Faith in a New School Year

The 41 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg opened their doors to new and returning students in the late days of August and the early days of September, ushering in a school year that will have a particular focus on the family.

With the long-awaited World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia this month, the Diocesan Department for Catholic Schools is encouraging schools to look at ways of offering family-focused events throughout the academic year.

Diocesan Catholic schools continue to celebrate excellent test scores, high graduation rates, and advances in technology. According to the most recent diocesan statistics, 93 percent of elementary students score above the national average in language skills, 85 percent score above the national average in reading, and 81 percent score above the national average in math. Diocesan schools boast a graduation rate of more than 98 percent, with annually more than $40 million in scholarships offered to graduates. In technology, students have access to a wide-area network that connects them to innumerable educational resources and well-equipped classrooms as schools continue to advance in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education.

The Catholic Witness made first-day-of-school visits this year to the Holy Family Campus of Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School and to St. Margaret Mary School in Harrisburg. See page 8 for back-to-school photos and the suggestions that the Department for Catholic Schools offers for family-based activities.

For Year of Mercy, Pope Extends Possibilities for Absolution

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

In an extraordinary gesture for the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has extended to priests worldwide the authority to absolve women for the sin of abortion and has decreed the full validity during the year of the sacrament of confession celebrated by priests of the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X.

“This jubilee Year of Mercy excludes no one,” the pope wrote in a letter to Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization, the office organizing events for the holy year, which opens Dec. 8.

Pope Francis said one of the most serious problems facing people today is a “widespread and insensitive mentality” toward the sacredness of human life.

“The tragedy of abortion is experienced by some with a superficial awareness, as if not realizing the extreme harm that such an act entails,” while many other women believe that “they have no other option” but to have an abortion, the pope wrote in the letter, released Sept. 1 by the Vatican.

The pressures exerted on many women to abort lead to “an existential and moral ordeal,” Pope Francis said. “I have met so many women who bear in their heart the scar of this agonizing and painful decision.”

When such a woman has repented and seeks absolution in the sacrament of confession, he said, “the forgiveness of God cannot be denied.”

Although Church law generally requires a priest to have special permission, called faculties, from his bishop to grant absolution to a person who has procured or helped another to procure an abortion, the pope said he decided “to concede to all priests for the jubilee year the discretion to absolve of the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it.”

All priests in the Diocese of Harrisburg already have this faculty.

Pope Francis urged priests to welcome to the sacrament women who have had an abortion, explain “the gravity of the sin committed” and indicate to them “a path of authentic conversion by which to obtain the true and generous forgiveness of the Father who renews all with his presence.”

Jesus Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, told reporters the pope’s letter “highlights the wideness of God’s mercy” and is “not in any way minimizing the gravity of the sin” of abortion.

In his letter, Pope Francis also granted another exception to Church rules out of More MERCY, page 2

Labor Day Statement:
Reflection, Action ‘Critical’ for Care of Workers

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

“Individual reflection and action is critical” when it comes to improving the conditions of workers in the United States and elsewhere, said Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, in the U.S. bishops’ annual Labor Day statement.

“We are in need of a profound conversion of heart at all levels of our lives. Let us examine our choices,” Archbishop Wenski said in the statement, dated Labor Day Sept. 7, but issued Aug. 24 in Washington.

“How do we participate in this wounding of human dignity,” he asked, through choices about the clothes we wear, food we eat, and things we buy – most of which is unaffordable to the very workers who make it? Do we give a thought to this truth, that for our wants to be met, economic realities are created that cause others to live in ways that we ourselves would not?”

Still, “individual effort should not...
The spokesman also confirmed that the Vatican’s contacts with leaders of the Society of St. Pius X have continued, as he hoped he would “in the near future solutions may be found to recover full communion with the priests and superiors of the Fraternity.”

Pope Francis’ letter also explained expanded opportunities for obtaining the indulgences that are a normal part of the celebration of a holy year. An indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment a person is due because of his or her sins. In a holy year, it is offered to pilgrims who cross the threshold of the Holy Door at the Vatican or in their local diocese, confess their sins, receive the Eucharist and pray for the pope’s intentions.

The celebration of God’s mercy, he said, included first the sacrament of reconciliation and to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy. It will be necessary to accompany this “celebration with the profession of faith and with prayer for me and for the intentions that I bear in my heart for the good of the Church and of the entire world.”

Those who are confined to their homes can obtain the indulgence by offering up their sickness and suffering, he said. Pope Francis also included special consideration for people who are incarcerated, touching on the Old Testament tradition of a jubilee year as a time for granting prisoners amnesty.

Those who, “despite deserving punishment, have become conscious of the injustice they committed,” may receive the indulgence with prayers and the reception of the sacraments in their prison chapel, he wrote. “May the gesture of directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell signify for them their passage through the Holy Door, because the mercy of God is able to transform hearts, and is also able to transform bars into an experience of freedom,” he wrote.

## Labor Day

**Continued from 1**

He added, “In demanding a living wage for workers we give hope to those struggling to provide for their families, as well as young workers who hope to have families of their own someday. Unions and worker associations, as with all human institutions, are imperfect, yet they remain indispensable to this work, and they can exemplify the importance of subsidiarity and solidarity in action.”

Archbishop Wenski used as the basis for his remarks Pope Francis’ encyclical **Laudato Si’**, on Care for Our Common Home, quoting from it to illustrate his points.

While Pope Francis’ encyclical has been regarded as an encyclical on the environment, the pope said in it, “The analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work-related and urban contexts, nor from how individuals relate to themselves, which leads in turn to how they relate to others.”

“Not long ago, jobs, wages, and the economy was on everyone’s mind. Unemployment, poverty—and foreclosures soared as Americans worried, rightly, if we could ever recover. Even with some economic progress, things have not truly improved for most American families. We must not resign ourselves to a ‘new normal’ with an economy that does not provide stable work at a living wage for too many men and women,” Archbishop Wenski said.

“The poverty rate remains painfully high. The unemployment rate has declined, yet much of that is due to people simply giving up looking for a job, not because they have found full-time work. The majority of jobs provide little in the way of sufficient wages, retirement benefits, stability, or family security, and too many families are stringing together part-time jobs to pay the bills. Opportunities for younger workers are in serious decline.”

“Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, the development, and personal fulfillment.” Pope Francis said in his encyclical.

Yet in the United States, according to Archbishop Wenski, “too many marriages bear the crushing weight of unpredictable schedules from multiple jobs, which make impossible adequate time for nurturing children, faith and community. Wage stagnation has increased pressures on families, as the costs of food, housing, transportation and education continue to pile up. Couples intentionally delay marriage, as unemployment and substantial work make a vision of stable family life difficult to see.”

“Workers are the first to ask, ‘What is our life worth?’ These are difficult questions to ask, yet we must ask them.”

## Pope: Balanced Life Includes Time for Family, Work, Prayer

**By Cindy Wooden**

**Catholic News Service**

Work is an important expression of human dignity and of caring for one’s family, but today there is a “dangerous tendency” to consider a worker’s family obligations as an obstacle to productivity and profit, Pope Francis said.

“That let’s ask ourselves: What productivity? And for whom?” he said Aug. 19 at his weekly general audience as he continued a long series of audience talks about the family and family life. “Work, in its thousand forms, beginning with housework, is about caring for the common good,” providing for one’s family and cooperating with God in creating goods and services that are useful to others, the pope said.

“Work – and I repeat, in all its forms – is human. It expresses the dignity of being created in the image of God, which is why it can be said that work is sacred,” Pope Francis told pilgrims gathered in the Vatican audience hall.

Work is so important for individual identity, for the ability it gives people to support their families and for its contribution to the community that creating and organizing employment is a huge “human and social responsibility, which cannot be left in the hands of a few or pushed off onto a divinized market,” the pope said.

“To cause the loss of jobs is to cause great social damage,” he said.

Work is part of the normal rhythm of life for individuals and for families, he said. It must alternate with times of rest and celebration and, especially, time for prayer.

Balance is important, Pope Francis said, for protecting individuals, their families, society and the environment.

“Attitudes toward work that consider the family an obstacle to productivity, he said, also tend to see the workplace as something "to assemble, use or dispose of" only according to how much money it makes.

The family is “the proving ground” of labor policies, he said. “When the organization of work takes the family hostage or blocks its progress, then we can be certain society has begun working against itself.”

