conversations with high school seniors Feb. 29 at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg.

The York Catholic students were on retreat at the Center that day, and joined the bishop in person as he spoke virtually with students across the diocese via the diocesan wide-area network.

“Whenever I thought of the word ‘virtuous,’ I didn’t picture myself in that category until today, when the bishop spoke about it,” Christopher told The Catholic Witness.

“He connected virtue with being human and striving to be like Jesus. The bishop pointed to the question, ‘What would Jesus do?’ Even in Bible school, we’d always hear that phrase. Now, it’s time to make that a lifestyle,” Christopher said.

In his conversation with the seniors through Lent, the bishop will speak about several virtues and highlight saints who exemplified those virtues: prudence and St. Dominic Savio; justice and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta; fortitude and St. Gianna Molla; and temperance and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati.

The Feb. 29 session featured a focus on humility and Blessed John Paul II.

Pointing to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Bishop McFadden explained to the students that “virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good.”

“Virtue is what develops in us when we actually use God’s gifts the way that he wants us to use them,” he said.

His messages to the students – to live virtuous lives, to use the gifts God has given them to do good, to develop their character – resonated with them.

Several seniors from York Catholic expressed that his words carried significant weight for them as they prepare to graduate.

“The bishop didn’t specifically say it, but his message seemed to be about the meaning of life, to live virtuously,” Douglas Weichert said.

“We’re preparing to step into a new life ahead of us, and it’s good for us to hear from the bishop how we’re supposed to live life. He’s giving us a starting point for where we’re supposed to go in life,” Douglas noted.

Senior Adam DePorter said he appreciated the bishop’s understanding of the significant and sometimes challenging choices he and his peers will make in life.

“It’s so relatable to what we’re experiencing.”

With the bishop related himself to our level as extremely exemplary people, and the fact that the bishop related himself to our level was very humbling,” he said. “He was once like us, and he has become a great influential person.”

Extolling the virtue of Blessed John Paul II, Bishop Joseph P. McFadden today celebrated for their senior class at the Cardinal Keeler Center. During their retreat in Harrisburg, the students formed a live audience for the bishop’s virtual Lenten conversations with high school seniors.

“Virtue is what develops in us when we actually use God’s gifts the way that he wants us to use them,” he said.

His messages to the students – to live virtuous lives, to use the gifts God has given them to do good, to develop their character – resonated with them.

Several seniors from York Catholic expressed that his words carried significant weight for them as they prepare to graduate.

“The bishop didn’t specifically say it, but his message seemed to be about the meaning of life, to live virtuously,” Douglas Weichert said.

“We’re preparing to step into a new life ahead of us, and it’s good for us to hear from the bishop how we’re supposed to live life. He’s giving us a starting point for where we’re supposed to go in life,” Douglas noted.

Senior Adam DePorter said he appreciated the bishop’s understanding of the significant and sometimes challenging choices he and his peers will make in life.

“It’s so relatable to what we’re experiencing.”

With the bishop related himself to our level as extremely exemplary people, and the fact that the bishop related himself to our level was very humbling,” he said. “He was once like us, and he has become a great influential person.”

Principal Opportunities in Harrisburg Diocesan Schools for 2012-2013

Sacred Heart, Lewistown (K/3-5)
St. Catherine Laboure, Harrisburg (K/3-8)
St. Leo the Great, Lancaster (K/3-8)
York Catholic High School (7-12)

Minimum Qualifications:
Practicing, knowledgeable Catholic
Thorough understanding of Catholic School Philosophy
Commitment to modeling the values of Catholic Educational Leadership
PA Administrators Certificate(or in process)
Catechetical Certification (or in process)
5 years of teaching experience

Preferred Qualifications (in addition to the minimum qualifications):
3 years of Administrative experience
Catechetical Certification (or in process)
Master’s Degree in Educational Administration

Send resume and letter of interest to:
Livia Riley
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Harrisburg
4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710
(717) 657-4804, ext. 222
Email: iriley@hbgdiocese.org
Deadline is March 23

Minimum Qualifications:
Practicing, knowledgeable Catholic
Thorough understanding of Catholic School Philosophy
Commitment to modeling the values of Catholic Educational Leadership
PA Administrators Certificate(or in process)
Catechetical Certification (or in process)
5 years of teaching experience

Preferred Qualifications (in addition to the minimum qualifications):
3 years of Administrative experience
Catechetical Certification (or in process)
Master’s Degree in Educational Administration

Send resume and letter of interest to:
Livia Riley
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Harrisburg
4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710
(717) 657-4804, ext. 222
Email: iriley@hbgdiocese.org
Deadline is March 23
The Church’s teaching regarding artificial means of contraception and birth control is controversial in many quarters. Schools, women’s health care, politics and even the Church itself, people often take strongly opposing positions on the use and availability of contraception and birth control. The media frequently presents only a partial, and sometimes even misleading appraisal of the Church’s teaching on the meaning of human sexuality and the morality of contraception.

For these reasons we felt this was an opportune time to present in a fresh way the Church’s teachings on love, marriage and childbearing. The Church has a firm teaching on human love and the joys and trials of family life. This insert only surveys that teaching, and attempts to present it in a brief and understandable way. Everyone is encouraged to use this material for private and group instruction, personal and corporate reflection and evangelization.

Timeline: The Church and Contraception

AD 04 – The Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles condemns contraception, which had been in use for more than 1,000 years. Other religious leaders like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom would do the same.

c. AD 400 – St. Augustine states that intercourse takes place “in an unlawful and shameful manner, whenever the conception of offspring is avoided.”

c. 1215 – St. Thomas Aquinas condemns any deliberate action to exclude offspring during intercourse. This was confirmed again and again by theologians of all faiths and popes through the beginning of the 20th century.

1934 – “Calendar Method” of family planning is developed in Japan and Austria. This method was based on a 28 day cycle for all women and was not very effective.

1930 – The Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church permits some forms of birth control in limited circumstances. This limitation is later dropped. Most Protestant denominations follow suit, and contraception becomes acceptable of personal discretion.

1930 – In Casti Connubii (On Chaste Marriage), Pope Pius XI teaches that all forms of artificial birth control are “intrinsically evil” because they disregard natural law and human biology. He cites abstinence as the only approved way to space births.

1936 – The U.S. courts toss out most of the Comstock Laws, which had prohibited (since 1873) distribution of contraceptives via U.S. Mail.

1951 – Pope Pius XII approves periodic abstinence and the Calendar Method. He asks physicians to move forward on research in Natural Family Planning (NFP).

1951 – The highly effective Sympo-Thermal method of Natural Family Planning is formulated. Other methods of NFP are developed in coming years. All methods are highly effective when used correctly.

1960 – The Birth Control Pill is approved by the FDA and comes into general use. Almost immediately there are reports of negative side effects.

1963 – The Pontifical Commission on Population, Family, and Birth-rate issues a report with over 200 recommendations regarding birth control. The commission is expanded by Pope Paul VI.


1964 – Birth control is still illegal in 8 states.

1965 – Griesvold v Connecticut results in the legalization of birth control in all states.

