Pope Calls for Less ‘Vatican-Centric,’
More Socially Conscious Church

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

In his latest wide-ranging interview, Pope Francis said that he aimed to make the Catholic Church less “Vatican-centric” and closer to the “people of God,” as well as more socially conscious and open to modern culture.

He also revealed that he briefly considered turning down the papacy in the moments following his election last March, and identified the “most urgent problem” the Church should address today as youth unemployment and the abandonment of elderly people.

The pope’s remarks appeared in a 4,500-word interview, published Oct. 1 in the Rome daily La Repubblica, with Eugenio Scalfari, a co-founder and former editor-in-chief of the newspaper.

Scalfari, an avowed atheist, publicly addressed the pope in a pair of articles on religious and philosophical topics over the summer, and Pope Francis replied in a letter that La Repubblica published Sept. 11. The journalist reported that the two met in person at the Vatican Sept. 24.

Their conversation touched on a range of topics, including economic justice, dialogue between Christians and nonbelievers, and reform of the Vatican bureaucracy.

“Heads of the Church have often been narcissists, flattered and thrilled by their courtiers,” the pope said. “The court is the leprosy of the papacy.”

Pope Francis said that the Roman Curia, the Church’s central administration at the Vatican, is not itself a court, though courtiers can be found there.

The Curia “has one defect,” he said. “It is Vatican-centric. It sees and looks after the interests of the Vatican, which are still, for the most part, temporal interests. This Vatican-centric view neglects the world around us. I do not share this view and I’ll do everything I can to change it.”

“The Church is or should go back to being a community of God’s people,” he said. “Priests, pastors and bishops who have the care of souls are at the service of the people of God.”

In response to Scalfari’s opinion that “love for temporal power is still very strong within the Vatican walls and in the institutional structure of the whole Church,” and that the “institution dominates the poor, missionary Church that you would like,” Pope Francis agreed, saying: “In fact, that is the way it is, and in this area you cannot perform miracles.”

Yet the pope offered reason for hope in the eight-member Council of Cardinals advising him on Church governance and reform of the Vatican bureaucracy, which he convened for three days of initial meetings that began Oct. 1.

“Though I have eight cardinals to be my advisers, not courtiers but wise people who share my own feelings,” he said. “I do not share this view and I’ll do everything I can to change it.”

“Since the Church is or should go back to being a community of God’s people,” he said. “When a priest is ordained, there is a great sense of pride that from this faith community emerged a religious vocation. In all of the parishioners at St. Patrick Church, there was a great sense of pride as they watched their Kevin Kayda become Father Kevin Kayda,” Father Forrey said.

Some four months after that first Mass, that joy was replaced with grief as family members, parishioners, clergy, religious and seminarians filled St. Patrick Church for the funeral Mass for Father Kayda, who died Oct. 3 in Carlisle from suicide linked to depression. He was 27.

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“He comes from a family that so very much loved him, passed on their love of God to him,” Father Forrey told The Catholic Witness. “From an early age, he knew he wanted to be a priest, and he achieved that goal. Even though that priesthood was short, he leaves behind an example of one who was willing to give his entire life to God.”

Kevin Lee Kayda II was born on Nov. 13, 1985, in Lancaster to Kevin and Laura McMillan Kayda. He graduated from Carlisle High School in 2004. He received degrees from Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia and St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pa., and two master’s degrees in Theology and Church History from Mount St. Mary’s in Emmitsburg, Md.

As a seminarian, he served at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Hershey, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Mount Carmel, and at several places in West York Catholic kicks off domestic violence awareness month

The Joyful Sight of Father Kevin Kayda Remembered for Dedication to Faith, People of God

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

The joyful sight of Father Kevin Kayda celebrating his first Mass at his home parish of St. Patrick in Carlisle is one that Father William Forrey will always remember.

“When a priest is ordained, there is a great sense of pride that from this faith community emerged a religious vocation. In all of the parishioners at St. Patrick Church, there was a great sense of pride as they watched their Kevin Kayda become Father Kevin Kayda,” Father Forrey said.

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Bishop Zubik Underscores Religious Freedom during Bishops’ Breakfast with State Legislators

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Speaking on the Catholic Church’s role in the public square, Pittsburgh Bishop David A. Zubik told a group of state legislators and his fellow bishops of Pennsylvania that religious freedom has never been understood in such a restrictive fashion as it is today.

“You and I face a highly organized and well-funded crusade to block the Church from the public square,” he said, pointing to religious freedom as “our right as citizens to live our faith in the world according to the dictates of our own consciences, not the dictates of secular society.”

Bishop Zubik made the remarks at a special breakfast hosted by the Pennsylvania State Council of the Knights of Columbus and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) to bring together the bishops of Pennsylvania with state legislators and other elected officials.

The breakfast is held every other year during the bishops’ annual meeting as the Board of Governors of the PCC.

“The bishops enjoy the opportunity to visit with the legislators of their diocese in a spirit of fellowship and friendship,” Dr. Robert J. O’Hara, Jr., Executive Director of the PCC, said of the event, held Sept. 25 in Harrisburg.

“Faith communities have a duty to engage in the public square. This breakfast is an example of building those relationships,” he said.

As the public affairs agency for the Church in Pennsylvania, the PCC formulates policy positions on state government programs, legislation and policies that affect the common good and the interests of the Church.

At the gathering, Bishop Zubik remarked, “The freedom to worship is only a small part of what is meant by freedom of religion under the Constitution. The beauty and richness of the American experience of religious freedom is more than just the right to show up to a church, or a temple or a mosque and privately worship.”

“Religious freedom has always meant the freedom to both active discipleship and the freedom to hold true to one’s beliefs and moral tenets,” he said. “It includes the rights of religious believers, leaders and communities to hold fast to their beliefs and moral principles without interference.”

Bishop Zubik stressed that believers have the right and the duty to make an impact on society based on their beliefs.

“Our Constitution has protected religious freedom and religious expression because there is a fundamental human understanding of religious freedom as the foundation of every other right. Without freedom of religion, without freedom to express and live out our religious beliefs openly, humanity sacrifices every other freedom,” he said.

“Religious freedom is not a passive act. Religious freedom is intentionally active. Religious freedom has to be out in the open among the people. Religious freedom has to be expressed. Religious freedom has to be lived,” Bishop Zubik remarked.

The biennial event was initiated by the State Council of the Knights of Columbus. Internationally, the Catholic fraternal organization promotes charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism while promoting and defending the Catholic faith.

“We work very closely with a lot of legislators in many different states in trying to bring the Catholic perspective to them,” Eric Johnson, State Deputy of the Knights of Columbus, remarked.

Survey for Catholic Boy Scouts and Scouters

The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting is studying a proposal to coordinate a week-long summer camp in 2015. The camp would take place at one of our local council camps and include all of the traditional summer camp activities while offering a uniquely Catholic program.

The Committee is seeking input from Catholic Boy Scouts and Scouters, and is asking them to discuss the idea as a troop and then complete a short survey. The survey can be found at http://nbof.us/dccs and should be completed before Nov. 1. You can also check for updates on the Boy Scout page under the Youth tab of the diocesan Web site, www.hbgdiocese.org.
Recent donations from two businesses were made to the Diocese of Harrisburg’s Neumann Scholarship Foundation for scholarship assistance to Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School and Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg.

Metro Bank contributed $3,000 for Harrisburg Catholic Elementary, and The Bryn Mawr Trust Company contributed $25,000 to Bishop McDevitt. The contributions were made possible by the businesses’ participation in Pennsylvania’s Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program, which provides tax credits to businesses that contribute to scholarship organizations, such as the Neumann Scholarship Foundation.

For information on donating to the Neumann Scholarship Foundation, contact Paula Lasecki, Diocesan Director of Development, at 717-657-4804, or plasecki@hbgdiocese.org.

The Very Reverend Robert M. Gillelan, Jr., Diocesan Administrator, has made the following appointments:

**Effective October 1, 2013:**
- At the presentation of Reverend Abraham Vettuvelil, Provincial of the Missionaries of Saint Francis De Sales, Reverend Anthony Swamy Anthappa, MSFS, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Mechanicsburg.
- At the presentation of Reverend Abraham Vettuvelil, Provincial of the Missionaries of Saint Francis De Sales, Reverend Joseph Cyriac, MSFS, to Parochial Vicar, The Cathedral Parish of Saint Patrick, Harrisburg.
- At the presentation of Reverend Keith M. Carroll from Parochial Vicar, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Harrisburg, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Patrick Parish, York.
- At the presentation of Reverend Mark T. Wilke from Parochial Vicar, Saint Francis Xavier Parish, Gettysburg, to Parochial Vicar, The Cathedral Parish of Saint Patrick, Harrisburg.

**Effective October 7, 2013:**
- Reverend Michael M. Laicha from Chaplain, Holy Family Conv. to Parochial Vicar, Danville, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Joseph Parish, Herkimer.

**Effective October 18, 2013:**
- Reverend Anthony A. Schwertfeger, Pastor of Trinity High School that appeared in the Sept. 27 edition of The Catholic Witness, has been made Bishop of Rockville Centre, New York.
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Life Matters: Domestic Violence

By Frank J. Moncher, PhD
Special to The Witness

Domestic violence is a hidden scourge on our families and communities. Those who are victimized often keep it a private matter for various reasons: fear, shame, well-intended efforts to preserve the family. Aggressors, if they even recognize their problem, are not likely to have it addressed. Yet it touches many, and knows no boundaries of race, social class, ethnicity, creed or age (most victims are first abused as teens). Statistics suggest one in four women experience domestic violence in their lifetime, and three in four Americans are reported to know a victim, though most episodes are not reported to the authorities. Although the majority of victims are female, an estimated 15% are male.

