The Pro-Life Ministry of Lourdeshouse

For the women who seek safety, support and services at Lourdeshouse, the residence is a maternity home like no other.

They see it not as a shelter, but as a home, where they receive case management, proper nutrition, parenting classes and transportation in a pro-life and family-like environment.

For more than 50 years, Lourdeshouse has been providing this life-affirming care for single mothers and their babies.

“It’s like a home to these ladies,” says caseworker Renee Ramp. “It’s a place to get the services that you need, and to know that if you come through Lourdeshouse, you’re not going to end up back on the street again.”

As the Church observes Respect Life Month in October, The Catholic Witness presents a feature piece on Lourdeshouse, a pro-life ministry and one of Catholic Charities’ “Homes for Healing.”

See pages 8 and 9 for the stories of Jenefer and Liz, who came to Lourdeshouse and found the assistance and encouragement they needed to find better lives for themselves and their babies.

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

Pope Francis said women’s “vocation and mission” today remain essentially connected to their capacity for motherhood, but warned against unjustly restricting their participation in the Church or civil society on that basis.

“Many things can change and have changed in our cultural and social evolution, but the fact remains that it is the woman who conceives, carries in her womb and gives birth to the children of men,” the pope said Oct. 12.

“This is not simply a biological matter, but carries a wealth of implications for the woman herself, for her way of being, for her relationships, for the way in which we lend respect to human life and to life in general,” he said.

“Calling a woman to maternity, God entrusted the human being to her in an altogether special manner,” he said.

The pope made his remarks in a speech to participants at an academic conference sponsored by the Pontifical Council for the Laity to mark the 25th anniversary of Blessed John Paul II’s apostolic letter Mulieris Dignitatem (“The Dignity of Women”). Pope Francis described it as a “historic document, the first of the papal magisterium dedicated entirely to the subject of woman.”

Pope Francis warned there are two ways of betraying women’s inherently maternal role: “two opposed extremes that demolish woman and her vocation.”

All Saints and All Souls

All Saints Day, Nov. 1, Holy Day of Obligation

All Souls Day, Nov. 2

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

Pope Francis said women’s “vocation and mission” today remain essentially connected to their capacity for motherhood, but warned against unjustly restricting their participation in the Church or civil society on that basis.

“All Saints and All Souls Pope Says Maternity is ‘Special,’ but Warns against Restricting Women

The first is to reduce maternity to a social role, to a task, albeit noble, but which in fact sets the woman aside with her potential and does not value her fully in the building of the community. This is both in the civil sphere and in the ecclesial sphere,” he said.

“I suffer – I speak truly – when I see in the Church or in some ecclesial organizations that the role of service – which we all have and should have – that woman’s role of service slips into a role of servitude ... when I see women who do things out of servitude, and that it is not well understood what a woman ought to do,” he said.

But the pope said there is also the “other danger in the opposite direction: that of promoting a type of emancipation which, in order to occupy spaces taken away from the masculine, abandons the feminine with the precious traits that characterize it.”

“Woman has a particular sensitivity for the things of God, above all in helping us to understand the mercy, tenderness and love that God has for us,” he said.

Pope Francis praised Mulieris Dignitatem for its “profound, organic reflection, with a solid anthropological basis illuminated by revelation,” and said the document was a point of departure for further study and efforts at “promotion” of women.

Noting that the Italian word for church (“chiesa”) is a feminine noun, the pope exclaimed that the “Church is a woman. The Church is a mother. And that’s beautiful, eh? We have to think deeply about this.”
By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Kyle Sahd, a seminarian of the Diocese of Harrisburg who has been studying in Rome for the past three years, was ordained to the diaconate earlier this month during a Mass celebrated at the Altar of the Chair of St. Peter, in the Papal Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican.

Deacon Sahd was among 41 seminarians from the Pontifical North American College who were ordained by Cardinal James Harvey, Archpriest of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls in Rome.

The deacons, who will complete an additional year of studies and formation before being ordained to the priesthood, received the Book of the Gospels during the ordination.

Deacon Sahd, a native of Holy Trinity Parish in Columbia. His twin brother Timothy is also a seminarian of the Diocese of Harrisburg.

Deacon Sahd is now studying Dogmatic Theology at Angelicum University. As a deacon, he will occasionally assist at Mass and preach homilies at the seminary. He has also been assigned to help coordinate a retreat and speak with seminary students about the faith.

Academic classes will help prepare him to celebrate Mass, hear confessions and anoint the sick.

In an e-mail to The Catholic Witness, he noted how his three years of study in Rome have illustrated the universality of the Church.

“In the Creed, we proclaim that the Church is ‘catholic,’ meaning universal. It is amazing to see the universality of the Church through the other seminarians from around the world with which I attend classes at the university. When speaking with them, I come to understand the true meaning of ‘catholic.’ Talking with them, I see that they believe the same truths of the faith as I do, but express the faith in a different way,” he wrote.

“Also, when I am in St. Peter’s Square for a papal liturgy, it is amazing to hear so many languages spoken and to see countless flags flying, representing the numerous countries present. ‘It is then that I realize that the Gospel has been proclaimed to the entire world!’”

Deacon Sahd said that his most memorable moments in Rome surrounded Pope Benedict XVI’s resignation and Pope Francis’ election earlier this year.

“Not only was it certainly an exciting month and a half between the announcement of Pope Benedict XVI and the election of Francis, it showed the unity and continuity of the faith,” he wrote. “As we have seen over the past several months, even though Pope Francis has a different personality than Pope Benedict XVI, both have passed on the Catholic faith that was given to them using the gifts that God has given them.”

As a deacon, “I am most looking forward to sharing with others the beauty of the faith, through preaching homilies and through deeds, as a deacon is commanded to act out of charity,” Deacon Sahd said.

“I want to thank the people of our diocese, who have been so generous to me over the past five years while I have been in seminary, first at St. Vincent’s in Latrobe and now here at the North American College,” he added. “Many priests, religious, parishioners and students have written to me and have prayed for me in my vocation, and I am very grateful; please know that I keep all of you in my prayers. God-willing, I look forward to returning home to serve in a parish in our diocese one day soon.”

In a show of unity and support, priests present for the diaconate ordination in Rome lay their hands on the head of Deacon Kyle Sahd.

In Rome, Kyle Sahd Ordained to Diaconate

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PONTIFICAL AMERICAN COLLEGE

Seminarians from the Pontifical North American College in Rome prostrate themselves before the Altar of the Chair of St. Peter as the congregation invokes the intercession of the saints during the Rite of Ordination.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PONTIFICAL AMERICAN COLLEGE

After receiving his vestments, Deacon Kyle Sahd, right, a seminarian of the Diocese of Harrisburg, joins classmates in receiving congratulations from members of the clergy.

In a show of unity and support, priests present for the diaconate ordination in Rome lay their hands on the head of Deacon Kyle Sahd.

Please watch for an update on the Fishers of Men Dinner in our next issue of The Catholic Witness.

We thank you for your patience and understanding.
The annual Diocesan Catechetical Conference is being held this year on Nov. 9 at the Diocesan Center in Harrisburg. It will emphasize drawing people to deeper faith in Christ and his Church by focusing on the truth, beauty and goodness of the Catholic faith.

The theme of the conference is the same as the diocesan theme for the Year of Faith, “Wonderful indeed is the Mystery of our Faith” (1 Timothy 3:16).

