At Lenten Penance Service, Pope Announces Holy Year of Mercy

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Pope Francis announced an extraordinary jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy, to highlight the Catholic Church’s “mission to be a witness of mercy.”

“No one can be excluded from God’s mercy,” the pope said March 13, marking the second anniversary of his pontificate by leading a Lenten penance service in St. Peter’s Basilica.

“I frequently have thought about how the Church can make more evident its mission to be a witness of mercy,” he said during his homily; that is why he decided to call a special Holy Year, which will be celebrated from Dec. 8, 2015, until Nov. 20, 2016.

The biblical theme of the year, he said, will be “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful,” an admonition that applies “especially to confessors,” the pope said with a smile.

Traditionally, every 25 years the popes proclaim a holy year, which features special celebrations and pilgrimages, strong calls for conversion and repentance, and the offer of special opportunities to experience God’s grace through the sacraments, especially confession. Extraordinary holy years, like the Holy Year of Mercy, are less frequent, but offer the same opportunities for spiritual growth.

The doors of the Church “are wide open so that all those who are touched by grace can find the certainty of forgiveness,” Pope Francis said at the penance service, which featured individual confessions. It was part of a worldwide celebration of “24 Hours for the Lord,” in which Catholic churches were staying open for prayer, eucharistic adoration and confession.

At each of the dozens of confessional in St. Peter’s Basilica, as well as in simple chairs scattered along the walls, priests welcomed people to the sacrament. The pope removed his liturgical vestments and went to confession before putting on a purple stole and hearing the confessions of others.

“God never ceases to demonstrate the richness of his mercy over the course of centuries,” the pope said in his homily, which preceded the confessions. God touches people’s hearts with his grace, filling them with repentance and a desire to “experience his love.”

“Being touched by the tenderness of his hand,” people should not be afraid to approach a priest and confess their sins, he said. In the confessional, one has “the certainty of being welcomed in the name of God and understood, despite our misery.”

“The greater the sin, the greater the love, which the Church must express toward those who convert,” Pope Francis said.

Holy Infant Parish Breaks Ground for New Church

On a breezy March 15 afternoon, as eagles flew overhead, the faithful of Holy Infant Parish in York Haven gathered along Conewago Creek Road in Manchester as Bishop Ronald Gainer blessed the ground where the parish’s new church will be built.

For a growing parish of more than 1,750 members, the new church will double the capacity of the current one, which was dedicated in 1949 as a mission of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in York.

The joyful occasion began with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Gainer in the current church, and culminated with the Rite of Beginning the Building of a New Church and the groundbreaking at the new site less than five miles away. See page 8 for additional coverage.

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS
Beth and Dan Reilly and their children Henry and Eamon help break ground for the new Holy Infant Church.
Franciscan Priest Appointed Bishop of Lexington

Catholic News Service

 Pope Francis has named Conventual Franciscan Father John Stowe to be bishop of Lexington, Ky. Bishop-designate Stowe is a vicar provincial for his order and rector of the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio.

Cardinal Egan’s ‘Pearl of Great Price’ Described As His Faith in Jesus

By Beth Griffin

Catholic News Service

At his funeral Mass March 10 in New York’s splendid St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Cardinal Edward M. Egan was remembered as a churchman whose faith in Jesus Christ shone through even his considerable temporal qualities.

Cardinal Egan died March 5 at age 82. He was the archbishop of New York from 2000 to 2009 and was the first to retire from the position.

“His ‘pearl of great price’ was not his erudition, his love of music and art, his renown in canon law, his administrative or distinctive preaching, his bishop’s ring or cardinal’s hat, but his faith in Jesus Christ,” New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan told the 2,500 people gathered to mourn his predecessor.

Cardinal Egan loved the Church, the place where he met, learned, and served was united with the Lord, Cardinal Dolan said. “I call him a churchman, a term that cannot be reduced to describing a man who prefers brick-and-mortar, ledges, and an altar to a man who sees in the Church Jesus Christ, his lord and savior, alive in teaching, serving and sanctifying,” the cardinal said.

The immense bronze doors of St. Patrick’s swung open to begin a procession that included Cardinal Dolan, seven other cardinals and more than 30 bishops, 250 priests, 24 deacons and 100 seminarians. They were met by an honor guard of New York City police and firefighters and members of the Knights of Malta, Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and Knights of Columbus.

As the concelebrants filed up the aisle and past Cardinal Egan’s casket, the skull of a bag-piper on Fifth Avenue mixed with the traditional organ and vocal music from the soaring choir loft and briefly threatened to drown it out.

From the altar, Cardinal Dolan welcomed civic and religious leaders. They included Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the papal nuncio to the United States; Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York, and representatives of the Orthodox, Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities.

The careful hierarchy of seating in the cathedral included reserved spots for Cardinal Egan’s family, trustees ofarchdiocesan groups, women and men religious, employees of the archdiocese, the general public and the media.

Members of Cardinal Egan’s family delivered the first and second readings and the general intercessions, and brought the offertory gifts to the altar. His great-nephew, Brian Hayes, eulogized the late cardinal as “a steadfast bulwark of all that is good.” Addressing himself to “the New York side of our family,” Hayes said, “You meant the world to him.”

He said his Uncle Ed appreciated dedication to a craft and especially loved Renee Fleming’s voice. “I know he’s listening to all of us today because she’s here,” he said with a smile. At Communion, the renowned soprano Franz Schubert’s “Ave Maria.” Her Metropolitan Opera colleague Matthew Polenzani sang Cesar Franck’s “Panis Angelicus.” Cardinal Egan was an accomplished classical pianist.

Cardinal Dolan said he “snuck” into the church the night before the funeral to again offer prayers for Cardinal Egan. The church was empty except for the police honor guard standing watch over the cardinal’s casket, he said.

As I gazed upon his body … I saw on him in the casket what he treasured most,” Cardinal Dolan said. “On his chest was the cross, in whose victory we trust he now shares; in his finger the rosary, reminding me of his prayers and his trust in the mother of Jesus; on his face the bishop’s ring, telling us that he was married to the bride of Christ, the Church; beneath his head was his pallium, yoking him to the successor of St. Peter in Rome; and all around him were the vestments each priest wears for Mass, his most sacred duty. Those were the essentials.”

At the end of Mass, pallbearers carrying the mahogany coffin on their shoulders led a procession of cardinals, bishops and Cardinal Egan’s family around the cathedral to bursts of spontaneous applause. They squeezed through passages narrowed by scaffolding from the almost-complete, multiyear restoration of the church and arrived at the crypt under the main altar.

There, Cardinal Egan was entombed along with six other cardinals.

The locked crypt now holds the remains of 14 people, including Archbishop Fulton Sheen, Pierre Toussaint and Msgr. Michael Lavelle, who for 60 years was rector of the cathedral. In its present configuration of three upright ranks of seven tombs each, it has a capacity of 21.

George Borrello, managing director of the trustees of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, told Catholic News Service the blank marble covers were removed from Cardinal Egan’s decreed crypt after his death. A monument company engraved the stone with the cardinal’s name, dates of his life and tenure as archbishop, and his coat of arms, featuring the motto, “In the Holiness of Truth.”

While the stonecutters worked, pallbearers practiced maneuvering a coffin down the low-ceilinged steps and made sure the 21st-century casket would fit into the 19th-century crypt. When a CNS reporter visited the crypt with Borrello after the funeral, the freshly engraved 250-pound slab had been sealed into place.

Cardinal Egan’s funeral capped two days of public mourning at St. Patrick’s. Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan of Camden, New Jersey, former auxiliary bishop of New York, delivered the homily at a vigil Mass March 9. Bishop Sullivan lived with cardinal and served as his vicar general for five years.

Cardinal Dolan said Cardinal Egan’s daily homilies, “moving, moving, moved me to tears before the tabernacle “was the juice of his priestly ministry.” It is what fired the rest of his day.”

He said the cardinal prepared his homilies meticulously and used his pulpit to lift up, encourage and “lead all to the mercy and infinite understanding of God.” Bishop Sullivan said Cardinal Egan was “always the priest, the gentleman, even when he was angry, impeccable in dress, speech and attention to detail.”

He was elected vicar provincial of his congregation’s Province of Our Lady of Consolation based in Mount St. Francis, Indiana, and has served as rector of the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Cary, Ohio, since 2010.

In September 2001, he was one of 2,000 religious and lay leaders of various faiths across the United States who signed a statement urging Americans to deny any claim by victory to the terrorists behind the 9/11 attacks that took place less than two weeks earlier.

“We can deny them their victory by refusing to submit to a world created in their image. Terrorism inflicts not only death and destruction but a spiritual oppression to further its aims,” the statement said. “We must not allow this terror to drive us away from being the people God has called us to be. We assert the vision of community, tolerance, compassion, justice, and the sacredness of human life, which lies at the heart of all our religious traditions.”

He made his solemn profession to the Conventual Franciscans, in the Ohio-based Our Lady of Consolation Province, in 1992, and was ordained a priest in 1995.


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Cardinal Egan was born April 15, 1966, in Amherst, Ohio. He earned a bachelor’s degree from St. Louis University in 1990; a master’s degree in divinity from Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California, in 1993; and a licentiate in sacred theology from Jesuit School of Theology in 1995.