Christian families, the pope said, have a mission to remind the world of the fundamental principles of God’s creation and God’s plan: “the identity and bond between man and woman; the generation of children; work that tames and makes the world habitable.”

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Peter’s Pence Supports Holy Father’s Charitable Works

Collection to Take Place in Parishes Sept. 12 and 13

In his homily for the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on March 20, 2013, Pope Francis spoke of our responsibility before the world and creation.

“And with us, too, don’t we have to wash each other’s feet day after day? But what does this mean? That all of us must help one another,” he said.

“There is much that we can do to benefit the poor, the needy and those who suffer, and to favor justice, promote reconciliation and build peace,” Pope Francis said.

Through the annual Peter’s Pence Collection, Catholics have an opportunity to support the humanitarian and charitable works of the Holy Father that reach out to the marginalized and poor. The collection unites us in solidarity to the Holy See, allowing the pope to respond to our brothers and sisters who are suffering because of war, oppression, natural disaster and disease.

In the Diocese of Harrisburg, the collection will be taken up during Masses on the weekend of Sept. 12 and 13. The collection is overseen by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ National Collections Committee.

The theme for this year’s collection is “Be a Witness to Charity,” emphasizing the need to show the mercy of God to others.

The Peter’s Pence Collection derives its name from an ancient custom. In ninth-century England, King Alfred the Great collected money, a pence, from landowners as financial support for the pope.

The collection has raised nearly $190 million to support our suffering brothers and sisters around the globe.

“Through the Peter’s Pence Collection, individuals can join with Pope Francis in providing much needed care and relief to those who find themselves suffering or on the margins,” said Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of Cincinnati, chairman of the Committee on National Collections of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. “This collection is a way to be a witness to the love of Christ in unity with Catholics all around the world.”

Additional information can be found at http://www.usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/peters-pence/index.cfm.

Annulment Presentations Scheduled

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Harrisburg will offer presentations concerning divorce and annulments from the Catholic perspective in the coming months. These presentations will be helpful for divorced Catholics, divorced people who wish to marry Catholics, parish leaders involved in the RCIA process and those who have a vested interest because of family or friends.

• September 9, Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg, 7 p.m.
• September 14 – Celebrate Mass for the 40th Anniversary of the Canonization of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Emmitsburg, Md., 11 a.m.
• September 17 – Attend the Lebanon District Council of Catholic Women Gathering, Mary, Gate of Heaven Parish, Myerstown, 5:30 p.m.
• September 19 – Celebrate the 75th Anniversary Mass for Delone Catholic High School, McSherrystown, 1 p.m.
• September 20 – Celebrate Mass and Dedication of Parish Center, Saint Leo the Great, Rohrerstown, 11 a.m.

Job Opening – Diocese of Harrisburg

Director, Family Life Office

The Diocese of Harrisburg is seeking an individual, with a passion for mission, to serve the families of the diocese as the Director of the Family Life Office within the Secretariat for Catholic Life & Evangelization.

The Director will assist and collaborate with parishes to evangelize and catechize the family, assisting the family in its formation as the Domestic Church and agent of evangelization to its members, parish, and community.

Responsibilities include: Diocesan marriage preparation programs; FOCUS Pre-Marriage Inventory for Engaged Couples; Natural Family Planning; Diocesan liaison to World Wide Marriage Encounter and other family apostolates; support of Retrouvaille ministry to marriages at risk; support for parish outreach to Separated and Divorced Catholics; facilitation of ministry to the Senior Adult Community.

Requirements:
• Be a practicing Catholic with an outgoing, self-motivated personality, a consistent prayer life and established communication skills.
• Master’s Degree in Theology, Religious Studies, Education or related field
• Leadership experience in marriage and family ministry
• Demonstrated skills in program design and implementation

Benefits:
A full-time position with commensurate salary and a comprehensive benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision, life insurance and a 401K plan.

To apply, please forward your résumé and a cover letter to employment@hbgdioocese.org.

Closing date for applications is Friday, September 25, 2015.

Job Opening – Diocese of Harrisburg

Housekeeper

The Diocese of Harrisburg has a vacancy for a part-time Housekeeper.

This position is responsible for the Episcopal residence and, as such, the successful candidate must be able to work in an environment of extreme confidentiality, discretion and trustworthiness. Normal work hours are two days a week (Tuesday & Thursday) from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. (8 hours a week).

Candidates will be responsible for planning and executing a cleaning/laundry schedule. The ability to prepare an occasional light lunch would be helpful. The position requires varying degrees of physical exertion, to include lifting, stretching, bending, climbing stairs and operating cleaning equipment. The following skills are essential: good organizational skills, a working knowledge of home safety procedures, dependability and the ability to take instructions as well as work without supervision.

A driving license is essential, as the successful candidate may be required to undertake the purchasing of groceries and ordinary household supplies.

Please send all résumés to employment@hbgdioocese.org

Mail applications to: Human Resources
Diocese of Harrisburg
4800 Union Deposit Rd
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Closing date is Friday September 11, 2015.
Thoughts from a Catholic Evangelist
Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC

A Glimpse of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, from Immaculata, Pa., profess the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and live the charism of Divine Love, Creative Hope and Fidelity through Alphonian spirituality. They minister in Catholic schools and parishes in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia and Peru, serving the Church in pastoral and evangelization ministries. They form a “powerful band” at Camilla Hall in Immaculata, Pa., where the retired and ill sisters reside.

The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary were founded on Nov. 10, 1845, in a log cabin in Monroe, Mich., by Father Louis Florent Gillet, a Redemptorist missionary, and Mother Theresa Maxix. In 1855, Bishop John Be ноя Imam the sisters to staff schools in Pennsylvania. The following year, their mission was undertaken in Reading, Pa., where a motherhouse was established. In 1872, the motherhouse was transferred to West Chester, Pa. Villa Maria House of Studies, the present motherhouse, was constructed in 1966.

This past July, the Oblate Sisters of Providence and the Holy Congregations of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary gathered in Scranton, Pa., to celebrate their common heritage and their shared future. Marking the 170th anniversary of IHM founding and the 186th anniversary of OSP founding, their time together included spiritual reflection, prayer, singing, dancing and renewing friendships.

The congregation is grateful for the 250 lay women and men who join in their apostolate as IBM Companions in Prayer and Ministry. During this Year of Consecrated Life, the congregation gratefully remembers the past while embracing the future with hope.

For more information on the community, visit www.ihmmaculata.org, or send an email to ihmvoices@gmail.com.

During the Year of Consecrated Life, which opened on November 30, Pope Francis calls upon all Catholics to thank God for the gifts that members of religious orders have given to the Church, and to join them in prayer and support them in their ministries.

“Let them know the affection and the warmth which the entire Christian people feels for them,” the pope said in a letter issued for the special year, which will conclude on Feb. 2, 2016, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

In observance of the Year of Consecrated Life, The Catholic Witness has offered a special series by Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC, who reflected on the beauty and ministry of consecrated life, accompanied by information highlighting various communities of consecrated life in our diocese.

For additional information and resources about the Year of Consecrated Life, visit the Web site of the National Religious Vocation Conference at www.nrvc.net. To learn about vocations in the diocese, visit www.hbgdiocese.org/clergy/vocations.

Special Edition October 2

The Catholic Witness plans to devote the entire October 2 edition to coverage of the World Meeting of Families and Pope Francis’ visit to the United States. The special edition will be part of The Witness’ regular bi-weekly schedule, and, as such, will be sent to all subscribers without a separate mailing.

Please note that this edition will not include the regular news, features, announcements found in our standard issues; those items will resume with the October 16 edition. When we are notified from the Secret Service regarding requested venues for our own coverage of these historic events, we hope to share more details of our plans for the October 2 edition.

Consecrated Life: Steps to Holiness

By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC

Special to The Witness

A few years ago when I was traveling with an educational colleague of mine, we stopped for breakfast in a small suburban diner. Breakfast was delightful since the weather was fabulous, the service was exceptional and the food was delicious. During the meal, a gentleman wearing stained and ragged clothes approached me for a conversation. He startled his words and stumbled as he approached. As he got closer, I detected the sharp scent of stale urine. Time seemed to stand still. Everybody’s glare was riveted on us. I knew it was a moment of grace not only for me, but all of the spectators.