Domestic violence and emotional abuse are typically used together in a relationship to control the victim. Persons may be living together, or dating. Examples of emotional abuse include name-calling, putdowns, re-behaving contact with family or friends, or any attempt to preventing a partner from working, actual or threatened physical harm (hitting, pushing, shoving), sexual assault, stalking, and intimidation.

In The Gospel of Life, Blessed John Paul II highlighted the gravity of the issue: “At the root of every act of violence against one’s neighbor there is a concession to the ‘thinking’ of the evil one, the one who ‘was a murderer from the beginning’ (Jn 8:44).” He also outlined the importance of the family as the primary community of life and love in which children are nurtured. How vital it is, then, to understand how to keep family members safe from violence in their homes, and how to heal and reunite families where violence has occurred, when possible.

The Person Being Harmed

Persons experiencing domestic violence are often termed “victims,” or if the situation has resolved, “survivors,” but it is most important to recall they are children of God, with inherent dignity and worth that is never lost. While their self-esteem may be low, they are not defined by their abuse. This is especially true because as abused persons they are often plagued by feelings of shame, fear, and depression, and have lost sight of the essential fact of their dignity and worthiness to be loved. At times they may also make decisions that affect their own safety (e.g., marry the abuser, or place their children in a dangerous environment). In their attempts to be loved, they are sometimes used to further the abuser’s control over another. The pattern is typically described as a “cycle of violence,” and the seriousness escalates with each occurrence. The “cycle” begins with a “set-up” phase: The abuser creates a situation in which the victim has no choice but to react in a way that, in the abuser’s mind, justifies the abuse. After the violence, the abuser may fear being held accountable, and so may apologize or make excuses for his or her behavior, pledge to never do it again, or use gifts as a way of coping with guilt or preventing the victim from telling. Next, however, the abuser may incite the incident as the victim’s fault, or resume “life as usual” as if nothing happened. The abuser expects that the victim will participate in the cover-up. Finally, the abuser thinks about the past and the future in a manner that drives the abuser to mentally “set up” the next episode of violence. Some victims of domestic abuse have a tendency to “normalize” violent behavior based on experiences in their family of origin, where they struggled with their sense of self-worth, setting boundaries, or emotional dependence. Even though the family of origin was dysfunctional, its unhealthy equilibrium may have been the only thing the person knew.

Consequently, some may feel guilty about why they are a victim, and may suspect the perpetrator of being “rooted in evil” if the violence was the only way to feel good about oneself. Others are afraid they will be hated by the abuser if they try to leave. These persons benefit from counseling that affirms their inherent dignity, helps them understand the dysfunctional patterns in their past and current relationships, and assists them in establishing a safe home and relationships.

Who are the Abusers, and Is There Hope?

Although common characteristics have been identified, there is no “typical” abuser. In public, they may appear friendly and loving to their family, while the violence and its consequences are hidden from view. The violence does not happen randomly, or solely because of stress or substance abuse, butchers use violence to get what they want. This being said, it is important to recognize that the abusers were not “born that way,” but have their own history of developmental and family problems (often being abused) that can explain how they learned to be aggressive. Because abusers often have a poor sense of self-worth, they do not take responsibility for their actions and try to blame the victim instead. Thus the person perpetrating the violence needs his own help and healing.

Aggressors must first become aware of their need for psychological assistance before they can recover and exercise healthier patterns of thinking and communicating. It is difficult for people to seek help, often burdened by shame, fear of being judged, or psychological issues (e.g., addictions). Once the problem is recognized, there is reason for hope: psychotherapists can help such persons with their thinking, forgiveness, emotional stability, and relationship skills. These skills (e.g., empathy) should be developed first with close friends and family members (initially not the victim), so that the aggressor can experience a healthy manner of dealing with his emotions and disappointments.

The Role of Friends and Extended Family

Although this problem tends to be hidden, friends, colleagues, and extended family can play a critical role in fostering peace. Victims generally ask for help only when the risk of violence increases. An important step in helping to prevent or stopping violence is recognizing certain risk factors such as jealousy, communications problems, and stress. When the abuser shows a lack of empathy, diagnosing this behavior, helping the victim need guidance in planning for her safety. Consultation with legal advisors, police, and others can help the victim know to report and ask for further protection.

In sum, the gravity and difficulty for families touched by domestic violence is severe. Although the struggle toward healing and recovery can be difficult, our faith gives us reason for hope. On the World Day of Peace in 1997, Blessed John Paul II focused on this theme, as demands are being published: “To offer forgiveness and receive peace…. I know well that it is hard, and sometimes even appears to be impossible to forgive; but it is the only way, because all revenge and all violence give rise to further revenge and violence. It is certainly less difficult to forgive when one is aware that God never tires of loving and forgiving us…. Let us never forget that everything passes, and only the eternal can fill the heart.” (Pope John Paul II, PhD, is a Licensed Psychologist of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington and Managing Director of Integration and Training, Catholic Charities, Arlington, Virginia, and Executive Director, Catholic Charities, Arlington, Virginia. This article is part of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Respect Life Program, and is reprinted here with permission of the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities.)
A Stance against Bullying

By Emily M. Albert
The Catholic Witness

It was a work night, late summer. Fall programming hadn’t aired yet, and I was bored. I decided to skim through Netflix, catch up on a documentary. I chose “Bully,” a 2011 film that follows five students who are bullied on a daily basis. I’d heard a lot of hype about it through the year. There had been a big controversy about the rating, as the film was initially released as Rated R, then later as PG-13 so as to be accessible to more youth.

So I pushed “Play.” Not even three minutes into the movie, I was already bawling. Tears rolling down my cheeks, I sat in my darkened basement with my sleeping dog and held him tight. “How can kids be so mean?” I pondered. “I don’t understand. What has happened?” I was suddenly moved. And curious.

As the movie continued, I couldn’t help but watch with a heavy heart the three stories shared. The film shows some violence in the incidents of bullying, and negative language, also in the incidents of bullying. One young man in middle school is punched, stabbed with pencils, and strangled on the bus. A young girl is not only bullied by her peers but also by her teachers for being a homosexual. Another young lady is documented in a juvenile detention center for bringing a gun onto a school bus after being bullied. Fortunately, no shots were fired, but it shows the power of hurtful words.

The movie also documents two families who lost their sons to suicide after the bullying and depression became overwhelming. Both families are now advocates against bullying and bring awareness to communities around the United States.

This is a real issue. It is not just in the movies or on TV shows as kids being kids. And it is spreading. Kids aren’t even safe at home anymore; cyber bullying is becoming more prevalent, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has declared bullying a public health issue.

Some 160,000 children stay home every day because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable going to school, a fact noted in a presentation given recently by the Byrne’s Health Education Center as part of an educational program for parents held at York Catholic High School.

The program, “I Got Your Back,” was held Oct. 2 and helped to raise awareness about the signs of bullying and how to approach the topic with your child and his or her school.

In upcoming editions of The Catholic Witness, we’ll address the issue of bullying. Educational information, resources and best practices will be shared from advocates and schools as a way to become a community that stands together against bullying.

Catholic Apps Offer Moments for Prayer

By Emily M. Albert
The Catholic Witness

Have you ever had that moment of guilt when you know you’re about to do something completely for fun and realize you really could be spending that time with God?

The other night, I picked up my book before bed – at the moment still guilt free – until I opened the book and saw my bookmark. It’s small, about the size of a credit card, with indentation of the Rosary. The month prior, I had found the bookmark among the many “trades” I had collected during World Youth Day and thought it fitting to use. Now, here it was in a book by one of my favorite Travel Channel guides and famous chef Anthony Bourdain. He’s one of my favorite authors because he combines two things I love: food and travel!

But back to my point. I realized as I held the bookmark in my hand that I had a choice. I could either use my few remaining moments of awake time to read a fairly mindless book, or I could pray at least a decade of the Rosary before my eyes became heavy. I decided it wasn’t pure coincidence that I had this thought and decided to go with a few minutes of quiet prayer time.

As I began to pray the Apostles’ Creed, it suddenly hit me that I didn’t know the Mysteries of the Rosary by heart. I was embarrassed, but this was not going to stop me. After all, I had an iPhone at my hands; the internet clearly could solve this solution for me. So I Googled the Rosary and came up with several useful sites.

And then the question came, “I wonder if there is an app for this?” Yes, in the middle of trying to pray the Rosary, I became distracted by technology, and at first I thought I should put my phone down and just continue, but my curiosity was too much. I had to know. So to the app store I went, typed in “Rosary Guide,” and a plethora of free Rosary apps appeared. I decided on “Rosary Guide.” It includes a digital Rosary that highlights the bead you are on. It also gives each prayer, as well as what Mystery should be prayed on what day. An entire guide for praying the Rosary was right there at my fingertips.

It suddenly occurred to me how easy it is to find the faith in technology. There are Bible apps, even apps for helping you to go to Confession. “Confession, a Roman Catholic App” is sold for $1.99 for Apple and Droid products. But if paying for apps isn’t your thing, then do what I did: just simply search “Free Catholic Apps.”