In his first encyclical, Lumen Fidei, Pope Francis connects faith and love, writing, “Faith knows because it is tied to love, because love itself brings enlightenment. Faith’s understanding is born when we receive the immense love of God which transforms us inwardly and enables us to see reality with new eyes” (Lumen Fidei, 26).

The keynote speaker for the Catechetical Conference is Father Frederick Miller, S.T.D. Father Miller is a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, and a highly esteemed theologian. His keynote address is entitled, “Mary: Mother and Model of the Church.”

Father Miller was ordained to the sacred priesthood in 1972. After serving in three parishes in the Newark Archdiocese, he was named Executive Director of the World Apostolate of the Fatima, Editor of Soul magazine and Rector of the Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Washington, N.J. After completing his doctoral studies in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome, Father Miller taught at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, St. Joseph’s Seminary, Dunwoodie, N.Y., and the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Presently, he is Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. Father Miller is 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.hbgdioce.se.org.

The PNC Financial Services Group recently contributed $30,000 to the Diocese of Harrisburg’s Neumann Scholarship Foundation for scholarship assistance. The contribution was 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@hbgdioce.se.org.

The Grace of Ars

Father Robert R. Gillilan, Jr., Diocesan Administrator, recently received letters of thanks for the contributions that the people of the diocese made to the Black, Indian Mission Collection and to Catholic Relief Services, and to the Missionary Childhood Association.

Father W. Carroll Paysse, Executive Director of the Black and Indian Mission Office, recognized the $38,955.73 contributed to the recent collection. “Together, we continue the spirit of St. Katharine Drexel by evangelizing our Black, Indian and Alaskan Native missions,” he said of the collection, which was established by the bishops in 1884.

Dr. Carolyn Woo, President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services, acknowledged the $11,547.24 contributed through Operation Rice Bowl. “Please know that your donation allows CRS to continue our mission to help and support rural families, throughout the world, in their effort to alleviate poverty, attain food and nutrition security and improve their livelihoods,” she wrote.

Very Reverend Andrew Small, OMI, STD, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, recognized the $58,161.90 given to the Missionary Childhood Association during the 2012-2013 school year. “As I offer my heartfelt gratitude for your efforts year round to animate a missionary spirit and encourage generous support for the mission churches, I emphasize the particular importance of such efforts for ‘Mission Month’ (October),” he wrote.
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Through a free e-mail service, you can receive the diocesan newspaper in a fast and user-friendly electronic format. Sign up, and you will receive an e-mail with a direct link to each edition as it is published.

Sign up for the e-mail service by logging on to the diocesan Web site at www.hbgdiocese.org. Follow the News/Events tab to The Catholic Witness page and click on “Catholic Witness E-mail Sign Up.” Once you complete this form, you’ll be added to our e-mail list. Receiving The Catholic Witness electronically is a great way for college students and people who live outside of the diocese to stay in touch with the Church in Harrisburg. It’s also an alternative for those who wish to read the paper online instead of receiving a copy in the mail.

Registration with an e-mail service will not automatically cancel your mailed subscription. If you prefer to receive the online version instead of a copy in the mail, contact our Circulation Coordinator, Susan Huntsberger, at shuntsberger@hbgdiocese.org or 717-657-4804, ext. 201, with your Witness account number, and your name, address, and phone number.

And remember, previous editions of the newspaper – dating back to early 2011 – are also available online. You can find them at www.hbgdiocese.org. Just follow the News/Events tab to The Catholic Witness page.

Survey for Catholic Boy Scouts and Scouters

The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting is studying a proposal to coordinate a long-week 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 for suggestions to come up with a new 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.

‘Beginning Experience’ Offers Healing after the Loss of a Spouse

If you have lost a spouse or a marriage, the Roman Catholic Church has a ministry just for you, called Beginning Experience. It is the gift of a weekend away and a safe place to work through the pain. This tested ministry is designed by the Roman Catholic Church to helped hundreds of persons in the diocese find these new beginnings after the loss of a marriage or spouse. One participant shared, “The Weekend gave me the light at the end of the tunnel of my despair, and I have begun to find my joy and life again.”

For information and an application form, contact harrisburgbe@gmail.com, 717-657-4804 ext. 201, or visit www.hbgdiocese.org.

The Catholic Witness
OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF HARRISBURG

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The Catholic Witness (ISSN 0030-8447, USPS 505 120) is published biweekly except Christmas, New Year’s, and July 4 by the Harrisburg Catholic Publishing Association, 4830 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17117-3710. Periodicals postage paid at Harrisburg, PA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
The Catholic Witness, 4830 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17117-3710.

The Witness is published biweekly except Christmas, New Year’s, and July 4 by The Catholic Witness, 4830 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17117-3710.

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Yearly Subscriptions:
$18.17 per family, payable in advance from diocesan revenues from the parish/parishes. Other subscriptions allow: $25.00.

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Friendship
By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC
Special to The Witness

Some time ago, my aunt folded a wad of money into my hand and told me to spend it on my catechism class for a Christmas party. At the time, I taught in an elementary school in Bronx, N.Y., and was a catechist for a third-grade First Holy Communion preparation class. I excitedly went to the store to buy cookies and soda as well as small trinkets and pieces of hard candy. I made paper stockings and proudly put the hard candy and small, inexpensive toys in them. Having a few extra dollars left over, I folded a dollar bill into each of the paper stockings. On the last day of our class before Christmas break, we had a rosary session after a prayer service which focused on the gift of the birth of the Christ Child, the words and the gifts were ripped open. The students all gasped over the fact that they actually had something they wanted! I gave them instructions that they were to tell their moms or grandmas of the fact that this dollar was a Christmas present from my aunt, and that I had given it to them. If they doubted the story, they were to call the convent.

Several of my students, upon dismissal, gave me a hug before they ran out of the building and down the street. I turned around to walk down the hallway to close and lockup the classroom when I met Andre, who was standing by the door. He began, “Sister, I just wanna tell you that my aunt celebrated Christmas’ causes we are too poor. The present you gave us is the only Christmas present I EVER received! Can’t wait to spend the dollar on my mom!”

I said a gasp and tears welled up in my eyes. He continued, “But part of Christmas is about giving, right?” I nodded in affirmation and said that God gave us Jesus as the first Christmas present. He looked at me and then at his feet. He stammered, “Well, don’t have a different way to give you a gift this year? For Christmas.” He reached down into his pocket and then handed me a “well played” Cabbage Patch Pat. He continued, “Merry Christmas, Sister! Enjoy playing with the action figure!” I knew that I had to accept his present because it would be insulting to him if I didn’t. With tears streaming down my face, taking his gift. I gave him a hug and said, “Andre, this is the best present I EVER received!” He responded, “Sister, you are a good teacher and a good friend!” He then ran off.

This story always reminds me about the meaning of giving and the deeper meaning of friendship. This nine-year-old boy called me his FRIEND because I shared with him the love my aunt had for me by sharing her gift with him. He showed his respect by sharing his well-loved toy with me.