He talked to me about his experience in Catholic schools and with the “nuns” who taught him. He related to me about their sometimes severe way of disciplining, as well as their ability to love unconditionally. As he shared this memory, he got down on his knees, looked into my eyes, kissed my hand and thanked my fellow nuns for teaching him how to love God. Tears welled up in my eyes as I thanked him for his words. As he walked away, my colleague said, “Hey! Can you stand something else? He smells fouled!” I said, “Smelled? Really? All I saw and smelled was his holiness.” In response to my words, all my colleague could do was shake their head.

When we went to pay for our meal, the cashier informed us that our bill had been paid by the gentleman. She went on, “That guy is quite wealthy. He had a stroke several months ago that has caused his slurred speech and loss of control of his bladder. He wears the ragged clothes in order to hide his disability. Everyone here knows him. We all protect him from outsiders and their rejection. He paid by the gentleman. She went on, “That guy is quite wealthy. He had a stroke several months ago that has caused his slurred speech and loss of control of his bladder. He wears the ragged clothes in order to hide his disability. Everybody here knows him. We all protect him from outsiders and their rejection. He paid that guy is quite wealthy. He had a stroke several months ago that has caused his slurred speech and loss of control of his bladder. He wears the ragged clothes in order to hide his disability. Everybody here knows him. We all protect him from outsiders and their rejection. He paid this way, “The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to His own purpose and grace.” They truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are made holy. Then too, by God’s gift, they must hold on to and complete in their live this holiness they have received. They are to live “as saints”, and to put on “as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and to possess the fruit of the Spirit in holiness.” (LG 40)

I can hear you saying to me, “Yes, Sister. I understand all of this. But how does one actually become holy?” Bishop Michael J. Sheridan from the Diocese of Colorado Springs says it this way, “In Baptism, God shares His life and holiness with each member of His Mystical Body. That holiness, which is a gift, is at the same time a vocation: a call to live out in the concrete circumstances of our lives that love and obedience which characterizes the life of Christ Himself.”

How does one become holy? Bishop Sheridan gives three ways. These ways are the explanation of his approach to prayer:

Prayer – This is the first step in the process of becoming holy. The very act of prayer is an expression of our total dependence on God and His grace. As we spend time lifting our minds and hearts to God, we are slowly transformed so that our thoughts and actions can become like God’s. This change is ever so slow and becomes our never ending story. Without time spent apart from prayer that is directed to God, this transformation is impossible.

Participation in the Eucharist – As practicing Catholics, we all understand that we have to go to Mass. But when we show up, are we centered in the prayer of the celebrant as well as the prayers of those sitting around us? In an Angelus greeting on the Feast of Corpus Christi, St. John Paul II said, “[Sun- day Eucharist] is a fundamental way, to be fulfilled not just in the Church but as a precept but as something felt as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life.”

Frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation – If we are to be holy, we must now the light of God’s love and knowledge that is right in front of us. True holiness incarnates God’s love in our daily lives. Can’t you detect a faint scent of heavenly perfume all around us?

(Sister of Christian Charity, Geralyn Schmidt, is the Wide Area Network Coordinator at the Diocese of Harrisburg and the Director of Formation for Wives in the Diocesan Program. An educator for 29 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.)
Chicken Marsala

Ingredients:
- 4 Boneless-skinless Chicken breasts
- ¾ cup Wondra Flour (may need more)
- ½ teaspoon salt – pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 4 tablespoons oil
- 8 ounces fresh sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup Marsala cooking wine
- 1 cup chicken broth

Directions:
Slice chicken thin and pound to ¼ inch thick. Combine 1 cup flour, salt, oregano, pepper. Dredge chicken in flour and shake off excess. Heat oil and butter in Fry pan at medium heat. Cook chicken about two minutes on each side until golden brown. Remove chicken from pan and set aside. In a small bowl, mix two tablespoons of Wondra flour and a few drops of Maggi for color and flavoring. Add to Mushroom/broth and heat until thickened. Add mushrooms and chicken broth and simmer five minutes in a small bowl. Mix two tablespoons of Wondra flour with ¼ cup warm water. Add to Mushroom/broth and heat until thickened. Add a little oil or butter to Mushroom/broth and heat until thickened. Cover chicken with sauce in an oven dish and warm at 325 degrees.

We have always enjoyed having friends over for dinner, as our families live in other states. They all enjoy having dinner with us and this is a good one to make ahead of time; heat and serve. We can enjoy their company and friendship without being in the kitchen. I add a salad, pasta and vegetable and dessert.

Catch Father Leo, ‘The Cooking Priest’ on ‘Holy & Hungry’ September 6

If you’re familiar with Father Leo Patalinghug, “the cooking priest” who leads the Grace Before Meals movement and who has appeared as the guest chef for Catholic Charities’ “Come and See” dinner in past years, you’ll want to catch The Cooking Channel’s new show, “Holy & Hungry,” on Sept. 6 a 10 p.m.

The show features host Sherri Shepherd as she visits chefs, clergy and other faithful who connect their passion for the faith with their passion for cooking. Father Leo will be featured in the Sept. 6 episode, “Food from the Father.”

Grace Before Meals is a movement to bring families back to the dinner table – away from work, school, TV, games, and the many other things we get caught up in – to share a delicious meal together, communicate and love one another and be nourished – body, mind, and soul. How? With easy lessons, tasty recipes and reasons to come together and share in the love that only a family or friend can provide.

Grace Before Meals is centered on one fundamental concept: the simple act of creating and sharing a meal can strengthen all kinds of relationships. Research has been done to show that the family that eats (and prays) together will stay together, so it is important to focus on family and prayer, Pope Francis said.

Prayer is a way of communicating with God about what’s on our minds and hearts. Most people are familiar with the simple act of saying grace before meals and to remember always that God is there and loves them, he said, family life will be enveloped in God’s love and family members will spontaneously find times for prayer.

If you learn as a child to turn to God “with the same spontaneity as you learn to say ‘daddy’ and ‘mommy,’ you’ve learned it forever,” he said.

By teaching children how to make the sign of the cross, to say a simple grace before meals and to remember always that God is there and loves them, family life will be enveloped in God’s love and family members will spontaneously find times for prayer.

“‘You, mom, and dad, teach your child to pray, to make the sign of the cross,” Pope Francis said.

The simple little prayers, he said, will increase family members’ sense of God’s love and presence and their certainty that God has entrusted the family members to one another.
Life Teen Members Demonstrate God’s Love during Mission Trip to Appalachia

The Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center, located in Louisa, Kentucky, is an outreach ministry of the Diocese of Lexington that works to assist the poor and impoverished. Its outreach programs include a thrift store and emergency food pantry, a Christmas food bank program, in-home services and home repairs, disaster relief services, and emergency and transitional housing, as well as summer youth camps for middle children’s Bible studies and outings.

Bishop Ronald Gainer, former Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown, established the ministry as an apostolate of the diocese as a means of strengthening and encouraging parishes.

This summer, 22 participants associated with the Life Teen ministry of St. Patrick Parish in Carlisle traveled to the Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center as means of sharing Christ’s love with others.

Once we arrived, our days became long and spontaneous. The best way I can summarize everything I felt and experienced is that this trip broke my heart and fixed it the very second I met Mary, the mother of the family we would be working with for the entire week. Upon introduction, I witnessed her crying and attempting to smoke her stress and worry away. I came to realize very quickly that Mary is a strong woman. Something that truly impacted me was Mary’s love for her daughter, who had been in a house fire when she was still a small child. Most of her skin had been melted off her body, and to this day she must travel back and forth from Boston to have procedures done where the skin has burned once again, and grown back. These surgeries have driven the family into the poverty they are currently in, and even though her daughter may require more love and care than the typical teenager, Mary would never complain. Whenever she talked about or even looked at her daughter, I could feel the overwhelming love she had for her, and it was beautiful. This reminded me of the love Mother Mary must have had for Jesus. Many people would have run out of love experiencing many of the things this woman has, but somehow she ended up to be one of the most caring and understanding people I have ever met. The trip may not have had a gigantic impact on my faith life, but reflecting on it now, I have learned some important things on this mission. I learned how important it is that we take the patience to truly listen to people, because similar to us, all they want is love, and listening is one of the greatest ways to show someone that you care. Patience and peace are some things that I personally have been struggling with recently. Mary and her daughter had taught me of these gifts, and the main thing I will take away from this trip is that if they can be patient and have enough trust that they will end up alright in their situation, I can, too. It is rare that good things come from worrying. I shall continue to work on building up my own patience and peace. One final grace God has granted me is thankfulness. I never realized how truly blessed I am to have such wonderful friends and family. God is good.