The first one that appeared on my iPhone was “Laudate.” It has a four-and-a-half star review and includes tools for daily readings, Liturgy of the Hours, Roman Missal changes and much more for the tech savvy Catholic. Some others include “The Catholic Directory,” which will find Catholic churches close to your location, a useful tool for the traveling employee or a newly relocated family. There are apps for children’s Bible study, including quiz and trivia games. “The Pope” is a Vatican-approved app that allows users to follow the pope’s speeches and homilies live and to see what is happening at the Vatican, Castel Gandolfo and the pontiff’s getaway spots outside Rome.

The list continues to grow. These are only suggestions based on readings and personal use, but take a look and maybe next time you’re waiting in the doctor’s office, you will be inspired to read a passage from the Bible instead of chasing Angry Birds.
Pope Francis

Continued from 1 government and other secular institutions, he said that such problems “also concern the Church, in fact, the Church above all because this situation wounds not only bodies but also souls. The Church must feel responsibility for both souls and bodies.”

The pope echoed his numerous earlier calls for greater restraint on market forces. “Personally I think so-called savage liberalism only makes the strong stronger and the weak weaker and excludes the most excluded,” he said. “We need great freedom, no discrimination, no demonstration of lofty. We need rules of conduct and also, if necessary, direct intervention from the state to correct the negative inequalities.”

The pope recalled the influence on his thinking of one of his early teachers, a “fervent communist” and “courageous and honest person,” whose “materialism had no hold over me” but who raised his awareness of an “aspect of the social, which I then found in the social structure.”

Asked whether he agreed with the Church’s disciplining of liberation theologians during the pontificate of Blessed John Paul II, Pope Francis said that liberation theology “certainly gave a political aspect to their theology, but many of the theologically incorrect in politics carry the values of their religion within, but have the mature awareness and expertise to implement them,” he said.

“The Church will never go beyond its task of expressing and disseminating its values, at least as long as I’m here,” he added. “Any problems that Church leaders have have almost never observed such limits.”

“Everyone has his own idea of good and evil and must choose to follow the good fight and as he conceives them,” the pope said elsewhere. “This will be to make the world a better place.”

Pope Francis joked that he had been warned that his atheist interviewer might try to convert him, the pope told Scalfari that he would not try to do likewise. “Prosvolyom is solemn nonsense, it makes no sense,” he said. “We need to get to know each other, listen to each other and improve our knowledge of the world around us.”

The Second Vatican Council “decided to look to the future with a modern spirituality and a deep openness to the world of non-believers. But afterwards very little was done in that direction. I have the humility and ambition to want to do something.”

When Pope Francis said that he and his interviewer shared a deep common ground of belief. When Scalfari said that he believed in “God, in the loving Father, in the Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and in the Church,” he said, “I believe in God, there is God, and I believe in Jesus Christ, his incarnation. Jesus is my teacher and my pastor, but God, the father, Abba, the light and the truth. This is my being. Do you think we are very far apart?”

The two also voiced similar views of liberation. Pope Francis said for avoiding anti-clericalism although he is not a believer, but the journalist told the pope, “I become a clericalist.”

Scalfari said the pope smiled and replied, “It also happens to me that when I meet a clericalist, I suddenly become anti-clerical. Clericalism should not have anything to do with Christianity.”

Pope Francis also recounted what he said was one of his rare mystical experiences, just after his election as pope, when he was “seized by a great anxiety” and even contemplated refusing the throne. “At a certain point I was filled with a great light,” he said. “It lasted a moment, but it seemed to me very long. Then the light faded, I got up suddenly and entered into the cardinals were waiting and the table on which was the act of acceptance.”

The interview with Scalfari was the third long interview Pope Francis, during his time as archbishop of Buenos Aires was known for refusing anti-clerical press interviews, has granted since becoming pope. The first was July 28, when he spoke to reporters on his plane flying back from Rio de Janeiro. On Sept. 19, Jesuit publications in several countries published an interview the pope had granted the previous month to Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro.

Father Kayda

Continued from 1 Pennsylvania, and was ordained a priest on June 1, 2013, by Bishop William Waltersheid, Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh, at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg. As a priest, Father Kayda served as parochial vicar at St. John of Arc Parish in Hershey.

Father Thomas Haan, a priest of the Diocese of Lafayette in Indiana and one of Father Kayda’s classmates, in his homily encouraged mourners to pray that they might hold on to the fragments that Father Kayda left behind — all the memories, teachings and perspectives he gave.

“We all had encounters with him, and he impacted us deeply. That’s the way, Father Haan said. “Our fragments probably coalesce into something we can all agree with: he was an intelligent young man, wise beyond his years. We can gather the fragments and see that he was a lover of Christ’s Church.”

Kevin didn’t have enemies. I don’t think he knew the meaning of the word,” Mr. McVitty told the congregation, which filled the church to capacity that evening. “His work should be continued: his selflessness, devotion, compassion and understanding brought to the hearts and minds of many.”

In four months as parochial vicar at St. John the Baptist Parish in New Freedom, Father Kayda left a lasting impression, especially among the young.

Members of the southern York County parish filled two buses to attend the funeral Mass in Carlisle Oct. 8. Among them were a number of teens ready to get involved in a pilot program for youth ministry that Father Kayda was helping to facilitate.

“He was very supportive of the youth in the parish,” he said of the young parishioner. Father Haan told the congregation, “Among the many of the things that Father Kayda had to offer to others was his wisdom and patience.”

At the trainings, Father Kayda really helped me to learn how things were to supposed to go. He did it in a fun way,” Michael recalled. “He said, ‘Come over here and stand on this spot of wax that Father Brommer probably already dropped.’ His humor took the pressure off.”

“Whenever I’m in trouble, I will always remember him,” Michael said.

Yulia Houseal, also 14, remembers Father Kayda’s support in attending one of her band concerts and soccer games, and in helping her to understand Scripture passages during youth group meetings.

“When I saw him in the crowd at the concert and the game, it motivated me to do my best,” she said. “He made me realize that he took his role as a Father seriously, and that he loved us.”

Burial was in St. Patrick Parish Cemetery, Carlisle Oct. 8. Among them were a number of teens ready to get involved in a pilot program for youth ministry that Father Kayda was helping to facilitate.

“Each and every one has been touched by him, perhaps to remind us that it is not how long we’re here, but how we use the time we have,” Father McNeil said. “So we gather today to celebrate, to rejoice, because he didn’t die last Thursday. He died those years ago when his parents brought him into the Church and he died with Christ and rose with Christ.”

“Over these past months, again and again, Father Kevin walked to the altar, reverenced the altar with a kiss and entered into that unformidable mystery of God’s love, the love that does transport us from this life of suffering and pain to the eternal glory of Heaven,” he said.

Acknowledging that death — especially the death of a young man like Father Kayda — often prompts us to ask “Why?” Father Lawrenc McNeil said in his homily during the funeral Mass that there are no answers.

“Let us, in this place, this Promise made real in today’s Second Reading: Nothing can separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Jesus Christ,” said Father McNeil, who was Father Kayda’s spiritual director. “So we gather today to celebrate, to rejoice, because he didn’t die last Thursday. He died those years ago when his parents brought him into the Church and he died with Christ and rose with Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism. He began his journey — a journey with joy and sorrow, a journey with difficulties and crises and wondrous celebration. A journey that reached its fullness,” he said.

In addition to his parents Kevin and Laura, Father Kayda is survived by his sisters, Stephanie Kayda and Michelle Kayda, by his maternal grandmother, Jean McMillan, and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Letters of condolence may be sent to the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Kayda, 512 West Old York Road, Carlisle, PA 17015. Memorial contributions may be made to the Andrew J. Fontanella Parish Activity Center Building Fund, 152 East Pomfret Street, Carlisle, PA 17013, or National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 2149 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

“Kevin was the perfect combination of his father’s easygoing but quiet demeanor and a person who was easy to trust,” Michael Koval, 14, said he was impressed by his role as a Father seriously, and that he loved us.”

“Kevin didn’t have enemies. I don’t think he knew the meaning of the word,” Mr. McVitty told the congregation, which filled the church to capacity that evening. “His work should be continued: his selflessness, devotion, compassion and understanding brought to the hearts and minds of many.”

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Members of the southern York County parish filled two buses to attend the funeral Mass in Carlisle Oct. 8. Among them were a number of teens ready to get involved in a pilot program for youth ministry that Father Kayda was helping to facilitate.

“He was very supportive of the youth in the parish,” he said of the young parishioner. Father Haan told the congregation, “Among the many of the things that Father Kayda had to offer to others was his wisdom and patience.”

At the trainings, Father Kayda really helped me to learn how things were to supposed to go. He did it in a fun way,” Michael recalled. “He said, ‘Come over here and stand on this spot of wax that Father Brommer probably already dropped.’ His humor took the pressure off.”

“Whenever I’m in trouble, I will always remember him,” Michael said.

Yulia Houseal, also 14, remembers Father Kayda’s support in attending one of her band concerts and soccer games, and in helping her to understand Scripture passages during youth group meetings.

“When I saw him in the crowd at the concert and the game, it motivated me to do my best,” she said. “He made me realize that he took his role as a Father seriously, and that he loved us.”

Burial was in St. Patrick Parish Cemetery, Carlisle Oct. 8. Among them were a number of teens ready to get involved in a pilot program for youth ministry that Father Kayda was helping to facilitate.

“Each and every one has been touched by him, perhaps to remind us that it is not how long we’re here, but how we use the time we have,” Father McNeil said. “So we gather today to celebrate, to rejoice, because he didn’t die last Thursday. He died those years ago when his parents brought him into the Church and he died with Christ and rose with Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism. He began his journey — a journey with joy and sorrow, a journey with difficulties and crises and wondrous celebration. A journey that reached its fullness,” he said.