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By Jen Reed

Father John C. Kemper, a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg and a member of the Society of St. Sulpice, was recently elected as Provincial Superior of the U.S. Province of the Society of St. Sulpice.

His six-year term will begin on July 1, 2015. The Sulpicians are a society of diocesan priests dedicated to the formation and education of priests and future priests. Founded by Father Jean-Jacques Olier in Paris in 1641, the society was invited to the United States by our nation’s first bishop, Bishop John Carroll, in 1791. In Baltimore, they founded St. Mary’s Seminary on Paca Street, the first Catholic seminary in the United States.

Father Kemper was elected during a Provincial Assembly that was held at the Center for Continuing Formation at St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, approximately 75 priests who belong to the Society of St. Sulpice.

“This is a great act of trust on the part of the Sulpician confessors and high- lights Father Kemper’s expe- rience in leadership and his many gifts. Father Kemper has always remained closely connected to the priests, religious and laity of his home diocese, for which we are all truly grateful. May he enjoy abundant blessings in his new ministry of service.”

“In the initial process, I didn’t see myself as becoming the next provincial,” said Father Kemper, who is currently serving in his seventh year as director of St. Mary’s Spiritual Center and Historic Site on Paca Street in Baltimore. “But I do believe, as is our tradition, that there is a great deal of wisdom in the membership gathered around the table, and we have to believe that collective wisdom is animated by the Spirit.”

Father Kemper will remain as director as St. Mary’s historic site until he takes on responsibilities as Provincial on July 1. As Provincial, he will continue to reside at St. Mary’s, which holds a special place in his heart. “Living at the site where the first Sulpicians came and settled is an awesome connection to the past,” said Father Kemper. “I am constantly inspired by the men who have gone before us. The first superior is buried here in our chapel, and I often find myself pausing at this grave behind the main altar and pondering what it must have been like for him in leadership, coming to the United States to a place that lacked a lot of the sophisticated culture of Paris. Baltimore was not a city when the first Sulpicians arrived, yet they found joy and contentment in that they were fulfilled in the mission. I hope I could do the same.”

As Provincial, Father Kemper will work with the provincial council to provide leadership in setting the society’s direction for the next six years, and oversee the approximately 75 priests who belong to the society.

Father Kemper was born and raised in Kulpmont, and is the son of Lois and the late Jack Kemper. He attended St. Mary’s School in Kulpmont and graduated from Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Coal Township in 1975.

A year after graduation, he became a seminarian for the Diocese of Harrisburg. He attended St. Pius X Seminary in Erlanger, Ky., and earned a bachelor’s degree in Philosophy. He was later assigned by the diocese to Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., where he earned a master of arts degree in Church history and a Master of Divinity.

Father Kemper was ordained on April 9, 1983, and assigned to Good Shepherd Parish in Camp Hill. It was near the end of his seminary studies when Father Kemper was approached by a Sulpician priest who taught Canon Law – Father Jim Brennan – and asked if he had ever considered joining the society.

The invitation resonated, and Father Kemper remained grateful to then-Bishop William Keeler for permission to discern ministry as a Sulpician.

The Sulpicians are a society of apostolic life, and therefore do not ordain men. All members are diocesan priests.

“It’s a great act of generosity on the part of the diocesan bishop to release a priest,” Father Kemper said. “I am grateful to the Diocese of Harrisburg for having permission to discern with the Sulpicians and become a member.”

Father Kemper holds a doctorate from Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Calif. He has served as Vice Rector of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Mich., and as Vice President of Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He has served as Provincial Consultant for the past 12 years.

“I have always had a great connection with the Diocese of Harrisburg,” Father Kemper said. “I do consider it home. My identity is very much a priest of Harrisburg who is also a Sulpician. I think that’s what we are about – to be diocesan priests with the mission of priestly formation as Sulpicians.”

Learn more about the Society of St. Sulpice at www.sulpicians.org. Learn more about St. Mary’s Spiritual Center and Historic Site in Baltimore at http://stmarysspiritualcenter.org/
Consecrated life: A Radical Witness to Christ

By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC

Special to The Witness

A few weeks ago, as I handed Jen Reed, the editor of The Witness, my final article in the series on the Eucharist, I asked her, “What else do you want me to write about?” She smiled and said, “The Year of Consecrated Life.” “Wow! Where should I start and how do you want me to cover it?” She suggested to begin by reading the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis and see where his words lead. Scrutinizing my notes, I realized that the letter has discovered that there were a lot of concepts as well as vocabulary that could be unfamiliar to many of my readers. So, my “teacher” mode kicked in as I turned to the Catechism of the Catholic Church to assist me to explain some of the jargon that is a part of consecrated life.

But first, I need to share a story. Some time ago, I was driving down a road and noticed a tree service drastically pruning old growth trees. The trunks of these trees had a diameter of more than three feet. The workmen were cutting them back so that their main branches stood bare with gaping wounds. As I drove past and saw a completed tree and another tree awaiting the surgery, I began to cry and thought to myself, “Why does this scene evoke tears?” Upon further reflection and prayer, I understood. You see, the branches of the tree respond to the light of the sun and the force of wind. The twists and the turns of the branches, for me, represent the turns and turns a person can make in their journey to God, the Light of the World. The wind’s action on the branches symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit to assist in that journey. Because of this reflection, bare trees are now, for me, a personal symbol to our call to holiness.

I was reminded of this when I began reading the section on The Consecrated Life found within the Catechism of the Catholic Church (paragraphs 914-945). The catechism describes consecrated life as one tree with many branches with these words, “From the God-given seed of the counsels a wonderful and wide-spreading tree has grown up in various forms of the religious life lived wide of the world.” The wind’s action on the branches signifies the work of the Holy Spirit to assist in that journey. Because of this reflection, bare trees are now, for me, a personal symbol to our call to holiness.

Within the history of the Church, there have been men and women who have chosen to live a radical witness to Christ by imitating him as closely possible in his poverty, his chastity and his obedience. These individuals can live lives dedicated to God in very different ways. Within our diocese, we find men and women living within the eremitical life, as consecrated virgins, within religious congregations, and within secular institutes. I can hear you say, “Really? I didn’t know that!”

Each of these “branches” witnesses to Christ in a unique manner, but their call to consecrated life is “rooted” in the soil of the Verein Life found within the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 918). The consecrated life is seen as a special aspect of the consecrated life, why should you care? The Catechism explains it this way, “By this state of life consecrated to God, the Church manifests Christ and shows how the Holy Spirit acts so wonderfully in her…[In addition] the consecrated life is seen as a special sign of the mystery of redemption. To follow and imitate Christ so closely and to manifest more clearly his self-emptying is to be more deeply present to one’s contemporaries, in the heart of Christ.”

In observance of the Year of Consecrated Life, the diocesan bishop consecrated the individuals who began them. This gift is called a charism. Specific charisms are given to individuals who began them. This gift is given to those consecrated to the service of the Church and to manifest more clearly his self-emptying? The Catechism explains it this way, “By this state of life consecrated to God, the Church manifests Christ and shows how the Holy Spirit acts so wonderfully in her…[In addition] the consecrated life is seen as a special sign of the mystery of redemption. To follow and imitate Christ so closely and to manifest more clearly his self-emptying is to be more deeply present to one’s contemporaries, in the heart of Christ.”

Secular Institutes – This is another “branch” on the tree of consecrated life. Secular Institutes have only been recognized by the Church for about 150 years. Those men and women who are professed within these institutes are “the Christian faithful living in the world striving for the perfection of charity and work for the sanctification of the world especially from within.”

In addition to those members of these institutes share in the Church’s task of evangelization. They act as “leaven in the world” and share in the Church’s task of evangelization.

So why should the Church need consecrated life? If you are not called to live a consecrated life, why should you care that the Church has declared a year in its honor? The Catechism explains it this way, “By this state of life consecrated to God, the Church manifests Christ and shows how the Holy Spirit acts so wonderfully in her…[In addition] the consecrated life is seen as a special sign of the mystery of redemption. To follow and imitate Christ so closely and to manifest more clearly his self-emptying is to be more deeply present to one’s contemporaries, in the heart of Christ. For those who are on this ‘narrower’ path encourage their brethren by their example, and bear striking witness ‘that the world cannot be transfigured and healed to God and the spirit of the Beatitudes.’” (CCC 932)

In short, as humans need others to point on how to follow Christ. Personally, I need to be reminded of what it means to be consecrated not only by the Sisters in my congregation but also by the laity with whom I work, pray and associate. This is how we can support our personal journey to holiness. This is how we can all be living branches of the Holy Mother Church.

(Sister of Christian Charity, Geralyn Schmidt, is the Wide Area Network Coordinator at the Diocese of Harrisburg and a member of the IT Department. An educator for 28 years, she is responsible for Professional Development Programs for every age learner. Through her presentations, she challenges her audiences to be the individual God has called them to be.)
Father Menei Fulfills Role as Spiritual Director for Lourdes Volunteers

‘The Miracle is in Accepting God’s Will’

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

As the spiritual director for the North American Lourdes Volunteers – an association that takes people with serious illnesses and disabilities to the holy site of Lourdes – Father Menei cajures pilgrims that the miracle they’re seeking might not be what they ultimately receive.

Of the 30 to 40 alleged miracles reported as stemming from Lourdes, France, every year, the Church has recognized less than one percent. Still, there is an openness to God’s will that finds that they receive something there, Father Menei points out.

