Known as “The Old Jesuit Mission,” St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Buchanan Valley is 200 years old, and members of the historic parish highlighted the milestone with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Ronald Gainer on Oct. 15. The historic church was dedicated under the patronage of St. Ignatius, the founder of the priests of the Society of Jesus, who tended to the mission chapel and the Catholics in the valley in the 1700s. The first Mass was celebrated there on Oct. 17, 1817. See page 8 for coverage of the anniversary.

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

Shining a Light on Fatima

A boy holds a candle during an outdoor Rosary and candlelight procession at Our Lady of Fatima Mission in Jonestown on Oct. 13, commemorating Our Lady’s apparitions at Fatima a century ago. See page 9.

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

Much of Puerto Rico Still Without Power; Aid Distribution Facing Obstacles

The only way a military veteran who works for the Diocese of Caguas could get a message out from Puerto Rico to contacts elsewhere illustrates conditions in Puerto Rico more than a month after Hurricane Maria made landfall on the island Sept. 20.

“He sent the email from his car in the mountains – the only place where he can charge his phone and get some periodic reception,” reported Joe Boland, vice president of mission at Chicago-based Catholic Extension.

He got word from the veteran “that they have armed guards at gas stations. Communications and transportation are still a mess,” Boland said in an e-mail sent to Catholic News Service in Washington.

After surviving the devastation wrought by Maria, Bishop Eusebio Ramos Morales of Caguas finally reached a functioning land line at one of his parishes and the first phone call he made was to Catholic Extension.

The bishop reached Boland and described the island of 3.4 million people as being in a total state of chaos. He said the Catholic Church was paralyzed due to the inability for anyone to travel or communicate.

A week after Maria hit, Catholic Extension was able to send $325,000 in relief funds for the six dioceses of Puerto Rico, with another $25,000 going to the U.S. Virgin Islands, which were hit by hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Catholic Extension is a national fundraising organization that helps build churches and supports church ministries and other efforts in U.S. home missions. It has had a
Day of Dialogue Examines Affirmations of Unity between Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican Traditions

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

In commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the annual Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic (LARC) Day of Dialogue focused on affirmations of unity between the three Christian traditions, through examinations of two specific documents on Catholic-Lutheran dialogue.

“Approaching any kind of conversation or dialogue from a perspective of what unites us instead of what divides us offers a positive step in relationships,” noted Bishop Emeritus Donald McCoid, the keynote presenter for the Day of Dialogue, held Oct. 23 at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg.

The annual LARC Day is one of several gatherings and activities resulting from a 1993 Covenant among the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Bishop Audrey Scanlan of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania.

Lutherans and Catholics should

The Catholic Witness, published by the Archdiocese of Harrisburg, pledges that our life in Christ will

view with The Catholic Witness, poner ourselves that these Ecumenical Imperatives were lifted up by Pope Francis and Bishop Munib Younan, President of the Lutheran World Federation, on Oct. 31 of last year in signing a joint statement in which Catholics and Lutherans pledged to pursue their dialogue in order to remove the remaining obstacles that hinder them from reaching full unity. The 2015 Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry and Eucharist, a document which summarizes 50 years of Catholic-Lutheran dialogue as the churches continue to work toward full Christian unity, was also examined during the LARC Day of Dialogue.

Bishop McCoid played a key role in preparing that document, created by a joint task force of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The document highlights 32 points of consensus between the Catholic and Lutheran churches in the areas of church ministry and the Eucharist.

- Catholics and Lutherans agree that the church on earth has been assembled by the one God.
- Catholics and Lutherans affirm that ordained ministry is of divine origin and necessary for the being of the church.
- Catholics and Lutherans agree that Ecumenicar Communion is a pledge that our life in Christ will be eternal, our bodies will rise, and the present world is destined for transformation.

Area bishops lead a panel discussion. From left are Bishop Ronald Gainer of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg; Bishop James Dunlop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Bishop Barbara Collins of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and Bishop Audrey Scanlan of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania.

Bishop Emeritus Donald McCoid, Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from 2007-2016, examined the five Ecumenical Imperatives in the 2013 document, “From Conflict to Communion,” authored by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran-Catholic Commission regarding the common commemoration of the Reformation:

- Catholics and Lutherans should always begin from the perspective of unity and not from the point of view of division in order to strengthen what is held in common especially as we seek to brush up on Church history, and to participate in friendly dialogue and collaboration at the parish level.
- Lutherans and Catholics must let themselves be transformed by the encounter with the other and by the mutual witness of faith.
- Catholics and Lutherans should accept each other as visible unity, to elaborate together the other and by the mutual witness let themselves be more easily seen and experienced.

October 31, 2017, marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s posting of the 95 Theses, which sparked the Protestant Reformation. One question that I’ve gotten recently is, “Why should Catholics be interested in this anniversary?”

Well, the Reformation had a profound effect on Christian civilization and was a pivotal time in Christian history. Therefore, the events surrounding the Reformation and important matters of study for any student of Western culture. They are especially important for any Catholic who wishes to understand the Church’s history.

2017 also marks 50 years of Lutheran-Catholic dialogue; over the past several decades, we have come to greater understanding and agreement with Christians of the Lutheran tradition.

With that in mind, in 2013 the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Lutheran Federation jointly published a document entitled “From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017,” which gave a vision for observing this landmark anniversary. It stated that, “In 2017, Catholic and Lutheran Christians will most fittingly look back on events that occurred 500 years earlier by putting the gospel of Jesus Christ at the center.”

Whereas past centenaries of the Reformation have been marked by mutual polemics, this anniversary calls both Catholics and Lutherans to take an honest look at history, to meet in charitable dialogue, and to work together to move from Conflict to Communion.

As Director for the Diocesan Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, I invite you to read the “Joint Declaration to Communion,” to brush up on Church history, and to participate in friendly dialogue about the Reformation. Myself, I’m an Anglican, Luther and discussing the Reformation with various Lutherans, and it’s been intriguing.

In the Diocese of Harrisburg, there are many opportunities for dialogue. We sponsor monthly Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic (LARC) Dialogue Lunches, an annual LARC Vespers, and an annual LARC Day of Dialogue, in addition to the many wonderful avenues for dialogue and collaboration at the parish level. You might also read the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,” published by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation stating that the churches share “a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ,” resolving the 500-year-old conflict over the nature of justification which was at the root of the Reformation.

The World Methodist Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches have also released this document. On Oct. 31 of this year, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council and the Reformed communion will be present with the Archbishop of Canterbury to affirm the joint declaration, Bishop McCoid pointed out.

“We are at a moment where we’ve never been regarding Christian unity,” Bishop McCoid said. “I think that the next steps are certainly theological, which will look at the continued understanding of who we are as the baptized children of God, and at the opportunities that come with our understanding of what we should be doing together.”

Links to the Documents Online

Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification:

From Conflict to Communion:
https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-conflict-communion-basis-lutheran-catholic-commemoration-reformation-2017

Declaration on The Way:

CHRIS HEISER, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS
By Jen Rod

The Catholic Witness

Father Paul Therez, a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg for the past 8 years, died Oct. 21 from pancreatic cancer. He was 69 years old.

The funeral Mass was celebrated at St. John the Baptist Church in New Freedom on Oct. 26. Burial was in the parish cemetery.

Father Luis Rodriguez, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Chambersburg, where Father Therez served as parochial vicar from 2012 until June of this year, remembers the late priest for his joyous demeanor.