In addition to his parents Kevin and Laura, Father Kayda is survived by his sisters, Stephanie Kayda and Michelle Kayda, by his maternal grandmother, Jean McMillan, and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Letters of condolence may be sent to the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Kayda, 512 West Old York Road, Carlisle, PA 17015. Memorial contributions may be made to the Andrew J. Fontanella Parish Activity Center Building Fund, 152 East Pomfret Street, Carlisle, PA 17013, or National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 2149 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110.
On the day that the U.S. Supreme Court opened its new session, lawyers, judges and public officials in the Harrisburg area gathered at St. Patrick Cathedral for the annual Red Mass, which invokes blessings on those who work in the administration of justice.

Father Edward Malesic, JCL, Diocesan Vicar, celebrated the Mass on Oct. 7. Msgr. Victor Finelli, JCL, a judge in the Tribunal of the Diocese of Allentown and chair of the National Convention of the Canon Law Society of America, served as homilist.

Msgr. Finelli told the congregation that “The Church has always held with esteem the legal profession. She does so because your profession has as its fundamental goal the protection and advancement of the rights of human beings. And since a good majority of these rights come from God, they are to be protected to the fullest extent and respected by all.”

Pointing to the concern that those involved in the judicial arena have for the protection of rights, he remarked that “The law is indeed a holy noble vocation. What we need, however, are holy law-makers, holy judges, and holy lawyers. Men and women of conscience who will bring their principles to bear in their professional lives. Today’s culture needs to have its rights, he remarked that “The law is indeed a holy noble vocation. What we need, however, are holy law-makers, holy judges, and holy lawyers. Men and women of conscience who will bring their principles to bear in their professional lives. Today’s culture needs to have its

“You who hold a title of civil office are not simply the beneficiaries of honor or privilege, although that may accompany your office. More importantly, your office carries the responsibility to exercise wisely, fairly, and in a personally disinterested fashion the call for justice and solidarity that God intends for us during our lives on earth,” Msgr. Finelli told the congregation. “For that reason, it is indeed good that we gather around the Lord’s altar to offer our prayers that God give to every civic official the wisdom to recognize His influence in their lives and the grace to carry out well the obligations they have accepted.”

The annual Mass is organized by the St. Thomas More Society of Central Pennsylvania, named for the saint who was beheaded on Tower Hill in London in 1535 for refusing to approve Henry VIII’s divorce and remarriage and establishment of the Church of England.

The St. Thomas More Society was founded for Catholic lawyers, judges and law students to promote the ideals and principles of its patron saint. Information on the society can be found at www.saintthomasmoresociety.com.

Very Reverend Robert M. Gilletlan, Jr., Very Reverend Philip G. Burger, and Reverend Raymond J. LaVoie extend their sincere regrets for the unforeseen circumstances that led to the postponing of the 5th Annual Fishers of Men Dinner.

Thank you for your kindness and understanding during this time of sorrow.

In your charity please offer prayers for our beloved brother, Reverend Kevin L. Kayda and his family.

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:8

Catholic Perspective Radio

The “Spot Light Report” on upcoming Catholic Perspective Radio programs will focus on the following topics. Tune in for these in-depth feature reports:

October 13: Johnnette Benkovic, hostess of the show “Women of Grace” on the EWTN network, talks about her faith to correspondent Rose Atkinson. Johnnette recently gave a seminar for women at Holy Name of Jesus Church in Harrisburg. You can see an accompanying story on page 16.

October 20: Reporter Rose Atkinson continues her two-part interview with “Women of Grace” founder Johnnette Benkovic, a Penn State graduate. We will hear Johnnette’s conversion story and her deep love for Jesus Christ and the Blessed Mother in time of tragedy.

October 27: To grow deeper in your faith, a Cursillo weekend may be what you are looking for. Con tributor Rose Atkinson speaks to Maria Gallagher, a member of the Harrisburg Cursillo community, about the upcoming Grand Ultreya being held at the Cardinal Keeler Center on Saturday, Nov. 2.

November 3: Karen Hurley, a Harrisburg parishioner, is President-elect of the National Council of Catholic Women. Reporter Rose Atkinson visits with her and finds out what this organization is all about as well as the gifts and vision that Mrs. Hurley brings to it.

Catholic Perspective is produced in cooperation with the Office of Communications of the Diocese and WHFY AM 720. It can be heard Mondays at noon and Sundays at 3 a.m. on WHYF AM 720 and on Sunday mornings on WLAM-AM 1390, Lancaster at 7:30 a.m.; WHYL-AM 960, Carlisle, at 8 a.m.; WHTV-AM 1280, Hanover, at 8 a.m.; WQOK-AM 1070, Sunbury, at 6:30 a.m.; WIZE-AM 670, Lewistown, at 8 a.m.; WWSM-AM 1510, Lebanon, at 7 a.m.; and WVEC-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. or for download at www.hhgdiocease.org.

Show your support for AM 720 with a new FREE Catholic Radio bumper stickers. They are available in area churches. They are also available at the station studio at 8 West Main Street, Shiremanstown. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus Councils and Assemblies who made the stickers possible.
York Catholic Kicks Off 85th Anniversary

York Catholic High School held its 85th Anniversary Kickoff on Sept. 28 at the high school. More than 350 guests enjoyed food and drink provided by a variety of local restaurants, and a silent auction featuring jewelry, gift cards and professional sports items. Memorabilia from throughout the school’s 85-year history was displayed for alumni to reminisce. Special recognition was given to Mary Dietrich Reed ‘36, Naomi Brasch Schiding ‘38, and Fred Steinfelt ‘41, who were in attendance.

The evening was capped off with entertainment by the “Dueling Pianos.” Proceeds from the event supported York Catholic’s Tuition Assistance Fund.

On the evening before the event, York Catholic hosted a Night of Champions to honor its teams that have won District and State Championships over the years. Representatives of the Championship Teams gathered at mid-field for recognition during the Sept. 27 football game. (The Catholic Witness is planning a feature piece on York Catholic High School during this school year.)

Annual Diocesan Catechetical Conference

“Wonderful indeed is the Mystery of our Faith”
November 9 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. • Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg

Keynote Speaker: Father Frederick L. Miller, Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. Father Miller is also known to EWTN audiences for his series on the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and on the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. His latest book, published by Ignatius Press, is entitled, The Grace of Ars.

Schedule includes:
• Celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
• Keynote Address
• 30+ workshops over four, one-hour sessions
• 15-20 catechetical vendors
• closing prayer

Cost is $30 per person and includes lunch. Registration materials will be made available to parishes and schools and online at www.hbgdiocese.org. For further information, contact Jim Gontis, Diocesan Director of Religious Education, at 717-657-4804, x 22, or jgontis@hbgdiocese.org.

Catholic Charities’ Come and See Dinner

Tuesday, November 26
Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
Back By Popular Demand – Father Leo Patalinghug

The event will begin with a reception and silent auction at 5 p.m., followed by a demonstration at 6 p.m., and dinner at 7 p.m. Father Leo, featured at last year’s Come and See Dinner, is the author of Grace Before Meals: Recipes for Family Life. Proceeds benefit Catholic Charities’ “Homes for Healing.” For information and reservations, contact Christopher Meehan, Development Director for Catholic Charities, at 717-657-4804 or cmeehan@hbgdiocese.org.
My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, has shown himself to be a great teacher with the heart of a missionary. He teaches by word and example, keeping the poor, the troubled and the vulnerable in clear view at all times. In that spirit I write to you today. Our Catholic Church, at every level and by its nature, is missionary. Its origin is in the very mission of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit. It is in Christ alone that “salvation is offered to all people, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy” (see Ephesians 2:8; Romans 1:16).

In every nation, World Mission Sunday will be observed on the weekend of October 19-20. This essential observance is an experience in learning for us all. It is a time for us to be inspired by the heroes of our Church who serve God’s beloved children by bringing the light of the Gospel. The priests, religious, and lay missionary groups make it possible for the most needy to encounter Christ, the Sacraments, and the living Word of God, and thereby to live to hope in heaven.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is the Holy Father’s missionary organization, providing resources for more than 1,150 mission dioceses the world over. No work of the Church is more central or important to her reason for being. So, I am asking that every parish and all the faithful experience the fullness of World Mission Sunday. In his address for World Mission Sunday, Pope Francis summarizes well the direction on which we must stay: “The Church...is not a relief organization, an enterprise or an NGO [non-governmental organization], but a community of people, animated by the Holy Spirit, who have lived and are living the wonder of the encounter with Jesus Christ and want to share this experience of deep joy, the message of salvation that the Lord gave us. It is the Holy Spirit that guides the Church in this path.”

The theme for the United States’ observance of this day is: “Do good on earth.” This is taken from the words of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the young Carmelite Sister who is the Patroness of the Missions. It is a call to put faith into action! The materials prepared by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith highlight the missionary efforts of the Salesian Sisters in Chennai, India, and their pastoral work among young women and girls who are victims of trafficking and slavery. The Sisters save the girls’ lives, and with love they teach and celebrate the Faith. It is a most inspiring glimpse into missionary realities today.

At a time when the needs in the Missions have grown substantially, and the urgency of the cry of the poor is all the more pronounced, I ask you for the gift of your generosity. With the mutual efforts of our clergy and faithful, every parish in this local Church should embrace a true concern to do the very best for those most in need. Let us pray that this year’s World Mission Sunday will touch each of us deeply, and that we will be united in providing true assistance where it is needed most, for the sake of Christ! I thank you in advance for your serious and generous response to the needs of others.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Very Reverend Robert M. Gillilan, Jr.
Diocesan Administrator, sale ucanate

For More Information about the Missions:
Information about the work of the Missions Office can be found on the Diocesan Web site, www.hbgdiocese.org/missions.