“Our pilgrimages through the North American Lourdes Volunteers include people with paralysis, end-stage cancer or ALS, and the sick and suffering at Lourdes and at St. Joseph’s Hospital. They’re all looking for a physical miracle,” said Father Menei, a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg. “I tell them, ‘You’re not looking for a physical miracle at Lourdes, but that doesn’t mean you’re not receiving something. That is the miracle in accepting God’s will.’”

“Think about what that means, exactly,” Father Menei said. “It’s not always easy to accept God’s will. What if that means you have to be in a wheelchair the rest of your life? What if it means you must suffer from cancer, or watch a loved one suffer and die? Can you accept that?”

The miracle of Lourdes, he said, is that everyone receives graces to uplift them.

Accompanying pilgrims twice a year as part of the North American Lourdes Volunteers, he encourages those on the journey to spend the weeklong experience praising God through the Blessed Mother.

“She knows God’s will, and she will help us to accept it,” he said.

Each year, an estimated six million people worldwide make a pilgrimage to Lourdes, nestled in the Pyrenees Mountains of southern France. It was here that Our Lady appeared to a young shepherd girl named Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. During the spring of apparitions that took place over several months beginning on February 11 of that year – a spring of water began to flow at the site of the grotto where Mary appeared. Here, Our Lady requested that a chapel be built, and townspeople began to flock to the site of the grotto.

Following four years of investigation, the Catholic Church proclaimed in 1862 that the apparitions at Lourdes were valid, and deemed the site worthy of pilgrimage. Today, 157 years after the Blessed Mother revealed herself to Bernadette, those same miraculous grottoes are the setting for a physical pilgrimage to make spiritual journeys to Lourdes to seek healing.

The North American Lourdes Volunteers association was established more than a decade ago by Marlene Watkins, a housewife who was so moved to serve pilgrims following her own experience in Lourdes. She founded the association – the first Lourdes Hospitality of the Americas – as an auxiliary to the Immaculate Conception as given to Bernadette in the Grotto at Lourdes. Here, Our Lady revealed herself to Bernadette in simplicity, humility and obedience.

The association accompanies pilgrims from North America to Lourdes, and also brings virtual Lourdes pilgrimages to parishes. These virtual experiences introduce Lourdes to parishioners with visuals and music, a piece of the Grotto rock, the precious water, the Rosary and Eucharistic experiences.

It was during a virtual pilgrimage at St. Therese Parish in Newtown two years ago that Father Menei – then pastor of St. Richard’s Parish in Manheim – was first introduced to the ministry of the North American Lourdes Volunteers.

There, he met Mrs. Watkins, and asked if he could make a pilgrimage to Lourdes someday through the association. She eagerly accepted his invitation, and invited him on the journey to take place the following month – June 2013.

On his inaugural pilgrimage with the association, Father Menei was asked by Mrs. Watkins to serve as spiritual director for the group. As a priest and as a person in a wheelchair, Father Menei created special connections with the pilgrims, Mrs. Watkins told him.

“That was an easy role for me to accept,” Father Menei said. “People would come talk to me, I would offer counsel, celebrate Mass, offer reflections.”

Yet, there were unexpected challenges during that pilgrimage in June 2013. Ex-treme flooding in the south of France put a halt to all the activities and sites associated with a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Mud and water prevented visits to the Grotto, the baths, and the Stations of the Cross, and cancelled nightly Rosary and Eucharistic processions.

Still, Mrs. Watkins, Father Menei and the association’s medical staff and other volunteers improvised, and created a special retreat on the rooftop of their hotel.

There, they participated in Holy Mass and small processions to create a spiritual experience.

“People later asked me how we could have possibly enjoyed that pilgrimage, but I told them, ‘You just enjoy the spiritual blessings of being there,’” Father Menei remarked.

Now retired from his role as pastor at St. Richard’s, Father Menei serves as the spiritual director for the national association, and travels with the ill and the injured on pilgrimages twice a year.

“I have experienced the most beautiful things at Lourdes,” he said. “When you go to the Grotto and see the Blessed Mother’s arms outstretched, you just want to go into those arms and give her your burdens.”

“I won’t ever be well physically, but spiritually I am re-invigorated,” he added. “When you see the Basilica and the Grotto, and the volunteers assisting pilgrims in the baths of the holy water, you experience the love God has for you.”

Last year, Father Menei shared that experience with Dr. Gayle Ryan, a longtime friend and parishioner of St. Richard’s.

The doctor who had been scheduled to accompany the pilgrims last year was unable to attend at the last minute, so Father Menei called on Dr. Ryan to assist.

Hearing little about the North American Lourdes Volunteers when Father Menei made the request, Dr. Ryan still kept at the chance to serve, and quickly became enamored of the association and its mission.

“The pilgrims that the volunteers care for have extensive medical needs, and some of them are near the end of their life,” she noted. “One pilgrim had a dozen people in wheelchairs, a person who has no use of their arms or legs, and people who needed oxygen tanks,” Dr. Ryan said. “Still, the volunteers and medical staff are prepared for anything the pilgrims might need while traveling – including international flights – and while in Lourdes. They are so accommodating of the anticipated needs of every pilgrim that comes on this journey.”

Once in Lourdes, pilgrims stay at an on-site hotel that is set up like a hospital, with special beds, assistance and accessibility to make the pilgrimage as easy as possible. As a general surgeon, Dr. Ryan could access any of the medical equipment there, if needed. She also became part of the medical bureau of Lourdes, the advisory board that determines whether alleged miracles can be explained by medical care. Though Dr. Ryan doesn’t think she will be called upon for her expertise, she does feel blessed to be part of the healing that pilgrims experience.

“In Lourdes, the volunteers and the pilgrims experience tremendous healing and comfort,” she said. “It’s the fully-accompanied people with ALS, end-stage cancer, end-stage heart failure, and by the end of the trip, they all had such peace and spiritual strength.”

Among the group was a woman with stage-four cancer who brought her husband and children to accompany her to Lourdes. During the pilgrimage, Father Menei celebrated a Mass at which the couple renewed their wedding vows and found the strength needed to carry the crosses for their daughter.

“Everyone goes to Lourdes with different needs, so everyone receives different graces,” Dr. Ryan remarked. “You don’t go into the baths and come out suddenly healed. There is truly something more to it – a spiritual healing and the understanding that we all carry our crosses. Your healing might not be the physical one you’ve been praying for, but might be the graces of offering your suffering as a sacrifice, or seeing a family member at peace.”

Father Menei and Dr. Ryan encourage pilgrims who are considering such an experience to make the journey in faith.

“The healing and the miracle may very well come in a way that you weren’t expecting,” Dr. Ryan said.

Father Menei is looking forward to offering spiritual guidance and receiving the graces of Lourdes on his next pilgrimage in June.

“For everyone who comes to Lourdes, their whole being is lifted because they’ve received something – the acceptance of God’s will, spiritual healing, or stronger faith,” he said. “The Blessed Mother has surprises for everyone.”

(Marlene Watkins from the North American Lourdes Volunteers organization was present and gave a keynote presentation at the convention of the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women in April. See the box on page 7 for information. The North American Lourdes Volunteers offer pilgrimages as well as volunteers on their pilgrimages each year. For information on how you can make this journey of faith, or to learn more about the virtual pilgrimages, visit www.lourdesvolunteers.org.)
World Meeting of Families
March Theme – Creating the Future

After returning from early Mass, Pete and Laura were watching the Sunday morning news panel on CNN while two-year-old Matthew and four-year-old Karen played on the floor. Suddenly the station cut away to the “Breaking News” logo and Anderson Cooper appeared on the screen. “ISIS has released a new video...” Laura picked up the remote and turned off the TV. Pete looked at her in surprise. “Why did you do that?” he asked.

“He just started a sentence with ISIS. What do you think we are about to see? Do you want the little ones to even hear about that?”

“The last time I heard a word forRedirect a second and then nodded. “Good point. Let’s see if “Frozen” is on demand yet.” Laura smiled at Pete. The children jumped with joy. All war well.

Sexual intimacy between a man and a woman is designed to welcome new life. Sacramental marriage creates a spiritual foundation for a man and a woman to welcome children “as an extension of divine generosity.” (Love is Our Mission, 71)

The same love that creates children will also lead parents to seek the best education and spiritual formation for their children. Pope Francis calls children “links in a chain” because children will eventually be adults who pass on their childhood faith to their own children. This chain has spanned across the years from the times of the Old Testament. Parents are called to share the faith with their children every day so that this chain will continue in the millennia to come. (75)

The family is a domestic church, where parents have the responsibility to be the first evangelists of the faith to their children. Parents also encourage their children to seek out the vocation in life that is best for each child. Children do not learn this in a vacuum; they learn this from their parents through example. Both at home and at church. Parents must teach their children what they themselves know – that daily prayer keeps one open to God and what God calls each person to be.

Parenting is challenging and demanding, but if “the goal of Christian family life is to open the home’s windows to God’s grace in daily life, then even in the midst of fatigue and domestic chaos, parents remain open to the spirit.” (79) Parenting also has a way of reminding parents that they need God in their lives to get through all the messiness of day to day life.