Could it be that friendship and love are somehow interrelated? St. Aedred of Rievaulx, an English writer and abbot who lived in the 12th century, wrote a Treatise on Friendship. For him: “Friendship springs directly from a God who created humanity; who created them to share his love with each other. Love one another as I have loved you. The human heart has impressed upon it the desire for friendship. In a very real way this desire is another aspect of the God of Genesis decreed that it is not good for man to be alone. True spiritual friendship, friendship that incarnates Christ among us, perfects love. It perfects creation.” (http://www.xandrewsawabbey.com/searchresults.aspx?cat=92)

So friendship stems from a foundation of a profound love of God found within the other. Pope Benedict understood this when he declared in a General Audience, “When two pure souls on fire with the same love for God meet, they find in their friendship with each other a powerful incentive to achieve the height of perfection. Friendship is one of the noblest and loveliest human sentiments which divine Grace purifies and transfigures. (September 15, 2010)

Do modern friendships lack genuine and meaningful relationships? And is social media friendship just another “harmless personal” comment on a social media profile or does it have greater meaning? According to Zawn Villines, author of the blog post, “How Social Networking Changes Friendships,” (http://www.goodtherapy. org/blog/how-social-networking-changes-friendship-1132137.html) the answer is “No!” Villines goes on to elaborate four aspects of social media friendships and how they have changed the meaning of friendship for our culture. The titles belong to him; the explanations are mine.

Reduced Investment – Face to face friendships are demanding for both parties. Time, effort and lots of conversation to get to know each other are key components to these friendships, while social media friendships require a mere click of the mouse. This apparent ease of “making friends” cheapens the idea of how friendship is understood.

Changed Boundaries – How many stories that have aired on television or been written in newspapers depict a “harmless personal” comment on a social media site that resulted in a dismissal from a job? Too many to describe! Conversely, conversations that should be of a more personal nature get watered down because they are written in newspapers depicting a “harmless personal” comment on a social media site. Does this mean our friendships are shallow?

How is Social Networking Changing Friendships?

Social media does assist those shy individuals who find it difficult to connect with others. It should only aid, not replace.

“Helping” vs “Making Friends” – The explanations are mine.

Changing Face Time – St. Aedred calls “a friend ‘another self’ to whom you can confess your failings, to whom you can speak on equal terms, to whom you can tell secrets. ‘A friend is a precious gift to help us to know our progress [or lack of it!] without blushing.’ In-person communication is a huge part of what a friend is. So where am I going with this, and why is this so important? The human heart is called into relationship with a Triune God that is in communion with one another. Technology is a tool that we need to use for our benefit and not as a replacement for what essentially is human. Would you accept an invitation to be my friend?

(Sister of Christian Charity, Geralyn Schmidt, is the Wide Area Network Coordinator at the Diocese of Harrisburg and a member of the IT Department. An educator for 28 years, she is responsible for Professional Development Programs for every age learner. In addition, Sister blogs for Powerful Learning Practices, a company providing in-service opportunities for educators. Through her presentations, she challenges her audiences to be the individual God has called them to be.)

Happy holidays!
By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

Are football players compassionate? Do the star basketball players in our schools act as positive role models?

Kristin Sheehan, Co-Director of the University of Notre Dame’s “Play Like a Champion Today” program, posed these questions to parents of athletes during a recent workshop at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary School in McSherrystown.

The answer to these questions should be a resounding “Yes,” if we’re teaching our children properly, she said.

The Oct. 16 “Parent Like a Champion” workshop addressed ways to instill values into sports programs and offered solutions for combating attitudes and actions that contribute to an unhealthy sports environment. The Alliance for Catholic Education at the University of Notre Dame developed the “Play Like a Champion Today” initiative to support schools and sports leagues in promoting athletics as a youth ministry, character development, spiritual growth, responsible decision making and building teams as moral communities.

The Notre Dame Club of Gettysburg partnered with the university’s program to bring the workshop to Annunciation School. Prior to presenting the program, Kristin Sheehan held a training workshop to educate leaders on how to present it in their own communities.

Christine Lucas, Principal of Annunciation School, told The Catholic Witness that offering the “Parent Like a Champion” workshop reflects the school’s focus on being proactive. “We are always looking to better ourselves, our coaches, our faculty, our staff,” she said. “We want to make sports a youth ministry, where we teach the same virtues and values that we instill in our kids every day within our school walls,” she said.

“I think it’s critical to introduce this program at the elementary school level, before the kids move on to high school and then college, and sports become more competitive,” Mrs. Lucas said. “We want parents to be good role models in sports so that their children will become role models for others and eventually for their own children.”

Mrs. Sheehan is a former Notre Dame cheerleader and a mother of three, who admitted that she once pushed her young son too far into gymnastics — so far that he didn’t enjoy it anymore.

In her presentation, she told the parents that any sports program should focus on teamwork, confidence, goal-setting and fun, and then asked, “But is there something different about a Catholic sports program?”

“Catholic sports can and should offer a distinct opportunity to share and encourage our faith with our kids,” she said.

She asked the parents to think about the characteristics that define a champion — someone who is determined, who focuses on teamwork, who desires to win the right way, who plays with integrity.

“Many times, we think of a champion as the first person to cross the finish line, or the team that is holding the trophy at the end of the season,” Mrs. Sheehan said. “But there are virtues and values that create a champion. We as parents should enlarge our vision of a champion, so that we can encourage each of these characteristics in our kids.”

That encouragement can be done through the GROW approach, which encourages them to strive to succeed.

GROW stands for Goals, Relationships, Ownership and Winning. Mrs. Sheehan explained. Goals include the physical, mental, and moral goals that an athlete can aspire to achieve in each game. Relationships focus on the positive and encouraging interaction between teammates. Ownership calls on athletes and spectators to respect game play, coaches and officials. Winning calls the athletes to win or lose with honor, and calls upon parents to be supportive instead of “sideline coaching” or berating their child’s play.

Mrs. Sheehan also suggested ways in which parents can be champions themselves: Refrain from placing blame or excessive pressure on young athletes. Challenge children to improve and try new things. Offer positive feedback. Praise their child’s acts of sportsmanship.

The “Play Like a Champion Today” initiative has educated more than 35,000 coaches and 20,000 parents throughout the country.

Mrs. Sheehan told The Catholic Witness that the program, which she has been presenting in elementary and high schools since 2006, is linked to the mission of the University of Notre Dame and of Catholic schools.

“Our mission is to educate the whole person – we want to help students grow in the academic disciplines and to be whole emotionally, morally and spiritually,” she said. “We believe we are helping to develop better human beings and disciples for the Church.”

(Information on the program can be found online at www.playlikeachampion.nd.edu.)
Life Matters: A Catholic Response to the Death Penalty

By Anthony Granado

Abortion, euthanasia, domestic abuse, gang related violence, terrorism, murder, mass shootings, expressions of hatred or racism and other acts contrary to the dignity of persons… all of these crimes cry out for justice. Yet we are a people of hope, and St. Paul reminds us that “in hope we were saved” (Rom 8:24).

We are confident that we serve a God of life, of hope and mercy. We know that all human life is a gift from God, a gift that God charges us to protect. To be worthy of being called his disciples, Jesus urges us to love others as he has loved us (Jn 13:34-35). Our response then to a culture in which hostility towards others is commonplace, in which killing is often considered a legitimate solution to social problems, is to both live and proclaim a gospel of life, hope and mercy.