Stories from the Missions

Meet Vandoosha…

Ten-year-old Vandoosha is one of the girls rescued by Sister Clara and the Sisters at Marialaya. Vandoosha was sold to a neighbor to work in the family’s home; that neighbor sold Vandoosha again. “I had to work from 5 a.m. to midnight every day,” Vandoosha says. “I was doing all the washing, cooking and cleaning for the whole family, and looking after their two-year-old child.” Vandoosha was also beaten by the mother in the home, and abused by another of the children.

Today, 12 years after Vandoosha was rescued, the memories of her time as a domestic worker are still fresh in her mind. However, thanks to Marialaya, Vandoosha is happy and healthy and doing exceptionally well at school.

Having experienced severe heartbreak and numerous challenges in her short life already, Vandoosha does not take anything for granted, including her education. She is determined to study hard and one day become a police officer, so that she can give protection to street children and bring them to Marialaya.

Meet Shorti…

Shorti is Vandoosha’s best friend. She is another of the fortunate children rescued by Sister Clara and living at Mari- alaya. She was stolen from her parents, and forced to beg at a train station. That’s when Sister Clara found her, recalling that she didn’t know how to speak, couldn’t say who her mother or father was. When Shorti was rescued, she was also extremely malnourished and had to go to the hospital to receive medications and treatment before starting her new life at Marialaya. Shorti is now in the fourth grade. Despite the effects of malaria she contracted as a young girl, her immune system is strong and she is set to have a bright future. Her dream is to become a doctor, so that she can help other sick children like she had been.

Strength through Jesus…

Sister Clara admits that her work can be extremely challenging and difficult. However, seeing young girls like Vandoosha and Shorti, once so frightened and vulnerable, gain confidence through the care, love and support they receive at Marialaya is incredibly rewarding and fulfilling for her. “It is through Jesus that Sister Clara gains her strength and conviction, as she says: “I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help. And in the evening I will ask Jesus’ help.”

For more information about World Mission Sunday and a short video of Sister Clara’s work at the Marialaya Children’s Home, go to www.iamamissionary.org.

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PRAY AND GIVE GENEROUSLY
‘Faith, Family, Football’ Permeates Steelers Team, Says Benedictine

By Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller Catholic News Service

Ask Pittsburgh Steelers chairman Dan Rooney why his football team has been training at St. Vincent College since 1966, and he says that the campus has the right facilities, it’s close to Pittsburgh and “for many reasons, it works well.”

Then he adds with a laugh, “And it helps that it’s the Benedictines.”

For the past 48 preseasons, the college and archabbey have welcomed the six-time Super Bowl winners with the spirit of hospitality written in the Rule of St. Benedict.

“Chapter 53 talks about welcoming guests and reminds us that every guest should be welcomed as Christ himself,” Benedictine Archabbott Douglas R. Nowicki said.

During preseason, that’s tens of thousands of guests from the solid fan-base in Pittsburgh 40 miles west, and from all over the United States. On the busiest days, some 5,000 vehicles overflow from the parking lots into the grassy fields.

To the east, the Laurel Highlands break the big sky with rolling hills, one of the reasons that a Sports Illustrated writer once called St. Vincent “the most picturesque camp” in the league. But that’s not all that sets this apart from other NFL camps. There’s definitely a Catholic presence.

“One of the most outstanding things that you see is the basilica’s steeples,” Archabbott Nowicki said. “It’s in all the Steelers’ pictures.”

That side of the campus was built by the original monks who in 1846 arrived with Abbot Boniface Wimmer to establish the first Benedictine monastery in the United States, and a school for immigrants. From there, monks set out to found more schools and monasteries.

“The Benedictine community thrived on being participants in communities,” said Benedictine Father Paul Taylor, executive vice president of the college. “We have a place where people come and we are good neighbors, and our reach goes around the world in the Benedictine network. So for the Steelers to be partners with us and to be here helps us to do what we try to do best—that is, to welcome people.”

The friendship between St. Vincent and the Steelers began in the early 1900s when Art Rooney Sr., a student and athlete at Duquesne University Prep School in Pittsburgh, came to campus to play against St. Vincent Prep School’s football team. He also came for retreats.

Art Sr. founded the Steelers franchise in 1933 and became its legendary “Chief.” His brother Dan was Father Silas Rooney, a Franciscan who once served at a St. Vincent mission in China.

Art Sr.’s son Art Jr. graduated from St. Vincent College in 1957, and Art Jr.’s brother Dan, now 81, is the team chairman and also served as U.S. ambassador to Ireland from 2009 to 2012. Dan’s son Art Rooney II is currently team president.

The team has been in the family from the beginning, and the Steelers hold the league distinction of having only three head coaches since 1969. So it’s more than a cheer when fans chant “We are family!”

“The Rooneyes are known for three things: faith, family and football,” Archabbott Nowicki said. “Art Sr. went to Mass every day, and so does his son Dan. That has certainly been part of their upbringing in strong Irish Catholic families, and it’s very much who they are and their identities. The importance of faith, family and football permeates the entire organization.”

“The value of faith is very important, just like the value of physical development,” he said. “It’s one of the pieces of being a whole person. Today’s athlete can live out the writings of St. Paul when he says you are an athlete for Christ, not the race to win, and the winner gets the crown. When you see athletes today working so hard to achieve victory, you can take the same model and apply it to our faith life. Walking the journey of life faithfully to God is hard work. It’s hard work to be a Christian, but the work pays off.”

Jerry Olsavsky, a Catholic, who is the Steelers’ defensive assistant coach and a former player, said that coming to Latrobe for camp “for the past 24 years has really made me who I am.”

“That’s the unexpected result of being here at St. Vincent, you feel whole,” he said. “I’m not just a football coach and I’m not just a Catholic. It lets me be one person and wraps me all together, all of those different sides of me.”

Offensive lineman Ramon Foster is not Catholic, but he said being at St. Vincent deepened his spirituality. He also has formed friendships with the monks. Those influences have helped him become a better husband and father, he said. “Just being here gives you a humbleness. There is nothing but growth from this whole situation.”

In February Archabbott Nowicki will be taking a black and gold Steelers Terrible Towel and autographed football to Rome and will present them to Pope Francis, whose love of faith and family has become known to all.

“We don’t know how he feels about football,” Archabbott Nowicki said, “but we’ll find out.”
Catholic Social Teaching on Solidarity

By Father John Bednarik, O.F.M., Cap.
Special To The Witness

To understand the concept of solidarity as part of Catholic social doctrine, we must first ask ourselves, “What is Catholic social teaching?”

From a document by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, we can find an explanation of the basis for social doctrine:

“Catholic social teaching emerges from the truth of what God has revealed to us about himself. We believe in the triune God whose very nature is communal and social. God the Father sends his only Son Jesus Christ and shares his Spirit as his gift of love. God reveals himself to us as one who is not alone, but rather as one who is relational, one who is Trinity. Therefore, we who are made in God’s image share this communal, social nature. We are called to reach out and to build relationships of love and justice. Catholic social teaching is based on and inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity. Every person, from the moment of conception to natural death, has inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. Human dignity comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment.” (Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions)

We must then ask ourselves, “What is the social doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding solidarity?” First of all, it is not a feeling about helping other people, but a way of life that recognizes that we are all brothers and sisters regardless of race, creed, or ethnic background. It has a global dimension. Pope Paul VI taught that if we want to work for justice, “Our faith challenges us to think of our parishes the European way. We need to cease thinking of boundaries, first of all national boundaries, and look at the world as one vast family. We are all brothers and sisters. What one family member does affects all of us.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reports some paragraphs to the idea of solidarity as part of the Church’s social teaching. Quoting Pope Pius XII, it states that: “An error, today abundantly widespread, is discredited for the law of human solidarity and charity, dictated and imposed both by our common origin and by the equality in rational nature of all men, whatever nation they belong to. This law is sealed by the sacrifice of redemption offered by Jesus Christ on the altar of the Cross to his heavenly Father, on behalf of sinful humanity.” (CCC, 1939)

But while we can cite these documents regarding social justice in general and solidarity in particular, there is a long list of papal documents on the subject. Just to name a few: Rerum Novarum of Leo XIII in 1891; Quadragesimo Anno of Pius XI in 1931; Mater et Magistra of John XXIII in 1961; Populorum Progressio of Paul VI in 1967; Sollicitudo Rei Socialis of Blessed John Paul II in 1987; Deus Caritas Est of Benedict XVI in 2005; and Caritatis in Veritate of Benedict XVI in 2009.

It has been said that the social doctrine of the Church has been the best kept secret in the world because these doctrines are progressive and offer a clear direction to obtain social justice in the world, but are little known by the faithful and less by world leaders.

To better understand the social doctrine of solidarity, it would be good to break down the concept into two parts, as proposed by Blessed John Paul II.