“He smiled was never far behind his graying hair,” Father Rodriguez told The Catholic Witness. “He would always give you a grin and raise his eyebrows and make you smile.”

Born July 22, 1948, in New York City, he attended St. Sebastian and St. Cecilia schools and Rice High School.

He spent 20 years serving in the U.S. military.

He enlisted in the Navy, where he served as an aviation electronics technician aboard the aircraft carriers USS Coral Vincent and USS Ranger. He retired from the military in 1967, and after more than 30 years of service in that branch of the armed forces, he enlisted in the Navy, where he served as an aviation electronics technician aboard the aircraft carriers USS Coral Vincent and USS Ranger. He retired from the military in 1991.

He then moved to Arizona to care for his ailing parents, and attended Arizona State University. It was during this time that he discerned a vocation to the priesthood.

He applied to become a seminarian for the Diocese of Phoenix but was turned down because of his age. He was 54 at the time. After his parents died, he moved to Maryland to be near family and began attending St. John the Baptist Parish in New Freedom. From there, he applied to be a seminarian for the Diocese of Harrisburg, and was assigned to study at Blessed John XXIII National Seminary in Massachusetts. As a deacon, he served at St. John the Baptist Parish in Elysburg.

Father Therez was ordained at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg on June 6, 2009, by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar at St. John the Baptist Parish in Lancaster from 2009-2012. Father Therez then served as parochial vicar at Corpus Christi Parish in Chambersburg from 2012-2017. He retired to St. John the Baptist Parish in New Freedom in June of this year.

“Father Paul was a very well-rounded man,” Father Rodriguez said, noting that “he lived his life in the military, his care for his parents and life as a member of the laity gave him a well-rounded outlook about people. He could talk to anyone. He was a man for all people, and that made him a great listener.”

“He offered a sense of the familial,” Father Rodriguez said. “He offered up his pain throughout his illness, in union with Christ on the Cross,” Father Rodriguez observed.

“In every prayer, in every Confession and visiting the homebound were among his greatest joys as a priest.”

Father Therez was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2014. Father Rodriguez remembers the day that Father Therez revealed his diagnosis.

“I delivered the bad news to Father Paul, and I don’t know if I was the one who delivered the news to him or if he wanted any from us!” Father Rodriguez said.

“Father Paul was a very well-rounded man, and I feel that revealed what our friendship would be as two brother priests,” he said. “We both cried together. Pancreatic cancer is such a quick death. Freedom sentence of several months, but Father Paul survived and battled for two and a half years.”

“As a friend of people who have had cancer, one thing I have learned from them is that you must live your present moment. There is plenty of life to live today,” Father Rodriguez remarked. “That’s what I would tell Father Paul, and he fully embraced that and enjoyed every moment.”

Father Therez spent time walking the parish grounds praying the Rosary, and could be found in prayer on the rectory porch in the mornings and evenings.

He continued to attend diocesan events in his illness. “He enjoyed every much gathering with his fellow priests at 40 Hours, always attended ordinands, and continued the monthly dinner that the priests of the Franklin Deanery would gather for,” Father Rodriguez said.

“He offered up his pain throughout his illness, in union with Christ on the Cross,” Father Rodriguez said. “I asked him if he was in pain, and he shook his head yes. I asked him if he wanted any medication for the pain, and he said no. In that, I saw Christ on the Cross.”

Letters of condolence can be sent to Father Therez’s sister, Antonette Therez, 113 Ruffin Rd., Summerville, S.C., 29486-1919.

Correction

Recognition of awardees at the annual Education Conference that appeared in the Sept. 29, 2017, edition of The Catholic Witness incorrectly spelled Tom Krauthiem’s name. Mr. Krauthiem was honored for 20 years of service on the maintenance staff at St. Joseph School in Mechanicsburg.
Idols around Us
By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC
Special to The Witness

Many, many years ago, when I was in sixth grade, I experienced my first fad. Every classroom of mine seemed to be bonkers about Duncan yo-yos. Remember them? Yes, I know, if you are near my age, you know we all had them! We spent most of our recess learning tricks and how to act cool as we “walked the dog.” went “around the world” and “skinned the cat.” (Whispers: These are all yo-yo tricks.) I found myself living and breathing yo-yos. I even went to bed with a string of one still wrapped around my finger!

Recently, grade schoolers have met up with similar fads. Remember Silly Bandz? Now there are Fidget Spinners. Fads seem to spring up and die overnight. I often wonder that our desire to jump on board with these fads proves how restless our hearts actually are. Or, is this a meeting a deeper hunger to fill the ache in our being for something “other” than ourselves?

I believe that we have been created to hunger and thirst for the one and only thing that can completely and totally fulfill us: God. Over and over, again and again, in the Old Testament we read about the Israelites worshiping false gods. They were indeed guilty of idolatry and they knew it! Often we “moderns,” I think, associate the sin of idolatry with an act which only the uneducated, ancient people performed.

Recently, I came across a book by Elizabeth Scalia called, “Strange Gods: Unmasking the Idols in Everyday Life.” In this, she writes: “If God created humankind in his image, we humans tend to create gods in our own image – or perhaps more correctly, we humans create god so reflective and shiny, they keep us looking at ourselves” (pg. 7). I know that her words made me reflect about the human “need” to be self-absorbed. This reflection also made me realize that my next series of articles would be on modern idolatry.

So, where to start? Look to an expert: Bishop Robert Barron! He has a wonderful video on Idolatry on YouTube. He explains that the first commandment, “I am the Lord thy god; thou shall not have strange gods before me,” is the foundation of not only how we treat God but how that flows into how we treat other people. Let me explain.

Who we are flows from how we value God. If we value wealth, power, pleasure and honor more than we value God, this becomes what we worship. We have been made for worship. In fact, St. Thomas Aquinas described our being as a temple of the Holy Spirit! Bishop Barron continues, “Everything you need to know about someone is to ask that person, ‘Who do you worship?’”

When for whom one worships is the greatest thing that person holds sacred or need to know about someone is to ask that person, ‘Who do you worship?’”

There is a second commandment, “I am the Lord thy God; thou shall not make any graven images,” which parallels the first commandment. A graven image is the foundation of not only how we treat God but how that flows into how we treat other people.

Think about it this way: In a homily I recently heard, a priest said that as Americans we hold three things most sacred; God, family and job. In our recent current society, many people truly believe that THE most important thing is job, then family and lastly God. This is a backwards way of approaching life. It will never give us lasting peace and happiness, but rather a society that is completely interested in getting more and more.

So, you see, we “moderns” do have idols all around us! Some have taken up residence within the temple of our being. The important thing is to not only identify them, but also be willing to throw them out!

It contains ups and downs. As we “walk our dogs” and “travel around the world,” it is key to have not only our eyes but also our hearts fixed on the string that is attached to God, who loves us more than we can imagine!

(https://youtube.com/WEizhUCyoQ).
(Leader of Christian Charity, Sister Geralyn Schmidt, is the Wide Area Network Coordinator at the Diocese of Harrisburg and the Director of Formation for Wives in the Diaconate Program. An educator for 30 years, she is responsible for Professional Development Programs for every age learner. Through her presentations, she challenges her audiences to be the individual God has called them to be.)

JOIN
ABBY
JOHNSON
November 14, 2017

What does it mean to be pro-ALL life? Is it enough to fight for the inherent dignity of one segment of society but not another? Join us as we explore this question with Abby Johnson here in Lancaster!