~ Dani Welsh

My trip to the Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center in Kentucky was the first mission trip I have ever been on. It was as though I was given a new window on the world. During the trip, I came to know the person of Christ more than I ever have in my life. I saw and experienced the suffering of the people who live in Appalachia, and this impact seemed to change every aspect of my faith life. But, somehow, I experienced a very real pain in my heart for the people I served. Looking at the faces of the people we served, I realized the struggles they have been through. I saw the impact of their struggles on their lives, and I realized how important it is to show them that we care.

In the weeks leading up to the mission, I reflected on the words of Blessed Mother Teresa, “Love has to hurt,” although I wasn’t sure exactly what this meant in context of this trip. I figured there would be some hard days and a lot of work to do, but I didn’t know what it meant to love someone so much that it hurt, at least not a stranger and certainly not someone I would only encounter for a week. But, somehow, I experienced a very real pain in my heart for the people I served. Every day brought some sort of challenge. Whether it was trying to fix the seemingly unfixable problems on the home or hearing the heartbreaking testimonies of the family, God taught me a lesson. I learned patience and generosity, kindness and cooperation, but the most important lesson I learned was humility. God gives me so many blessings in my life, yet I find myself constantly dissatisfied. The people I served had next to nothing and were quite honestly, some of the happiest people I have ever met. I was shocked by their openness to pray with the strangers that had just walked into their home and how they understood that even with so little, God had given them so much.

Blessed Mother Teresa’s statement about love hit me hardest when we had to leave the beautiful people we had come to know so well. Love hurt a lot in that moment. I knew them, I worked with them, and I played and had fun with them. Their home had become mine, and we all loved being together. It was a joy to love them, but it definitely hurt.

Reflecting on the trip, I reached the conclusion that, strangely, I went to serve; yet I felt as though I was the one that had been served. The Appalachian mission pushed me to my limits and every night left me feeling tired and drained, but I had never felt so full. Christ is everywhere, and I am so grateful that I found Him in Kentucky.

~ Claire Lynch

My mission trip experience was quite different than most. I prepared for the trip by praying for a safe and fun week. I also prayed and journaled on Scripture passages that helped to focus my mind on the work God was about to put before me. Usually, I expect to see people labor and blazing sun. My thoughts changed during the week. My team painted a building made for the purpose of being a recreation center and emergency housing for people in need. Although my group did not get to help one specific family for the whole week, the work we did would help many families and people. We painted the chapel and two bathrooms. Our group had many struggles and laughs, but everything we did brought us closer together. We truly could see Christ through our work through the smiling and satisfied faces of the people at the center we helped. I do not regret going at all. It was a wonderful experience. My life has changed because I’m more grateful for what I have, and I want to help more people.

~ Alex Agp

In the weeks leading up to the mission, I reflected on the words of Blessed Mother Teresa, “Love has to hurt,” although I wasn’t sure exactly what this meant in context of this trip. I figured there would be some hard days and a lot of work to do, but I didn’t know what it meant to love someone so much that it hurt, at least not a stranger and certainly not someone I would only encounter for a week. But, somehow, I experienced a very real pain in my heart for the people I served. Every day brought some sort of challenge. Whether it was trying to fix the seemingly unfixable problems on the home or hearing the heartbreaking testimonies of the family, God taught me a lesson. I learned patience and generosity, kindness and cooperation, but the most important lesson I learned was humility. God gives me so many blessings in my life, yet I find myself constantly dissatisfied. The people I served had next to nothing and were quite honestly, some of the happiest people I have ever met. I was shocked by their openness to pray with the strangers that had just walked into their home and how they understood that even with so little, God had given them so much.

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~ Morgan Hall

Kate Salzmann, a member of the Life Teen group at St. Patrick Parish in Carlisle, installs a new window on a home in Appalachia, during the group’s mission trip to Kentucky in July.

My trip to the Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center in Kentucky was the first mission trip I have ever been on. It was as though I was given a new window on the world. During the trip, I came to know the person of Christ more through my group and the family we were helping. Looking at the people and realizing that everyone is made in the image of God made me learn to not judge someone off their looks or what they have. Everyone in Kentucky was so nice and put others at ease. It was such an amazing feeling to be in that environment.

My relationship with Christ deepened before, during, and after in many ways. One main way was through the journal they gave us to use through the whole trip. That helped focused my prayer more on the right areas. Another way was through the food pantry volunteers that had been there seeing the people’s strong faith in God. Even when they were not in the best of situations, they still had faith that God will come through for them. The people were kind and loving, and I just knew that family was very important to them and that made you want to feel the same way. It helped you realize your life is good and your struggles are not as bad as theirs. They still keep faith in God and we should too.

Our work there was an answering of God’s call because we helped these people no matter what their situation. It felt so good, and as much as we thought we were changing their lives, they were really changing ours more. I got to work at a food bank one of the days that we were there. The people that ran it were so nice. When helping, I loved seeing the people’s faces as they walked out with their food. They were all so nice. These experiences made me realize that the people that run the center get to do this and answer God’s call every week. I would love to get to do that.

This trip truly was an eye opening experience and I would go back in a heartbeat. If you ever get a chance to go on a mission trip, do it; you won’t regret it.

~ Morgan Hall

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~ Morgan Hall

Kaleigh Balcaev puts the finishing touches on the Community Center restroom as part of the mission work at the Father Beiting Appalachian Mission Center, located in Louisa, Kentucky.
Youth and young adults can celebrate World Youth Day 2016 stateside, with a celebration of faith July 30 and 31 at Lancaster Catholic High School and Clipper Magazine stadiums. This unique, faith-filled event is being presented by the Diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry. It begins on the afternoon of Saturday, July 30, at Lancaster Catholic’s stadium, with an opening Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and Confessions. Food and merchandise vendors will be available throughout the day. In the evening, there will be break-out sessions, dinner, a concert, and a Holy Hour, leading up to Evening Prayer, a candlelight vigil and the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. Youth and young adults will sleep under the stars at Lancaster Catholic High School on Saturday night, in solidarity with diocesan pilgrims at World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland. On Sunday, July 31, participants will enjoy breakfast, join in Morning Prayer and praise and worship, and see a video message from Bishop Ronald Gainer. The morning will include Stations of the Cross, and then a pilgrimage walk to Clipper Magazine Stadium, where youth and young adults will enjoy lunch and a concert prior to the closing Mass.

The stateside event in Lancaster will correspond with the vigil and closing Mass presided over by Pope Francis at World Youth Day in Poland, offering participants an opportunity to join their peers in prayer, fellowship and the Eucharist. The pope’s World Youth Day homily will also be broadcasted. Registration for this exciting pilgrimage is now open! Early discount and “Sunday only” tickets are available. Visit www.hbgdiocese.org/wydstateside for information and registration, and stay connected with World Youth Day plans and excitement on Facebook by searching “World Youth Day Diocese of Harrisburg.”

Unable to Attend World Youth Day in Poland Next July?
The Diocese of Harrisburg has a unique opportunity in Lancaster for young people!

$175

www.hbgdiocese.org/wydstateside
Renovations Show Vitality of St. Monica Parish in Sunbury

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Marking this year the 20th anniversary of the founding of their parish from the consolidation of St. Michael the Archangel in Sunbury and St. Thomas More in Northumberland, the members of St. Monica in Sunbury have demonstrated their faith and their love for their parish through the completion of a renovation project.

Overlooking the junction of the north and west branches of the Susquehanna River from the corner of Front and Market streets, the current church building dates to 1950, constructed then as St. Michael the Archangel.

Through the winter of 2015, parishioners of St. Monica’s, under the leadership of their pastor, Father Fred Wangwe, AJ, undertook efforts to renovate the church interior. The renovations – which include new carpet, freshly painted walls, refinished pews, upgraded lighting, a new sound system and asbestos abatement – required financial support from parishioners and three months of work, which was completed in March.

Inclement weather in early March precluded Bishop Ronald Gainer from plans to celebrate Mass and bless the renovations, and so St. Monica and its faithful members opened the church doors to him on Aug. 23, four days prior to the Feast of St. Monica, for their highly-anticipated celebration.