Solidarity is first of all an obligation of society, of nations, and secondly of individuals. “A consistent theme of Catholic social teaching is the option or love of preference for the poor. Today this preference has to be expressed in worldwide dimensions, embracing the immense number of hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and those without hope.” (Of Social Concern, #42)

“One must denounce the economic, financial, and social mechanisms and structures that are manifestly rich and powerful for their own benefit at the expense of the poor.” (Of Social Concern, #16)

“Solidarity helps us to see the other—whether person, people, or nation—not just as some kind of instrument, with work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our neighbor, a helper (Mt 25:40). Everything that one owns is a sharer on a par with ourselves in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God. Interdependence must be transformed into solidarity, grounded on the principle that the goods of creation are meant for all. Avoiding every type of imperialism, the stronger nations must feel responsible for other nations, based on the equality of all peoples with respect for the differences.” (Of Social Concern, #39)

The obligation of solidarity is also one for individuals. While nations must provide for its citizens and give them a just and healthy life, individuals also have an obligation toward one another. “Legislation is necessary but it is not sufficient for setting up true relationships of justice and equality. If beyond legal rules there is really no deeper feeling of respect for and service to others, then equality before the law can serve as an alibi for flagrant discrimination, continued exploitation and actual contempt. Without a renewed education in solidarity, an overemphasis on equality can give rise to an individualism in which one claims his own rights without out wishing to be answerable for the common good.” (A Call To Action, #23)

While it is both lawful and moral to own things, the question becomes, “What are the obligations of an individual to provide for those who do not have it? It is a moral principle that one must practice for the necessities of the individual and the family. But when the demands of necessity have been met, there is the duty to give to the poor out of that which remains.”

“In our parishes the Eucharist represents a central setting for discovering and expressing our commitment to our brothers and sisters throughout the world. A parish reaching beyond its own members and beyond national boundaries is a truly ‘catholic’ parish… Parishes are called to help those who suffer in our own communities and in situations of poverty and pain around the world. … We respond very generously when network news tells us of hurricanes and famines, but will we help those victimized by often less visible disasters of poverty caused by structural injustice such as debt, ethnic conflicts, and the arms trade? (U.S. Catholic Bishops, Called To Global Solidarity)

“Our faith challenges us to reach out to those in need and to resist the immorality of isolationism. Pope John Paul II reminds us that to turn to ‘selfish isolation’ would not only be a ‘betrayal of humanity’s legitimate expectiations…but also a real desertion of a moral obligation.” (Called To Global Solidarity, #6)

Father John Bednarik, O.F.M., Cap., is pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Harrisburg.

Examination of Conscience

• Does the way I spend my time reflect a genuine concern for others?
• Is solidarity incorporated into my prayer and spirituality? Do I lift up vulnerable people throughout the world in my prayer, or is it reserved for only my personal concerns?
• Am I attentive only to my local neighbors or also those across the globe?
• Do I see all members of the human family as my brothers and sisters?
Pope, in Assisi, Calls on Church to Renounce ‘Spirit of the World’

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

Making his first pilgrimage as pope to the birthplace of his papal namesake, Pope Francis called on the whole Church to imitate St. Francis of Assisi, embracing poverty and stripping itself of the “spirit of world.”

“A Christian cannot coexist with the spirit of the world,” he said. Worldliness “leads us to vanity, arrogance, pride. And this is an idol, it is not of God.”

The pope spoke Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis, in the “stripping room” of the Assisi archbishop’s residence, where the saint shed himself of his rich clothes and embraced a life of poverty.

“This is a good occasion for inviting the Church to strip itself,” the pope said, adding that he directed his invitation not merely to the hierarchy but all the Church’s members, and that he sought renunciation of spiritual complacency as well as material riches.

“It is so sad to find a worldly Christian, who thinks he enjoys the security of the faith and of the world. One can’t have it both ways.”

The pope was accompanied to Assisi by the eight-member Council of Cardinals he has appointed to advise him on governance of the universal Church and reform of the Vatican bureaucracy, and with whom he concluded an initial series of meetings Oct. 3 at the Vatican.

Pope Francis’ talk in the archbishop’s residence, one of six addresses he was scheduled to deliver during his daylong visit to Assisi, was to a group of poor people receiving assistance from local Catholic charities, whom he later joined for lunch.

“Many of you have been stripped by this savage world, which doesn’t provide work, which doesn’t help, to which it makes no difference that children die of hunger,” he said.

As he often does, the pope set aside his prepared remarks and spoke entirely off the cuff.

He did the same thing earlier in the morning, when he addressed a group of disabled children and young people and their caregivers at a Church-run rehabilitation center, the first of a dozen stops on his tightly packed schedule.

Pope Francis spent about 45 minutes prior to his talk personally greeting the young patients, many of whom were confined to wheelchairs. Throughout his visit, the room resounded with their cries and moans.

“We are among the wounds of Jesus,” the pope said. “Jesus is hidden in these kids, in these children, in these people. On the altar we adore the flesh of Jesus, in them we find the wounds of Jesus.”

The pope noted that Jesus’ body after the resurrection was unblemished except for the five wounds he had received during his crucifixion.

“He wanted to preserve only the wounds, and he took them with him into heaven,” the pope said. “We treat the wounds of Jesus here and he, in heaven, shows us his wounds and tells all of us, all of us: ‘I am waiting for you.’”

In the pope’s undelivered remarks at the rehabilitation center he called for more “works of the culture of welcome, works animated above all by profound Christian love, love for Christ crucified, for the flesh of Christ.”

The pope’s morning in Assisi culminated in a Mass he celebrated in the square outside the Basilica of St. Francis. In his homily, the pope disputed what he characterized as popular misconceptions of St. Francis and his legacy.

“Many people, when they think of St. Francis, think of peace,” he said. “Very few people, however, go deeper.

“What is the peace which Francis received, experienced and lived, and which he passes on to us?” the pope asked. “It is the peace of Christ, which is born of the greatest love of all, the love of the cross.”

He later added: “Franciscan peace is not something saccharine. Hardly. That is not the real St. Francis. Nor is it a kind of pantheistic harmony with the forces of the cosmos. That is not Franciscan either; it is a notion some people have invented.”

Celebrating St. Francis’ love for all creation, the pope said that the saint “bears witness that man is called to safeguard man, that man is at the center of creation, where God the creator wanted him.”

The pope's day in Assisi included visits to various sites associated with St. Francis, including his tomb in the Basilica of St. Francis; the Church of San Damiano, where the saint had a vision of Jesus; the hermitage where he went to pray in isolation; the small “Porziuncola” church, now contained inside the Basilica of Sanata Maria degli Angeli, where he founded the Franciscan order; the tomb of his friend St. Clare; and the cathedral where St. Francis and St. Clare were baptized.

In a short impromptu talk to cloistered nuns at the Basilica of St. Clare, the pope voiced sympathy over the challenges of community life and urged them to strive for harmony.

“The devil takes every opportunity to divide. He says, ‘I don’t wish to speak ill but ...’ And the division begins,” the pope said. “Foster friendship among yourselves, family life, love, that your monastery not be a purgatory but a family.”

Later in the afternoon, addressing diocesan clergy, religious and laity in the cathedral, Pope Francis charmed the crowd like a folksy parish priest, drawing frequent laughter and applause.

“Enough with these intolerable, boring homilies of which nothing can be understood,” said the pope, who favors short sermons typically based on three key words.

Encouraging pastors to be close to their flock, the pope recalled one who had told him that he knew the names of all the families – and the dogs – in his parish.

“What could be more beautiful?” he asked.

“I always advise newlyweds: ‘Argue as much as you want,’” he said. “If the plates fly, let them. But never let the day end without making peace, never.’”

Pope Francis also paid tribute to his namesake as a “man of harmony and peace” and drew attention to those “who are suffering and who are dying because of violence, terrorism or war, in the Holy Land, so dear to St. Francis, in Syria, throughout the Middle East and everywhere in the world.”
As the congressional stalemate over the federal government's shutdown continued, not only were an estimated 800,000 federal employees temporarily jobless, but other functions and services generally supported and funded by the government without a second thought being given to them were no less affected. 

The Archdiocese for the Military Services said that its use of “contract priests” to celebrate Mass at a number of military bases outside the continental United States requires chapters on site would have to be canceled in most circumstances.

“With the government shutdown, GS [general services] and contract priests who minister to Catholics on military bases worldwide are not permitted to work — not even to voluteer,” said an Oct. 3 op-ed essay written by John Schlageter, general counsel for the military archdiocese. “During the shutdown, it is illegal for them to minister on bases closes, or not to be paid.

Scores of Masses has been canceled as a result. One exception was the Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia where, the archdiocese pointed out Oct. 4, the priest could perform pastoral duties because of the way “the contract is worded.”

“At a time when the military is considering alternative sources of funding for sporting events at the service academies, no one seems to be looking at the funding to ensure the free exercise rights of Catholics in uniform. Why not?” Schlageter said. He was referring to a scheduled Oct. 5 football game between Navy and Air Force that had been under threat of cancellation, but would be permitted to be played.

The House Oct. 5 in a 400-1 vote passed a concurrent resolution calling for the government to cease services regarding the need for the continued availability of religioss services to members of the Armed Forces and their families during a lapse in government operations. The bill was referred to the Senate for action.

The same day, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced the furlough of all but 250,000 of the 350,000 civilians employed by the Department of Defense, a decision that was expected to resolve the situation with contract priests and allow them to say Mass.

With national polls closed as a result of the shutdown, tourism is off.

In Utah, Father Bill Wheaton, pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Map, said a number of his parishioners work for the National Park Service or the Bureau of Land Management, and “they’re all at the point of cut out of work.”

Other parishioners work in the area’s tourism industry, and with the closure of the nearby national parks, tourists are staying away, meaning business is down.