Abby Johnson is the former director of one of the most successful Planned Parenthood Clinics in Texas and the founder of And Then There Were None, a non-profit ministry that provides financial, emotional and spiritual support for clinic workers who decide to leave the abortion industry.

Abby will speak about the consistent life ethic: how being pro-life begins in the womb, but extends beyond to our homeless brothers and sisters on the streets.

Beginning Experience Weekend for Those Suffering the Loss of a Spouse

The ecumenical Beginning Experience weekends are an approved program designed for those suffering the loss of a spouse through death, divorce, or separation. Hundreds of persons have been helped to move towards successful, productive, happy lives by attending one of these weekends.

The weekend is led by persons who have lost a spouse through death or divorce and are trained in facilitating a weekend. Each Beginning Experience Team is certified by the International Beginning Experience Organization.

The following is a testimonial of a person who attended the Beginning Experience Weekend:

“I can tell you that my encounter with the Beginning Experience weekend has brought me greater peace and given me an extended family of lifelong friends who I quickly grew to love and lean on. If you or someone you know is suffering the isolation and pain that can accompany the loss of a spouse or marriage, I encourage you to seriously consider attending the Beginning Experience weekend.”

Beginning Experience is your Church at work to provide help, healing and spiritual restoration. Check the Harrisburg Diocesan Web site: http://www. hbgdiocese.org/ and go to “marriage and family” or visit www.beginningexperience.org. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Harrisburg Beginning Experience Team members, Julie, at 717-379-0800 or Eva, at 717-495-9586.

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Diocese of Harrisburg Yearly Subscription Program
To report suspected abuse of a minor, call the toll free PA Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-333-7103.

Diocese of Harrisburg Youth Protection Program
To report suspected abuse of a minor by a Church official, employee or volunteer, also please call the diocesan toll free hotline: 1-800-626-1608.
Death Penalty: Catholic Q & A

For people committed to upholding the sanctity of human life, there is reason to respect and protect innocent human life is clear. For some, however, issues like the death penalty may seem less clear.

Although nothing can substitute for thorough catechesis, the following may be helpful as a starting point for considering the death penalty within the context of respect for God's gift of human life.

Who Are We?

The essence of our identity and worth as human beings, the source of our dignity, is that we are loved by God and made in his image and likeness. God's love doesn't change; even sin cannot diminish God's love for each person. As we are reminded in Sacred Scripture, “Can a mother forget her infant?... Even should she forget, I will never forget you” (Isaiah 49:15).

What is the Purpose of Punishment?

Although “legitimate public authority has the right and the duty to inflict punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense,” it is not for the sake of vengeance. The Catechism of the Catholic Church goes on to say, “in addition to defending public order and protecting people’s safety, [punishment] has a medicinal purpose as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party.”

Aren’t Some Crimes so Evil the Offender Deserves to Die?

Consider how God responded when Cain took the life of his brother, Abel. God punished Cain greatly, but also mercifully spared and protected his life by marking him “so that no one would kill him at sight” (Genesis 4:15). No sin is a barrier to God’s immense and merciful love, and nothing diminishes how much God cherishes each person and his or her life. As God’s people, we are called to follow his example, drawing from the grace of Christ’s Redemption.

Didn’t the Old Testament Law Allow the Punishment of Death?

For Israelites in the Old Testament, legal punishment of personal injury did allow “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (Exodus 21:23-24). However, when Jesus came, he fulfilled the execution of the offender is an absolute understanding of both justice and mercy: “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (John 13:34).

We see the fulfilled law every time we participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In justice, after confessing our sins, we receive the correction of the guilty party. “In justice, after confessing our sins, we receive the correction of the guilty party.”

What is the Position of the United States Bishops on the Death Penalty?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has long opposed the use of the death penalty, recognizing that Catholic teaching affirms the authority of a government in rare (if practically nonexistent) cases to execute criminals, the bishops have said that in the United States, there are other, non-lethal means of defense against unjust aggressors that should be used instead.

In 2015, the tenth anniversary year of the bishops’ Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty, a letter reaffirming the bishops’ opposition to the death penalty offered a reflection on our justice system: “Our faith tradition offers a unique perspective on crime and punishment, one grounded in mercy and healing, not punishment for its own sake. No matter how heinous the crime, if society can protect itself without ending a human life, it should do so. Today, we have this capability.”

Is Discussion of the Death Penalty a Catholic, Pro-Life Matter?

Earlier in 2015, the chairmen of the bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities and Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development responded to a Supreme Court decision related to the death penalty: “We bishops continue to say, we cannot teach killing is wrong by killing.” Institutionnalized practices of violence against anyone erode reverence for the sanctity of every human life.

Christ came to liberate us from the cycle of violence by showing us how to love and be merciful. As reflected in his life and teaching, as well as in sacred lives throughout history, “the antidote to violence is love, not more violence.”

As the culture of death threatens to electively select who does and who does not deserve life, we must uphold that all human life has invaluable dignity and worth.

When we feel that sin and evil are overwhelming, we must not be afraid. Jesus Christ has already conquered sin and death, and we know that his is the ultimate victory. Let us work to defend the dignity of all human life, made in the image and likeness of God, through prayer, education, and advocacy. Be not afraid; God is with us.

(Endnotes)

1 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed., 2266.
2 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2267.
3 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2267, citing John Paul II, Evangelium vitae 56.
7 Catechism of the Catholic Church, second edition © 2000 LEV/USCCB. Used with permission. Except from Evangelium vitae © 1995, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City. Used with permission. All rights reserved. Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2017, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.
8 Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
9 Toll-free order number: (866) 582-0943 | FREE Downloads: www.usccb.org/respectlife
10 People of Life @usccbprolife @ProjectRachel
11 Reprinted [Excerpted] from Respect Life Program, copyright © 2017, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.

October is Respect Life Month

Rachel’s Vineyard Weekend Retreat for Healing after Abortion

Rachel’s Vineyard weekends are for healing after an abortion. Weekend retreats are offered throughout the year in locations across the United States and Canada, with additional sites around the world. Rachel’s Vineyard is a ministry of Priests for Life. In the Diocese of Harrisburg, a retreat will be offered Dec. 1-3.

The program is an opportunity to examine your abortion experience, identify the ways that the loss has impacted you in the past and present, and helps to acknowledge any unresolved feelings that many individuals struggle with after abortion. Because of the emotional numbness and secrecy that often surrounds an abortion experience, conflicting emotions both during and after the event may remain unsolved. These buried feelings can surface later and may be symptoms of post abortion trauma.

Married couples, mothers, fathers, grandparents and siblings of aborted children, as well as persons who have been involved in the abortion industry have come to Rachel’s Vineyard in search of peace and inner healing. The weekend is a lot of work but yields a fruitful harvest for all who are willing to labor there.

Contact Becky Biter at 717-788-4959 for information and registration.
Prayer for the Conversion of Hearts Will Change the World, Keynoter Tells Women’s Conference

By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

Pray for the conversion of hearts – as the Blessed Mother instructed at Fatima – and the world will change.

That’s the message that author and award-winning journalist Susan Brinkmann told some 900 attendees at the diocese’s third annual Women’s Conference.

Ms. Brinkmann’s message was not only one of hopefulness, but also one of experience. Once a self-described “birth control pill-popping pro-choice feminist,” her heart was converted to the Church and to the Eucharist.

Taking the stage at Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg Oct. 14 – one day after the 100th anniversary of Our Lady’s final appearance to the shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal – Ms. Brinkmann presented her keynote: “The Message of Fatima for Today’s Woman.”