The culture of modern life also requires parents to be very discerning about what should be allowed into the family from the outside world. Television news and entertainment, Internet, video games, movies – all of these media can erode the life of the family if they are not carefully monitored and filtered. In a fragmented culture, where the social and media environment may undermine parental authority in general, and Catholic parenting in particular, parents and children need to reflect on their family’s way of being in the world without belonging to the world.” (82)

Everything children are exposed to will influence them in some way. So it is important for everyone who cares for children – parents, caregivers, teachers, extended family – to give the children wholesome experiences “that protect their innocence, give them an appetite for the adventure of Christian living, and evoke a vocational approach to life.” (83)

The domestic church of the family must also be part of the bigger Church through attendance at Sunday Mass. As Pope Benedict has said, a parish is a “family of families” which is “able to share with each other, not only the joys but the inevitable difficulties of initiating family life.” The sacraments and other works of mercy can be facilitated by the parish. Children can see their parents helping the poor through the parish. “The domestic church serves the parish and is served by the parish.” (86)

In the case of children with only one parent, the parish, the diocese and other Catholic institutions can collaborate with the parent in supporting the child through difficult times. And in the case of any family experiencing difficulty, the simple act of one parishioner befriending and helping another can make a tremendous difference. Being faithful does not simply mean going to church on Sunday, it also means all the little or not so little day to day kindness that people extend to one another. “We were made for one another, and to live as if that is not true is a sadness, a failure to fulfill the life-giving law of Christ.” (88) Adoption and foster parenting are also great works of love.

How can turning off the news be a faithful act for a family?

In preparation for the World Meeting of Families to be hosted in Philadelphia on September 22-27, 2015, The Catholic Witness is presenting reflections on ten monthly themes at the center of the conference. Those planning the World Meeting of Families have developed a preparatory catechesis that focuses on the themes, and the reflections presented in The Catholic Witness are written by Victoria Laskowski, Director of the Office for Family Ministries for the Diocese of Harrisburg. Information and registration for the conference is available at www.worldmeeting2015.org. Information about the Festival of Families and a Papal Mass, as well as details on busses running from locations throughout the diocese will be published here as it becomes available.

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

At the annual Geography Bee held on March 4 at the Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg, Luke Capper of St. Joseph School, Mechanicsburg, middle, won the competition between elementary students from all schools across the diocese. Coming in second place was Alexander Giocgon of St. Catherine Labour School, Harrisburg, and Olivia Speakman of Annunciation School, McSherrystown, placed third.

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Three Popes Celebrated - A Celebration of Peace Through Music is a concert that will air on PBS TV stations in the Diocese on Easter weekend. The televised concert was created by American conductor Sir Gilbert Levine and features the Krakow Philharmonic Choir, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and the Washington Choral Arts Society. Through music, a language that supersedes all cultural boundaries, Levine leads these world-class vocal and orchestral ensembles in a moving tribute to Pope John XXIII, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis — three spiritual leaders recognized for their dedication to promoting understanding and peace around the world.

Known as the “Pope’s Maestro” for his decades-long friendship with Pope John Paul II, Sir Gilbert is uniquely qualified to lead this musical tribute. Each musical work performed was selected to reflect the spirit of these three great leaders and their commitment to peace and understanding among people of all faiths. This concert special also follows Sir Gilbert as he travels to Buenos Aires, Venice, Krakow, Rome, Vienna, and Washington, D.C., to show us all how music and spirit can unite our world. The concert was performed in Washington, D.C., in May 2014, following the canonization of St. John XXIII and St. John Paul II.

The program will air on WITF TV, on Easter Sunday, April 5 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. It will air on WJLA TV on Saturday, April 4 at 9 p.m. and Easter Sunday, April 5 at 5 p.m.

Catholic Perspective
Tune into Catholic Perspective. This weekly program features news and information about current events and topics in a magazine format. Listeners will hear from the following contributors who present timely and topical information. These include Bishop Ronald Gainer; Father William Weary; James Gentis, Diocesan Director of Religious Education; Micaiah Bilger of the Pennsylvania Pro Life Federation and correspondents Rose Atkinson and Eleanor Rossman.

Information on this week’s edition can be found online at www.hbgdiocese.org/catholicperspective.

Catholic Perspective is produced in cooperation with the Office of Communications of the Diocese and AM 720 WHYF where it is heard on Sunday at 3 p.m. and Monday at noon and on Sunday mornings on WHVR-AM 1280, Hanover, at 8 a.m.; WKOK-AM 1070, Sunbury, at 6:30 a.m.; WIEZ-AM 670, Lewistown, at 8 a.m.; WWSM-AM 1510, Lebanon, at 7 a.m.; and WWEC-FM 88.3, Elizabethtown, at 9:30 a.m. It is also available on line at www.OldiesRadio1620.com at 6:30 a.m. and at www.WISL1480.com on Sunday at 11 a.m. It can also be heard on line at www.hbgdiocese.org.
Holy Rosary Parish Lends a Helping Hand with Lenten Mission Project

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Elysburg is an active parish community with numerous activities, both spiritual and social. But Father Alfred Sceski, pastor, was hoping his parishioners would get involved in something different. “Several months ago, when meeting with our Parish Council, we started to discuss mission projects, and Meg Yeager, a council member, suggested the Helping Hands meal packaging event presented by Catholic Relief Services and Stop Hunger Now,” Father Sceski explained. “The program involves volunteer teams of parish members who measure dry ingredients, bag the meals, and package them for shipment to the village of Burkina Faso, West Africa.” As part of a Lenten mission project on March 7, approximately 80 Holy Rosary parishioners bagged 10,000 meals, in addition to raising $5,000 through meal sponsorships to cover the cost of the project. In preparing the meals, they measured rice and beans into bags, along with dehydrated vegetables and nutrition packets.

Father Sceski was ecstatic with the success of the project. “We have a very generous parish that is supportive of our local food pantry, clothing drives, our Relay for Life team and other projects throughout the year,” he said. “This project expanded their view on helping others and was perfect for the season of Lent, during which time the Church calls us to see others as Christ saw them and to offer them the same love.”

Both the young and young at heart volunteered for this mission project, which has prompted discussion on future mission projects, both local and elsewhere. (Submitted by Sheila Olchowski, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Parish.)

May 23 Outdoor Mass Set for Beatification of Archbishop Romero

Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero will be beatified in San Salvador May 23, said Italian Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the postulator or promoter of the archbishop’s sainthood cause.

The ceremony, which moves the murdered archbishop a step closer to sainthood, will be in Plaza Divino Salvador del Mundo. The archbishop said Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, would celebrate the Mass.

“Romero, from heaven, wants every Salvadoran to walk the path of peace and justice,” Archbishop Paglia said March 11 at a news conference in San Salvador.

The archbishop called the beatification a gift for the world, but particularly for the people of El Salvador.

Pope Francis formerly recognized Feb. 3 that the slain Salvadoran archbishop was killed “in hatred of the faith” — and not for purely political reasons.

While Archbishop Romero’s sainthood cause began in 1993, it continued for years as Church officials combed through thousands of documents related to his life. The effort began moving forward under Pope Benedict XVI. In May 2007, he said: “Archbishop Romero certainly was a great witness to the faith, a man of great Christian virtue.”

The process advanced rapidly with the election of Pope Francis in 2013, the first Latin American pope in history. From the first moments of his papacy, he showed interest in declaring Archbishop Romero a saint.

Pope Francis signed the decree recognizing Archbishop Romero as a martyr, which meant there was no need to prove a miracle for his beatification. However, a miracle is ordinarily needed for canonization as saint.

Archbishop Romero, an outspoken advocate for the poor, was shot and killed March 24, 1980, as he celebrated Mass in a hospital in San Salvador during his country’s civil war. Archbishop Paglia said in early February that the two decades it took to obtain the decree were the result of “misunderstandings and preconceptions.”

During Archbishop Romero’s time as archbishop of San Salvador — from 1977 to 1980 — “kilos of letters against him arrived in Rome. The accusations were simple: He’s political; he’s a follower of liberation theology.”

All of the complaints, Archbishop Paglia said in February, slowed the sainthood process.

However, promoters of the cause, he said, collected “a mountain of testimony just as big” to counter the accusations and to prove that Archbishop Romero heroically lived the Christian faith and was killed out of hatred for his words and actions as a Catholic pastor.

“He was killed at the altar,” Archbishop Paglia said, instead of when he was an easier target at home or on the street. “Through him, they wanted to strike the Church that flowed from the Second Vatican Council.”

The archbishop announced the date of the beatification on the eve of the anniversary of the assassination of a close personal friend of Archbishop Romero: Jesuit Father Rutilio Grande, the first priest executed by death squads, March 12, 1977.

Father Grande was a fiery champion of the poor and oppressed and used the pulpit to denounce actions of the government, death squads in his country, violence from the outbreak of civil war and military occupation of churches. His death had a profound impact on Archbishop Romero, who later said, “When I looked at Rutilio lying there dead I thought, ‘If they have killed him for doing what he did, then I, too, have to walk the same path.’”

Harrsburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Seeks Applicants for Scholarship

The Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women’s Scholarship will be awarded to a Catholic senior high school girl for her freshman year at an accredited college, university, or trade school. The amount of the academic scholarship is $1,000.

Applicants must be sponsored by a mother, grandmother or guardian who is an active member of a Parish Council of Catholic Women for no less than one year.