“The other thing that’s very sad is that I have heard several Catholics who are going to Mass in the last day or so, and because they have barricades up at both Canyonslands and Arches (national parks), these people were very disappointed. They talked about spending a year planning their vacations and now they can’t visit world-famous sights like Delicate Arch or the petroglyphs in Home shool, Father Wheaton said.

The ripple effect of the shutdown could affect even Father Wheaton’s budget, he told the Intermountain Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Salt Lake City. “It’s a two-edge sword,” he said. “They tend to be very generous. Most of the support throughout the year comes from local parishioners, though, and with the shutdown, their paycheck are affected, too.”

In Ogden, Utah, the shutdown’s impact so far was minimal at the Joyce Hansen Hall Food Bank in Ogden, “but we do expect that to increase,” said Marcie Valdez, director of Catholic Community Services Northern Utah. The food bank is the largest in the area, and Weber County is home to many federal employees who work at the regional IRS center and Hill Air Force Base.

Elsewhere, Catholic families whose livelihood is tied to the military were already dealing with the fallout.

Kelly Corbett’s husband, John, is retired from the Air Force and is a civilian employee at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo. He received notification Sept. 25 that his job was furloughed.

“During the previous government shutdown,” Kelly Corbett told the Colorado Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Diocese of Colorado Springs. “There is no option to use vacation or sick days in order to collect a paycheck. He has applied for unemployment for the first time in his life, after working for the Air Force for 33 years.

Sue Reininger said she and her husband, Bob, another retired serviceman working as a civilian employee at Peterson, have been trying to tighten their belts since Bob’s paycheck was cut by 20 percent due to budget sequester.

“We had a difficult financial situation. On Oct. 3, the school used its Facebook page to ask parents how they were affected by the shutdown.

More than 300 parents responded. One mother posted that she lost her veterans benefits, which have helped her stay home and pursue a master’s degree while paying for her children’s tuition. A mother in the military wrote that the closure of the commissary will cost her family an extra $400 a month in groceries. And a single mother wrote that she already had received a 20 percent pay cut for six weeks and will not be paid until the shutdown is over. “I don’t know how long I can continue to pay tuition,” the mother said.

In Washington, many restaurants and bars were offering free or reduced-priced items to furloughed government workers.

Jesuit-run Georgetown University got in on the act, offering six free classes to workers affected by the shutdown.

Each class was offered at the university’s downtown campus, closer to where the federal workers had their government jobs.

The courses, offered by Georgetown’s School for Continuing Studies, last from just one to four days. George- town had up to 100 slots available for each class.

Pope to Canonize Blessed John XXIII, John Paul II April 27

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

Recognizing that Blessed John XXIII and John Paul II have widespread reputations for holiness and that years of studying their lives and actions have proven their exceptions to canonization, the Vatican announced he would declare his two predecessors saint at a special ceremony April 27.

The pope made the announcement Sept. 30 at the end of an “ordinary public consistory,” a gathering of cardinals and promoters of the sainthood cause of the two late popes. The consistory took place in the context of a prayer service in Latin and included the reading of brief biographies of the two saints.

Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, read the biographies and highlighted the “service to peace” and the impact both popes had “inside and outside the Christian community” at times of great cultural, political and religious transformation.

The testimonies of their lives, “completely dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel, shine in the Church and reverberate in the history of the world as examples of hope and light,” the cardinal said.

Blessed John Paul II, known as a global advocate of the values and messages of his predecessor, was declared a saint along with his predecessor on Oct. 27, 2014. The pope made the announcement Sept. 25 at a consistory held Sept. 22 that marked the first time two popes were canonized in the same day, the Vatican announced that the pope had agreed to declare two saints this year.

The pope said: “This event, which has no parallel in the history of the Church, because he was ‘a man who proclaimed the Gospel everywhere.’”

Pope Francis signed a decree recognizing the miracle needed for Blessed John Paul’s canonization July 5; the same day, the Vatican announced that the pope had agreed to declare two saints this year.

Except in the case of martyrs, Vatican rules require one miracle for a candidate’s beatification and a second for his or her canonization as confirmations that the candidate really is in heaven with God. However, the pope may set aside the rule.
The names of the following deceased persons have been submitted by their parishes:

ABBOTSTOWN – Immaculate Heart of Mary: Paul McMaster.
BERWICK – Immaculate Conception BVM: Katie Kercher.

COAL TOWNSHIP – Our Lady of Hope: Michael Cerklewski.

COLUMBIA – Holy Trinity: Rosemary R. Donnelly.

ELIZABETHTOWN – St. Peter: Loretta Johnson.

ENOLA – Our Lady of Lourdes: Charles J. Rizzo, Sr.


HARRISBURG – Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick: Chuck Abela, Grace Kothos; St. Catherine Laboure: William Dukes, Sr., Mary Ann Fuller, Richard Helman.

HERSHEY – St. Juan of Arc: Helen Adamkowski, Harry Woltman, Silvio Adamkowski.

LEBANON – Assumption BVM: D. "Zack" Zaccagnini.

HERSEY – Thomas Flynn.

ELIZABETHTOWN – Rosemary R. Donnelly.

COLUMBIA – Hope: Michael Cerklewski.

BERWICK – Immaculate Conception BVM: Paul McMaster.

Holy Cross Cemetery
3420 Susquehanna Trail
York PA 17402
St. Patrick Cemetery
Ranck Mill Ave. and Grofftown Rd.
Mount Carmel PA 17060
Gate of Heaven Cemetery
440 St. Joseph Street
Lancaster PA 17601
St. Lawrence Church
172 All Saints Road
York PA 17402
St. John the Baptist: Catherine Lubreski, William H. Reed, Robert Schaline.

PALMYRA – Holy Spirit: Gerard George Trageser.

ROARING CREEK – Our Lady of Visitation: Lenora “Lee” Bannon.

STEELTON – Prince of Peace: Victor Ivan Gusci.

YORK – Immaculate Conception BVM: Jacqueline Fake, George Rock.

For more information on how to start a Little Flowers group or join a Little Flowers Catholic program for girls ages five and up based on learning Catholic virtues, please refer to the club's official blog at http://littleflowersgirlsclub.com. The group's official blog is at http://littleflowersgirlsclub.blogspot.com. For more information, call Robert Charlton at 717-761-7228. In case of inclement weather, the Rosary and Benediction will take place at St. Lawrence Church.

Little Flowers Club Nurseries Catholic Girls in Shippenburg

By Jessica Reinsfelder

When Rachel Watkins of Baltimore began the first Little Flowers Girls' Club in 1993, she says she was “seeking a place for my girls (now 20 and 18) to be with other Catholic girls, have fun, make crafts, do skits, and much more. I wanted them to be in a place where their faith was celebrated and not ignored, where being Catholic was a cause for joy, not embarrassment and not prejudice or condemnation.” According to the group's official blog, “Little Flowers Girls' Club is a Catholic program for girls ages five and up based on learning Catholic virtues.” The club is named after St. Therese, the Little Flower of Lisieux. Her “little way” teaches us to do the ordinary things of life with extraordinary love. In the years since Ms. Watkins first gathered a small group and planned activities, with the help of Father Lasance’s “Catholic Girls’ Guide” (1996), numerous mothers and daughters have followed in her footsteps by establishing similar clubs at parishes across the United States and around the world.

In the fall of 2011, when my daughter was eight, I worked with Jill Lear, a friend and mother of two daughters (then ages eight and five) to bring a Little Flowers Girls’ Club to Our Lady of the Valley Parish in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. We entitled the initiative and over the past two years the program has continued to grow. Father Hallerays, “From its moment of birth, ‘Little Flowers’ was introduced to me it was a perfect fit for our parish. It has been nurtured in such a way it is a grace and a blessing for us.”

The little group has become a Little Flowers Club Nurtures Catholic Girls in Shippenburg. The public is invited.

For more information on how to start a Little Flowers group or join a Little Flowers Club, visit http://littleflowersgirlsclub.blogspot.com. The group’s official blog is at http://littleflowersgirlsclub.blogspot.com.
St. Monica Ministry is a national Catholic evangelization ministry designed to facilitate the healing and consolation of those Catholic women who have chosen to end a pregnancy. We are currently in practice of the faith, but is currently in active prayer for any who desires to return to the faith. This ministry will be offered at St. Peter Parish in Hanover, Freedom Nov. 9, beginning at 9 am. There is no fee, but a $10 workbasket will be available. The ministry will be led by Dr. Jack Bucher. For more information, please visit: StMonicaMinistry.org or call 717-737-0857.

Retreats & Pilgrimages

The Harrisburg Cursillo movement will hold a "Grand Ultreya" Nov. 2 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Cardinal Keeler Pastoral Center in Hagerstown, Md., with Fr. John Tijko among the speakers. The program will include talks in both English and Spanish and a bilingual celebration of the Holy Mass. The registration fee for the day is $10 and includes the cost of lunch. To register, visit: http://harrisburg-cursillo.org or call Robbie Davey at 717-306-8786.

A 24-hour silent, directed retreat will be offered by Sister Jean Marie, SSCM, at St. Cyril and Methodius Spiritual Center in Darlington, Pa., Oct. 17-18, with a registration fee of $90 due by the registration deadline of Nov. 8, or, stay for the silent directed retreat Oct. 24-25, with a registration fee of $95 by Nov. 8. The retreat is silent, and will be held in a contemplative atmosphere enhanced by Eucharist, spiritual direction and quiet reflection. Retreatants are also invited to take a private retreat during this weekend, which is also open in silence and prayer but is self-directed. For more information, visit www.sosc.org and click on "current events."