Pointing to Mary’s messages of sacrifice, reparation, conversion and the acceptance of suffering, Ms. Brinkmann reiterated the words of St. John Paul II, who said that the message of Fatima is more urgent today than it was in 1917.

“That isn’t hard to believe, when you look around at the battlefield of our world right now. The institution of marriage and the family, and the national morality in general is in shambles,” she said, [and] “if there was ever a time that we needed Mary, it’s now.”

“Fatima gives us direction. It tells us where to go to get help and have hope, and that is to Mary and the Blessed Sacrament,” said Ms. Brinkmann, staff journalist for Women of Grace and frequent guest on EWTN, delivers her keynote address, ‘The Message of Fatima for Today’s Woman,’ during the diocese’s third annual Women’s Conference.

A struggling author for 14 years, she turned to New Age practices and the so-called “Prosperity Gospel,” which portends that financial and physical wellbeing are always God’s will for people, and that they can receive it through increasing faithfulness.

Increasingly frustrated by the lack of prosperity, Ms. Brinkmann soon wondered where that teaching could be found in the Bible. As she turned the pages, she came across one of the Psalms of David: “You are my defender. You are my strength. You are my helper. You are my hiding place.”

“I remember thinking, ‘I could use somebody like that,’” Ms. Brinkmann said. “Despite who I was at that time, I felt inexplicably drawn to that God, who I called ‘David’s God.’”

She began to read the Bible every night, and soon started attending Mass every Sunday.

She read Mutileris Dignum, St. John Paul II’s 1988 Apostolic Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women. It celebrated the feminine genius, the complementarity of men and women, and Mary as the prototype of the human race.

“Never had I heard women spoken about in such exulted terms,” Ms. Brinkmann remarked.

“I finished that document, and I sobbed,” she said. “Deep down inside, I was ashamed from the promiscuity I was engaging in, under the guise of liberation and empowerment. Until that moment, I was carrying the burden of that shame all alone, [but] for the first time, someone was telling me that this deeply hidden shame wasn’t all my fault. That was when I really started to love David’s God.”

She read Humane Vitae, Pope Paul VI’s 1968 Encyclical on Human Life.

“I discovered I deserved something more in life. My beloved feminism crumbled,” Ms. Brinkmann said. She found God’s mercy in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

“If God’s grace could get me that far in life, it can certainly help us live the message of Fatima,” Ms. Brinkmann said.

The first sacrifice Mary asked of the three shepherd children was to pray the Rosary every day for peace in the world.

“In a world where terrorist attacks are occurring every other month, abortion providers are killing millions of unborn babies and selling their baby parts, Christians are being murdered and being driven out of their homelands,” Ms. Brinkmann asked, “can the Rosary still be the answer? Yes!”

The Blessed Mother also asked for reparation for the sins which offend God.

“We take it upon ourselves to make up for the offenses that are made to our God,” Ms. Brinkmann explained. “Reparation is very powerful, especially when it’s combined with prayer. And it can be little things. For example, whenever you hear someone taking the Lord’s name in vain, say in your heart, ‘I’m sorry, Jesus.’”

The message of Fatima also calls us to pray for the conversion of sinners.

“I was finally able to receive the Eucharist when I returned to the Church, and I believe it’s because someone out there was praying for me,” Ms. Brinkmann said. “I believe it was Our Lady and all the people who follow the message of Fatima and the call to pray for the conversion of sinners.

“Praying for the conversion of hearts is the most efficient way to pray. It will get rid of all the ills of mankind,” she told the crowd.

“A converted heart doesn’t commit abortion. It doesn’t engage in promiscuity. It doesn’t lie or cheat or steal. A converted heart isn’t dishonest, greedy, selfish, lustful, angry. It doesn’t seek revenge. It doesn’t hold grudges. It doesn’t brag,” Ms. Brinkmann said. “If you pray for the conversion of hearts, there goes abortion, violence, drug addiction, adultery, domestic abuse.

“Say one Hail Mary a day for the conversion of hearts, and watch how this world changes,” she challenged.
High School Athletes Gather with Bishop for Rosary Rally

Now in its third year, the Rosary Rally for High School Athletes drew some 300 student-athletes, coaches and parents to Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg Oct. 23, as Bishop Ronald Gainer led participants in praying the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. The rally is an activity of Sports Leader, a Catholic, virtue-grounded organization designed to help coaches and athletes integrate the pillars of virtue, mentoring, ceremony and Catholic identity into their athletic endeavors. For information on the formation program, visit www.sportsleader.org.

Bishop Dedicates Third Phase of Renovations at Delone

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

The past six years at Delone Catholic High School in McSherrystown have witnessed significant renovations to the school, in conjunction with its 75th anniversary and the Diamond Decade Initiative, a multiple-phase, $6.8 million capital campaign designed to renovate the entire facility.

Since 2011, renovations have been made to the 1963 Math and Science Wing, and to the 1940 Wing, resulting in fully equipped math and science classrooms, improved lighting, safety features and accessibility.

On Oct. 19, following an Open House, Bishop Ronald Gainer dedicated the third phase of the project with the renovated 1955 Wing, which provides similar upgrades to the English, Foreign Language, Technology, Religion and Fine Arts classrooms, a sound-proof band room, modern library, and renovations to the Sheppard Gym lobby and restrooms, cafeteria and kitchen.

Expressing his gratitude for those who donated to the Diamond Decade Initiative, principal Richard LaRocca shared in remarks at the dedication ceremony:

“We implore the Holy Spirit to enkindle in us the fire of his love, to continue to inspire all those who pass through Delone Catholic’s doors and to provide for the needs of our students, our alumna, their families and all our benefactors who support the staff and community of DCHS to graduate ‘Doers of the Word.’”

(Learn more about Delone Catholic High School by visiting www.delonecatholic.org.)
St. Ignatius Church in Buchanan Valley Celebrates 200 Years of the Holy Eucharist

Known as “The Old Jesuit Mission,” St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Buchanan Valley is 200 years old this month, and members of the historic parish have been celebrating the bicentennial with a focus on the Eucharist.

“Our theme this year is ‘Celebrating 200 years of the Holy Eucharist’ – that’s what our presence here is all about,” Father Dominic DiBiccaro, pastor, told The Catholic Witness.

Commemoration of the bicentennial has been a yearlong celebration for the historic parish, with such events as the undertaking of a photo directory, bicentennial T-shirts, the showing of the movie “St. Ignatius Loyola: Soldier, Sinner and Saint” at Gettysburg Middle School, and the restoration of the church’s 1940s organ, followed by a recital held on the Feast of St. Ignatius.

The commemoration culminated with the celebration of Mass by Bishop Ronald Gainer on Oct. 15 to mark the 200th anniversary of the Old Jesuit Mission.

The historic church was dedicated under the patronage of St. Ignatius, the founder of the priests of the Society of Jesus, who tended to the mission chapel and the Catholics in the valley in the 1700s. The Jesuits from Conewago had established the mission on the trail between Conewago and Chambersburg, celebrating Masses in the farmhouse of a pioneer family.

By the early 1800s, the Jesuits planned a church for the growing community in Buchanan Valley, and local families aided in its construction. The cornerstone was laid on Oct. 10, 1816, and the first Mass was celebrated there on Oct. 17, 1817. The Jesuits tended to the mission until 1858. In 1911, Bishop John Shanahan established St. Ignatius as a parish.