For people committed to upholding the sanctity of human life, the death penalty can present a challenge. Properly understood, however, Catholic teaching against the death penalty is both persuasive and eminently pro-life. It begins with the affirmation that human dignity applies to every human being, to victims as well as those who have committed crimes against life. Our teaching also holds that recourse to the death penalty may be justified only under the most narrow circumstance, namely, if it “is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor” (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], no. 2267). The teaching reminds us that if non-lethal means are capable of protecting society, these are preferable as “more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person” (CCC, no. 2267).

Blessed John Paul II was instrumental in challenging the world to reconsider the use of the death penalty. In his 1995 encyclical Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life, “EV”), he explained that, “The Gospel of God’s love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel” (no. 2). Quoting the Second Vatican Council’s Gaudium et Spes (no. 22), “By his incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every man,” he added that, “This saving event reveals to humanity not only the boundless love of God… but also the incomparable value of every human person” (EV, no. 2).

In the first chapter of EV, “The Voice of Your Brother’s Blood Cries to Me from the Ground” (Gen 4:10), Blessed John Paul II presents the story of Cain and Abel to illustrate that God’s mercy embraces even a murderer. Despite Cain’s deliberate killing of his brother, despite his lack of remorse, his arrogance, his lies to God and utter callousness about what he had done (“I do not know [where Cain is]. Am I my brother’s keeper?” Gen 4:9), God nevertheless refuses to take Cain’s life as punishment. But he does not leave the crime unpunished. He tells Cain that he will not be able to grow crops and that he will be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth. Cain complains that such leniency is still too harsh, fearing that someone might kill him on sight.

Then reveals still greater mercy towards Cain, putting a mark on him “so that no one would kill him at sight!” (Gen 4:15) and promising that “If anyone kills [you], [you] shall be avenged seven times” (Gen 4:15). Although Cain is spared execution, justice requires that he live the rest of his earthly life alone and outcast, but with time to reflect on his crime, to perhaps feel remorse and at last seek forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

The story of Cain and Abel shows that, though we reject and betray God through our sinfulness, his love for human beings is always faithful, merciful, compassionate and patient. Writing about this passage, Blessed John Paul II observed, “Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this” (EV, 9). We must never lose our conviction that even the worst offenders are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Certainly, one of the principal failures of the death penalty is that it denies the opportunity for repentance and conversion by definitively cutting short the efforts of the Holy Spirit to transform the condemned person’s soul in this life. In effect, we are condemning the accused not only to death, but possibly also to hell. The finality of the death penalty compels us to ask, who are we to thwart God’s desire that all might be saved? Who are we to put an end to the work God is trying to accomplish in anyone’s soul?

From a purely secular perspective, it is a fact that simply because states have always exercised the power to kill persons convicted of murder or treason, it does not follow that this power always has been exercised wisely or well. Given mankind’s seemingly infinite capacity to err, we must admit that the death penalty poses significant problems. With scandalous frequency, people on death row have later been shown to be innocent of the crime for which they were convicted. As of 2012, 141 people incarcerated on death row in 26 states have been exonerated and freed when conclusive evidence of their innocence was later discovered. But we cannot always rely on DNA evidence to demonstrate guilt or innocence because DNA evidence exists in only 10 percent of cases.

Even if the death penalty were always imposed without error, should we support its use? We teach that killing is wrong by responding with mercy and justice, not more killing. We don’t want a government that kills when society can be protected fully by the bloodless means of life imprisonment. By fostering a spirit of vengeance, which should have no role in the administration of justice, the death penalty contributes to the increasing disrespect for human life in our culture.

Today a growing movement in the United States, led by Catholics, opposes the use of the death penalty. As a result, more states are restricting or abolishing its use, but many other states retain this penalty.

As Catholics, we believe and put our hope in a merciful and loving God. We are conscious of our own brokenness and need for redemption. Our Lord calls us to imitate him more perfectly by witnessing to the inherent dignity of every human being, including those whose actions have been despicable. Our faith and hope is in the mercy of God who says to us, “Blessed are the merciful for they shall be shown mercy (Mt 5:7) and I desire mercy, not sacrifices” (Mt 9:13). As Christians we are called to oppose the culture of death by witnessing to something greater and more perfect: a gospel of life, hope and mercy.

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia, recently summed up the case against the death penalty in these words: “As children of God, we’re better than this, and we need to start acting like it. We need to end the death penalty now.” Let us then join in efforts to end the death penalty and show that we are people of life, hope and mercy.

(Anthony Granado is a Policy Advisor in the Office of Domestic Social Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)
On the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, Oct. 15, members of the Discalced Carmelite community in Danville gathered to celebrate their 60th anniversary. The momentous occasion was highlighted by a Mass celebrated by Father Chester Snyder in the Chapel at Maria Hall, where the community has lived since moving there from Elysburg in 2008.

Their contemplative life focuses on communion with God through prayer and self denial. The religious sisters devote their days to prayer, contemplation and solitude for the salvation of the world. They live a strictly cloistered life, set apart from the world in order to dedicate themselves to God.

The Carmelite community in Danville is one of three contemplative communities in the Diocese of Harrisburg – the others are the Discalced Carmelites in Elysburg and the Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary in Lancaster.
Lourdeshouse: Affirming Life for Women and their Babies

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Three months ago, Jenefer, 23, walked into Lourdeshouse maternity home. She was nine months pregnant and looking to escape from a sexual harassment situation.

She didn’t know what Lourdeshouse could offer, or what to expect there. Jenefer’s case manager had located the program for her. She just wanted a safe place to bring her baby into the world and to start a better life for both of them.

“I didn’t care what space I was in, as long as I was out of that house and away from the harassment,” Jenefer said.

“When I came to Lourdeshouse, I didn’t know anything about it,” she said. “I didn’t know if it was a good environment for my child. I didn’t know the ladies here. I thought there was going to be a lot of cussing and fighting.”

In her mind, negative images of shelters took over.

But during her very first day at Lourdeshouse, Jenefer came to realize it would be a positive and caring environment for her and her unborn daughter.

She realized it when Lourdeshouse caseworker Renee Ramp showed her to her own room.

“I cried,” Jenefer said. “I cried because I wasn’t expecting I’d get my own space. I cried because I was so happy to know I would bring my child into a safe environment.”

For more than 50 years, Lourdeshouse has been providing life-affirming care for single mothers and their babies.

Nestled within the St. Samuel Center in Harrisburg (also home to the Interfaith Shelter for Homeless Families and Evergreen House for women in recovery), Lourdeshouse is one of Catholic Charities’ “Homes for Healing,” residential homes that serve those in need.

At Lourdeshouse, up to 16 women can stay at a time for shelter, maternity care and residential services. The dedicated and compassionate staff and volunteers monitor the women’s medical care and nutrition, and offer parenting classes, case management, transportation to appointments, and unwavering support and encouragement as the women seek housing, education and employment.

“Lourdeshouse is such a unique place. When you’re here, you become like a family,” Mrs. Ramp said, gesturing to the spacious living room, dining room and kitchen, and to the bedrooms that offer women and babies refuge.

Within that family dynamic, each staff member and volunteer fills an important role, from Program Manager Annette Martin an the volunteers who prepare breakfast and lunch, to the cook who serves dinner and the women who help tend to the babies while their mothers are out seeking housing or work.

“Sometimes, the women might not have been shown how to cook or do laundry, the everyday things we might take for granted,” Mrs. Ramp pointed out.

“We show the women those things, and in that way, a lot of them really do feel like we are family.”

That environment is critical, said Jenefer, whose siblings live nearby but whose parents are further away.