1966 – The Pontifical Commission issues its report to the Holy Father.

1968 – Pope Paul VI issues Humanae Vitae, which reaffirms that each act of marital intercourse must keep open the possibility of procreation.

1970-1984 – Pope John Paul II preaches a series of talks on Theology of the Body, greatly expanding the Church’s teaching. These talks continue to be shared and studied today.

2005 – Benedict XVI ascends to the Papacy and continues to affirm and support the Church’s teachings on the unitive and procreative aspects of marital love.

Openness to Life Within Marriage

The following is a thumbnail sketch of the Church’s Teaching on Openness to Life and on Contraception. The information in the following points can be found in greater detail in paragraphs 2366 – 2370 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). These points were compiled by Mr. James Gotsis, Diocesan Director of Religious Education.

• Fruitfulness/ fecundity is a gift from God.
• The two ends of the marriage act (marital intercourse) are the unitive end, i.e. bonding, and the procreative end (openness to life). The marriage act is never to dissociate these two ends.
• This obviously does not mean that the marriage act will always result in the conception of a child.
• It does mean that when a couple engages in the marriage act they are to be open through the language of the body to the possibility of a child being conceived.
• When a married man and woman who are in sanctifying grace (the grace that makes us holy) engage in the marital act, and when that act is open to life and love, God pours into the souls of the couple and increase of sanctifying grace!
• Procreation is an end, an essential purpose of marriage and of the marital embrace.
• Concupial love naturally tends to be fruitful.
• Children are not “add-ons” to the love of spouses, but are a result of the self-giving love the married couples are to show for one another.
• Because it is God’s law, not merely man’s law, the Church, which is “on the side of life, teaches that it is necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered, per se to the procreation of human life.” (CCC 2366).
• When a couple contracept or is sterilized, they hold back a part of them-selves from their spouse. It is impossible in this situation for a spouse to fully give him/her one self to the other. It is like saying, “I give myself to you, but not really, not totally.”

Then the marriage act becomes a lie through the language of the body.
• Human beings are not pure spirits like angels, but rather a body/soul unity. Both body and soul are good and important. What one does with his/her body has a profound effect on the state of his/her soul.
• All this, then, rules out the legitimacy of contraception of any kind and direct sterilization, e.g. vasectomies and tubal ligations, both of which are gravely and intrinsically (by its very nature) evil, cf. CCC 2370.

• If a person has contracted or been sterilized, it is important that he/she repent of these sincerely and, if Catholic, confess these sins in the Sacrament of Penance (because they are sins of great gravity).
• If we are sorry for our sins, confess them forthrightly to the Priest (who has authority given him by Christ to forgive sins in His name, cf. Jn. 20:19-23), and have a firm purpose of amendment, God will lavish His Divine Mercy upon us. “This is good and pleasing to God our Savior, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timo- thy 2:3).
• When married couples conceive a child, they “share in the creative power and fatherhood of God.” (CCC 2367).
• For just reasons, spouses may wish, by natural methods, to space the births of children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood.
• Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality.” (CCC 2370)

These methods are referred to as Natural Family Planning. Natural Family Planning differs essentially from contraception.

“Children are the greatest treasure and the future of every society: truly caring for them means recognizing our responsibility to teach, defend and live the moral virtues which are the key to human fulfillment. It is my hope that the Church in the United States, however chastened by the events of the past decade, will persevere in its historic mission of educating the young and thus contribute to the consolidation of that sound family life which is the surest guarantee of intergenerational solidarity and the health of society as a whole.”

~ Pope Benedict XVI, March 9, 2012

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways! He shall eat the fruit of the labor of his hands; he shall be happy, and it shall be well with him. His wife will be like a fruitful vine within his house; his children will be like olive shoots around his table. ~ Psalm 128:1-3

Considering Contraception:

The Church’s teaching regarding artificial means of contraception and birth control is controversial in many quarters. Schools, women’s health care, politics and even the Church itself, people often take strongly opposing positions on the use and availability of contraception and birth control. The media frequently presents only a partial, and sometimes even misleading appraisal of the Church’s teaching on the meaning of human sexuality and the morality of contraception.

The following is a thumbnail sketch of the Church’s Teaching on Openness to Life and on Contraception. The information in the following points can be found in greater detail in paragraphs 2366 – 2370 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). These points were compiled by Mr. James Gotsis, Diocesan Director of Religious Education.

• Fruitfulness/ fecundity is a gift from God.
• The two ends of the marriage act (marital intercourse) are the unitive end, i.e. bonding, and the procreative end (openness to life). The marriage act is never to dissociate these two ends.
• This obviously does not mean that the marriage act will always result in the conception of a child.
• It does mean that when a couple engages in the marriage act they are to be open through the language of the body to the possibility of a child being conceived.
• When a married man and woman who are in sanctifying grace (the grace that makes us holy) engage in the marital act, and when that act is open to life and love, God pours into the souls of the couple and increase of sanctifying grace!
• Procreation is an end, an essential purpose of marriage and of the marital embrace.
• Concupial love naturally tends to be fruitful.
• Children are not “add-ons” to the love of spouses, but are a result of the self-giving love the married couples are to show for one another.
• Because it is God’s law, not merely man’s law, the Church, which is “on the side of life, teaches that it is necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered, per se to the procreation of human life.” (CCC 2366).
• When a couple contracept or is sterilized, they hold back a part of them-selves from their spouse. It is impossible in this situation for a spouse to fully give him/her one self to the other. It is like saying, “I give myself to you, but not really, not totally.”

Then the marriage act becomes a lie through the language of the body.
• Human beings are not pure spirits like angels, but rather a body/soul unity. Both body and soul are good and important. What one does with his/her body has a profound effect on the state of his/her soul.
• All this, then, rules out the legitimacy of contraception of any kind and direct sterilization, e.g. vasectomies and tubal ligations, both of which are gravely and intrinsically (by its very nature) evil, cf. CCC 2370.

• If a person has contracted or been sterilized, it is important that he/she repent of these sincerely and, if Catholic, confess these sins in the Sacrament of Penance (because they are sins of great gravity).
• If we are sorry for our sins, confess them forthrightly to the Priest (who has authority given him by Christ to forgive sins in His name, cf. Jn. 20:19-23), and have a firm purpose of amendment, God will lavish His Divine Mercy upon us. “This is good and pleasing to God our Savior, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timo- thy 2:3).
• When married couples conceive a child, they “share in the creative power and fatherhood of God.” (CCC 2367).
• For just reasons, spouses may wish, by natural methods, to space the births of children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood.
• Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality.” (CCC 2370)

These methods are referred to as Natural Family Planning. Natural Family Planning differs essentially from contraception.
A Dialogue on the Harmony of Church Teaching and Women’s Health

On March 8, Msgr. William King, Diocesan Vicar General, sat down with Dr. Faith Duggs and Dr. Damon Cudihy at Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill, to discuss the relationship between the Church’s moral teachings and women’s health. Mrs. Victoria Lazowsky, Diocesan Director of Marriage and Family Ministries, and Fr. Paul CB Schenck, Diocesan Director of the Respect Life Office, joined in the conversation.