Applicants must meet all conditions established by the Scholarship Committee as set forth in its rules and regulations, which are included in the application packet. Applications are available from parish presidents of the Council of Catholic Women. More information can be obtained by contacting Joyce Scott, Scholarship Chair, at 717-737-0927 or joyophb10@comcast.net. The application deadline is May 1, 2015.
In the history of Holy Infant Parish, a story is told of a man from Saginaw, on the western side of the Susquehanna River south of York Haven, whose three-year-old son died in the early 1920s. Seeking a priest in his time of sacramental and pastoral need, the man went south to York to Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. When the priest arrived with the man in Saginaw, he found 60 Catholics there, and saw the need for a mission church for them.

The first phase of Holy Infant Parish in York Haven began with the small chapel built in Saginaw under the patronage of St. Joseph the Worker, which served the faithful for nearly 25 years. Its second phase came in 1944, when Bishop George Leech granted permission that the mission be relocated to York Haven, where people worked at the local paper and power companies. In 1948, ground was broken for the current church, dedicated to the Holy Infant.

Established as a parish in 1972, Holy Infant is now undertaking the next phase in its history with the building of a new church.

Bishop Ronald Gainer celebrated Mass for the parish faithful on March 15, and accompanied parishioners and Father Edward C. Malesic, JCL, pastor, to the site of the new church, located about five miles away along Conewago Creek Road off of Old Susquehanna Trail, for the groundbreaking.

Holy Infant is a young and growing parish, with more than 1,750 parishioners in some 550 households. According to Father Malesic, discussions about plans for a new church began ten years ago during the pastorate of Father Clarence Osowekski, who then saw the need for a larger church because of the growing community. Formal plans began in the fall of 2009.

The parish began its “Building Our Family of Faith” capital campaign in October 2012, announcing the goal of raising $1.05 million. “Within eight weeks of that dinner, we had received pledges that exceeded that figure,” Father Malesic said. “Not yet three years into the campaign, we have collected over 90 percent on our pledges and are well on our way to successfully completing this campaign. This has been a tremendous achievement for our parish, and is a witness to the faith of our parishioners and the love they have for our parish.”

The new church is being built at a cost of roughly $3.6 million. It will seat 350 adults, about twice the capacity of the current church, which will be sold – along with its educational wing. The new church will also include space for a children’s chapel, socials, parish offices, meeting rooms, a larger kitchen and the flexibility to expand educational and other ministries.

The outstanding artwork, statues and furnishings in the current church will be incorporated into the new house of worship, Father Malesic noted. This includes stained-glass windows, statues of Mary, Joseph and the Infant of Prague, the altar, crucifix and tabernacle and hand-carved Stations of the Cross. A statue of Our Lady of Lourdes and the church bell – both from the original mission church in Saginaw – will also be part of the new church.

Father Malesic estimates that the church will be completed in the spring of 2016.

“Our parishioners have been outstanding,” he said of their support for the campaign and project. “They were very helpful when making the decision to move the church and facilities. They have been very supportive of me as their pastor. They have given of their time and talent and made many significant financial sacrifices to make this dream become a reality. In fact, we are able to build a little bit earlier than originally projected because they have been so clear in their desire for a new church and parish center.”

(A video of the groundbreaking ceremony, produced through the parish, is available at www.holyinfantparish.com.)
Deacons Serve the Kingdom of God

AUDIENCE OF ST. JOHN PAUL II

We find other witnesses in St Poly- 
carp of Smyrna (Ad Phil., 5, 2), St. Jun-
tin (Ap. I., 65, 5; 67; S. Tertullian (De 
Bapt., 17, 1)), St. Cyril of Jerusalem 
(Ad Magnes, 11-15; cf. Didascalia 
Magnes, 16), and in St. Augustine (De cat. 
rad., 1, c. 1, 1). 3. In the first centuries the deacon car-
ried out liturgical functions. In the Eucha-
ristic celebration he read or chanted the 
Epiistle and the Gospel; he brought the of-
ferings of the faithful to the celebrant; he 
distributed Communion and brought it to 
those absent; he was responsible for the 
orderliness of the ceremonies and at the end 
dismissed the assembly. In addition, he 
prepared catechumens for Baptism, in-
structed them and assisted the priest in 
administering this sacrament. In certain 
circumstances he himself baptized and 
preached. He also shared in the adminis-
tration of ecclesiastical property; he had 
care of the poor, widows, orphans and 
helper workers.

In Tradition there are witnesses to the 
distinction between the deacon’s func-
tions and those of the priest. For ex-
ample, St Hippolytus states (second to 
third century) that the deacon is ordained “not 
to the priesthood, but for service to the 
Bishop, to do what he commands” (SCH, 
11, p. 39; cf. Constitutione Apgeget, 
III, 2; cf. Funk, Didascalia, p. 103; Statuta 
Ecclesiae Ant., 37-41: Mansi 3, 954). Ac-
tual, according to the Church’s mind 
and practice, the diacate belongs “not to 
Orders of Bishops, but is not part of the 
priesthood and does not entail functions 
proper to priests.

With the passage of time, as we 
know, the presbytery in the West as 
simply assumed almost exclusive import-
ance in relation to the diacate, which in fact 
was reduced to being merely a step on the way 
to the priesthood. This is not the place 
to retrace the historical process and explain 
the reasons for these changes: it is rather 
a question of pointing out that, on the ba-
sis of the Office of teaching (in the awareness 
of the diaconate’s importance for the Church 
greater and greater in theological and 
pastoral circles, as did the appropri-
ateness of re-establishing it as an Order 
and permanent state of life. Pope Pius XII 
also made reference to this in his address to 
the Second World Congress of the Lay 
Apostolate (5 October 1957), when he 
stated that, although the idea of intro-
ducing the diacate as a function distinct 
from the priesthood was not yet ripe at the 
time, nevertheless it could become such 
and that in any case the diacate was to 
be put in the context of the hierarchical 
mystery defined by the most ancient 

Permanent diacate was re-established by Vatican II

The time was ripe at the Second Vatican 
Council, which considered the proposals of the preceding years and decided on its re-establishment (cf. Lumen gentium, n. 29). It was Pope Paul VI who later im-
plemented the decision, determining the complete canonical and liturgical disci-
pline for this Order (cf. Sacrum Diaconas 
Nudinum: 18 June 1967; Pontificalis 
Romani recognitio: 17 June 1968; Ad pas-
cendam: 15 August 1972).

There were two main reasons for the 
theologians’ proposals and the conciliar 
and papal decisions. First of all, it was 
considered fitting that certain charitable services, guaranteed in a stable way by 
laymen’s known of being called to the 
Church’s Gospel mission, should be con-
cretely expressed in a form recognized by 
virtue of an official consecration. It was 
also necessary to provide for the scarcity 
of priests, as well as to assist them with 
many responsibilities not directly con-
cerned with the sacramental minis-
ty. Bishop Ronald W. Gainer officially 
announced, in a message of 17 December, 
enrollment for a formation class for 
the permanent diacate in the Diocese of Harrisburg. The class will consist of a course of studies in 
Church theology as well as pastoral, spiritual 
and human formation. The program of 
formation will begin with an academic 
year which will focus on discerning 
the call to ordained ministry. That is 
followed by four years of studies and 
predicate formation which will 
wait take place in the spring of 2020. Catho-
lic men who wish to apply should ap-
preach their pastors. All applications 
must be completed no later than June 
15, 2015.

The following is the text of the Au-
dience of St John Paul II, given on Oct 
5, 1993, on the order of deacons.

1. In addition to presbyters there is 
another category of ministers in the 
Church with specific tasks and charisms, as the Council of Trent recalls when it discusses the sacrament of Orders: “In the Cathedral 
Church there are realized the functions of 
divine ordinance, which includes Bish-
ops, presbyters and ministers” (DS 1776).

2. The first evidence of the 
appointment to the diaconate, which in fact was 
reduced to being merely a step on the way 
to the priesthood, is that of a greater and more direct 
presence of Church ministers in the vari-
ous spheres of the family, work, school, etc., 
in addition to existing pastoral struc-
tures. Among other things, this fact ex-
plains the relationship of the modern 
Church, in historically justifying the idea of celibacy for deacons, 
permitted this Order to be conferred on 
married men under certain conditions: 
they would be at least 35 years of age and have 
their wife’s consent, be of good character and reputation, and 
receive an adequate pastoral and spiritual 
preparation given either by institutes or 
priests specially chosen for this purpose. 
(cf. Paul VI, Sacrum Diaconatus Ordin-
atum, 11-15: Enchiridion Vaticanum, 
II, 1381-1385).

Those who aspire to 
the diaconate need formation

7. It should be noted, however, that the Church has maintained the diaconate 
open to younger men who would de-
vote themselves totally to the Lord, with 
the commitment of celibacy as well. It is 
a life of “evangelical perfection”, which 
can be understood, chosen and loved 
by generous men who want to serve 
the kingdom of God in the world, 
without entering the priesthood to which 
they do not feel called, but nevertheless receiv-
ing a consecration that guarantees and institutionalizes their special service to 
the Church through the conferral of sac-
ramental grace. These men are not lack-
ting today. Certain provisions were given 
for them: for ordination to the diacate 
they must be at least 25 years of age 
and receive formation for at least three years 
in a special institute, “where they are test-
ined in a life of evangelical perfection 
and prepared to carry out effectively their 
own specific functions” (cf. ibid., nn 5-9: 
Enchiridion Vaticanum, II, 1375-1379).