The interior renovations are immediately striking to anyone who visited St. Monica Church prior to the changes, as the once dark carpeting and wood-paneled walls have been replaced with brighter hues.

“A project like this takes a lot of pulling together – it shows that you all did that,” Bishop Gainer told parishioners in his homily.

“This beautiful renovation is a success story to the vitality of the parish family,” he said. “This is a beautiful gathering place for your parish family.”

“Our Church stands up to our culture – our culture says the Church’s teaching is too difficult to accept…,” the bishop remarked. “But the teaching does not turn away from Christ. The teaching may be too difficult, too challenging, but it is the way to eternal life…. We dare not turn away from Christ. We need to stand with Peter and remain with the Lord.”

Bishop Ronald Gainer blesses the renovations at St. Monica Church in Sunbury, sprinkling holy water on the congregation.

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS


Susan Hendricks, the organist and choir director at St. Monica Parish, bows her head in prayer.

Edwin Ruiz and his daughters Brianna, left, and Janeris attend Mass to celebrate the completion of the renovations at their parish.
In Diocese of Harrisburg, Catholic Schools Celebrate Faith and Family

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Ask any student, educator or parent in any one of the 41 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg to tell you what makes their school so special, and they’ll inevitably say: “It’s like one big family.” As they should be.

Catholic schools are an extension of the home, providing spiritual formation for each child – body, mind and soul. They call students to discover, proclaim and live the Gospel message as they grow in faith. And this year, diocesan Catholic schools will focus on the family in a particular way.

Livia Riley, who serves as Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, told The Catholic Witness at the start of this academic year that the schools’ theme for 2015-2016 will focus on the family, in conjunction with the Year of the Family and the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia later this year.

The theme will be punctuated at the annual Education Conference on Sept. 16, which draws teachers and administrators together at the start of every school year for Holy Mass and a full slate of presentations and workshops designed to give educators the latest tools, knowledge and fuel for students’ faith-based learning.

Mrs. Riley said that the Diocesan Department for Catholic Schools is encouraging its schools – two pre-K programs, two K-12 schools, five high schools and 32 elementary schools – to undertake activities each month that celebrate the family. “With the busyness of our lives and various commitments, our family time can easily become more deprived, and so we’re encouraging schools to find ways to bring families together,” Mrs. Riley said.

“This fall, educators will find diocesan support to continue their advances in technology and STEM education via two events backed by the Department for Catholic Schools: the annual Tech’d Out Conference at the Cardinal Keeler Center, and a STEM workshop at Bishop McDevitt High School, both in early November. “These gatherings help to foster the community of educators throughout the diocese, and give them the support and resources they need to ensure that student learning is maximized,” said Margaret Barrett, Diocesan Assistant Superintendent for Elementary and Curriculum Development. “We’re here to support our Catholic schools by promoting students’ spiritual and academic development focused on the Catholic faith,” she said.

Learn more about Catholic schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg at www.hbgdiocese.org/catholic-schools.

Suggested School Activities for Families

• In October, hold a family Rosary gathering, where students and families can come together in prayer during the month dedicated to the Holy Rosary
• In November, create a school-wide family prayer to pray throughout the year
• In December, host an Advent prayer service to reflect on the coming of Christ
• In January, dedicate a family connection day, whereby students and parents turn off their electronic devices and focus on one another
• In February, plan activities focused on heart health
• In March, plan a Lenten prayer service to reflect on sacrifice for others during the penitential season
• In April, mindful of Pope Francis’ encyclical, Laudato Si’, on the care for our common home, plant a garden or participate in efforts to beautify the school or neighborhood
• In May, celebrate the family with a picnic.

Sisters Kristine and Laurieanna Fletcher, third and second graders at Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School, respectively, anticipate the start of their first year at the school. Both girls told The Catholic Witness that they were nervous about attending a new school, but were looking forward to math class.

Gina Myers and Megan Mwaura serve as cantors for Mass on the first day of school at St. Margaret Mary School in Harrisburg Aug. 31.

Nico Tritt, left, and Ryan Nickle show their school spirit as they head to class at St. Margaret Mary School in Harrisburg.
By Jen Reed

The Catholic Witness

In his sermon on the Last Judgment, Jesus calls us to charitable action on behalf of our neighbors through the seven Corporal Works of Mercy: • Feed the hungry • Give drink to the thirsty • Clothe the naked • Shelter the homeless • Visit the sick • Visit the imprisoned • Bury the dead

Most people are familiar with the passage from Matthew 25: “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” When we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, care for the sick, visit the imprisoned and bury the dead, we are caring for Christ.

For nearly 30 years, men and women volunteers in the Prison Christian Growth Group (PCGG) have been practicing one of those Corporal Works of Mercy by sharing the faith with inmates in a number of Pennsylvania’s prisons.

“Our mission, simply, is to share Christ with the inmates, and we do it through a format of faith sharing,” said Michael Drank, a ten-year member of the group and a parishioner at St. Catherine Laboure Parish in Harrisburg.

“We work all inmates regardless of church affiliation to join us in faith sharing. We pray, we read from the Bible, and we talk to people about the work that we do, and why we encourage them to come to the conference. We want people to have an understanding of the reality of prison ministry and the impact it can make on the lives of inmates.”

It’s not an easy ministry to attract volunteers to go,” Mr. Drank said, pointing out common concerns about safety, or attitudes about prisoners.

“People might feel strongly about Catholic social teaching and the call to visit the prisoner, as Jesus told us, but sometimes concerns about safety or negative stories they’ve heard can deter them from wanting to get involved in prison ministry,” he said. “This is why we want to talk to people about the work that we do, and why we encourage them to come to the conference. We want people to have an understanding of the reality of prison ministry and the impact it can make on the lives of inmates.”

It really requires nothing more than a willing and open heart.

“You don’t have to be able to quote the Bible, you don’t have to know Church theology. You just have to be willing to share your faith. Your own faith journey is your testimony,” Mr. Drank said. “You just need an open mind and an open heart. We’re there to start seeds of faith behind prison walls.”

begins walls to Share Christ with Inmates

Group to Host Prison Ministry Conference in Harrisburg in October

The Prison Christian Growth Group, whose members have been sharing the faith with inmates in a number of Pennsylvania’s prisons for nearly 30 years, will host a Prison Ministry Conference at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg on October 31 from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

The conference is an opportunity for men and women who are interested in prison ministry to learn more about ways in which they can get involved.

Father Francis Menei, a retired priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg and former Statewide Chaplain for the Correctional Institutions in Pennsylvania, will be the keynote presenter.

Breakout sessions will highlight the Prison Christian Growth Group, Catholic formation, and audio recordings of inmates talking about the impact of the ministry on their lives. Bishop Ronald Gainer will celebrate Mass, at 9 a.m.

Cost is $22 per person and includes lunch. Find additional information and register online at www.pcggprisonministry.org.

Beginning Experience Weekend For Couples Struggling with the Loss of a Spouse

If you have been through the loss of a marriage or spouse, apply for the fall Beginning Experience Weekend, to be held October 30-November 1, 2015, at Camp Hebron in Halifax, PA.

A former participant writes: “I received so much that weekend and would be interested in learning if I would be able to help even one person feel as blessed as I was to receive such compassion and support.”

The ministry is under the auspices of the Diocesan Office of Family Ministries. Applications and information are available at www.beginningexperience.org, or contact harrisburgc@gmail.com or 717-512-2718. Apply by September 30, 2015. Late applications may be accepted if space is available. Cost is $249.
Deacon Mortel Named Honorary Alumnus by Penn State

From St. Joan of Arc Parish, Hershey

Dr. Rodrigue Mortel, who serves as a deacon at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Hershey, recently received the Penn State Alumni Association’s Honorary Alumni Award. The award recognizes those who, not being Penn State graduates, have made significant contributions to the university’s welfare through their commitment and service.

Deacon Mortel served in a number of positions during his 30 years at Penn State Hershey. He was promoted to full professor in 1977, only five years after joining the faculty, and later became the chair of obstetrics and gynecology in 1983. After 13 years as department chair, Deacon Mortel was named founding director of Penn State Cancer Institute in 1985, where he discovered a new treatment for uterine cancer. He remained involved in educating young doctors and researchers.

“Education has been my passion from the age of 11,” Deacon Mortel said. “Not only did I educate myself to a high level, but I also made sure that everyone I do know in this country, is provide education. That’s why we endowed two places to Haiti schools.”