The scenic Buchanan Valley is rich with history, from the service of the Jesuits of Conewago to the final resting place of veterans from the Civil War and the War of 1812. It is also the birthplace of Mary Jemison, a local girl who, at age 16, was kidnapped during the French and Indian War in 1758, adopted by a Seneca Indian tribe and spent her entire adult life as a “White Squaw,” as she came to be known. A statue of her stands on the parish grounds.

St. Ignatius Parish, home to 275 families, is interwoven into the valley’s life and history, too. Its most notable event is the annual Buchanan Valley Picnic, held every August, which has drawn attendance and support of the local community for more than 130 years.

Parish outreach includes the “That Man is You!” program, a Bible study, a bereavement support group, and bringing Holy Communion to the homebound.

Members of the parish are also active in service to the community in many ways, preparing and serving a monthly meal at the Gettysburg Soup kitchen, and offering financial support to local food programs. The Knights of Columbus council leads an ongoing food collection, raises funds for ARC and the Tender Care Pregnancy Center, and conducts an annual winter coat drive.

These acts of service illustrate what St. Ignatius Parish is all about, Father DiBiccaro noted.

“I want parishioners to take the Holy Eucharist as the source, summit and center of our faith out into what we’ve been doing here in Buchanan Valley for 200 years,” he said.
Fatima Mission Marks Anniversary of Apparitions

Members of the faithful gathered at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Jonestown on Oct. 13 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Blessed Mother’s final appearance to the three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal. The commemoration was highlighted by the recitation of the Rosary and an outdoor candlelight procession, followed by the celebration of Holy Mass by Bishop Ronald Gainer. Beginning this past May, Our Lady of Fatima Mission marked Our Lady’s six appearances with the recitation of the Rosary and the celebration of Mass. The mission also welcomed individuals and groups who made pilgrimages there to mark the anniversary.

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

Members of Our Lady of Fatima Mission in Jonestown gather at the foot of the statues replicating the Blessed Mother’s apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, 100 years ago.

Luminaries light the way during the procession on the church grounds.

As evening descends, candles light the scene as Alice Ferrara prays the Rosary.


Above, left: Shielded from the rain, Mr. and Mrs. Le Diep join in the recitation of the Rosary.

Left: Members of Our Lady of Fatima Mission process on the church grounds with candles.
Young Adults ‘Get Connected,’ Reinforce Belonging to Local Church

By Chris Lilik
Special to The Witness

A swanky downtown Harrisburg atmosphere, mouthwatering buffet, delicious drinks, great music, entertaining games and more than $3,000 in door prizes and gift baskets donated by local businesses – throw in a crowd of friendly, energetic young Catholics and you have one heck of a party.

More than 130 young adults, priests and Theology on Tap speakers gathered together for an evening of fun, new friendships, and good times at this year’s “Get Connected” event on Oct. 7. The annual evening was preceded by a well-attended Vigil Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral in Harrisburg, celebrated by Father Joshua Brommer, before a lively social at the upscale Bridge’s Social Club two blocks away.

The event was sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, and featured attendees from mostly the greater Harrisburg, York and Lancaster areas, with some traveling as far as Schuylkill County and the Philadelphia suburbs to attend.

“In order to celebrate our growing young adult community – and keep the momentum going – we hosted this special diocesan-wide event,” said Rob Williams, Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. “I believe that a gathering of people in their 20’s and 30’s from throughout our diocese reinforces a sense of belonging to the larger Church.”

The event was organized by members of Harrisburg, Lancaster, and York Theology on Tap chapters. A number of local businesses donated free items for the event, and more than $2,000 was donated by individuals and local Knights of Columbus chapters to allow Get Connected to provide a full buffet.

While the crowd was mostly comprised of young Catholics, there was a sizable number of non-Catholics who came out to support the cause and make new friends. “Great event,” said Jennifer Dructor, who attends West Shore Free Church. “It was refreshing to connect with other believers in a more relaxed setting!”

“I immensely enjoyed the opportunity to connect with fellow Catholics and fellow Christians,” remarked Michelle Christ, a Lancaster Theology on Tap Core Team Member. “Friends of faith are the cornerstone to a thriving social network.”

“The Catholic social brought all walks of life to share in one common goal: the celebration of Christian influence on young adults,” added AJ Lazar, a young adult who attends St. Joan of Arc Parish in Hershey.

“I was very pleased to see the strong response among young adults to this opportunity to ‘Get Connected,’” said Mr. Williams. “It is our sincere hope and prayer that that everything that we do within young adult ministry connects young adults with Jesus Christ, His Church, and their peers. May these encounters inspire young adults to be strong and faithful Christian witnesses.”

Becky Davis, pastoral associate at St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Mechanicsburg, was the emcee for the event, and remarked that “Joy is the best word I have to describe the night. I am passionate about welcoming others into a dynamic Catholic community and I think we accomplished that goal. It was a huge blessing to be an emcee, where I could look out over the crowd and see so many talking, laughing, meeting old and new friends, and having a good time. It gives me great hope for the future of the Church in the Diocese of Harrisburg.”

(Chris Lilik is a member of Harrisburg Theology on Tap.)

GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS (20s/30s):

Regardless of where you are in your faith, there are other young people just like you who attend each of these three local Theology on Tap groups. Theology on Tap is a monthly gathering of young adults in a bar to hear a religious speaker. Whether you enjoy Mass and brunch and Bible study, or just social events like game nights, laser tag, or Halloween parties, you are guaranteed to make many new friends and hear about tons of local events.

Harrisburg Theology on Tap
Website: TOTHarrisburg.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/HarrisburgTOT/
Monthly event location: Capital Gastropub, 310 N 2nd St., Harrisburg, PA 17101

Lancaster Theology on Tap
Website: TOTLancaster.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TOTLancaster/
Monthly event locations: Annie Bailey’s, 28 East King Street, Lancaster, PA 17602; The First Post, 3691 E Market St, York, PA 17402

York Theology on Tap
Website: https://www.facebook.com/YorkTheology/
Monthly event locations: The First Post, 3691 E Market St, York, PA 17402

World Youth Day Panama, 2019
A pilgrimage for post high school young adults
Panama City, January 21-28, 2019
nwilliams@hbgdiocese.org 717-657-4804, ext. 328

Young Adult Retreat
for those in their 20s and 30s, married or single
May 11-12, 2018 in Stevens, PA
nwilliams@hbgdiocese.org 717-657-4804, ext. 328

For more information about participating in or starting a parish young adult ministry contact Rob Williams
nwilliams@hbgdiocese.org 717-657-4804, ext. 328
Long-Term Recovery Ahead for California Communities Hit Hard by Wildfires

Catholic News Service

The Diocese of Santa Rosa “has been hit hard” and “is in an ongoing state of uncertainty” because of Northern California wildfires that began the night of Oct. 8, said Bishop Robert F. Vasa.

Fanned by warm winds, they devastated a vast swath of North California’s wine country and forced 20,000 to evacuate. The fires left at least 31 people dead, and hundreds of others were missing. News reports said that 21 fires spanned 300 square miles.

“Santa Rosa is extremely smoky with the sun a mere red ball,” the bishop said in a statement. He also noted that for the many hundreds who have lost their homes, “the sense of great helplessness is palpable.”

A CNN report noted how fast-moving the fires are, saying they “torched 20,000 acres in 12 hours.” Local civic authorities said factors that contributed to the rapid spread of the flames included dry conditions, high-speed winds and lots of vegetation.

In an Oct. 13 telegram to two California archbishops, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, conveyed the pontiff sent his blessing to all lives of those still missing. “The cardinal loved ones and residents “who fear for the terror, especially those mourning the loss of his prayers” for all affected by the disaster.