The women can welcome family members to visit on weekends, but not everyone has relatives who live near Harrisburg. Some have severed ties.

“It feels like we’re all just one big family,” Jenefer said. “Miss Renee is like my mom, the girls here are my sisters, and my daughter has whole bunch of cousins coming.”

Jenefer’s daughter, Kataleya, is a happy and healthy three-month-old, and Jenefer’s inspiration.

When she starts smiling, I just think about my life before she was here. I have someone who will always love me, and I will love her unconditionally,” Jenefer said.

She knows that without Kataleya and Lourdeshouse, she would not be the pleasant and genuine person she is today. Tears stream down her face as she reflects on “the old Jenefer.”

“Everybody tells me that I changed dramatically since coming to Lourdeshouse. They tell me that I’m a great mom, and they say that I’ve changed from the person I used to be,” she said. “I’m not the angry person they knew. I’m loving and caring now.”

She is also motivated.

Jenefer wants to go to school and eventually work in childcare. She is working on getting her driver’s license and seeking a stable home where she can raise Kataleya.

“Without Lourdeshouse, I think I would still be living where I was, being sexually harassed and scared every night. And I would be afraid for my child,” she said.

“You get a lot of help here. They show you that you’re not by yourself when you’re a single parent raising your own child,” Jenefer said of Lourdeshouse. “It gets you where you want to be. If you go about with your business, you will get where you want to be.”

The women who seek the sanctuary of Lourdeshouse come from different situations – drug addiction, homelessness, domestic violence, sexual harassment and abuse.

Jenefer and Kataleya won a contest through Parents magazine for Kataleya to be photographed as the Gerber Baby.

Jenefer came to Lourdeshouse when she was pregnant with Kataleya, who is now three months old.
Lourdeshouse
Continued from B

They come to Lourdeshouse not just for safety for themselves and their babies, but to lay the foundations for their future.

“Our goal is for them to have their own place and be self-sufficient, and to be the best mothers that they can be,” Mrs. Ramp said.

“For all the women who have come from Lourdeshouse, I can say I have seen them grow in one way or another by the time they leave,” she said. “I can honestly say that I see wonderful mothers leave Lourdeshouse.”

Liz, age 40, was six months pregnant when she arrived at Lourdeshouse in March.

She had been in a domestic violence shelter in her hometown in Centre County four times before leaving the area and seeking out Lourdeshouse.

“Where I was before, it wasn’t the right place for me. I was always looking for work and doing as much as I could on my own,” she said, “but here, you are surrounded by other people who are in similar situations and with people who are really trying to help you deal with things like preparing for a baby, and regular life and its everyday cares and concerns.”

Without family in the area, Liz found at Lourdeshouse the support she needed to welcome daughter Aaleya into the world and find a place for them to live.

“They really take care of you here in terms of making sure we have proper nutrition and healthcare. It’s nice to have someone looking out for you.”

When Liz gave birth to Aaleya four months ago, Mrs. Ramp was by her side.

“My family was far away, so I was very grateful to have Miss Renee with me instead of being alone. That was the most major show of support I could ever think of,” said Liz, who is also a mom to three-year-old Tiana, who lives with Liz’s parents.

Liz now has her own apartment, and looks forward to going back to work.

She can’t imagine where she might be today without the assistance she found at Lourdeshouse.

“I don’t think I would be thinking so much about the decisions I make in life,” she said. “I probably would have had to ask for help from people I wouldn’t have wanted to, from people who aren’t good for my situation.”

“I definitely think Lourdeshouse was the right place for me,” she said. “I’m feeling pretty positive. There is no more intense love than what I feel for my kids.”

For its services and support of pregnant women, new moms, unborn babies and newborn infants, Lourdeshouse is a program that affirms life and women.

“The mothers that come through here are definitely pro-life women, and they can’t imagine not having their children in their lives,” Mrs. Ramp remarked.

“Cuddling Aaleya, Liz wished aloud that there were more programs like Lourdeshouse.

“Seeing what’s going on in the world, today, there isn’t a lot of value put on life like it should be. Places like Lourdeshouse bring back that focus,” she said.

“Lourdeshouse is a great place for women to get situated, to focus on themselves and their babies, to get the help that they need,” Liz remarked. “It gave my baby a nurturing environment, a safe place, a positive start coming into this world. It helped me learn to become independent, to take control of my situation.”

To the women of Lourdeshouse, it’s not a shelter, it’s a home.

“They appreciate the home-cooked meals, the private bedrooms, the family-like living areas, the classes, the care of the volunteers and the support of the staff.”

“It’s like a home to these ladies,” Mrs. Ramp said. “It’s a place to get the services that you need, and to know that if you come through Lourdeshouse, you’re not going to end up back on the street again.”

“There is no place like Lourdeshouse out there,” Jennifer said. “When I was visiting places, there was nothing at all like this.”

“I didn’t expect Lourdeshouse to be this way. But I saw that it was different, and I saw that everybody who works here cares for you, and they care for your child,” she said. “Other places might care for you, but they don’t show it like the Lourdeshouse staff.”

How You Can Help

For more than 50 years, Lourdeshouse has been caring for single mothers and their children, offering a sanctuary for hundreds of pregnant women who have nowhere else to turn.

Once supported primarily by government funding, Lourdeshouse now seeks support from charitable dollars in order to continue to provide services for its residents.

Charitable contributions, donations of items, and volunteers are needed as the program continues to fulfill its mission of promoting the life and dignity of those it serves.

Wish list items include personal care items, baby items for infants up to 12 months, craft supplies, small photo albums and gift cards to Giant and Walmart. Volunteers are needed for cooking meals, house cleaning and yard work.

For information on how you can donate or volunteer, contact Annette Martin, Lourdeshouse Program Manager, at 717-412-4865.
Vietnamese Catholics Keep Traditions Alive at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church

By Mary Klaus
The Catholic Witness

Wearing traditional Vietnamese clothing and carrying fans and candles, more than 100 members of Harrisburg’s Vietnamese Catholic Community slowly processed up the center aisle at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church in Harrisburg.

Little girls in silk dresses and little boys in suits bowed their heads before a statue of the Blessed Mother.

Teen-age girls in pink silk gowns and youth in dark suits followed, raising their flickering candles in unison. Women in red, blue, green and floral dresses came next, genuflecting together and twirling in groups of four as they performed sacred dance steps.

Senior members – women in white dresses, men in royal blue shirts – added another generation to the colorful 32-minute ceremony that preceded the Saturday night Vietnamese Mass Oct. 5.

The recent procession honoring Our Lady of the Rosary was nothing unusual at Our Lady’s, which has three Vietnamese Masses each weekend and Vietnamese religious education classes on Sunday afternoons for more than 100 children.

Our Lady’s, an inclusive Catholic parish that celebrates its diversity, has hosted the Vietnamese Catholic community for decades. Father Paul Fisher is pastor there.

“We try to keep our Vietnamese Catholic traditions,” said Ninh Le, who moved from Vietnam to the United States in 1975 and now lives in Linglestown.

“We are a strong faith community. We are grateful to Our Lady’s, an inclusive Catholic parish that celebrates its diversity, has hosted the Vietnamese Catholic community for decades. Father Paul Fisher is pastor there.

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Father Paul Nguyen, parochial vicar at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Harrisburg, celebrated Mass for Vietnamese Catholics.