The Rod and Ceil Mortel Visiting Scholar in Obstetrics and Gynecology started in 1999 and continues into his retirement as a Scholar in Cancer Research in 2001, where he discovered a new treatment for uterine cancer.

Dr. Rodrigue Mortel and his wife, Ceil, hold the award certificate recognizing him as a recipient of the Penn State Alumni Association’s Honorary Alumni Award. Including 3- and 4-year-old pre-schoolers, adult literacy students and youth learning trades. “Our goal is to have these groups we are educating take over the direction of the country and help in restoring dignity to the poor Haitians and eliminate corruption in the government,” he said. “So it will be probably another 25 years before we see the product of what we have accomplished.”

Six months before he retired in 2002, he was ordained a deacon in the Catholic Church. In addition to service in the Diocese of Harrisburg and in his home diocese of Gonaïves, Deacon Mortel serves as missions chair in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Part of his ministry takes groups of youth to Haiti.

“Twice during the year, the Haitian students collect their pennies together and buy food, cook a meal and deliver it to the prisoners. So I think they show that if somebody helps you, then you go help somebody else.” He is thankful for the university’s honor.

“I was really excited and surprised that, even 15 years into retirement, Penn State was still interested in what I do,” he said. “I want to thank both the College of Medicine for nominating me, and the Penn State Alumni Association leadership for selecting me as the fourth person of the College of Medicine to receive this prestigious award.”

Deacon Rodrigue Mortel and his wife, Ceil, hold the award certificate recognizing him as a recipient of the Penn State Alumni Association’s Honorary Alumni Award.

Annual Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women’s Marian Day

Saturday, October 17, from 8:30 a.m.-noon
Holy Name of Jesus Church
6190 Allentown Boulevard, Harrisburg, PA 17112

The Dauphin District Council of Catholic Women warmly invites all women of the diocese to join us as we host this annual celebration to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. The day begins with Mass at 8:30 a.m., Rosary at 9 a.m., followed by breakfast at 9:30 a.m.

The speaker is Karen Bruskewicz, a professor of the Sacred Institute of the Missionaries of the Kingdom of Christ, which follows the Franciscan spirituality of seeing the face of Christ in all people. Karen is a member of Good Shepherd Parish in Camp Hill, and Lay Campus Minister at Elizabethtown College and Franklin & Marshall College.

Cost of $10 includes breakfast. RSVP by October 9 to Gigi Luto, 3216 Larry Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17109. Checks should be made payable to Dauphin District CCW.

Charismatic Day of Renewal “The Eucharistic Heart of Jesus”

September 19 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg

Kathleen McCarthy, a published author, Catholic radio broadcaster, and a Catholic lay evangelist for almost 40 years, will be the presenter. McCarthy has traveled across the country and internationally as a conference speaker and facilitates workshops, days of renewal and parish retreats. She has experienced the death of a husband, loss of a house through fire, personal and family illness and loss. Through it all, her uncompromising love of God and faith in His love for her has been her source of strength. She is a gifted speaker who shares with enthusiasm and motivates many hearts to experience the living God.

The Day of Renewal will have special times of praise and worship by “Break Through” Music Ministry. Word Gifts will be shared by Charismatic leaders from throughout the diocese. A newcomer’s session, prayer team ministry and unbound ministry will be shared by Charismatic leaders from throughout the diocese.

Pre-registration closes Sept. 10. To register, send $20 check made payable to “Diocese of Harrisburg”, Charismatic Renewal c/o Cardinal Keeler Center, Attn: Jaclyn Curran, Office of Vicar General, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, Pa 17111-3710.
New Orleans Archdiocese: Forever Changed by Hurricane Katrina

By Peter Finney Jr. — Catholic News Service

They are calling it “Kat 10” — Hurricane Katrina plus 10 years — which carries with it the double meaning of an ominous meteorological warning.

How could a Category 5 storm that engulfed the entire Gulf of Mexico but dropped its rains north of the region, gulfed the entire Gulf of Mexico but dropped its rains north of the region, and utterly resilient — is a resurrection story.

There were no insects, no birds and no human life has been restored, ” said now-retired New Orleans Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes, 82, who was stunned when he took a life at this moment in time. Across the region, 200,000 homes were destroyed or damaged. Catholic schools as quickly as possible to provide aid to families with a reason to return even when classes.

“Katrina forever changed the landscape of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Before the storm, the archdiocese was home to 128 parishes and missions. Three years later, after two stages of restructuring, that number was down to 108. There was a shared sense of loss. Across the region, 200,000 homes were destroyed or heavily damaged. Dozens of public, private and Catholic schools closed forever. But in the midst of the devastation, the Catholic Church jump-started the city’s initial recovery with a bold plan: open up as many Catholic schools as quickly as possible to provide aid to families with a reason to return even when public schools were not ready to open. “That was with very little publicity; strictly word of mouth about what we were doing. We knew if we did a lot of publicizing about what we were doing, that kind of response would not have received a ticket. Those not fortunate enough to receive a ticket were told to return the following day. “It was tough,” she said. “Just the physical toll was one thing. We worked really long days, 12-hour days, seven days a week. The agency was able to locate emergency shelter that they were lucky enough to get. Another might have needed a deposit for an apartment that they were lucky enough to find. Another might have needed to look for people they had been separated from, and many needed help in developing a plan. As time went on, the needs changed.

From the time the storm struck New Orleans through February 2006, Catholic Charities in the Baton Rouge Diocese served 103,187 people, and received more than $17 million in grant funding that was distributed in myriad of ways.

Katrina Evacuees Found Shelter, Relief in Baton Rouge Diocese

By Richard Meek — Catholic News Service

Ten years later, the memories still linger for Carol Spruill, as if they happened yester-
year but perhaps were a lifetime ago. She remembers the chaos, despair, uncer-
tainty and the cries for help from so many and workweeks that had no end in the days and months following Hurricane Katrina.

She also remembers the lines, droves of desperate people who had lost everything in Katrina’s floodwater, who were seeking any modicum of relief; whether it was articles of clothing, a bus ticket to a relative’s house outside the city, food or assistance in finding a place to live.

“I remember pulling into the parking lot at the airport to find that there already was a line of people down the drive-
way,” said Spruill, communications director for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. “There were probably 300 people before we even got close to opening our doors.”

“Of course, that with very little publicity; strictly word of mouth about what we were doing. We knew if we did a lot of publicizing about what we were doing, that kind of response would not have received a ticket. Those not fortunate enough to receive a ticket were told to return the following day. “It was tough,” she said. “Just the physical toll was one thing. We worked really long days, 12-hour days, seven days a week. The agency was able to locate emergency shelter that they were lucky enough to get. Another might have needed a deposit for an apartment that they were lucky enough to find. Another might have needed to look for people they had been separated from, and many needed help in developing a plan. As time went on, the needs changed.

From the time the storm struck New Orleans through February 2006, Catholic Charities in the Baton Rouge Diocese served 103,187 people, and received more than $17 million in grant funding that was distributed in myriad of ways. They provided counseling and case management ser-
vices to nearly 10,000 people. They clothed nearly 30,000 people, and provided more than $1 million in utilities assistance to nearly 20,000 people. More than $2 million in financial assistance was directed to nearly 80,000 people and included mortgage and rental assistance.

The society of St. Vincent de Paul is the one that works at the forefront in helping evacuees in the diocese by distributing meals, providing temporary shelter and warehousing dona-
tions from around the world. St. Vincent assisted more than 70,000 individuals from the time of the storm through the end of 2005.

“What I remember most about Katrina is the wonderful way our Church responded,” said Sister of St. Vincent de Paul execu-
tive director Michael Acacio. “The Catholic Charities response was phenomenal.”

He said in the darkest days he saw hope in the humanity of the victims and their demeanor of the world. And he continues to see that hope.

“I think the hope is God,” he said. “After Katrina when we needed God the most, His disciples were out there doing all of the work.”
**Blessed Serra Described as Missionary ‘On Fire’ Heeding Christ’s Call**

By Nancy Wieheec  
Catholic News Service

To Andrew Galvan, Blessed Junipero Serra is a stalwart of faith and mission worthy of the title “saint.”

“He was all wood and nails. He was a tough dude. He fought, he defended, he wrangled, he was frustrated and he was frustrating,” Galvan told Catholic News Service.