In a statement Oct. 12, the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ domestic policy committee called for prayer for all impacted by the fires. “Today we ask for the intercession of Almighty God as wildfires rage in Northern California,” said Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, quoting from Verse 10, from Isaiah 41. “Do not fear. I am with you; do not be anxious. I am your God.”

As brave men and women respond to these disasters, battling the fires and helping people to safety, we call upon God for improved weather, for people to safety, we call upon God for improved weather, for the blessing of rain and favorable winds, to assist them," the bishop said. “We pray that those who are missing or are still in harm’s way will be found and protected. May God grant eternal rest to those who have died, and bring them into glory with him forever.”

He also prayed “for generosity, care, and concern from neighbors and surrounding communities for those who are grieving and displaced.”

Bishop Dewane acknowledged that the natural disasters and other calamities the nation has endured as of late have left many feeling weary, but “we know that God cannot be outdone in generosity and charity.” He prayed God would provide all “with new wellsprings of love” to help those “hurting so deeply today.”

In Santa Rosa, Bishop Vasa reported that most of the parishes in the diocese were fine but that a Catholic high school and elementary school that shared a campus suffered serious damage.

The diocesan chancery also was “in the heart of a severely fire-damaged part of the city but fortunately was entirely spared,” Bishop Vasa said in his statement, but it was being used as an evacuation center and would remain closed to diocesan staff “for the unforeseeable future,” the bishop said.

“So I am currently working from my car and trying to visit a few of the evacuation centers,” the bishop said.

“In the city, they estimate that 1,500 homes and businesses have been lost,” he continued. “I have met numerous folks who are in shelters and who have no home to which to return. The sense of great helplessness is palpable.”

“That helplessness extends to the caregivers who know that short-term solutions are necessary but also severely inadequate to meet the long-term needs.”

The six-county Diocese of Santa Rosa includes four of the counties hit hard by the fires — Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino counties. Bishop Vasa called on all Catholics of the diocese to help their brothers and sisters who “have been severely impacted by the devastating fires and are in immediate need of your prayers. Please do not hesitate to offer your help though ongoing prayer, donations, and emotional support.”

“You may even be inspired to offer your home to a family who has lost everything. Simply imagine yourself and your family going through what many are experiencing now in reality, and act accordingly,” he advised.

Bishop Vasa said he would try to send occasional updates to the people of the diocese. “I appreciate the outpouring of concern and especially prayers. When people ask how they can help, I answer that I really do not know. I do know that prayers are the greatest source of solace and help.”

“My heart and prayers go out to all this displaced by the fire, especially those who have lost their homes,” he said. “I am extremely grateful to all the caregivers who have reached out so generously to your brothers and sisters in need.”

He added: “We all need to recognize that this is a long-term recovery and we are not yet done with the active fires. There is always need for ardent, consistent and devout prayers. I know that we can all count on you for this as well.”

Puerto Rico

Continued from 1
decades-long relationship with Puerto Rico. It first assisted the Archdiocese of San Juan with a church-building project in 1908. Other agencies that have provided aid include Catholic Charities USA, which sent $1 million in emergency aid to Caritas Puerto Rico, and the Knights of Columbus, which has sent $100,000 in aid.

As of Oct. 10, just 16 percent of electric service had been restored. At an Oct. 6 news conference, Gov. Ricardo A. Rossello told reporters officials expected to have 25 percent of the electrical system restored “within the next month.” About 67 percent of cellphone towers remained down.

Most Puerto Ricans are still struggling to get basic necessities — food, water, fuel, medicine, currency — and several relief organizations continue to face obstacles getting aid to those who need it most because of fuel shortages, and a majority of the work is in ruins. The New York Times reported that only 392 miles of the 5,073 miles of the island’s roads are open. At least 43 people have died as a result of the hurricane; officials said that number could rise as communication systems improve.

Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez Nieves of San Juan announced at a news conference Oct. 10 that the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico has already helped at least 50,000 affected by the Hurricane Maria with food and clothes.

A few days after the hurricane hit, Archbishop Gonzalez’s staff sent an e-mail to Catholic Extension at his request with a subject line that said: “WE WILL RISE!” It asked for help to “lift our diocesan structure and [support] the parishes with the biggest damage.” Catholic Extension said it has been “extraordinarily difficult for the Puerto Rican bishops and diocesan leaders to communicate with us, because provisional cell phone towers are only located in certain places and only function during certain hours. It is even hard for them to communicate with one another because many roads are still blocked or ripped up due to mudslides, and gasoline is nearly impossible to procure.”

As a result, it has been difficult for dioceses to assess the extent of damage to church property. Beyond the obstacles to getting around to assess property damage in Puerto Rico’s six dioceses has been the challenge of getting the Catholic Church on the island “up and running again without having access of income for the foreseeable future — paying staff, keeping the lights on, and maintaining operations,” as well as “dealing with the humanitarian crisis” that is ongoing in terms of “feeding and sheltering people.”

Catholic Extension said it will help with the rebuilding and repurposing of churches destroyed or damaged by Hurricane Maria, but, the statement said, that “will be a priority down the road.” The organization is accepting donations at www.catholicextension.org/give/hurricane-support, with the amount to be matched dollar by dollar by some of Catholic Extension’s long-term donors.

Health care workers continue to sound the alarm about dire conditions and countless numbers of residents they say are still in desperate need of assistance.

Brock Long, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has叹 that “an estimated 16,000 federal and military assets are on the ground in Puerto Rico and about 350,000 Puerto Ricans have registered so far in the FEMA system to receive financial assistance.

Catholic Organizations, Groups Actively Working on Recovery on Puerto Rico

By Wallice J. de la Vega

Catholic News Service

A month after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, Catholic organizations, groups and individuals were still among the most prominent responders to the needs of a suffering people.

Despite early logistical obstacles, as of Oct. 20, the local Caritas chapter had disbursed over $1.1 million in aid to an estimated 50,000 people — including food, local Caritas chapter had disbursed over $1.1 million in aid to an estimated 50,000 people — including food, water, fuel, medicine, currency — and several relief organizations continue to face obstacles getting aid to those who need it most because of fuel shortages, and a majority of the work is in ruins. The New York Times reported that only 392 miles of the 5,073 miles of the island’s roads are open. At least 43 people have died as a result of the hurricane; officials said that number could rise as communication systems improve.

Caritas has been closely working with Catholic Charities USA on Puerto Rico’s recovery since Hurricane Irma brushed the island’s northern coast two weeks before Maria followed Sept. 20.

Kim Burgo, senior director of disaster operations for Catholic Charities, told CNS: “One of our biggest challenges is money because there were two other hurricanes before ... but then Maria comes along, which in many ways was worse than Harvey and Irma, and people have donor fatigue and it is very difficult to get donations for Puerto Rico. The need here is so much greater, yet the financial resources are so much less.”

Puerto Rico’s post-hurricane recovery efforts have been largely a grass-roots impulse, mainly spearheaded by newly formed young adult movements and religious groups that have become an alternative to slow, complex and bureaucratic government procedures. Most of these groups, local and coming from the U.S., include Catholics.

Katherine Rizio, a Catholic volunteer with the Canadian relief foundation Impact Nations, came to Quebradillas, a town of 25,000 residents in northwest Puerto Rico, with a team of four to help distribute 300 portable water filters around isolated homes deep in the mountains. Rizio is a retired schoolteacher and a 30-year missionary veteran who is a member of the Sangre de Cristo Parish in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This was her first disaster-related mission.