The purpose of the discussion was to relate the core of the Church’s instruction on artificial contraception, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs to the care and treatment of women patients and their partners. Dr. Duggs and Dr. Cudihy were very informative and insightful in their discussions about the positive application of their faith as practicing Catholics to their effective practice as physicians dedicated to providing their women patients with the best of care and therapies.

Is contraception, or sterilization or abortion-inducing drugs necessary and essential to women’s health?

Dr. Duggs: I would not say that these are essential and necessary to women’s health care. Certainly, they have been incorporated as treatments for a variety of gynecologic disorders. In particular, oral contraceptive therapies have been used as a medical panacea for many women’s health conditions – painful periods, irregular cycles, endometriosis – when actually there’s not great data that this therapy is effective for all of those conditions.

Sterilization doesn’t serve any purpose other than destroying the tubes and disrupting one’s fertility. It doesn’t treat any known medical conditions, and there is some research that shows it actually may produce problems for a woman. It can potentially lead to adhesions or scar tissue within the abdomen and pelvis, and in some cases may even be related to future disruptions of a woman’s cycle and/or pain.

Abortion generally is not used as a treatment therapeutically, so to speak – for a pregnancy. There may be some very rare medical conditions in which a woman where there may be a consideration to terminate a pregnancy because of her failing health. The main one that comes to mind is cardiomyopathy or primary pulmonary hypertension. However, even in that realm in the last ten years, there are small case series, particularly in England, of other therapeutics being developed to be used to manage those women medically to carry them through pregnancy, at least to viability.

I don’t see there as essential and necessary, particularly since there are a variety of medical and surgical therapies that are alternatives and available, and that were used even prior to the advent of contraceptives or have been developed subsequent to the availability of contraceptives.

Dr. Cudihy: The short answer is no, I don’t see that contraceptives are ever an actual form of women’s health care. When it comes to contraception, a woman’s fertility is actually a healthy condition. If a woman is able to conceive, that means there is something working right with her reproductive system. There’s not a malady in need of treatment. … Our first approach is not to do harm. If I make a decision to destroy a woman’s reproductive system, I’m actually doing harm to her normally functioning system.

Unfortunately, contraception is treated like a panacea. I think it’s more of the snake oil of modern medicine. I think it’s more of the easy way out for us physicians to avoid having to address it. … An approach that actually seeks to diagnose the problem and treat it requires more work. It requires some imaging studies, some blood work, even surgery. And while it’s more work, it’s what the woman deserves if we are really concerned about her health.

“Welcoming a child, through birth or adoption, is an act of faith as well as an act of love. Being open to new life signals trust in the God who ultimately creates and sustains all life. It is also the beginning of a lifetime commitment: nurturing, teaching, disciplining, and, finally, letting go of a child—as he or she follows a new and perhaps uncharted way of love. Parenthood is indeed a Christian call and responsibility. It is the experience of acting as God’s instruments in giving life to sons and daughters in many ways; but equally, it is an experience of being formed by God through your children.” ~Follow the Way of Love (USCCB, 1994)

Is contraception ever a threat to a woman’s life or health?

Dr. Cudihy: Very much so. Few people are aware that the World Health Organization, as of 2005, has included hormonal contraceptives as what they define as a Group 1 carcinogen. Carcinogens are those things that we know cause cancer. Some examples of other carcinogens in this category would be asbestos, radioactive phosphorus, tobacco products and radon. For the World Health Organization to make that statement was pretty striking. That means that they looked at the evidence and saw that there was really no debate anymore about whether or not this is a cancer-causing agent.

The types of cancer that are most associated with the birth control pill would be breast cancer, cervical cancer and liver cancer. One of the unfortunate things that has been promoted is the idea that birth control pills are actually preventive against cancer. It’s important to understand that although there are studies showing it probably does decrease the rate of ovarian cancer and potentially uterine cancer, when you look at the net effect – because breast cancer is so much more common in particular – it is an increased risk of cancer.

We’re hearing that contraception is basic preventative health care. I’ve said more than once that it is preventative, but not in the sense that people think. When it’s used to apparently treat endometriosis, irregular cycles or pelvic pain, many times it’s preventing the woman from ever receiving a proper diagnosis and preventing her from having a treatment that will cure the disease. Contraception is not preventing a disease – it’s preventing diagnosis, treatment and cure of the disease. It’s an easy way out for us physicians to avoid having to address it. … An approach that actually seeks to diagnose the problem and treat it requires more work. It requires some imaging studies, some blood work, even surgery. And while it’s more work, it’s what the woman deserves if we are really concerned about her health.

“Married love is powerfully embodied in the spouses’ sexual relationship, when they most fully express what it means to become “one body” (Gn 2:24) or “one flesh” (Mt 10:8, Mt 19:6). The Church teaches that the sexual union of husband and wife is meant to express the full meaning of love, its power to bind a couple together and its openness to new life. When Scripture portrays God creating mankind “in his image” (Gn 1:27), it treats the union of man and woman as joining two persons equal in human dignity (“This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” Gn 2:23), and as being open to the blessing of children (“Be fertile and multiply,” Gn 1:28).” ~Married Love and the Gift of Life (USCCB, 2009)
Dr. Daggs: I would not say that oral contraceptives would be appropriate because we have legitimate medical means for a woman to know and understand the facts, and for her and her partner to work together to use that in order to space or avoid pregnancy altogether.

Natural Family Planning has many names: fertility awareness, Billings Ovulation Method, Symptothermal Method, the Creighton Model. All of these are based on a 50-year science of knowing what’s going on in a woman’s body hormonally, and using the biological indicators of that can be readily taught and observed regardless of the amount of education or training a woman has. Often, these methods are an aid to their health. We use Creighton Method in our practice. That’s been medically adapted to help us make a whole host of gynecologic conditions.

Dr. Daggs: It’s the almighty dollar. In general, Natural Family Planning is not a moneymaker so it’s not well known to people. Also, I think there may be a sense that women feel like it is totally their responsibility in a relationship, that society has shifted this responsibility totally to women. Particularly with the terms of finances and child-rearing, but often this is somehow that this is holding me back from providing the best care.

So it’s not a matter of Church against medicine, or medicine against Church?

Dr. Cudihy: Not at all. The teachings of the Church encourage us to want to provide the best medical care and the very best health care for women. In many situations, the Church’s teaching may suggest that the Church’s teachings may suggest in terms of pregnancy that the Church’s teachings in conflict with good women’s health. In fact, it’s the Pope’s teachings on the matter that keep us on track in seeking to provide the very best for women. The Church’s positions on this in no way are harmful to women. It’s not because the Church doesn’t care about women that she teaches that contraception violates her human dignity, it’s actually precisely because the Church does care about women that does this. Because of the guidance of the Church on this issue, it’s helped us to be better physicians. In no way do I feel constrained that this is holding me back from providing the best care.