A descendant of tribal members from the San Francisco Bay region, Galvan traces his family roots to California’s first Christians, thousands of whom were baptized and confirmed by the 18th-century Spanish missionary.

Pope Francis will canonize Blessed Junipero Sept. 23 in Washington. Galvan said he hopes to be there.

Long a promoter of Blessed Serra, Galvan is the museum director and curator of Old Mission Dolores, the sixth-oldest of California’s 21 historical missions.

He said Blessed Serra was “fearless” to heed Christ’s call to witness, like Jesus’ apostles and St. Francis of Assisi.

“He’s on sacred ground, because in his mind, being a student of [John Duns] Scotus, he is now entering this world that is completely innocent,” he said referring to the famed Franciscan priest-philosopher of the Middle Ages. “And he [Serra] is now entering this world that is completely innocent, living faith and mission worthy of the title ‘saint.’

“His God, I couldn’t live the life he lived,” Galvan said.

Miguel Joseph Serra took the Franciscan habit at age 17. He chose the name Junipero, after a companion of St. Francis known for his holy simplicity.

Junipero Serra became an adept student of philosophy and theology and was inspired by the stories of saints and missionaries. Always looking outward, the friar left a successful and comfortable life as a professor to embark on a missionary journey to the lands he would never return to Spain.

In Mexico, he spent 17 years building up Indian missions in the Sierra Gorda and traveling far and wide, preaching popular missions. In fervent sermons, he called on those who had fallen from faith to return to God’s mercy.

His long journey did not deter California until he was 55. And when he did, said Galvan, he jumped from his donkey and kissed the ground.

“He’s on sacred ground, because in his mind, being a student of [John Duns] Scotus, he is now entering this world that is completely innocent,” he said referring to the famed Franciscan priest-philosopher of the Middle Ages. “And he [Serra] is the one bringing the Gospel where it has never been brought before.”

Galvan has studied Blessed Serra for 37 years and has a deep acceptance of the friar, who was beatified in 1988 by St. John Paul II.

“History will be made on September 27 when Mass will be celebrated by our Holy Father from the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia,” Galvan said. “The West Shore Catholic Schools, in celebration of the World Meeting of Families, will host the live streaming of this family event at Good Shepherd Church in Camp Hill.

Doors will open at 3:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Church and Parish Hall; the Mass will begin at 4:00 p.m. Please visit the event website at www.worldfamilyrun.com and register today! Registration is free. Seating is limited.

**Building Second Papal Altar is Work of Faith for Deacon**

By Mark Zimmermann  
Catholic News Service

They say lightning never strikes twice in the same place, but at the St. Joseph Carpentry Shop along a country road in Poolesville, Md., Deacon Dave Cahoon said he is having his second “once-in-a-lifetime” experience in the past seven years.

In 2008, Deacon Cahoon built the altar Pope Benedict XVI used for his papal Mass at Nationals Park in Washington, and now the carpenter is building an altar Pope Francis will use at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception during his visit to the nation’s capital.

On Sept. 23, on the east steps of the national shrine overlooking The Catholic University of America campus, the pope will celebrate the canonization Mass for Blessed Junipero Serra, the 18th-century Spanish Franciscan missionary to California.

“It is just by the grace of God,” said Deacon Cahoon, describing the honor and the blessing of building two papal altars.

The experience of building Pope Benedict’s altar, chair and ambo went perfectly eight years ago, the carpenter said, noting that altar and ambo are now used in the chapel at the Archdiocese of Washington’s St. John Paul II Seminary.

Now Deacon Cahoon is working as part of a team of 12 craftsmen, preparing 14 pieces of furniture for the canonization Mass, including the altar, chair, ambo and side chairs.

Deacon Cahoon just finished restoring the old steeple at St. Mary Church in Barnesville, Md., where he serves as a deacon. That project involved new slate, brickwork and painting, with a new cross put on top of the steeple.

Deacon Cahoon and his employee, Carlos Hernandez, are working hard in his shop on the altar for the papal Mass.

“This is the first piece of 14. I am on pure adrenaline,” he said, laughing, later noting that building the furniture will require thousands of hours of work by the team.

A friend and fellow Catholic, Doug Faust, the owner of Carriage Hill Cabinet & Millwork Co. in Frederick, Md., will be building the papal chair and side chairs out of cherry wood.

The altar was designed by Catholic University architecture students Ariadne Cerretti, Matthew Hoffman and Joseph Taylor, and it will be used in the national shrine afterward.

In an interview with the Catholic Standard, Washington’s archdiocesan newspaper, Deacon Cahoon said he was inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’ on the environment to use materials for the altar that did not involve any exploitation of the environment or of indigenous workers.

The altar includes a colonnade of 10 individual columns crafted from poplar, with its main structure made of medium-density fiber board, which he said offers stability.

Craftsmen from Ruge Stone of Lorson, Virginia, will build the altar top with Botticino Classic, a type of Italian marble. Artists at the national shrine will apply a faux finish to it to match the color of the columns around the shrine’s main altar.

Deacon Cahoon named his carpentry shop after St. Joseph, the carpenter and Jesus’ earthly father, and he tries to emulate his shop’s patron saint. “I think for him, work was a prayer.”

The deacon begins each day with morning Mass at St. Mary Church. “It [the Eucharist] is the center of my world, that’s where I begin,” he said.
The Catholic Church.

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.

BERWICK – St. Joseph: George Scarcince.

CHAMBERSBURG – Corpus Christi: Alberto Cocco, Josephine Colby, David Gusty, Cecilia Hill, Theresa Milazzo, Joan Smith, Carl Wundrich.

COAL TOWNSHIP – Our Lady of Hope: Edward C. Strenkoski.


ENOLA – Our Lady of Lourdes: Charles Del Santo.

FAIRFIELD – Immaculate Conception BVM: Nancy Fisanich.

HARRISBURG – St. Mary: Patricia J. Dwyer.


LEBANON – Assumption BVM: Baltazar Dinulos, Filomona Galassi, Richard Klick, Zacharia Xuoz, Dorothy Shay.

MARYSVILLE – Our Lady of Good Counsel: David Long.


MIDDLETOWN – Seven Sorrows BVM: Herbert “Hesh” Henderson, Rose Marie Rose.

MILLERSVILLE – St. Philip the Apostle: Atreyu Davenport, Samuel Fonz, Donald J. Kirchner, Robert Trowbridge.

MOUNT CARMEL – St. Joseph: Ronald Matarese; St. Rose of Lima: Joanna W. “Joyce” Rogers.

NIGHTINGER, William Randall, Loretta Eugenia Jean Bednarchik, James E. Shay.

OLSON, Patrick Thorn.

PONZI, Donald J. Kirchner, Robert Baltazar Dinulos, Filomona Galassi, Letitia Connors, Helen White.

R. Olson, Patrick Thorn.

Skean.

Sister M. Concepta Abbott

Victoria BVM: Nancy Fisanich.


They died in September:

PIERCE – St. Mary: Nicholas Maria Bores.

St. Leo: The Pilgrim Virgin,” which took place at the parish center on Novem-

Pray for the following clergy who died in September during the past 25 years:


Tithe” program, individual parishioners, friends and even one local Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Peace and Social Justice Committee has paid

steps down after 8 years

St. Joseph’s in Danville Donates Hygiene Items for Migrants

Since 2006, the members of the Peace and Social Justice Committee of St. Joseph Parish in Danville have been preparing hygiene bags for migrant workers who come to the area for the harvests. This is the 10th year that the committee members have solicited donations from parishioners and prepared and distributed them to the workers at their camps or living quarters.

In addition, through monetary donations from the parish’s “Tithe the Tithe” program, individual parishioners, friends and even one local Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Peace and Social Justice Committee has paid or helped to pay for needed dental work, vision exams and eyeglasses for the workers and their families.

The committee has also been aided by the Good Samaritan Center of Danville, the graduate CRNP nursing program at Misericordia University and by parishioners who provided jeans, shoes, boots, shirts and sweatshirts, baseball caps, blankets, and many other items. The committee estimates that during the ten-year period, more than $25,000 has been donated and spent to help those less fortunate than we are.

Recently, members of the Peace and Social Justice Committee prepared approximately 100 bags filled with donations gathered from parishioners. Each bag contains a toothbrush, toothpaste, a razor, shaving cream, shampoo, soap, a bath towel, a washcloth, deodorant, hand lotion and socks. They have prepared and distributed 645 individual bags over the past 10 years.