These provisions, although significant, are not the new idea of dedicating oneself to 
the kingdom of God, which the Church 
takes from the Gospel and raises as a banner particularly by young people in our time too.
Pope Penance

Continued from 1

The Gospel reading at the penance service was the story of the sinful woman who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. Every time one goes to confession, the pope said, “we feel the same compassionate gaze of Jesus” that she did. Jesus’ love, he said, allowed her to draw near, to demonstrate her repentance and to show her love for him. “Every gesture of this woman speaks of love and expresses her desire to have an unshakable certainty in her life, that of having been forgiven.”

“Love and forgiveness are simultaneous” in the story of each person, just as in the story of the sinful woman, he said. “God forgave her for much – for everything – because he loved her much.”

Through Jesus, the pope said, God took the woman’s sins and “threw them over his shoulder, he no longer remembers them.” Jesus’ encounter with the woman took place in the home of a Pharisee named Simon. Unlike the woman, the pope said, Simon “isn’t able to find the path of love. He remains stopped at the threshold of formality. He is not able to take the next step to encounter Jesus, who brings salvation.”

The Pharisee is concerned only with following God’s law, with justice, which is a mistake, the pope said. “His judgment of the woman distances him from the truth and prevents him from understanding who his guest is.”

Jesus scolds Simon, pointing out how the “sinful woman” has shown nothing but love and repentance, the pope said. “Jesus rebuke pushes each of us to never stop at the surface of things, especially when dealing with a person. We are called to look deeper, to focus on the heart in order to see how much generosity the personal is capable of.”

Pope Francis said he asked the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization to coordinate preparations for the Holy Year so that it would be “a new stage in the Church’s journey in fulfilling its mission of bringing the Gospel of mercy to each person.”

Anniversary Interview: Pope Talks about His Election, Papacy, Future

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

When Pope Francis went out onto the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica for the first time, he said he did not prepare what he was going to say, but “I felt deeply that a minister needs the blessing of God, but also of his people.”

He did not know if it was right to explicitly ask the thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square to bless him, he said. And he bowed for their prayers.

Marking the second anniversary of his election March 13, Pope Francis spoke about the conclave that elected him in 2013, about his life the last two years and about the future in an interview with Valentina Alazraki of Mexico’s Televisa.

And, he said, while he doesn’t hate being pope, he is not a fan of the travel involved and he really would like to go out of the Vatican unrecognized, perhaps “to a pizzeria to eat a pizza.”

“I have the feeling that my pontificate will be brief,” he said. “Four or five years, I do not know, or maybe two, three. Well, two have already passed. It’s a vague feeling.”

Perhaps, the pope said, it is like the kind of trick a gambler plays on his mind by convincing himself – when he places a bet – that he will lose; when he does, he is not disappointed. “I do not know what it is, but I have the feeling that the Lord put me here for a brief time... But it is just a feeling. So I keep the possibility open.”

Pope Benedict XVI’s discernment that he no longer had the energy to carry out the office and his decision to resign to a life of prayer was courageous, Pope Francis said, and it opened the door for popes in the future to do so with greater ease.

But, the pope said, he is opposed to setting an age limit, for example, 80, for a pope’s ministry. While for some theologians “the papacy is a sacrament,” he said he would not go that far, but “it is something special.”

Asked about reports that he received about 40 votes during the 2005 conclave that elected Pope Benedict, Pope Francis refused to answer, “although I could tell because now I have the authority to speak.”

As for the 2013 conclave, he said he had no inkling until the lunch break March 13 “when something happened,” cardinals started coming up to him and asking about his health. “When we returned in the evening, the cake was cooked. Everything happened with just two ballots. It was a surprise for me as well.”

During the voting, he said, he was praying the Rosary, which was his normal practice and brings him a great sense of peace. “The same thing occurred then, which for me was a sign that it was God’s will. Peace. And even today I have not lost that sense.”

The cardinals at the conclave interrupted his Rosary when he had reached the two-thirds vote necessary to be elected. “They asked me if I accepted. I said yes. I don’t know if they made me take an oath, I don’t remember.”

Questioned about the 2014 extraordinary synod and the upcoming Synod of Bishops on the family, Pope Francis said he is convinced God wants the Church to focus on better serving families.

“The family is in crisis,” he said, and it is not the age-old crisis of infidelity, but the future of marriage itself.

“I think the Lord wants us to face this,” Pope Francis said, including through improved “marriage preparation; accompanying cohabitating couples; accompanying those who do marry and are raising a family; supporting those whose marriages have failed and are in a new union; preparing them for the sacrament of marriage, [because] not everyone is ready.”

As for the reform of the Roman Curia, which Pope Francis said really was the “last [royal] court” existing in Europe, he said, “the appearance of a court can be maintained,” but the Curia must be a group of people and structures “at the service of the Church, at the service of the bishops.”
Gold Award Project Leads to Service at Interfaith Shelter

By Krista Haas

(Girl Scout Krista Haas, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Mechanicsburg and a senior at Camp Hill High School, volunteered at the Interfaith Shelter for Homeless Families in Harrisburg for her Girl Scout Gold Award project. The following is a reflection she offered on her volunteer experience.)

Muffin Girl, I knew you’d come back!”

In a homeless child’s life where nothing is permanent, even where they are living, seeing a familiar face, one who had brought food – yes, muffins – and games, stories, and crafts, return is an exciting event.

For me, it was a bittersweet moment. I felt bad for him, in a way – what if I hadn’t come back, at least while he ment.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the third, and most prestigious, in the series of highest awards a Girl Scout can earn, following the Bronze Award and Silver Award. To put it in a better-known perspective, it is an equivalent award to the Boy Scout Eagle Award.

It is open to Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts, Girl Scouts in grades 9 through 12.

I completed my project in a different way in many of my well-known world of AP classes and college tours, and it was definitely a positive experience for me.

As the Girl Scout Web site says, “This prestigious award challenges you to change the world – or at least your own. You are encouraged to use the skills you have developed during your Girl Scout years to help solve a community problem, or to bring about change in some area of need. A Girl Scout Gold Award may be awarded only in recognition of an outstanding piece of volunteer service, and not for participation in the usual Girl Scout activities.”

Lenten Dinners

St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church

In Harrisburg will serve fish and penitent dinners this Lent on Wednesdays from 4:30-6 p.m. in the parish hall. Homemade soups, side dishes and desserts will also be available. Penit (pierogi) prices will be set at $8 or $10 for 8 or $5 for 5 per dozen each Wednesday during the season and from noon-1 p.m., Wednesdays and on Saturdays from 9 a.m.-noon. Fillings will be available for purchase: kielbasa, kosaerkau, prune, farmer cheese and apple. Smoked Kielbasa will also be available for sale for $5 a ring. The mystery portion of the pierogi will be open also during the Wednesday sale times. For info, see 717-652-6654, or www.stannbzy.org.

Divine Redeemer Parish in Mount Carmel will host their Lenten Fish Dinners in the Divine Mercy Hall from 11 a.m.-6 p.m., eat-in or take-out.

On March 20, 2015, there will be live entertainment from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. for 75 cents each. Balter will also be available for purchase. On March 20, a spaghetti dinner will be served, including salad, spaghetti and meatballs, bread, butter, dessert and beverage. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the door. For take-outs, call 570-759-0221.

St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Hummelstown will serve their Lenten Fish Dinners on Fridays through March 27 from 4-7 p.m. Eat-in or take-out. Battered-fried fish, baked fish, chicken, fried shrimp, fried catfish, fried haddock, Choice of French fries or baked potato. Choice of cole slaw, corn or beans. Baked pies, pies pudding and beverages available.

Order factory orders – call 717-759-7272, or fax 717-759-6873 or 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Knights of Columbus of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Mechanicsburg will sponsor their annual Lenten Fish Dinners in the church social hall on Fridays through March 27 from 4-7 p.m. All-you-can-eat meals include homemade fish and fried haddock, fish, popcon shrimp, fried clams, French fries, macaroni and cheese, and a selection of tomatoes. All meals come with a choice of a baked potato or French fries, cole slaw or potato salad. All meals come with a choice of a baked potato or French fries, cole slaw or potato salad. All meals come with a choice of a baked potato or French fries, cole slaw or potato salad.

Pay at the door: adults $12; ages 6-12 $6; children 5 and under are free.

Lenten Dinners

St. Rose of Lima Parish in York will be holding its annual seafood fundraiser during the Lenten season. The March 20th dinner will be served every Friday through March 27. Lunches will run from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Dinners will begin at 4:30-6:30 p.m. and 7:30-9 p.m.

For more information, visit www.saintsroseoflima.org.

Holy Spirit Parish in Palmyra will host its Lenten Fish Fry Dinners every Friday in Lent, excluding Good Friday, from 3-7 p.m. in the Church Social Hall. Menu includes fried fish, baked fish, butterfly shrimp, single crab cakes, dinners and pierogie dinners. Average price is $8.50.

Dinners are follows by Stations of the Cross at 7:30 p.m.

Knights of Columbus #1851 of St. Bernadette Parish in Duncannon will sponsor Lenten Fish dinners from March 24 through March 30. Eat-in or take-out.