I see the truth of these things being affirmed every day, I see my patients aren’t Catholic. They come to us not because they know that we don’t prescribe contraception and we don’t recommend it. I see it every day. I’ve been blessed with a patient who is a woman who is able to share with me her medical history and her desire to have children. I’m able to have other women share with me about what’s going in their lives. It’s been a beautiful blessing for me.

Pope John Paul II taught that there may be reasons a woman to delay pregnancy, where it may be morally impossible upon her to use it for her health and her family’s sake. Would you say at that time overall you would say that contraception would be appropriate?

Dr. Daggs: I do believe so. Why do we do day-in and day-out is take care of women, and we do it in a manner that is consistent with our faith and medically and scientifically sound, without using sterilization procedures, contraceptives or referring for termination of pregnancy. It allows us to be better physicians. From a medical standpoint, I find I am really managing women’s health care in terms of using investigatory tools and then treating in ways that are complementary to their body that aren’t going to mask something that’s going to cause further damage.

Is the Church teaching as it addresses contraception, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in conflict with good health practices for women?

Dr. Cudihy: I do not believe so. As we do day-in and day-out is take care of women, and we do it in a manner that is consistent with our faith and medically and scientifically sound, without using sterilization procedures, contraceptives or referring for termination of pregnancy. It allows us to be better physicians. …From a medical standpoint, I feel like I am really managing women’s health care in terms of using investigatory tools and then treating in ways that are complementary to their body that aren’t going to mask something that’s going to cause further damage.

The two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive and procreative, cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself.”

— John Paul II, Letter to Families, 1994

Knowing the harm that contraception, sterilization and abortion cause, and knowing that there are safe, moral and effective methods regarding family planning, why are women still choosing the former?

Dr. Daggs: It’s the almighty dollar. In general, Natural Family Planning is not a moneymaker so it’s not well known to people. Also, I think there may be a sense that women feel like it is totally their responsibility in a relationship, that society has shifted this responsibility totally to women. Particularly with the terms of finances and child-rearing, but often this is somehow that this is holding me back from providing the best care.

I see the truth of these things being affirmed every day, I see my patients aren’t Catholic. They come to us not because they know that we don’t prescribe contraception and we don’t recommend it. I see it every day. I’ve been blessed with a patient who is a woman who is able to share with me her medical history and her desire to have children. I’m able to have other women share with me about what’s going in their lives. It’s been a beautiful blessing for me.

Is the Church teaching as it addresses contraception, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in conflict with good health practices for women?

Dr. Cudihy: I do not believe so. Why do we do day-in and day-out is take care of women, and we do it in a manner that is consistent with our faith and medically and scientifically sound, without using sterilization procedures, contraceptives or referring for termination of pregnancy. It allows us to be better physicians. …From a medical standpoint, I feel like I am really managing women’s health care in terms of using investigatory tools and then treating in ways that are complementary to their body that aren’t going to mask something that’s going to cause further damage.

Is the Church teaching as it addresses contraception, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in conflict with good health practices for women?

Dr. Cudihy: I do not believe so. Why do we do day-in and day-out is take care of women, and we do it in a manner that is consistent with our faith and medically and scientifically sound, without using sterilization procedures, contraceptives or referring for termination of pregnancy. It allows us to be better physicians. …From a medical standpoint, I feel like I am really managing women’s health care in terms of using investigatory tools and then treating in ways that are complementary to their body that aren’t going to mask something that’s going to cause further damage.

I know that couples have to plan their family and for that there is natural family planning. The way to plan the family is natural family planning, not contraception. In destroying the power of giving life, through contraception, a husband or wife is doing something to self. This turns the attention to self and so it destroys the gift of love in him or her. In loving, the husband and wife, their conjugal union, to each other as happens in natural family planning, and not to self, as happens in contraception. Once that living love is destroyed by contraception, abortion follows very easily. I also know that there are great problems in the world - that many spousal love does not love each other enough to practice natural family planning. We cannot solve all the problems in the world, but we never bring in the worst problem of all, and that is to destroy love. And this is what happens when we tell people to practice contraception and abortion.

— Blessed Theresa of Calcutta

In the delivery room, immediately after delivery, some physicians will ask a woman what type of birth control she would like to start, or if she would like to have a tubal ligation. Is that a necessary follow-up to delivery?

Dr. Daggs: No. Certainly, there are situations where undertaking another pregnancy and another delivery is a particular concern to a woman’s health. However, the delivery room is not the most appropriate place to enter that discussion, even if the woman has no risk factors. There’s quite a bit of study looking at women who were counseled regarding tubal ligation during pregnancy and shortly after delivery and who accepted those procedures. Afterward, they showed a particular amount of regret.

In general, Natural Family Planning is not a moneymaker so it’s not well known to people. Also, I think there may be a sense that women feel like it is totally their responsibility in a relationship, that society has shifted this responsibility totally to women. Particularly with the terms of finances and child-rearing, but often this is somehow that this is holding me back from providing the best care.

I see the truth of these things being affirmed every day, I see my patients aren’t Catholic. They come to us not because they know that we don’t prescribe contraception and we don’t recommend it. I see it every day. I’ve been blessed with a patient who is a woman who is able to share with me her medical history and her desire to have children. I’m able to have other women share with me about what’s going in their lives. It’s been a beautiful blessing for me.
Natural Family Planning

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is an umbrella term for certain methods used to achieve and avoid pregnancies. These methods are based on observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman’s menstrual cycle. Couples using NFP to avoid pregnancy abstain from intercourse and genital contact during the fertile phase of the woman’s cycle. Because it allows couples to adjust their behavior to the naturally occurring cycles of a woman’s body, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife.

Who can use NFP?

Any married couple can use NFP! A woman need not have “regular” cycles. NFP education helps couples to fully understand their combined fertility, thereby helping them to either achieve or avoid a pregnancy. The key to the successful use of NFP is cooperation and communication between husband and wife—a shared commitment. NFP is unique among methods of family planning because it enables its users to work with the body rather than against it. Fertility is viewed as a reality to live, not a problem to be solved.

What are the signs of fertility?

A woman’s body provides three basic ways to identify the fertile and infertile times of her cycle. Recognizing the pattern of those physical signs forms the basis for all methods of NFP. A primary sign of fertility is the mucus released from the women’s cervix. A woman learns to identify the normal, healthy, cervical mucus which indicates the days that intercourse is most likely to result in a pregnancy. The second sign is her basal body temperature. Due to hormonal activity, a woman’s waking temperature changes a day or two after ovulation. Higher temperatures indicate a rise in progesterone which signals the end of the fertile time. The third sign is a change in the shape or texture of the cervix. Finally, secondary signs, such as minor abdominal pain or pressure at the time of ovulation can also be observed.

How does NFP work?

NFP instruction helps a couple identify the most opportune time to achieve as well as avoid a pregnancy. Understanding that intercourse or genital contact during the fertile time can result in pregnancy, couples using the natural methods must be clear regarding their family planning intention—that is, do they wish to achieve or avoid a pregnancy?