Sister M. Concepta Abbott

Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy Sister M. Concepta Abbott died Aug. 18 at Misericordia Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in York, where she had been a resident for several years, prior to being a nurse and Director of Nursing at the facility. She was 93.

Born in Scranton, Pa., she entered the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy in York in 1942. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from College Misericordia in Dallas, Pa., and taught for several years in schools administered by the religious order, including at St. Joan of Arc School in Hershey, and in Old Forge and Hazleton, Pa., as well as in New Jersey and Massachusetts.

Sister Concepta studied nursing at St. Joseph Hospital, School of Nursing, in Lancaster. After becoming a registered nurse she ministered at Misericordia Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center in York for more than 50 years, until her full retirement in 2012.

The funeral Mass was celebrated in the chapel at Misericordia on Aug. 22.

Burial was in the Pieta Cemetery on the grounds of the Provincial House in Newfield, N.J.

Cathedral Hosts Open Houses during Labor Day Festivities

The Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick, located at 212 State Street in Harrisburg, will hold a one-day open house in conjunction with Kipona, which returns to Harrisburg’s Riverfront Park this year. The annual three-day festival will be held Sept. 5-7.

The Cathedral’s open house, hosted by the Knights of Columbus, Cathedral Council #11008, will run from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 5.

The Knights will serve free hot dogs and beverages to guests who visit the Cathedral for self-guided tours. Father Joshua Brommer, the new pastor of the Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick, will be on hand to welcome and speak with guests.

Additionally, because Kipona brings so many guests into the city, the Knights also will be serving free coffee and donuts to the public outside the Cathedral after the Masses at 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 6. Visit www.stpatrickcathedral.com for a Mass schedule.

The popular Kipona festival brings together artists, food vendors and live music along the waterfront at Riverfront Park. The Native American Pow Wow, karate tournaments and Seniors’ baseball games will take place on City Island.

For more information about the Knights of Columbus, visit http://www.kofc11008.com/. Find them on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/KofC11008. The local Knights also are on Twitter at @KofC11008.

St. Joseph’s in Danville

Donates Hygiene Items for Migrants

Charles Becker, past Grand Knight of Knights of Columbus Council #14349 of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Spring Grove, was recently presented with an award plaque and ceremonial gavel in recognition for his 8 years of service as Grand Knight for the Sacred Heart council. The award ceremony took place at the Sacred Heart Parish Center shortly after the installation of new council officers had concluded. Incoming Grand Knight Nevin Taylor presented the plaque to Mr. Becker with council members and the entire Becker family in attendance.

Mr. Becker was elected to the position of Grand Knight at the founding of Council #14349 in July of 2007. The dedication and wisdom he brought to the post resulted in his being reelected for an additional 3 terms.

Over the course of Mr. Becker’s tenure, the council officers had concluded. Incoming Grand Knight Nevin Taylor presented the plaque to Mr. Becker with council members and the entire Becker family in attendance.

Mr. Becker was elected to the position of Grand Knight at the founding of Council #14349 in July of 2007. The dedication and wisdom he brought to the post resulted in his being reelected for an additional 3 terms.

Over the course of Mr. Becker’s tenure, the council took on projects that benefitted both the Sacred Heart Parish of Spring Grove and the larger community. Among those were the establishment of a computer lab at the Sacred Heart Parish Center in 2007, the council’s adoption and maintenance of Route 116 south of Spring Grove, an annual mitten tree that the committee has also been aided by the Good Samaritan Center of Danville, the graduate CRNP nursing program at Misericordia University and by parishioners who provided jeans, shoes, boots, shirts and sweatshirts, baseball caps, blankets, and many other items. The committee estimates that during the ten-year period, more than $25,000 has been donated and spent to help those less fortunate than we are.

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Sacred Heart Grand Knight Steps Down after 8 Years

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Memorial Service for Victims of Abortion - On Saturday, September 12 at 11:30 a.m., pro-life Americans will honor the memory of our littlest neighbors with the National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children. Solemn prayer and a eucharistic adoration will be held for all babies who have not had the opportunity to be born, and for those whose lives have been marked by abortion. For more information, contact Jo Caan at 717-732-4199 or billy@verizon.net.

The DSSR Group will hold a of prayer and song to be held at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in New Freedom from 7 to 9pm on Tuesday, September 8. For more information, call Stephanie Anne at 726-9847 or email salas@etnyrnyc.org or visit www.ETNYRNYC.org/dssr. The DSSR Group will also hold a retreat on abortion awareness at York Hall in Hanover from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Participants find healing through the videos, discussion groups and workshop exercises based on biblical passages. Cost is for workshop only. For more information, please call the retreat coordinator, Jo Caan at 717-732-4199 or billy@verizon.net.

Sisters of St. Joseph of the Valley in New Oxford will be holding a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land on September 9-20, 2015. This pilgrimage will be led by Brother Joseph Basile, Provincial of the Province of North America, and includes an evening with the Holy Father. The itinerary includes a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Garden of Gethseman and the Mount of Olives, the Sea of Galilee, the monasteries of the Holy Land, the Dead Sea, and Petra. Cost of $3,999 is all-inclusive (except lunch, personal gifts, transfers, and tips) and includes roundtrip airfare from Philadelphia. For more information, contact Geri Andregic at 717-761-4789 or email your child’s name to 17011, and marking the envelope “Mass of Remembrance.” You may also call to speak with the Rev. John C. Clark, Director of Advancement, at 717-737-3731, ext. 327 for more information or visit www.rachelsvineyard.org.
Sports Commentary

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

I trust in God.

Simple enough to recite these words, though they have a profound ring to them, as you can imagine. Spoken prior to Little League baseball games, these words begin a pledge that was conceived in the mid-1950s by an anonymous league official. Surely that person wanted the kids who were about to grace the diamond to be fully aware of blessings given through this great game.

Not since 1976 had I heard these words ring in person.

I trust in God.

I love my country, And will respect its laws. I will play fair, And strive to win But win or lose, I will always do my best.

For the first time, I went to the Little League World Series last week to namely see this vaunted team from Central Pennsylvania’s Red Land whose prodigious uppercut swings harken back to the good ole days when ball players lifted their front foot and swung for the fences with reckless abandon. There’s something quite fun about watching kids try to pound the ball as hard as they can on every swing. No bunts, no shortening up the swing with two strikes, no slapping the ball the other way to get base runners aboard. Pound it, and have them chase it.

What makes baseball so great is that there is no right way to play. It’s probably the reason I love this game above all other great games. When I played Little League beginning in 1973 and finishing in 1976, those were turbulent years in American history. Amidst the ending of the Vietnam War on TV every night, it seemed, and the Watergate drama that forced a president to resign, baseball was the rock in my life. When our country celebrated its 200th birthday in ’76, I was playing all-star baseball, hoping to make it to Williamsport. We didn’t win enough, of course, to make it, but it was the goal.

Before every game I played, I truly remember reciting these words of the pledge. Meant nothing to me as a pre-adolescent boy – I cared about the game at hand and whether I beat my friends’ team so I could rub it in after the game. We shook hands, said “good game” and commenced ribbing them about losing. There was no mercy given.

Not so at Williamsport, as I watched this year where sportsmanship is the rule. And it’s refreshing to see adults in charge of kids doing life well. At Williamsport, you take a week to respect your foes, act polite, respect differences of other players from around the world, rather than telling them they are not welcome. It’s a big stage and the script is written well, and thus the play works. Kids really aren’t different than we were 40 years ago. The simple words they recited probably did not resonate any more than they did with me in the 1970s – a dangerous time of war and malfeasance just the same. The world has never been safe.

But one very safe thing I noticed and was struck by at the World Series: these kids from Red Land, and all the other teams who competed for that matter, played without fear. That takes trust. That takes trust in your Creator. And that’s the inspiring message that is Williamsport every August, if you ask me. There was no fear getting hurt standing in against a pitcher firing 95 mph from 46 feet away. Having no fear of failing, no fear of losing in front of 45,000 fans and 30 million viewers on TV is a hard thing to imagine. Play hard, strive to win, do your best – a pledge to live by forever.

My hope is that they remember for the rest of their lives when they had the blessing of having no fear – when they trusted God – and played the best game of all on a diamond in a respectful manner that was profound to witness.