“All the devastation ... when you see this, no electricity, families living with no water to bathe in, it’s hard and they are traumatized,” Rizio told CNS while dis-
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Lebanon will hold its annual Christmas Bazaar on Nov. 18 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. in the parish hall at 309 S. George Street. Homemade fall décor and more. The event will be held rain or shine. For more information, contact Livia Riley, 717-319-6617, for information.

St. Benedict the Abbot Parish in Lebanon will hold its annual Christmas Dinner on Nov. 11 from 4-7 p.m. in the Social Hall. Everyone: homemade candy, variety of foods, homemade soups, cookies, baked goods, and more. There will be a raffle and a bake sale. Deli sandwiches will be sold. For more information, contact Kathy at 717-352-7354.

St. Cecilia Parish in Lebanon will hold its annual Christmas Bazaar on Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. at 360 State Street Social Hall. The event will be held rain or shine. For more information, contact Peg Wagaman at pegwagaman@gmail.com.

St. Rose of Lima Parish’s annual Christmas Festival will be held Dec. 2 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the school in Thompsville. A free breakfast with Santa for children under the age of 10 will be from 9-10 a.m., followed by free ‘selves’ with Santa in the lobby. Reindeer food, for children and adults, will be sold. A visit with Santa will be held from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., and a visit with Mrs. Claus will be held from 12-2 p.m. Lunch will be served with Mrs. Claus. The event will be held rain or shine. For more information, contact Peg Wagaman at pegwagaman@gmail.com.

The Conewago Christmas Bazaar and Craft Show will take place on November 18 from 8 a.m.-9 p.m. on the historic grounds of the Conewago Chapel. There will be a variety of handcrafted items by local vendors and artists, homemade baked goods, raffles, a silent auction, lunch and much more. For our little ones and the young at heart, that jolly old fella, Santa Claus, will be visiting from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. in the church. The event is open to the public and admission is free. For more information, contact the school office at 717-632-8715 Monday-Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. For more information, call 717-323-2156. All proceeds benefit the church’s repair and maintenance.

Sister Mary K. Baker is the coordinator of the event. If you have any questions, please call 717-632-8715. For more information, visit www.sfxpccw.org.

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Obituaries

The names of the following deceased persons have been submitted by their parishes. Please remember in your prayers the happy repose of these recently departed souls and the consolation of their loved ones.

ABBOTTSTOWN – Immaculate Heart of Mary: Arlington (Jim) Schuchart.

ANNVILLE – St. Paul the Apostle: Andrew J. Brjakovich.

BLOOMSBURG – St. Columba: Lesley Leidy.

BLOOMSBURG – St. Francis Xavier: Richard Musantry.

BLOOMSBURG – Immaculate Conception: Christine Kerwin.

BLUERIDGE SUMMIT – St. Columba: Gale Leslye Leidy.

BLUE RIDGE SUMMIT – St. Paul the Apostle: Margaret Mary Smith has died at the age of 85.


BLOOMSBURG – Immaculate Conception: Ralphetta Johnston, Irene Regan.

BLOOMSBURG – Immaculate Conception: Michael Breslin, Barbara Lagus Pollock.


BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Catherine Georgine Portner.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Margaret Mary Smith.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Catherine Georgine Portner, 99, died in Assisi House in Aston, Pa. on Oct. 10. She had been a professor of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 81 years.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Born Gertrude Mary Portner in Mahanoy City, Pa., she entered the congregation in 1932. Sister Catherine Georgine earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Marywood College and an M.A. from the Catholic University of America. She ministered primarily in elementary education.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: She served for 26 years in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 28 years in the Diocese of Trenton, nine years in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, 12 years in the Diocese of Allentown, and six years in the Diocese of Harrisburg, where she taught at St. Joseph School in Lancaster and served as principal of St. Joseph School in York.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: In 2001, Sister Catherine Georgine began working at the Sisters of St. Francis finance office, located in Our Lady of Angels Convent in Aston. In 2012, she became a resident of Assisi House, the congregation’s retirement residence, where she served in prayer ministry and, for several years, continued her volunteer work in the finance office.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: The funeral Mass was celebrated Oct. 13 in Assisi House. Burial was in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery in Aston.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Margaret Mary Smith has died at the age of 85.


BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: She studied at the Precious Blood Teacher Training Institute at the motherhouse, received certification in food service management at Saint Louis University, studied at Alvernia College in Reading, Pa., and was certified in dietary administration for food service managers from the Catholic Hospital Association. She also received a nurse’s aide training certificate from St. Anne’s Home in Columbia.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Margaret Mary taught kindergarten in North Carolina; cooked and was a substitute teacher in Georgia; and taught kindergarten and second grade in Chicago; and second grade in Indiana and Pennsylvania. She cared for children with HIV/AIDS in Texas and for abandoned children at University Hospital of New Jersey. She taught at a day care center in St. Louis, while a member of the Inter-Province Formation Community.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: She was also the head cook and manager of food services for the motherhouse and academy in Columbia for more than 30 years.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Margaret Mary retired in 2006, and moved to St. Anne’s Retirement Community in late 2016.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: The funeral Mass was celebrated Oct. 14 at St. Anne’s Retirement in Community. Burial was in the community cemetery.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Margaret Mary Smith was buried at St. Anne’s Retirement Community.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: She was 99 years old.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Born Gertrude Mary Portner in Mahanoy City, Pa., she entered the congregation in 1932. Sister Catherine Georgine earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Marywood College and an M.A. from the Catholic University of America. She ministered primarily in elementary education.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: She served for 26 years in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 28 years in the Diocese of Trenton, nine years in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, 12 years in the Diocese of Allentown, and six years in the Diocese of Harrisburg, where she taught at St. Joseph School in Lancaster and served as principal of St. Joseph School in York.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: In 2001, Sister Catherine Georgine began working at the Sisters of St. Francis finance office, located in Our Lady of Angels Convent in Aston. In 2012, she became a resident of Assisi House, the congregation’s retirement residence, where she served in prayer ministry and, for several years, continued her volunteer work in the finance office.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: The funeral Mass was celebrated Oct. 13 in Assisi House. Burial was in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery in Aston.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Margaret Mary Smith has died at the age of 85.


BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: She studied at the Precious Blood Teacher Training Institute at the motherhouse, received certification in food service management at Saint Louis University, studied at Alvernia College in Reading, Pa., and was certified in dietary administration for food service managers from the Catholic Hospital Association. She also received a nurse’s aide training certificate from St. Anne’s Home in Columbia.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Margaret Mary taught kindergarten in North Carolina; cooked and was a substitute teacher in Georgia; and taught kindergarten and second grade in Chicago; and second grade in Indiana and Pennsylvania. She cared for children with HIV/AIDS in Texas and for abandoned children at University Hospital of New Jersey. She taught at a day care center in St. Louis, while a member of the Inter-Province Formation Community.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: She was also the head cook and manager of food services for the motherhouse and academy in Columbia for more than 30 years.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Sister Margaret Mary retired in 2006, and moved to St. Anne’s Retirement Community in late 2016.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: The funeral Mass was celebrated Oct. 14 at St. Anne’s Retirement in Community. Burial was in the community cemetery.

BLOOMSBURG – Our Lady Help of Christians: Margaret Mary Smith was buried at St. Anne’s Retirement Community.