Described Father Nguyen as the glue that binds the community. Mr. Tran praised his "great sermon" and his welcoming personality.

"Father Paul brings energy, youth and creative ideas to us," Ninh Le said.

Father Nguyen, born in North Vietnam to a devout Catholic family with seven children, said his family influenced his faith walk.

"In 1954, my paternal grand-father was persecuted by Vietnamese Communists," Father Nguyen said. "He sacrificed himself to witness for Christ in order to become the faith model for our family. My grandmother was a godly woman with a very strong faith in Christ. I lived with her all through my childhood. That was a great time for my faith tree to mature."

He said that his grandmother, who taught him about prayers and the Bible, told him that she dreamed he would become a priest.

On the night she died, Father Nguyen said, he heard "a soft and friendly voice" call his name even though he was no longer living with his grandmother. The next morning, he learned that she had died.

"I always believed that she came and said the final goodbye to me that night," he said. "I never forget her and always pray for her."

Father Nguyen, who was ordained in 2004, two years later moved to the United States. He earned Masters Degrees in pastoral counseling and spiritual direction from Loyola University in Chicago.

In February 2012, he was assigned as parochial vicar at Our Lady’s and to minister to the Vietnamese Catholic community there.

(Mary Klaus is a freelance reporter for The Catholic Witness.)
Greed Destroys, Money is God’s Gift to Use to Help Others, Pope Says

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

Money by itself isn’t a problem, but greed and an attachment to money cause evil and destroy families and relationships, Pope Francis said.

“Money is needed to bring about many good things,” he said in his morning Mass homily Oct. 21, “but when your heart is attached to money, it destroys you.”

“How many destroyed families have we seen because of money problems, sibling against sibling, father against child,” he said during the Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae, according to Vatican Radio.

“When a person is attached to money, he destroys himself, destroys the family” and destroys relationships, he said.

The pope focused on the day’s Gospel reading (Luke 12:13-21) and Jesus’ parable of the rich man. God admonished the rich man and said a person who stores up treasures for himself will not be rich “in what matters to God.”

In the Gospel reading, Jesus warns people to “guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.”

Pope Francis said what is destructive is “not money, but the attitude called greed.”

“Greed makes you ill because it makes you think about everything only in relation to money.” “Greed is an instrument of idolatry” because “you play god out of vanity” and because “it leads to the path that is opposed to what God did for us,” the pope said.

Jesus made himself poor to enrich humanity, and the path to God is through Christ’s same humility and “lowering oneself in order to serve,” he said.

When Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters,” one can either serve God or money, Jesus was asking people to trust in God to provide, Pope Francis said.

However, he said, walking the path of poverty isn’t for poverty’s sake; poverty is an instrument to help people remain focused on God, who is the only master, “not the idol of gold.”

“All the goods we have, the Lord gives us” in order to help the world and humanity progress, and to help others, the pope said.

Pope Francis Receives Kenneth Hackett, New U.S. Envoy to Vatican

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

Presenting his credentials to Pope Francis, Kenneth F. Hackett officially took over as U.S. ambassador to the Holy See Oct. 21, filling a role that had been vacant for nearly a year.

“The United States and the Holy See have converging interests that span a broad range of issues” including “human rights and social justice,” Hackett wrote the same day, in the first post on his official ambassador’s blog.

“We both work to make a difference on a range of important global issues such as trafficking in persons, inter-religious dialogue, conflict resolution, food access and security, HIV/AIDS and care for the environment,” wrote Hackett, a former president of Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops’ overseas relief and development agency.

The United States has had an ambassador at the Vatican since November 2012, when Miguel H. Diaz resigned and left Rome to become a professor of faith and culture at the University of Dayton in Ohio.

During Diaz’s tenure, relations between Washington and the Vatican were marked by tension, particularly over the Obama administration’s plan to require that all health insurance plans, including those offered by most Catholic institutions, cover sterilizations and contraceptives, which are forbidden by Catholic moral teaching. The plan prompted Pope Benedict XVI and the papal nuncio to the U.S. to issue public warnings of a threat to Americans’ religious freedom.

“There will be times when the position of the [Obama administration differs, obviously, from the Holy See,” Hackett told the Catholic Review, Baltimore’s archdiocesan newspaper, last August. “But I am going to look for — as many of my predecessors did — those opportunities where we can come together and find strength in collaboration, coincidence of interests.”

Hackett is a former president of CRS, the U.S. bishops’ overseas relief and development agency, which he first joined in 1972 after a post-college stint with the Peace Corps in Ghana. He retired as president of CRS in December 2011.

The new ambassador is also a former North American president of Caritas Internationalis, the confederation of humanitarian agencies of the Catholic Church, and a former member of the board of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum.

He told the Catholic Review in August that he was looking forward to reconnecting in Rome with the sort of people he had befriended during his years in relief work: “holy people who are trying their best.”

“I missed that in the last year I’ve been retired. You don’t see those kind of people anymore, that bishop from Congo who has so many stories to tell at supper, of so much hardship,” he said. “I want to re-establish those relationships and use them to, basically, improve U.S. policies.”

The Tour of the INTERNATIONAL PILGRIM VIRGIN STATUE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA will commence November 1st and conclude November 21st, 2013.

The following parishes and locations within the Diocese of Harrisburg will be hosting Our Lady during this time, “The Year of Faith.”

St. Rita’s, Blue Ridge Summit .................................. Nov. 1
St. Andrew the Apostle, Waynesboro ........................ Nov. 1
St. Ignatius Loyola, Orrtanna .................................. Nov. 2
Sacred Heart, Spring Grove .................................. Nov. 3
St. Anthony of Padua, Lancaster ............................. Nov. 3 & 4
Manor Care, Camp Hill ........................................ Nov. 4
Good Shepherd, Camp Hill .................................. Nov. 4 & 5
St. Joseph, Danville .............................................. Nov. 5 & 6
St. Joseph, Mechanicsburg .................................... Nov. 7
St. Richard, Manheim ............................................ Nov. 7
Mary Mother of the Church, Mt. Joy ........................ Nov. 8
Prince of Peace, Steelton ....................................... Nov. 9
Assumption BVM, Lebanon ................................. Nov. 9 & 10
St. Leo the Great, Lancaster .................................. Nov. 11 & 12
San Juan Bautista, Lancaster .................................. Nov. 12
St. Anne’s Retirement Center, Columbus ................ Nov. 13
Sacred Heart, Cornwall ........................................ Nov. 13 & 14
Divine Redeemer, Mt. Carmel ................................ Nov. 14 & 15
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Marysville .................. Nov. 15
St. Bernadette Mission, Duncannon ....................... Nov. 16
Seven Sorrows BVM, Middletown ......................... Nov. 16, 17 & 18
St. Francis of Assisi, Harrisburg ............................. Nov. 18
St. Patrick Cathedral, Harrisburg .......................... Nov. 19
Historic St. Mary’s, Lancaster ............................... Nov. 20 & 21

To learn more about the IPVS, go to www.pilgrimvirginstatue.com

THE CATHOLIC WITNESS - 11

OCTOBER 25, 2013
The names of the following deceased persons have been submitted by their parishes:

ANNVILLE — St. Paul the Apostle: Josephine Diamond, Rose McShane, Joseph Meade, Chet Stetsko.