If a couple wishes to achieve pregnancy, they have intercourse during the fertile time. If a couple wishes to avoid pregnancy, they abstain from intercourse and any genital contact during the fertile time. If a couple wishes to achieve pregnancy, they have intercourse during the fertile time. If a couple wishes to avoid pregnancy, they abstain from intercourse and any genital contact during the fertile time. No artificial methods are used during the fertile time. These would interfere with a woman’s observation of her fertility signs.

What are the benefits of using NFP?

In NFP both spouses are taught to understand the nature of fertility and work with it, either to plan a pregnancy or to avoid a pregnancy. Couples who use NFP soon learn that they have a shared responsibility for family planning. Husbands are encouraged to “tune into” their wives’ cycles and both spouses are encouraged to speak openly and frankly about their sexual desires and their ideas on family size.

How effective are the Natural Family Planning methods for avoiding pregnancy?

When couples understand the methods and are motivated to follow them, NFP is up to 99% successful in spacing or limiting births. The effectiveness of NFP depends upon the spouses’ following the rules of the method according to their family planning intention (i.e., achieving or limiting pregnancy). Those who are strongly motivated to avoid pregnancy and follow the method-defined rules are very effective in meeting their goal.

Effectiveness of Natural Family Planning in Avoiding Pregnancy:

- (Number of pregnancies among 100 couples in one year.)
- Couples who follow all the rules for avoiding pregnancy all the time – 1-3
- Couples who do not follow all the rules for avoiding pregnancy – 2-15

Where can I learn how to use NFP?

The best way to learn NFP is from a qualified instructor—that is, one who is certified from an NFP teacher training program. For further information on how the Church teaches about marriage and natural family planning, visit our resource page at www.hbgdiocese.org/NFP.

Benefits of NFP

- Works with human fertility
- Teaches a couple to understand their combined fertility
- Treats each menstrual cycle as unique
- Effective for achieving or avoiding pregnancy
- Useful throughout a woman’s reproductive life-time (e.g., post-partum, breastfeeding, perimenopause, etc.)
- No harmful side effects
- Economical (fees are typically charged for first instruction)
- Values children
- Requires mutual responsibility by both husband and wife
- Encourages couple communication
- Fosters respect for and acceptance of the total person
- Respects God’s design for married love
HARRISBURG – Ann Shettel.
ENOLA – Our Lady of Lourdes: Regina Coyle.
QUARRYVILLE – Our Lady: Annunciation Coyle.
St. Joan of Arc: Joseph “Frank” Fiorentino.
DANVILLE – St. Patrick: Donald Brady.
COAL TOWNSHIP – Our Lady of Mt. Carmel: James Misel.
COLUMBIA – St. Peter: Margaret A. Minel.
DANVILLE – St. Joseph: Donald Brady.
ENDOLA – Our Lady of Lourdes: Regina Anna Schet.
GETTYSBURG – St. Francis Xavier: Wayne Asper, Thomas Rosensteel.
HARRISBURG – St. Catherine Labourton: Margaret Cichy, Joseph Papandrea, Sr., Frances Watkins.
HERSHEY – St. Joan of Arc: Joseph Biggica, Irene Iorio.
KULMPTON – Holy Angels: George Piezar.
LEBANON – Assumption BVM: George Arnold, Michael Discullio, Cyril “Bud” Faust, James Leedy, Catherine Sweyer.
MCHSERHSTOWN – Annunciation BVM: Mary C. Murphy.
NEW FREEDOM – St. John the Baptist: Robert Ranta, Richard Fleimng, James Herbert, Larry Sibley.
NEW OXFORD – Immaculate Conception BVM: Susan Norton.
QUARYVILLE – St. Catherine of Siena: Sharon Ann Kology, Ray Shoemaker.
ROARING CREEK – Our Lady of Mercy: Gloria Fream.
SELINGROVE – St. Pius X: Steven Bickhart.
STEELTON – Prince of Peace: John (Jack) McKenna; St. Rose of Lima: John Minorga.
Sister Maureen Anuszkiewicz
Sister Maureen Anuszkiewicz of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Third Order Regular of St. Francis, died Feb. 27 at St. Joseph Villa, Mount Alvernia, in Reading, Pa. She was 94.
Born in Kulpmont, she entered the Bernardine Order in 1935. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, and a Master in Sacred Science from St. Bonaventure in New York.
Sister Maureen served her ministry in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Washington D.C., as an elementary and secondary teacher, superior, director of postulants, principal, 4th general councilor, administrator, testing technician and tutor.
The funeral Mass was celebrated March 3 at Sacred Heart Convent Chapel, Mount Alvernia. Burial was in the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters’ cemetery, Mount Alvernia.
Seminarians Installed as Acolytes
On Sunday, March 4, 55 seminarians of the Pontifical North American College were instituted to the ministry of acolyte during a celebration of the Eucharist. Bishop Marcus and Kyle Sahd of the Diocese of Harrisburg, who are in their second year of theological studies, were among those seminarians instituted.
His Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop Marcus, Bishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, celebrated the Mass and instituted the new acolytes. Among the concelebrants of the Mass were the American bishops present in Rome for their ad limina visits with His Holiness Benedict XVI.
In his homily, Archbishop Nienstedt explained that through their institution the Church has given the new acolytes the opportunity to serve at the altar and assist the priest and deacon at the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries. He expressed his hope that the exercise of this ministry “will at the same time deepen your affection and love for those same Mysteries.”
These seminarians have now received both the ministry of lector and acolyte in anticipation of their diaconal and then priestly ordination. As the rite indicates, an acolyte is charged with assisting at the celebration of the Eucharist, purifying the sacred vessels and when needed to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion.
St. Rose of Lima School Earns Accreditation
St. Rose of Lima School in Thompsville was recently awarded accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The award was announced by The Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools following the Commissions’ October 2011 meetings. St. Rose of Lima School was one of approximately 200 schools honored by the two Commissions. Accreditation is recognized around the world as an indication of trustworthiness, educational quality, and a commitment to on-going school improvement.
Souper Bowl Sunday Sale Raises Support for Shelters
The recent soup sale held at four area parishes was a roaring success! Souper Bowl Sunday, sponsored by the St. Elizabeth Guild in support of Catholic Charities, netted close to $3,000 with all proceeds benefitting the organization’s Homes for Healing: Lourdeshouse, Evergreen House, Hope House and the Interfaith Shelter for Homeless Families.
This was the first fundraising event sponsored by the newly-formed guild, which was organized last April to promote the growth and development of Catholic Charities through fundraising activities, volunteer support and by creating awareness of its mission and goals to the community at large. Upcoming events include a wine and cheese reception and art show, featuring original Norman Rockwell illustrations, a 5K Run and Walk, annual golf outings and the annual Come and See Dinner.
Our thanks to go the following parishes and pastors: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Mechanicsburg and Reverend Msgr. William King; St. Joseph in Mechanicsburg and Father Chester Snyder; St. Theresa in New Cumberland and Father Michael McFadden and Hobbies. We also express our gratitude to all the volunteers who gave so generously supported the soup sale.
For more information about the guild’s programs, services and volunteer opportunities write to Catholic Charities, 440 St. Joseph Street, Lancaster, PA 17603 or call 717-394-2231.
Inaugural “Mitre Cup” Invitational Golf Tournament Planned
The Inaugural “Mitre Cup” Invitational Golf Tournament will feature Bishop Joseph P. McFadden and the Diocese of Harrisburg versus Father Peter Hahn and the North and South handhelds. The golf tournament will be held at Bent Creek Country Club in Lancaster on Thursday, June 28 with shot gun start at 1:30 p.m. Applications are being accepted for the golf tournament. The cost is $30 per player which includes: golf cart for two, logo golf shirt (red for Lancaster Team, Blue for the Bishop’s Team) locker room facilities, shoe shine, goodie bag, box for lunch, complimentary beer and buffet dinner. Space is limited to 80 golfers.
The money raised from this event will benefit the benevolent care fund at St. Anne’s Retirement Community in Columbia.
Even if you’re not a golfer, we’re offering a great opportunity to support St. Anne’s. There will be an exciting “Golf Balls From Heaven Drop” at 6:30 p.m. that evening. Donation of $50 for each golf ball, or $300 for on sale now. Only 375 golf balls will be sold. If your numbered golf ball falls closest to the target, you win $2,500. Winner need not be present to win.
After the golf tournament there will be a cocktail reception and buffet dinner with Bishop McFadden. If you would like to attend, tickets are $100.
If you are interested in playing golf in this tournament, sponsorship opportunities, purchasing tickets for the “Golf Balls From Heaven Drop,” or attending the cocktail reception/buffet dinner, contact Mary Jo Diffendall at 717-285-6539 or mjdifendall@stanusre.org.
Obituaries
Lourdes Regional Topples Undefeated Foe to Win Another District 4 Title