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Fundraisers & Events

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Cornwall will host a fish dinner Nov. 1 from 4-7 p.m. Dinner includes baked haddock or fried cod, baked or fried potatoes, apple sauce or cole slaw. The event starts at 11 a.m. and tickets are $15. All proceeds support spiritual, instrumental, and musical theatre programs for elementary and secondary students at Sacred Heart. Contact Mary Modestus at 717-661-1509 to reserve an order or call the Sacred Heart Parish Office at 717-774-5871.

The Lebanon Catholic Publishing Board is seeking $5,000 in grants to support diocesan needs. All projects which support diocesan education, and needs to ensure that children with special needs are able to receive an appropriate education. Contact Father Modestus at 717-771-6587 to request a grant application. The deadline to submit your application is Nov. 30.

Our Mother of Perpetual Help School in Ephrata will host a Treasure Island Auction on Nov. 4 at the 300 Church Street, McSherrystown. The evening will begin with a preview of auction items at 6 p.m. Auctioning will begin at 7 p.m. Refreshments and heavy hors d’oeuvres will be served throughout the evening. Comprised of donations from families and area businesses, the Treasure Island Auction is a true auction bonanza! Auction items range from an Apple iPhone 6 Plus to a Disney Vacation Package, to restaurant gift certificates and much, much more. Tickets will be available at the door or in advance by calling the OMPH Development Office at 717-738-2144. Tickets can also be purchased in the school office until Oct. 31. Tickets are $30.00 and $3.00. You must be 21 or over to attend.

Mary, Gate of Heaven Council of Catholic Women in Myerstown is having its annual Thanksgiving Day dinner at the New St. John’s Downtown Community Daycare Center. The event is open to all and will include a free turkey dinner, beverages, and a program. For more information, contact the office at 717-663-3828.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Marysville will host a spaghetti dinner Nov. 9, serving from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 4-7 p.m. Eat-in or take-out. Dinners are $8 and include dessert and beverages.

The Diocese of Harrisburg’s Instructional Support Advancement Committee announces an Evening of Wine Tasting at the Conestoga Country Club on Nov. 4. Bringing Catholic education to the forefront of local needs is an important, but costly endeavor. The Diocese of Harrisburg’s Instructional Support Advancement (ISA) Committee is in its third year of holding an annual wine dinner to help subsidize cost of buying two different diocesan special education programs. Offer tuition dollars for teachers seeking autistics certifying add-on endorsement. Also to their mission, the ISA will purchase specially designed programs and other resources to ensure that children with special needs are able to receive an appropriate education. Contact Father Modestus at 717-771-6587 to request a grant application. The deadline to submit your application is Nov. 30.

The Golden Years Club welcomes new members. All young adults (20s and 30s), single, married, Catholic sisters in Christ as we praise Our Lord through prayer, praise, and worship and music. Father Modestus will preside. A reception will be held immediately after Mass. All are invited to attend. A $10 donation is requested.

Educational Enrichment

Immaculate Conception CVM Parish in Berwick (aka. St. Mary’s Church) will be hosting a Polish Pottery Bingo on Nov. 5. Doors open at 12:30 p.m., Bingo begins at 2 p.m. Twenty games, door prizes, and concessions for deserts. Tickets are $20 and may be purchased at the door prior to the event or the following week at the parish office, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. daily.

Lancaster Catholic High School’s Fine and Performing Arts Concert and Lecture Series will continue with a hosting of a night of spooky fun on Oct. 31 at 7:30 p.m. in the Old Main Auditorium, featuring the following graceful and entertaining acts.

Lancaster Catholic High School will host its Pillars of Truth Banquet to honor those men and women who have dedicated their lives to the service of the Church as priests, deacons, sisters, and brothers. Come join our Lancaster Catholic High School Community on Nov. 10 in 6 p.m. in the Berger Gym. The evening will include a cocktail hour, dinner, dessert, and music and will conclude with a special ceremony. RSVP to the Administrator of Education at 717-509-0315. There is a $100 admission fee to attend this event.

Lancaster Catholic High School’s Annual Open House will be held Oct. 27 from 6-8 p.m. This is the chance for parents and potential students to explore Lancaster Catholic, discover the mission and meet teachers, faculty and current students.

For more information about the Open House, visit lchsyes.org.

The Silence of Mary, a Catholic Home, a Christian family home for God’s abandoned or neglected people of all ages in the Allison Hill section of Harrisburg. For more information, call 717-771-4107, or email particle@silenceofmary.org. For more information about the event, visit our website at thesilenceofmary.org.

A fall harvest indoor flea market and bake sale sponsored by Holy Family and St. Francis of Assisi parishes in Harrisburg, will be held in the Holy Family Social Hall Nov. 11 from noon-4:30 p.m. Stop by to find a treasure, buy some baked goods and sip some apple cider and other delights.
NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK

NOVEMBER 5 - 11

By Father Brian J. Wayne
Diocesan Director of Vocations

Each year, in early November, the Church celebrates National Vocation Awareness Week. I have been blessed to be in my third year as the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Harrisburg, working closely in the formation of our seminarians for the priesthood as well as seeking to produce a “Culture of Vocations” in our parishes and schools where our young people readily ask the question: “What does God want for my life?”

I remember throughout high school being asked, again and again: “What do you want to do with your life?” My answer varied from teacher, to engineer, to astrophysicist. Then, my freshmen year of college, someone asked me in passing: “What do you think God wants you to do with your life?” Honestly, I never thought about that question! That, I think, is the point of this week: to realize that the God who loves us into existence and knows us better than we can even know ourselves has created us for some purpose and we should be willing to ask Him what that purpose is.

Allow me to share some interesting numbers with you. Did you know that the number of priestly ordinations in the U.S. has been steadily climbing, 440 in 2010 and 590 in 2017? In our own diocese, we may have seven men ordained to the priesthood in 2018 (the last class of seven was 1983). In fact, by summer of 2017, approximately one-third of our active diocesan priests will have been ordained less than 10 years! Young women also continue to enter formation in consecrated life. This past year, I know of two ladies from our diocese who have entered the Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth in Williamsport and the Sister Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara in Washington, D.C.

WHAT CAN I DO AS A PARISHIONER? That’s the question I get a lot when travelling. Allow me to offer three suggestions anyone can do:

- Encourage teens: the average age of a young man or woman first considers a religious vocation is 16, so encourage those high school students you feel might have a calling to priesthood or consecrated life.
- Invite, invite, invite: 82% of the men ordained priests this past year said they were encouraged to consider the vocation by at least four people.
- Promote prayer in your parish: three-quarters of new priests, and even more religious, regularly attended Eucharistic Adoration before entering formation.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO DISCERN FURTHER? Once one reaches the point of saying “I want only what God wants for me,” God may begin to call one to consider a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life. Here are three tips to help:

- Seek guidance: talk to a priest or a sister you trust; attend the Quo Vadis Days and Fiat Days retreats put on by the diocese each summer; don’t discern alone!
- Pray, pray, pray: God will reveal His will in His time when you are ready; what you can do is make yourself available for Him in the Eucharist, through Confession, and giving God time daily in prayer.

Our diocese prays for these seven men in their final year of seminary formation.

IS GOD CALLING YOU?

Do you have a deep love for Christ and His Church?

Do you want to help others grow closer to Christ?

Do you desire to live a life of virtue and prayer?

Have other people mentioned to you that you would make a good sister or priest?

Has God placed in your heart a desire to become a sister or priest?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY ONE OF THESE QUESTIONS, PERHAPS GOD IS CALLING YOU.

www.hbgdiocese.org/vocations

Reverend Brian J. Wayne, Director of Vocations

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