CHAMBERSBURG — Corpus Christi: John C. McCarthy.

COAL TOWNSHIP — Our Lady of Hope: John Ruback.

COLUMBIA — Holy Trinity: Gerald “Jere” High, Melvin King, Antoinette Scerbo.

DANVILLE — St. Joseph: M. Catharine Brady, John Kurtinecz.

ELIZABETHTOWN — St. Peter: Helen Tracy.

ENOLA — Our Lady of Lourdes: Helen M. Cardene.

GETTYSBURG — St. Francis Xavier: Betty Jane Fulton.

HANOVER — St. Vincent de Paul: Alan Teel.


HERSHEY — St. Joan of Arc: Ronald Clapp, Margaret Craig, Joyce Everson.

KULPMONT — Holy Angels: Bernard Bruni, Daniel Dietterick, Francis Sando.

LEWISTOWN — Sacred Heart of Jesus: Ellen Boova, Agnes Potepan.

LYKENS — Our Lady Help of Christians: Jeffrey Faust.


NEW FREEDOM — St. John the Baptist: Patricia Deolozier, Joseph J. “Jimmy” Philbin, Jr.

WILLIAMSTOWN — Sacred Heart of Jesus: Vince McNamara.

YORK — Inmaculate Conception BVM: Charles Keener, Louonna Snyder.

OBITUARIES

For more information contact Joe Bralansky, Manager
1313 South York Street
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
(717) 697-0206
Jbralansky@hbgdiocese.org

Christmas Bazaars and Craft Shows

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Lykens, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 1 from 9 a.m.-7 p.m. in the social hall. The kitchen will serve delicious homemade foods. Baked goods stand, craft stand, secondhand jewelry stand, chance stand and much more.

St. John Neumann Parish in Lancaster, annual Christmas bazaar and holiday craft fair, Nov. 1 from 9 a.m.-8 p.m., and Nov. 2 from 9 a.m.-noon. The theme of this year’s bazaar is “Reindeer.” Handcrafted and handmade items, aprons, Christmas decorations, ornaments, angels, Santas, snow people, floral decorations, chance tree. Kitchen open Friday from 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Free parking, no admission fee. For more information, call the parish at 717-569-8531.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Hanover, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 2 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. in the gymnasium. Vendors, raffle table, baked goods. Kitchen open until 1 p.m. St. Vincent’s Thrift Shop is having a Christmas Open House the same day.

Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Harrisburg, craft show, Nov. 2 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. in the school gym. Vendors, homemade items, full kitchen, and service dogs on stage.

The Council of Catholic Women of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Lebanon, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 2 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. in the parish center. Holiday crafts, themed baskets, white elephant stand, jewelry, baked goods, candy, harvest table, chance booth and religious items. Come early for coffee and doughnuts. Lunch includes beef barbecue, egg rolls, soups, hotdogs and more.

The Council of Catholic Women of Corpus Christi Parish in Chambersburg, holiday craft fair, Nov. 2 from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at the parish center. Unique hand sewn items, crafts, jewelry, home decor, baked goods, A&B Religious Shop and much more. Lunch and dessert from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Free gift wrapping by Corpus Christi School students. For more information, contact Kathy at 717-352-7354.

The Annunciation Home and School Association in McSherrystown, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 2 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Homemade crafts and baked goods, outdoor Nativity sets, filled baskets, raffles, wreaths, vendors, free childcare, and breakfast served by chef Peg Staub and her staff.

St. John the Baptist Parish in New Freedom, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 2 from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in the parish center social hall. Raffle items including handmade quilts, cash and sports items. Photos with Santa, gift baskets, Christmas and country crafts, quilted items, homemade baked goods, candy, “Secret Santa” room for kids. Country breakfast at 9 a.m. in the parish center, full lunch menu to follow. Raffle drawings at 2:30 p.m. For information, call the parish at 717-235-2156.

St. Benedict the Abbot Parish in Lebanon, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 9 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. in the social hall. Poppy, nut and apricot rolls, cookies, homemade candy and soups, kielbasa, haleki, haleki pierogies, egg rolls, Spanish foods. Tables of treasures and crafts, basket raffle and more.

St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Lancaster, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 9 from 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Resurrection Catholic School. This year’s theme is “Spirit of Christmas.” All items are made or donated by parishioners or businesses. Food, crafts, holiday decor, gifts, wreaths, jewelry, a children’s shopping room and country crafts, quilted items, homemade baked goods, religious articles, gift basket raffle. Café offers breakfast and lunch. For information, call 717-334-0333 or visit www.sfxpccw.org.

St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Waynesboro, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 9 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., sponsored by the Council of Catholic Women. Twenty displays of home items, lunch available.

St. Anne’s Retirement Community Auxiliary, bazaar and craft show to benefit residents of the retirement community, Nov. 15 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. and Nov. 16 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. Anne’s Retirement Community. Handcrafted items, seasonal decorations, St. Anne’s note cards, baked goods, crafts, vendors. Lunch of chicken corn soup, hot dogs, BBQ. Donate baked goods Nov. 14 and 15.

St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Annville, holiday bazaar, Nov. 16 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Handmade crafted items for decorating and gift-giving. Homemade cookies, candies, pies, cakes and more. Café features homemade chicken pot pie, hot dogs, meatball sandwiches, soup, doughnuts, bagels and drinks.

St. James Parish in Liltz, Christmas bazaar. Nov. 22 from 4-6 p.m. and Nov. 23 from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Crafts, wreaths, floral arrangements, knitted items, white elephant sale, children’s room with Santa, bake sale, raffle, silent auction 25-cent bingo, fish bowl, raffle for prizes. St. James Café open Friday. Saturday menu includes light breakfast, soups, sandwiches, homemade pierogies, salads for lunch, ham/turkey dinner for the evening. For information, call the parish at 717-626-5580.

St. Cecilia Parish in Lebanon, Christmas bazaar, Nov. 23 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the State Drive social hall. Walnut, poppyseed and apricot strudel, sugar cookies, homemade candies, needlework and crafts, gift baskets, jewelry and handbag boutique, chance booth, flea market items, a children’s store with gift wrapping available, Christmas booth, lunch.
The Council of Catholic Women of Sacred Heart Parish in Williamstown will host a savor- 
knock dinner on Election Day, Nov. 5. Dinner includes savor-knock, pork, salad, potato salad, 
salad, noodles, and beverage. Tickets are $8 and are available by calling Nancy Mikoldt at 717-649-9450 or any member of the Ladies Council.

Divine Redeemer Parish in Mount Carmel will be offering an "Election Day" Dinner Nov. 5 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. in Divine Mercy Hall. Dinner includes savor-knock, pork, potatoes, mashed potatoes, vegetables, salad, and beverage. Tickets are $8 and may be purchased at the door. For more information, call Mary Duty at 717-556-7051, Phyllis Ficca at 717-373-5953, or at the door. Eat-in or take-out.

An Election Day Spaghetti Dinner will be held at Sacred Heart Parish in Grantville. Dinner is from 4 to 8 p.m. Election Day. Dinner includes spaghetti and meatballs, salad, roll, butter, jello, or applesauce, and drinks. Tickets are $8 and may be purchased at the door or call 717-921-3432. Raffle tickets are also available for $8 each. For more information, call 717-273-1574.