In the District 4 Class A girls’ basketball championship at Danville High School, the Lady Red Raiders beat previously unbeaten Line Mountain 66-49 to continue their dominance in District 4 basketball. Lourdes shot 60 percent from 3-point land in the first half to put the Eagles behind by double digits. Lourdes was led by junior power forward Christina Perles who poured in 21 points.

This marks the fourth straight championship for the school and for the senior captains Ali Singh and Molly Loftus. They noted that “it feels great to be a part of something that has not been done before at Lourdes,” which has had a very storied and successful program for the past 25 years.

Berks Catholic Edges Trinity

Might be that the most anticipated District 3 finals matchup was the one played between the Shamrocks of Trinity High School and newly merged Berks Catholic in Class AAA on March 2 at the Giant Center in Hershey. With the game tied at 49 with less than two minutes to play, the Saints went on a 7-0 run to finish the game. The Rocks missed a couple of key open three-point looks while the Saints’ Marquis Marshall, son of former NBA star Donyell, was able to convert a couple of key buckets in the paint in crunch time to seal the victory.

Trinity was led by their outstanding shooter Brad Wesner, who hit 10-17 shots. The Rocks only turned the ball over four times, but were out-rebounded 36-25.

Leave it to the Beavers

The Lebanon Catholic Beavers won their 16th District 3 Class A girls’ championship in a great matchup against a solid Steel High team who arguably puts the area’s best player on the floor in junior Malia Tate-DeFreitas. And though she poured in 50 points in the 84-78 loss, the Beavers still won the game by defensively controlling the Rollers’ other four players on the court.

The Rollers took a phenomenal 80 shots but only shot 28 percent from the field that also included a dismal 2-19 from beyond the three-point arc. Leading Lebanon Catholic was senior Stevie Fortna, who poured in 36 points which included her 1,000th career point on a crucial free-throw.

“Everyone basically told us that we were underdogs and weren’t supposed to win,” Fortna said after the game.
District Basketball Championships

Crusaders Defy Odds

It’s hard to have faith down 5 points without the ball with just under a minute to go. But a quick steal and a 22-foot three pointer that hit nothing but net by Lancaster Catholic’s senior co-captain Alyssa Aichele, followed by a jumper by freshman Erin Holt, and suddenly the basketball game is tied waiting for your true scorer to ice the game with a pair of free throws. That’s what happened when Lancaster Catholic’s premier scorer Porsha Speller sank them both to doom Oley Valley in the District 3 Class AAA final at the Giant Center in Hershey on March 3.

Speller poured in 29 points, shot 10-16 from the field and grabbed 13 rebounds, which is astonishing given her diminutive stature on the floor. The exciting 72-69 victory gave Lancaster Catholic its 15th District title under the legendary tutelage of Lamar Kauffman, who passed the 700-win plateau last month. He has been coaching at the school for 30 years and has sports a record of 706-176. Yes, that’s averaging 25-plus wins a season!

Crusaders’ legendary coach Lamar Kauffman celebrates win number 706.

More than Lucky Seven

It seems incredible to imagine, but the York Catholic Fighting Irish won their seventh consecutive District 3 basketball championship by again besting arch-rival Delone Catholic 49-42 at the Giant Center in Hershey on March 2. This amazing feat was accomplished the usual way for the Irish – defense. They held the Squirettes to 15 percent field goal shooting in the fourth quarter to deny Delone’s senior standout player Sierra Moore and teammates a district gold medal.

Moore, who is York County’s all-time leading scorer and will play for Duke next year, could not penetrate the Irish’s 2-3 zone that was designed and executed with Moore in mind. “I just think that they play harder than us,” Delone’s disappointed three-time state champ coach Gerry Eckenrode said after the game. “That’s to York Catholic’s credit.”

The Squires’ Brent Smith scores a crucial fourth quarter bucket.

Thriller Goes Squires’ Way

Last year, the locker room after the District 3 Class AA final was eerily silent as the Delone Catholic Squires had just lost a painful heartbreaker that denied the them first district title since 1985. And it would have marked the first title for legendary coach Jim Dooley as well.

“First day of practice this year, I told the players that we were going to win the District title,” Coach Dooley said after winning this year’s exciting overtime thriller against York Catholic 43-39. “That was probably a mistake,” the coach said smiling. It seems almost impossible to win a basketball game shooting 5-48 from the field, but the Squires made some clutch 3-pointers, especially so by Seth Bollers, that sent the game into overtime where defensive stands and critical foul shooting made the difference.

For Coach Dooley, who has nearly 450 wins at four different schools – with the most coming at Delone – it was his first district gold in five tries. “I feel like a 500-pound gorilla has been lifted off my back… These kids were magnificent and if you listen to the locker room back there you can tell that they are so happy.”
By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

It’s never easy being the favorite to win any race, as those doing the chasing are usually quite determined to upset you. But Trinity’s Caroline Finkbeiner held off her close rivals to win two gold medals at the District 3 swimming championships held at Cumberland Valley’s Natatorium on March 2 and 3. The Shamrock senior, who will continue her swimming career at the University of Tennessee, barely held off Delone Catholic’s Victoria Griffin in the 200-meter freestyle event to grab her first gold medal of the meet. In the lengthy 500-meter free later in the day, Finkbeiner won in more convincing fashion, though she did not break the 5-minute barrier. The future Volunteer will swim in the competitive Southeastern Conference. The Squires’ Victoria Griffin won the 100-free by more than a second and a half to compliment her silver with a gold medal.