St. Matthew Parish Knights of Columbus Council will be hosting baked fish dinners at the parish activity center in Dauphin March 27 from 4-7 p.m. Dinner options include homemade fish cakes and baked haddock fillets. Dinners include twice baked potato, cole slaw, applesauce, and milk or drink. A full meal will be available. Homemade desserts will be available a la carte, as well as a variety of desserts.

Lenten Dinners

Holy Angels Parish in Kulpmont will hold Lenten fish dinners on Fridays during Lent from 4-6 p.m. in the activity center. Take-out will be offered. Donations are $8 for adults, $5 for children 12 and under. Stations of the Cross take place Fridays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Mechanicsburg will hold Lenten dinners on March 20 and 27 from 4-6:30 p.m. The cost is $11, which includes soup, fish, vegetable, starch, roll, drink and dessert. Limited amount of pasta dinners for sale until Friday, March 20 and 27 for $5. Take-out is available. A family price will be posted in all websites. All donations go to the diners.

St. Peter Parish in Columbia will hold Lenten Fish Fry dinners from March 20-27 from 4-6:30 p.m. Menu features haddock, scallops, oysters, clams, steak and accolades. Non-meal dishes prepared by the women of the parish. Included in the menu are the plate of the day, cole slaw, a dinner roll, macaroni and cheese, a vegetable and French frites. Macaroni and cheese, pizza, fish sticks, fish sandwiches and French fries may be purchased a la carte as well. Homemade desserts are also available.

Take-out or eat-in.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Carlisle will host its Lenten Fish Fry every Friday through March 27 in the parish hall, from 4-7 p.m. The menu includes a variety of seafood, both baked and fried. There will not be a fish fry on Good Friday, March 27. Take-out call 717-473-1995 for take-outs.

Knights of Columbus Holy Rosary Council #1171 will hold Lenten Fish Fry every Friday through March 27 from 4-7 p.m. Please call 1-800-626-1608 for more information. For take-outs, call 717-345-6504.

St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Mechanicsburg will hold Lenten Fish Fries every Friday through March 27. For information, call 1-800-626-1608 for more information. For take-outs, please join us for Stta.

The Knights of Columbus of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Mechanicsburg will sponsor Lenten Fish Frys every Friday through March 27 from 4-6:30 p.m. in the parish hall on Fridays from 4:45-6:45 p.m. Stta. The Cross on the Cross. Follow the diners each evening.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in New Bloomfield will hold Lenten Fish Frys every Friday through March 27 from 4-7 p.m. On Fridays through March 27, Men will be served fish or crab cakes, or macaroni and cheese. Men will be served fish or crab cakes, or macaroni and cheese. Men will be served fish or crab cakes, or macaroni and cheese. Men will be served fish or crab cakes, or macaroni and cheese.

For more information, call 717-334-0448.

Seven Sorrows BVM Parish in Chesterville will be hosting Lenten Fish Dinners from March 27 through 5-8 p.m. in the school cafeteria. The menu features 24-cans of crab cakes, baked fish, fish cakes, fried clams, French fries, mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese, and a variety of desserts, including coconut cream pie. Handicap accessible. Overflow parking available. Come and enjoy the Lenten Fish Fry snack. All meals come with a choice of a baked potato or French fries, cole slaw or potato salad, and a choice of a baked potato or French fries, cole slaw or potato salad.

Cost is $8 for adult dinners and $2 for child’s dinner, March 20, potato cakes will be sold frozen for $6 per dozen each Wednesday during the Lenten season. However, due to the fact that the Interfaith Shelter is a 30-day shelter, it was never guaranteed that there would be kids for me to work with. This was the case more than once, so I did other tasks around the shelter to help out, such as helping make dinner and taking down Christmas decorations. I played with children while their mothers got a chance to relax, I got to paint and draw, and I got to read stories to an attentive and interested audience. I also learned how to handle a group of excitable children and how to speak up enough to be heard over them.

This project was a great experience for me, and I hope it was good for those kids as well. But in order for it to continue, the shelter needs your help. It is currently staging a “Hope for All” campaign to raise money for much-needed renovations to the entire facility, renovations that will make the shelter, as well as the connected Evergreen House and Lourdes House Mother Home, more accessible to those with disabilities. With your help, it is possible to continue to help make the shelter was life-changing for me, it was hopefully truly life-altering for the kids. Please consider donating to the campaign, so that the good work of the shelter can continue.

(See the accompanying ad on this page for information about the “Hope for All” campaign and how you can do-nate.)

“Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty.”

Help us fight loneliness... support the women and the unborn in This Saint Samual Center through the Heart For All community service campaign.

The campaign serves women and the unborn through the Interfaith Shelter for Homeless Families, Good's Home Lanham Service, and Evergreen House.

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

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St. Joseph School in Mechanicsburg
Nominated for Blue Ribbon Award

Since 1982, the U.S. Department of Education’s National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized outstanding public and private schools. In identifying several hundred outstanding schools annually, the program celebrates some of the most skilled and effective educators in the country. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program was the brainchild of Terrel H. Bell, the second Secretary of Education named by President Ronald Reagan. Secretary Bell created the National Blue Ribbon Schools Award in 1982 to bring public attention to the best schools in the United States and to facilitate community andsharing of best practices.

The Council for American Private Education (http://capenet.org/) has chosen St. Joseph School in Mechanicsburg to be one of 16 private schools nationwide to receive a nomination for the 2015 Blue Ribbon Schools Award. There are more than 34,000 private schools across the country, and CAPE nominees solicit no more than 50 private schools each year for this award. St. Joseph School earned the nomination as an “Exemplary High Performing School” as described on the Blue Ribbon Schools website, http://nationalblueberron schoools.org/index.html.

The U.S. Department of Education will then give the award to no more than 50 private schools through an announcement in September. “This nomination is a testament to the great work done by our faculty and staff in partnership with our families,” said Tom Cominsky, principal of St. Joseph’s. “Most of the private schools who earn nominations are academies with admission tests or other requirements. St. Joseph School is sponsored by our area parishes and educates as many students with diverse needs as possible. Our parish communities deserve high praise, too, for the support that they offer. And, most importantly, the nomination is a testimony to the achievements of our students!”

Lancaster Catholic Senior to Perform with All-Eastern Honors Ensemble

Lancaster Catholic High School senior Grace Auncan will perform as part of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) All-Eastern Symphony Orchestras Honors Ensemble from April 9-12, 2015 in Providence, RI.

Auncan will join 800 of the most musically talented and skilled high school students from the Eastern Region when she performs at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium over the three day period.

Each of the state music educators associations in the Eastern Division (CT, DC, DE, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, RI, PA, VT, Europe) will be represented in this festival. Students who made their All-State Festivals last year as sopranos and juniors were eligible to audition.

This will be Auncan’s third performance at the NAfME All-Eastern Honors festival this year, as she represented Lancaster Catholic at the All-National Orchestra Festival in Nashville, TN, this past October.

Auncan will perform under the direction of Allen Tinkham, Director of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra in Chicago, IL.

The NAfME All-Nations Honors Ensembles, consisting of a concert band, symphony orchestra, mixed chorus and jazz ensemble, are organized by members of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). The National Association for Music Education amongst the world’s largest arts education organizations, is the only association that addresses all aspects of music education. NAfME advocates at the local, state, and national levels; provides resources for teachers, parents, and administrators; hosts professional development events; and offers a variety of opportunities for students and teachers. The Association orchestrates success for millions of students nationwide and has supported music educators at all teaching levels for more than a century.

For more information about the festival or the Fine & Performing Arts Department, please contact Tony Brill, Director of Fine and Performing Arts, Lancaster Catholic High School, at thbrll@lchsleys.org

Holy Spirit Hospital Auxiliary to Host Annual Spring Festival

Holy Spirit Hospital Auxiliary—A Geisinger Affiliate will hold its 18th annual Spring Festival on Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at Adams Ric opioid, East, Enfield Drive, Emmaus, PA. It is a family-friendly event, which includes chicken barbecue, children’s games and inflatables, and craft vendors.

Holy Spirit Nurse will kick off the day by hosting the Spirit 5K Run/Walk at 9 a.m. Race registration opens at 8 a.m. and the warm-up session begins at 8:30 a.m. The 5K Run starts at 9 a.m. while the country, “the Park,” begins at 9:05 a.m. Children 12 and under can take part in the Children’s Fun Run at 10 a.m. The Spirit 5K Run/Walk is hosted by the nurses of Holy Spirit—A Geisinger Affiliate, as part of their commitment to ANCC Magnet® Recognition for Excellence in Nursing.

Admission to the Spring Festival is free. There is a fee to participate in the 5K Run/Walk events. Proceeds from this family-friendly event will benefit Holy Spirit Hospital’s charitable programs. The event will be held rain or shine.

For more information, or to pre-order flowers or chicken barbecue meals, please call the Holy Spirit Hospital Auxiliary office at 717-763-2796 or send an email to Ann.Hubbard@hsf.org.

For more information about the 5K Run/Walk, or to register, go to www.hsf.org/Spirit5KRunWalk or contact Holy Spirit’s Office of Resource Development at 717-763-2779 or by email at Development@hsf.org. Sign up by March 27 to receive a race shirt.
An Iconography Workshop led by Jody Cole will be held at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Allentown on April 23. Registration deadline is April 16. For more information, call 610-464-4257.