St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Annville will host an Election Day Spaghetti Dinner Nov. 5 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dinner includes pasta, meatballs, salad, and beverage. Tickets are $8 at the door. For more information, call St. Paul the Apostle Parish at 717-869-9212.

The Sisters of Peace, an order of nuns headquartered in New York City, will offer a 6-day retreat, "The Practice of Intimacy," Nov. 4-9. The retreat will be at St. Aloysius Church in Carlisle. For more information, call Sister Therese of the Sacred Heart at 717-292-4103.

The Diocesan Ministry Office is offering a Mass with a Meal program on Nov. 10 at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church in cucumber. Mass will be offered by Father William Wurn. There is no charge for the diocesan Mass with a Meal program. For more information, call the Diocesan Ministry Office at 717-224-8300.
Dear Friends in Christ,

During this period of sede vacante (vacant seat of the bishop) as we await the announcement of our new bishop, I am pleased to share with you the annual diocesan Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013. This audited report reflects your continued and generous financial support for the overall mission of the Diocese of Harrisburg.

Because of your support and the prudent stewardship of Harrisburg Catholic Administrative Services (HCAS) and the Diocesan Finance Council, we, the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Harrisburg, are able to be about the work of Christ as we strive to proclaim the Kingdom of God throughout the fifteen counties of central Pennsylvania.

Although saddened by the death of Bishop McFadden, we have followed through with his vision of greater accountability and transparency when managing the financial resources of the Diocese. To this end, we have begun a process of strengthening financial accounting procedures and controls in our parishes, schools, and institutions. In a special way, I want to thank all the parish and school finance councils who have completed the lengthy survey requested by HCAS. The initiative is already bearing fruit.

As a pastor who is now serving as Diocesan Administrator, I am able to see the Diocese as a whole and am delighted to report that our financial stability is good. Due to your generous and consistent support of our parishes, the Diocese, the Lenten Appeal, Pentecost, Matthew 25, and national and global collections, we are able to sustain the many ministries and services we need to be as the Catholic Church. In addition, the wise stewardship of our resources enables us to have hope for the future.

May God continue to bless us with the wisdom to good steward of His many gifts - both temporal and spiritual. May we place all in the service of God’s Kingdom – for God’s greater glory, the good of all, and the salvation of souls.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Very Reverend Robert M. Gillician, Jr.
Diocesan Administrator, sede vacante

Consistent with its policy of providing financial disclosure, the Diocese of Harrisburg is once again publishing the financial statements of its Central Offices and Ministries. The financial statements presented here for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2013 and 2012 were prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and were audited by the independent certified public accounting firm McKeon and Asbury, LLP. These financial reports do not include the financial status of diocesan parishes and schools. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg, PA, Inc. Each of these entities maintains its own set of fiscal records and reports individually to its own particular constituencies.

The complete financial reports for the diocese, together with the independent auditor’s report and notes to the financial statements, are available from Harrisburg Catholic Administrative Services, Inc., (HCAS) upon request.

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Lancaster Catholic Tennis Nets Singles Silver, Team Gold in Districts

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Members of the girls’ tennis team at Lancaster Catholic High School have accomplished the goals they set for themselves this season, but that doesn’t mean that they’re not looking to add more hardware to the trophy case.

Earlier this month, junior Elizabeth Veronis finished as the Lancaster-Lebanon League champion in singles, and then brought home the silver medal in District 3 AA play.

And, she joined her teammates in capturing the school’s first team title in district tennis, besting Wyomissing, which had laid claim to team gold the previous four years.

Veronis’ district silver came on the heels of four hours of play Oct. 14 at the Hershey Racquet Club. After a semifinal match that went three sets, she took to the court again against Chapel Hill’s Eleanor Gerhard for a finals match that also went three sets, with Gerhard winning 6-7, 6-4, 7-5.

Gerhard is a familiar opponent for Veronis. The two had met last year in districts, where Veronis placed fourth. “I definitely came in with more of a strategy because I know her strengths and her weaknesses,” Veronis said of the district final. “She is really fast, so I knew I had to try and take advantage of my opportunities when I had them.”

“I was exhausted,” Veronis said of her campaign. She found herself down 5-2 in the third, and charged back to a 5-5 tie before Gerhard won the final two games.

Veronis now looks to singles competition in the PIAA state tournament, which will take place Nov. 1 and 2 at the Hershey Racquet Club.

“In team tennis, the Crusaders attribute this year’s success to depth and chemistry. “It seems that our team really came together this year,” said senior Katie Filling. “We were strong in years past, but this has definitely been the year that we’ve improved the most. And we all get along really well. That’s so important, especially for a team.”

Teamwork resulted in their first AA District 3 team championship, earned after a 3-0 victory over powerhouse Wyomissing.

The win came on the heels of doubles victories by Julia Davis and Ellie Cubbison, and by Katie Filling and Emily Hollister, and a singles win from Veronis. Davis and Cubbison moved on to doubles play in the district tournament, where they finished fourth.

“We have a really solid team this year. There is a lot of depth to our team, which I think is probably our best asset overall,” Hollister said. “We focused a lot on doubles this year, and I think that by doing that, it helped the team as whole.”

After tasting district gold, the girls set their sights on state championship play. As of press time on Oct. 22, they were heading into their first-round match up.

“The district title was a pretty big goal for us to accomplish so far,” Filling said. “We don’t know much about the other teams in states because we’ve never played them before, so we’re just going to give it our best shot and go as far as we can.”

“I think we do have a good chance, because we do have such a great team,” said Hollister. “If we keep pushing ourselves and playing our best, we’ll have a good shot at states.”
Venerating Fatima Statue, Pope Entrusts World to Mary

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

Pope Francis led the vigil, which included a recitation of the seven sorrows of Mary. In a catechetical talk, the pope said that all believers can emulate the mother of God by giving “human flesh to Jesus” when they assent freely to his call.

“Believing in Jesus means giving him our flesh with the humility and courage of Mary, so that he can continue to dwell in our midst,” the pope said. “It means giving him our hands, to caress the little ones and the poor; our feet, to go forth and meet our brothers and sisters; our arms, to hold up the weak and to work in the Lord’s vineyard; our minds, to think and act in the light of the Gospel; and especially our hearts, to love and to make choices in accordance with God’s will.”

Later that night, Pope Francis sent a video message to faithful gathered at 10 Marian shrines around the world, stressing Mary’s role as a bridge to her son.

“Mary points to Jesus,” he said. “She asks us to bear witness to Jesus, she constantly guides us to her son Jesus, because in him alone do we find salvation. He alone can change the water of our loneliness, difficulties and sin into the wine of encounter, joy and forgiveness. He alone.”

Pope Francis has signaled his strong devotion to Mary from the first morning of his pontificate, when he made a brief pilgrimage to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, Rome’s principal Marian shrine. He later asked the bishops of Portugal to dedicate his pontificate to Our Lady of Fatima.

Oct. 13 is the anniversary of the last apparition of Mary to three shepherd children at Fatima in 1917. Two of the visionaries, Blessed Jacinta Marto and her brother Blessed Francisco Marto, were beatified by Blessed John Paul II in 2000. Their cousin, Sister Lucia de Jesus dos Santos, died in 2005, and three years later Pope Benedict exempted her from the usual five-year waiting period between a death and the start of a beatification cause.

The International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima will be in the Diocese of Harrisburg Nov. 1-21. See page 11 for a listing of the parishes and locations that will host the statue.