Repeating as District 3 champ in the boys’ 200-IM was Lancaster Catholic’s junior Everett Albert, who won the gold medal by a fingertip over Gettysburg’s Phineas O’Brien-Milne with both swimmers breaking the 2-minute barrier.

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Rejuvenating its wrestling program last year after a 40-year hiatus, Trinity High School in Camp Hill etched itself in the state-wrestling record books when Ryan Diehl climbed to the highest spot on Pennsylvania’s championship podium at the Giant Center in Hershey March 10.

The 113-pound junior, a two-time West Virginia state champ, capped off his undefeated season by beating Vito Pasone of Meyers High School 11-5 in the title bout that wasn’t without excitement.

Having dominated the first two periods and leading 8-0, Diehl suddenly found himself in a headlock and on his back after Pasone pounced on a mistake that the Shamrock made early in the third. The nearly sold-out Giant Center crowd erupted in surprise as Diehl struggled for a few moments.

“I knew I had to get off my back, I got lazy and he caught me,” Diehl told reporters after the match.

After scrambling out of the danger zone, Diehl regained control of the match and solidified his first Pennsylvania state championship. He is the first diocesan high school wrestler to win state gold since Delone Catholic’s Dana Gingerich won at 130 pounds in 2003.

“I’m loving it,” Diehl said of his title win. “This really means a lot. Wrestling [in Pennsylvania] is a lot more technical. Plus the atmosphere is totally different.”
Local Church News

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg

“Soup, Salad and Sermon” Lenten Lunch
Tuesday, April 3 at Noon
Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg

Join Bishop Joseph P. McFadden and the staff from Catholic Charities as we learn about the ministry provided through the agency.

Lunch is complimentary, though a free-will offering will be taken. RSVP to Christopher Meehan by March 30 at 717-657-4804, ext. 284, or cmeehan@hbgdiocese.org.

Lenten Fish Dinners

Holy Angels Parish in Kulpmont fish dinners on Fridays during Lent $6.75 per platter (Feb. 24 - March 30 from 4-6 p.m. in the Activity Center. Dinner includes baked fish, potato dish, vegetable, cole slaw, soup and dessert bar; coffee, tea or fruit punch. Donation $8 per platter. Dine-in or take out. Stations of the Cross will be prayed at Holy Angels Church on Fridays during Lent at 2 and 7 p.m.

St. Francis of Assisi fish in Harrisburg fish dinners on the Fridays of Lent in March. Eat-in or take out from 4:30-7 p.m. Cost is $8 for adults and $4 for children (4-12). Call 717-236-4506 for information.

The St. Matthew’s Knights of Columbus will be hosting a baked haddock dinner March 23 and 30 from 4-7 p.m. All-you-can-eat fried and baked fish, popcorn shrimp, fried clams, fries, macaroni and cheese, stewed tomatoes, corn, green beans, cole slaw, apple sauce, rolls, puddings, and desserts. $10 for adults, $6 for children 6-12.

St. Rose of Lima Parish in York Lenten seafood dinners. Take-out or eat-in from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 4-8 p.m. each Friday through Lent. Crab cakes, shrimp and a fried seafood platter, crab imperial, fried clams, scallops, grilled cheese sandwiches and more. Lighter fare and kids’ menus. Entrees served with beverage, potatoes or pasta, cole slaw or vegetable. Macaroni and cheese, soups and desserts available. For take-outs, call 717-854-1371.

The Church of the Holy Spirit in Palmyra Lenten Fish Fry on Fridays Feb. 24-March 30 from 3 p.m.-7 p.m. Ocean whitefish, fried shrimp or crab cake dinners; pierogies (dinner and side dish); soup; beverage. Dinners include cole slaw, fries, roll, coffee and dessert. Stations of the Cross at 7:30 p.m. For info, call 717-838-3369.

St. Peter Parish in Columbia Lenten Fish Fry on Fridays Feb. 24-March 30 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Fish platters include baked haddock, oysters, scampi, crab cakes and other dishes. Desserts available. Eat-in or take-out. Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m.

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Lykens Lenten Fish Fry on Fridays Feb. 24-March 30 from 4-7 p.m. in the parish hall. Cost is $9.50 for fried or baked haddock dinner, two crab cakes, shrimp dinner, or combo meal; $4 for fish or crab cake sandwich; $2 for fries or baked potato. Take-outs available. Call 717-453-9931 to order.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Enola Fish Dinners in the church social hall Fridays Feb. 24-March 16 from 4-7 p.m. Seasoned baked cod, baked macaroni & cheese, vegetable, cole slaw, roll and butter, dessert & coffee or punch. Adults $10, children $5. Eat-in or take-out.

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Harrisburg Fish Dinners Fridays Feb. 24-March 30 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Dinner includes baked fish, potato soup, potatoes or pasta, rolls and fries, macaroni and cheese, and $4 for child’s (10 & under) fish dinner. Call 717-259-0611 for details.

Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Middletown Fish Fry on Fridays Feb. 24-March 30 from 5-8 p.m. in the school cafeteria. All-you-can-eat bather-dipped fish plus lemon-pepper fish, crab cakes, baked potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and weekly specials. Sides include fries, cole slaw, apple sauce or tossed salad, and children’s menu available. Cost is $3.50 for 6-12 year olds and children under 6 are free. Family ticket plan (2 adults and 3 or more children) available for $30 pre-purchase. Call Kathy Warner at 717-669-9230 for menu details or to pre-purchase tickets.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Cornwall Lenten Fish Dinners Wednesdays March 21, 28 and April 4 from 4-7 p.m. in the parish social hall. Baked or fried fish and baked potato or fries, applesauce or coleslaw, homemade dessert, coffee or tea. Take-outs available. Cost is $7 for adults, $6 for children 5-12, and $4 for children 5 & under fish dinner. Call 717-574-6294 for menu details.

St. Peter Parish in Elizabethtown Lenten Dinners March 16, 23 and 30 from 5-7 p.m. in the parish center (school). Visit www.stpetereactualelements.weebly.org.

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Elysburg Lenten Dinners in the Parish Social Hall March 16, 23 and 30 from 4-6:30 p.m. $8.00 per platter includes baked fish, macaroni & cheese, stewed tomatoes, mixed vegetables, cole slaw, roll/butter, dessert and beverage. For info, call 570-672-2302.

St. Francis Xavier Parish in Gettysburg Lenten Fish Fry on March 16 and 30 from 5-7 p.m. at Xavier Center, 465 Table Rock Road. Menu and side dishes include baked fish, potato salad, fried shrimp, clam strips, spaghetti and shrimp, garlic bread, salad, hash browns, cole slaw, fruit cup, dessert and coffee. For exact menu: 717-334-4315. Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m. at the Historic Church on High Street.

Please Join Us
Proceeds from the Golf Classic benefit Harrisburg’s Interfaith Shelter, the only emergency shelter in the capital region that provides services to homeless families. The shelter helps families overcome barriers to self-sufficiency, and helps to provide clothing, food and baby supplies, employment and life skills as well as mental and physical care.