Lift Your Spirits Performing Arts will present “Born for Flight” on April 11. For more information, call 717-286-7449.


The Jazz Under the Dome Series at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg continues on March 27 at 7:30 p.m., paying tribute to trombonist Kai Winding and JJ Johnson. Catholic Rock Music Duo Kevin Myers and Jim McFalls, will perform duets from the album “The Great Kai and J.J.” Admission is free, but a free-will offering will be collected to benefit the music series. The concert will be held in the basement of the church.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Hanover will hold its annual fish fry and sale on March 20 from 5-9 p.m. There will be 60 tables of goodies along with soup and bake sales. The kitchen will be open for breakfast and lunch. The yard sale will be held in the gym on South Hanover Street. The thrift shop will also be open that day from 10 a.m.–noon.

Trinity High School in Camp Hill announces its Spring Gala “A Night on the Oyster” on March 29 & Colonial Golf Club and Tennis Club in Harrisburg. The evening includes dinner, dancing, entertainment, live auction, silent auction, a “best dressed” contest, 50/50 raffle and more. For more information and tickets, call 717-761-2228.

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny will be held at Sacred Heart Parish Hall in Hanover March 29 from 8-11:30 a.m. All-you-can-eat breakfast featuring Chef Wade Smith creating made-to-order omelets. Chipotle beef and gravy, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes, home fries, toast, and coffee will be served. Cost is $8 for adults, $6 for children ages 6-13, and free for children five and under.

A Palm Sunday breakfast, bake sale and candy sale will be held in support of the Lord’s Pantry at St. Martin de Porres Parish on March 29. Pancakes, French toast, eggs, sausage, bacon and more. Nut and raisin bread and dried fruit cake will be sold by the pound, with all proceeds benefiting the Lord’s Pantry.

Northern Pennsylvania: Art and Education Center in Smithfield will host a “Celebration of Local Artists” on March 27 from 5-9 p.m. For more information, call 717-335-1932.

The SJBNF’s annual Care Day on April 11 at Lancaster Catholic High School. This event will host the third annual Prayer and Run on April 11 at 7 a.m. at St. Cyril Spiritual Center in Danville. The next gathering will be March 21.

St. Francis de Sales School, former Chairman of Lancaster County Commission- ers, and Middle School to present “Fact from Fiction: The Truth about the Crusades.” A happy hour followed by a panel discussion and a Q&A. For more information, call 717-972-7690.

Pastoral Care Day on April 11 at Lancaster Catholic High School. This event will host the third annual Prayer and Run on April 11 at 7 a.m. at St. Cyril Spiritual Center in Danville. The next gathering will be March 21.

St. Catherine Labouré School in Harrisburg will host the third annual Prayer and Run on April 11 at 7 a.m. at St. Cyril Spiritual Center in Danville. The next gathering will be March 21.
TRINITY DIVER CONTINUES HIS PERFECT FORM

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

With his third straight state PIAA state championship, Trinity’s junior diver Bradley Buchter has achieved a status that makes him one of the best Pennsylvania divers to have ever competed in the 1-meter springboard. At Kinney Natatorium on the campus of Bucknell University on March 11, Buchter not only captured his third gold medal in convincing fashion, he set the state and pool record at Bucknell with a score of 642.50 – besting his closest rival by nearly 200 points. He scored two perfect 10 scores on a back pike.

'ROCKS RELAY SWIMMERS WIN SILVER

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

In the PIAA state Class AA swimming championships at Bucknell University on March 12, the Trinity boys’ 400-yard freestyle relay team won the silver medal, led by anchorman Jordan Wyant, pictured at right. His teammates were Lucas Haywood, Keenan Handley and Andy Snyder, who set a school record with their performance.

Tourney Brings Together Seminarians who Share Love of Sport, Priesthood

By Joyce Duriga
Catholic News Service

At first glance, the basketball tournament held in the gym at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois last month looked like any other amateur men’s league except with one difference – all of the players were discerning a call to the priesthood. They were taking part in the annual Father Pat O’Malley Invitational that pits against each other teams from seminaries around the country. This year, 12 teams from seven states participated.

“It’s always been a wonderful time for fraternity among the seminarians,” said Father Robert Barron, rector of Mundelein Seminary, in a northwest Chicago suburb. “It’s the best the seminary tournament I’ve seen anywhere in the country.”

Two years ago, Father Barron, who attended several of the tournament games this year, renamed the event in honor of Father Pat O’Malley, who passed away in 2013. A retired Chicago priest and former columnist at the Catholic New World, the archdiocesan newspaper, he had served as a spiritual director at the seminary. Father O’Malley was an avid sports fan and used to attend all of the tournament games.

“He loved this tournament. He was always here cheering the guys on. So when he died, I thought he was an appropriate guy to name it for,” Father Barron said.

The whole event is an opportunity to strengthen bonds between those discerning priesthood, he said.

“For men, we connect by working together, whether it’s building a house or playing sports,” he said. “I’ve learned throughout my life that playing sports is a good way to get to know each other.”
Lady Red Raiders Finish Fine Season in the Elite 8

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

After losing in the District 4 semifinals, the Lady Red Raiders of Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School in Coal Township advanced to the state Class A quarterfinal, where they ran into the Lady Devils of Old Forge, who have won four straight District 2 Class A titles in a row.

Lourdes had beaten Lebanon Catholic by 16 points in the first round of states, and after winning their second-round game, the Lady Red Raiders advanced to the final eight best teams in Pennsylvania when they took the floor at Hazelton Area High School on Saturday March 14.

Midway through the second quarter, Lourdes had a five-point lead built on solid shooting and steady play from their backcourt duo of Bailey Krell and Carmella Bickell, who are both excellent ball handlers and shooters. And Lourdes missed a number of layups and little dink looks that could have built a lead to withstand that second half rally by Old Forge.

But in the third quarter, shooting-wise things went as cold as February was when the Lady Red Raiders only made one field goal (1 for 13 shooting in the quarter) and at the same time the Lady Devils began pounding the ball inside to their big shooters, which led to foul trouble for Lourdes.

Lourdes lost 50-38, though the game was much closer than the scoreboard told. The Lady Red Raiders finished their great season at 20-8.

Kristen Komara, senior, gets fouled by a Lady Devil.

Lourdes’ Carmella Bickell finds tough defense going under the basket.
Bishop McDevitt senior David Pipa finished his high school wrestling career with a third-place finish in the state's AA tournament at 126 pounds. This year’s District 3-AA champion, Pipa will head to Lehigh University in the fall.

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

In the sport of wrestling, one solitary move can be the difference between victory and defeat. Break free for a single escape point, and you can solidify a win. Position yourself too high on your opponent’s back, and you might suffer a loss.

When the state’s top 20 high school wrestlers from 14 weight classes in both AA and AAA competition convened in Hershey March 5-7 for the PIAA championships, good solitary decisions led to championship bouts for 36 of the 560 competitors in Chocolate Town.

Lancaster Catholic junior Joe Lobeck was the only diocesan high school wrestler to battle through to a championship match at the Giant Center, where he squared off against Central Cambria’s Max Murin in the third-place AA final.

A fourth-place finisher in the state last season, Lobeck entered this year’s tournament at 38-2 – his only losses coming in close matches against AAA opponents. Holding a 4-3 lead entering the third and final period against Murin, one solitary move swung Lobeck’s pendulum in the opposite direction. Murin slipped out from underneath Lobeck’s top ride and turned the move into a four-point swing to earn the 7-4 win. With his silver medal, Lobeck told the media he was disappointed that he didn’t make it to the top of the podium, but considered his 2014-2015 campaign to be a success.

“I think it was a pretty successful season,” he said. “I enjoyed the season. It was a lot of fun and a lot of hard work. I guess the hard work paid off, just not enough. Next year, through, it should pay off the full way.”

Bishop McDevitt senior David Pipa ended his high school career with a third-place finish at 126 in AA. Pipa ousted Forest Hills’ Triston Law – the heavy favorite for gold – in the quarterfinals, 1-0, after Law cut Pipa loose from the bottom in the third period. Pipa lost his semifinal match, but gut-checked his way through two consolation bouts – including a second win against Law – to earn bronze.

John Pipa, a sophomore at Bishop McDevitt and last year’s PIAA silver medalist at 106 pounds, also suffered a loss in the semifinals, but wrestled to fourth place at 120 pounds in the consolation bracket. Also at 120 pounds, Trinity’s Andrew Wert, the current District 3-AA champion, lost in the first round, but surged through three consolation matches to place fifth on the podium.

Bishop McDevitt – also with Luke Pipa at 106 pounds and Jacque Jackson at 170 pounds – finished the weekend in a three-way tie for 15th in team points, out of 94 teams with wrestlers in AA competition.

Wrestlers Scrap for PIAA Podium

Joe Lobeck of Lancaster Catholic eyes his opponent before the whistle blows on the start of his 113-pound final in the PIAA class AA championships in Hershey March 7.

The District 3-AA champion at 113 pounds, Lancaster Catholic’s Joe Lobeck, top, matches up against Max Murin of Central Cambria in the state finals. Lobeck finished second, falling to Murin, 7-4.