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: Join Father Kenneth Smith as we see the sites of the Holy Land from Mass at Mariazell on May 31, 2014. The pilgrimages will come alive on this Lenten journey to the roots of our Catholic Faith. The Mass at Mariazell is celebrated by a licensed Christian guide, accommodation in first class hotels (five nights in Jerusalem, three nights in Athens, one night each in the Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth). The land transport will be in a deluxe motor coach, roundtrip motorcoach transport from Altoona to New York to New Jersey to Tel Aviv. Flights from New York to nonstop flights with United Airlines, and for, $4,351/person for flights on the trip, in addition to the all inclusive on the trip. For more information, contact: International's Tours at 1-800-746-2501, or visit www.gesac.org, or you can contact Anthony at 617-792-5800.

Events & Fund-Raisers

Raffle for Penn State Kickoff Classic Tour in Dublin, Ireland – St. Patrick Parish in York is sponsoring a raffle for a tour to see the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, to take place July 13, 2014. Tickets are $25 per person, including breakfast Oct. 19 between beginning with the 5:30 a.m. Mass at St. Phil- industrally at the Harrisburg Diocesan Pastoral Center at the Stars. Tino. The event is open to experience the holy spirit and encourage women to open the door to Catholic women with more than 75,000 members. Catholic Daughters support numerous Catholic causes, in- cluding Mother Teresa’s Foundation, Morally-in-the-Media, the National American Indians, AIDS, Habitat for Humanity, and the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., as well as local causes like Lancaster Catholic High School, A Women’s Center of Lancaster, providing support and services to children. The local chapter celebrated its 85th anniversary in October last year.

“Reflections on Medjugorje” will be presented at St. Patrick Church in York. Oct. 19 from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Following the 5:30 a.m. Mass, the Franciscan Friars of Medjugorje will present a program with an over- whelmingly positive message about the spiritual fruits and devotions to Our Lady of Medjugorje. For more information, call Deacon Michael at 717-298-3581.

“A Theology on Tap” session in Lancaster, for adults ages 21-30 something, will be held Oct. 23 at the Lancaster Bible Church. For more information, visit: stjoosephmech.org/ministries/adult-education/theology-on-tap.

The Council of Catholic Women at St. Columbia Parish in Darlington, Pa., has changed their “Fath and Morals” series Oct. 24 at 7 p.m. July Dobson RN, MSW, will give an overview of the Catholic understanding of end of life issues. The program will be held in St. Columba Parish in an over- sized room will be presented by Rev. Thomas Morrow, S.T.D., “Catholic Faith Alive” radio host and guest on EWTN’s “This Abun- dant Life.” Happy hour starts at 7 p.m., followed by the presenta- tion at 8:00 p.m. For information, visit: stjosephmech.org/thyatira or www.tolacatholic.com.

The Council of Catholic Women at St. Columbus Parish in Darlington, Pa., will be hosting their annual Autumnfest event Oct. 26 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. in the lobby of the Lawrence B. (Sonny) Sheppard, Jr. Memorial Library at York County Library. The event will feature a variety of items to enjoy, with proceeds benefiting the Children’s Home in York. For more information, call 717-755-2522.

A candlelight saints tour highlighting Native American saints will be offered Oct. 25 and 26 from 10-11 p.m. through the Charles H. and Edith S. Muhlenhomeyer Antiques Farmhouse at 302 Traffic St. Tickets are $10 each. For information, call 717-778-2175.

Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill will host a bazaar and art sale on Sunday, Oct. 27 at 1:00 p.m. The sale is being held by the Parish of St. Catherine of Siena Parish and the Parish of St. Rose of Lima Parish. The sale will host various items offered by the parishioners of the parish. There is no cost to participate. For more information, call 717-756-2180.

The Fall Festival of Faith and Culture will be held on Sunday, Oct. 13 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Lower Church. There will be food, music, crafts, games, and more. For more information, call 717-734-1764.

Our Lady of Hope Parish in Coal Township will host its annual Oktoberfest celebration Nov. 2 at 6 p.m. at 319 Main St. Tickets are $10 and include live entertainment, a polka band, lawn games, drinks, and a decadent dessert from 10:30 a.m. To more information, contact: Bill at 717-937-2970.

A car cruise will be held at Prince of Peace Parish in St. James Parish Oct. 13 from 1-4 p.m. For more information, call 717-755-2522.

The Knights of Columbus of Prince of Peace Parish in St. James will host an Oktoberfest and basket raffle Oct. 26 from 6-10 p.m. at the parish center. St. James Parish will celebrate its 100th birthday on October 26, 2013. For more information, contact: Phil Sanders at 717-306-8113.

A Holy Fest will be held at Holy Spirit Parish in Camp Hill Oct. 27 from 1-4 p.m. The event will feature food, beverages, entertainment, and more. For more information, call 717-756-2180.

The Little Flock of St. Thomas Aquinas in New Cumberland will host a trip to an annual Musician Theatre music on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2013. For more information, call 717-756-2180.

Parishes & Organizations

Corpus Christi Parish in Chambersburg is seeking a full-time Parochial Vicar. The successful candidate must have a highly responsible person with good organizational skills and the ability to work collaboratively with the leadership and the Catholic Education Department of the parish. The candidate must have a minimum degree of a Master’s in Theology/Philosophy from a Catholic University while possessing a strong knowledge of Church teaching while possessing the ability to share their faith with others. Background clearances will be required before hire. A Master’s or a Bachelor’s degree in Theology is preferred with experience working with a clientele required. Candidates must be willing to work toward becoming a Catholic priest. Please submit a completed application and cover letter to: Fr. James Keefe, 1016 Chesapeake Ave. Chambersburg, PA 17202, or jkeefe@corpuschristiparish.org.
In Suffering, We Can Find God’s Blessings through the Cross, Johnnette Benkovic Tells Harrisburg Crowd

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Johnnette Benkovic, the founder of the Women of Grace apostolate and a popular EWTN personality, told more than 300 women gathered for a recent retreat in Harrisburg that, no matter their sufferings, they can receive God’s blessings through the cross.

“No matter what trial you are facing in life right now – whether it be physical, emotional or psychological; whether you’ve lost a loved one recently; no matter the children who are out of the Church, the children who are threatening to leave the Church, the children whose behavior have caused you pain and torment; no matter the drug abuse in the family, no matter the alcoholism that rages – you must know that you are a daughter of the Most High God, and he wants to give you every spiritual blessing in the Heavens, that this pain, this anguish becomes for you not a curse, but a blessing.”

Mrs. Benkovic is a familiar personality on the Eternal Word Television Network, where she is the host of “Women of Grace.” She is a noted author, and has also been Executive Producer of “The Abundant Life,” on EWTN.

She was a non-practicing Catholic who returned to the Church in 1981. Her work to share the Gospel message through the media began in 1987.

During the Oct. 5 retreat, held at Holy Name of Jesus Church, Mrs. Benkovic offered an impassioned series of talks on suffering. In 2004, her son, Stephen, died of brain cancer.

She explained that we receive those blessings on two levels: through an infused gift of the Holy Spirit, and by cooperating with the grace as it is being given.

“Truth attracts truth, and goodness attracts goodness, and the more we open up our heart to receive the blessings of God, the more of these blessings can enter into us because our hearts are disposed to receive them,” she said.

“Sometimes we don’t even sense that the grace is being given, but we know that the grace is being given because faith tells us so,” she noted.

Addressing the retreat’s focus on suffering, Mrs. Benkovic acknowledged: “Our culture despises suffering. Our culture wants to run from suffering. We want to get out of suffering as quickly as we can. We don’t even want to acknowledge that it exists. But suffering is real. There is certainly one thing that we can be assured of, and that is that we’re all going to suffer.”

Wounds of sexual abuse, domestic violence, abortion, and the absence of one or both parents build up and plague us unless properly addressed, she said, even as she alluded to her own sufferings as a child and as a young woman.

“We live in a broken world. We are going to suffer. But suffering doesn’t have the last word, and the pain of suffering doesn’t have the last word. God has the last word,” she said. “There is something in that suffering that is a treasury of grace to be mined – no matter the suffering, no matter the travail, no matter the heartache, no matter the grief.

“Redeeming grace and salvation has the last word and the consolation is: “But in order for us to receive healing and experience the grace, we have to embrace the cross.”

“Embracing the cross means acknowledging the wound and experiencing that pain,” she said. “It is the Father’s will for you to traverse that distance and find the glory that is yours in the cross itself.”

The retreat began with Mass and included praise and worship music led by Women at the Well from St. Leo the Great Parish in Rohrerstown. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the praying of the Rosary, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Benediction rounded out the day.

The event was hosted by the Women of Grace leadership team at Holy Name of Jesus Parish.

A Catholic apostolate with study programs in parishes around the world, Women of Grace aims to transform the women of the diocese. Women of Grace study program, which explores women’s spirituality, psychology, emotions and physical being through DVD lessons orExtraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, or entering into other adult studies or missions. We have all gone forth into different areas of interest in the parish, whether it be serving as lectors or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, or entering into other adult studies or missions. We have all spun off from this into different areas, and we have all grown.”

“As women, we are ambassadors for Christ,” she said. “In our very secular society, women may feel that they have been cast aside, or that their value has been demeaned. But we are to aid humanity, to strengthen women. For me, it means that I have to try to encourage and lead other women in this ministry in their role as ambassadors to Jesus Christ.”

For more information on the Women of Grace apostolate, visit www.womenofgrace.com or connect to a study group or leadership team offered through diocesan parishes.)