Schedule of Events:
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Registration and Lunch
12:30 p.m. Scramble Classic, Shotgun Start
6 p.m. Dinner, Prizes and Door Prizes

For event information, registration or sponsorship questions, contact Christopher Meehan at 717-657-4804, ext. 284 or visit Catholic Charities at www.hbgdiocese.org. Registration deadline is May 4.

MARCH 16, 2012, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS - 17
Young Church in Action

St. Leo Students Encounter Saints Via Interactive Fair

By Alan Schwartz
Special to The Witness

Students at St. Leo the Great School in Rohrerstown, recently learned about the saints in a most engaging way.

The parent-lead Spiritual Life Committee at Saint Leo’s, (which every other year puts together their well known Vocations Day for the school), began this year their first bi-annual Saints Fair, allowing the students exposure in a powerful and engaging way to the lives of the saints. The motivation of the committee was to create in the off years where there was no Vocations Day a fun and engaging opportunity for the children to learn about the lives of our faith’s holy heroes so that when eighth grade comes around and it is time to choose a Confirmation name, there would be no mystery or random method used to do so, but simply for the children to glean from the knowledge they have of their favorite saints.

The day started with the older grades participat- ing in a Saints Fact Scavenger Hunt. The committee creatively used all the Confirmation names (saints, of course) of the principal, teachers in the school and other staff members for this activity. Teams of stu- dents then tried to find out facts about saints whose images were posted all over the gymnasium, along with random facts about each saint on mobile felt dividers. Afterwards, the students viewed the video “Champions of Faith,” a program that highlights some of major league baseball’s biggest stars who also are devoted to their Catholic faith and have strong devotions to saints.

Throughout the day, two individuals were dressed as saints, St. Faustina and St. John Bosco, inspired by EWTN’s “Saints Alive” program where adults dress and act as saints to teach children about them.

The day continued with the younger grades participat- ing in various games and crafts focusing on certain saints and attaining the holiness needed to become a saint. One station was St. Anthony of Padua’s Lost & Found, where children reached into a big bin of balls to find a small prayer book, teaching them about the story of how he became the patron of lost objects.

All children received a rosary, medal, prayer card and a connection to a saint who may be a factor and a partner in their most valuable prayers.

(Alan Schwartz is the Director of Development at Parish Ministries at St. Leo the Great in Rohrerstown.)

Students from Pack 36 in Harrisburg recently sent a collection to the Interfaith Shelter for Homeless Families and Lourdeshouse Maternity Home in Harrisburg for their first annual service project. The donations came from collections of material goods and financial assistance that the Scouts collected after Masses at St. Margaret Mary and Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parishes in Harrisburg. Scouts shown in the photo are Jason Slyman, Louis Negron, Shawn Trude, Brian Patrick and Nicholas Patrick.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JOLENE CALLA

Scouts from Pack 36 in Harrisburg recently sent a collection to the Interfaith Shelter for Homeless Families and Lourdeshouse Maternity Home in Harrisburg for their first annual service project.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SCOT GORDON

Gloria Leone, a second-grader, participates in the St. Anthony “seek-and-find” game, searching for St. Anthony’s missing prayer book in a bin of balls.

Third-grader Dillon Otto plays a saints bingo game during a Saints Fair at St. Leo the Great School in Rohrerstown.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOT GORDON

By Alan Schwartz
Special to The Witness

The Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women is offering a $1,000 scholarship to a Catholic senior girl for her freshman year at an accredited college, university, or trade school. She must be sponsored by a mother or grandmother/guardian who is an active member of a Parish Council of Catholic Women for no less than one year, be a resident of the Harrisburg Diocese, and must meet all conditions established by the Scholarship committee as set forth in its rules and regulations.

Deadline for submitting applications is May 1. Anyone interested in applying should contact Joyce Scott at 717-737-0927 or JoynBob10@comcast.net.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOT GORDON

The council’s $1,000 scholarship is for Catholic senior girls for their freshman year at accredited college, university, or trade school.
Children’s Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be offered in St. Joseph’s Adoration Chapel at St. Joseph Church in Lancaster on the last Thursday of each month from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. All ages and abilities are welcome; handicap accessible. Call Catechetical Mts. Wagn at 717-389-0365 for information.

Easter Eggstravaganza will be held on March 17 at 5:00 p.m. will feature the Bloom Consortium, which has been performing the music of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries from Spain and Italy. The performance will be free to all. No charge for the foodbank, though a free-will offering will be taken.

Registration deadline is April 15. The form is available for a small price are the Money Wheel, Black Jack, Texas Hold ‘Em and drinks, which will include some adult beverages. Other games available for a small price are the Money Wheel, Black Jack, Texas Hold ‘Em and drinks, which will include some adult beverages. Other games and a $5 voucher. Must be 18 unless accompanied by an adult. Tickets are $47 and include dinner, musical entertainment, Irish Step Dance, a 5K run/walk March 24 at 9:30 a.m. at Blue Ridge Country Club. The event will also feature a “Court of Queens” with a $10 registration fee. The event will take place April 14 and 14 in the gym at St. Leo the Great Parish in Rohrstown.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call the Advance Office at 717-781-0651.

Parishes & Organizations

The Catholic Woman’s Club of York will hold their annual spring luncheon and fashion show April 21 at the Outdoor Club of York. Doors open at 11:30 a.m., with lunch at noon. Fashions will be on display at the Shoe Gallery. Raffle drawings, 50/50 cash drawing. Cost is $30 per person, and proceeds benefit the CRWC Scholarship Fund. For information, call Donna Dugan at 717-852-7431.

The Catholic Woman’s Club of York is seeking applicants for its board of directors. The board is responsible for planning events for the upcoming 2012 from York County high school within the York Diocese. A strong commitment to the Catholic faith, a good academic record, financial independence and a need of a board obligation are requirements. For more information, call Donna Dugan at 717-852-7431 or Donna@bellsouth.net.

The Catholic Woman’s Club of York is seeking applicants for its board of directors. The board is responsible for planning events for the upcoming 2012 from York County high school within the York Diocese. A strong commitment to the Catholic faith, a good academic record, financial independence and a need of a board obligation are requirements. For more information, call Donna Dugan at 717-852-7431 or Donna@bellsouth.net.
Nearly 50 classrooms full of diocesan students linked in to Bishop Joseph P. McFadden as he read “Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland” on Read Across America Day, March 2.

The bishop was broadcast live from his office at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg to children across the diocese who tuned in to watch him read a story about the Irish saint, who is also the patron saint of the Diocese of Harrisburg.

“On St. Patrick’s Day, everybody is Irish because everybody loves St. Patrick,” the bishop told the students, as he relayed to them his own Irish heritage.

“Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland,” by Tomie dePaola, relates the story of Patrick’s life and several well-known legends about him, including his use of the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity.

“It is important for us to read because it helps us to learn so much,” Bishop McFadden told students. “God wants us to know about different cultures and people.”

Read Across America Day, observed on the birthday of Dr. Seuss, is an annual program that encourages children to celebrate reading.