Teens assemble glow-stick necklaces during an exuberant dance that was part of the 20th annual Fan the Fire rally in York Nov. 17. The rally drew hundreds of teens to grow closer to the Lord through Mass, Adoration and Christian fellowship.

By Mariah Chuprinski
Special to The Witness

In its 20th year, the Fan the Fire youth rally drew more than 500 teenagers Nov. 17 to grow closer to the Lord in the Eucharist.

The annual one-day event drew teens in grades 8-12 from all over the Diocese of Harrisburg – as well as from Maryland, New Jersey and West Virginia – to make the trek to St. Joseph Church in York.

The theme of the rally this year was “All in the Family,” and was headlined by keynote speaker Roy Petitfils, an author and licensed counselor who specializes in counseling teens and young adults.

Eucharistic Adoration and Mass were frequently cited as the teens’ favorite part of the day, which also included a keynote address, lunch and dinner, Confession, time for praise and worship, and a “glow stick” dance. Two workshop sessions were offered, where teens broke into five smaller groups to hear local presenters speak on family-focused issues.

The rally began as an idea more than 20 years ago. Scott Anthony, the founder and lead organizer since its inception, realized there was a need for a spiritual renewal among teens, outside of larger youth gatherings like the Steubenville Youth Conferences, where area teens frequently travel with their youth groups.

“They were having these deep experiences with God in the Eucharist at these large events, but not having them in their parishes. I wanted to show them that Jesus is the same everywhere; he’s just as powerful on a retreat or a mission trip as he is in their own parishes,” said Anthony, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at St. Joseph Parish.

More than 100 teens attended the first rally in 1998, which quickly gained popularity to involve hundreds from four dozen parishes. News on the event’s success spread; Anthony was invited to guide organizers from other dioceses to start rallies of their own.

Many of the teens are repeat attendees, including Lori Schlosser, a junior from St. Joseph Parish who has attended the rally for the last several years.

“Through Fan the Fire, I’ve been hit with the reality of God’s love, and it re-
Diocese Develops Survivors’ Compensation Program

“The tragedy of sexual abuse of minors affects every segment of modern society. Therefore, whenever someone reports suspected sexual abuse of a minor, whether it is a recent or past occurrence, the Diocese will act quickly and authoritatively, in justice to all concerned.”

So reads the opening statement of the Diocese of Harrisburg’s Youth Protection Program. With these words in mind and in an effort to continue supporting survivors of clergy abuse, the Diocese recently announced the development of a Survivors’ Compensation Program.

“It is my sincere hope that this program will help to enhance and increase our already ongoing efforts to assist the survivors of child sexual abuse,” said Ronald W. Gainer, Bishop of Harrisburg.

The program will operate independent of the Diocese. A board of highly respected experts from various fields will oversee the program, including informing the Diocese of our financial obligations to survivors.

“The program will be operational early next year (2019) and will be led by attorney Kenneth Feinberg, along with his colleague Camille Biros,” said Bishop Gainer. “Mr. Feinberg has specialized in administering similar types of victims programs, including the successful Independent Reconciliation and Compensation fund for the Archdiocese of New York, and the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund.”

Far more than just a fund, this program will work with survivors to provide physical, mental and spiritual healing. The Diocese already offers counseling and pastoral care to every survivor of abuse, regardless of when or where the abuse occurred. This new program, which will be operational in January of 2019, will build onto the services already in place.

Bishop Gainer added that funding for this program will come from the Diocese’s “reserve, unrestricted Diocesan accounts and the yield from our Diocesan investments. We will also be working with our insurers who will be another source of these funds.”

Supporting Survivors

Many of the services the Diocese provides for survivors of abuse have been in place for decades, all with the goal of helping survivors find healing.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Mental Health Counseling

In Lancaster, York, Harrisburg and Abbottstown

- Adult Individual Counseling
- Child and Adolescent Individual Counseling (ages 5-17)
- Couples Counseling
- Family Counseling
- Faith-Based Counseling Available
- Co-Occurring Disorders Treatment
- Psychiatric Evaluations
- Medication Assessment and Medication Management

Job Opening:
Digital Communication/ Media Specialist

The Diocese of Harrisburg is seeking a full-time Digital Communication/ Media Specialist. This position is responsible for providing creative and technical expertise in planning, producing and implementing high-quality multimedia materials across several platforms in an integrated fashion.

As a member of the Diocese’s Communications Department, the specialist will develop and maintain a robust online presence, specifically with social media, while also assisting with digital press materials, website content development, media production and operation of the Diocese’s cable TV channel and radio programs.

Requirements: Must have a bachelor’s degree in public relations, journalism, communications or similar field, at least three years of relevant experience, minimum of two years of experience using digital platforms for communication/public relations, and experience with video editing systems.

View the full job description at www.hbgdiocese.org/employment.

Submit cover letter, résumé and a link to an online portfolio demonstrating digital communications experience to Rachel Bryson at rbryson@hbgdiocese.org.

For best consideration, submit all materials by the end of November.

The Catholic Witness
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The mission of The Catholic Witness is to be of personal and practical help as we try to be loyal and true witnesses for Christ in our daily living, spiritual and temporal, in private and in public.

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Every survivor is offered spiritual, pastoral, and mental health assistance. These services are offered at no cost and will never be denied, even if the abuse occurred outside of the Diocese.

The current supports offered to abuse survivors are part of the Diocese’s Youth Protection Program. Through this program, the Diocese ensures that every clergy member, employee, volunteer and vendor has the appropriate clearances and training to work with children; understands how to recognize and report abuse; and details the steps the Diocese’s takes for every abuse accusation.

“I continue to express our profound sorrow and apologize to the survivors of child sex abuse, the Catholic faithful and the general public for the abuses that took place and for those Church officials who failed to protect children,” Bishop Gainer said.

More details on the Survivors’ Compensation Program will be shared as soon as they are available. To learn about the many programs in place to assist survivors and prevent abuse, please visit www.YouthProtectionHbg.com.
Catechists Celebrated for Going ‘All In’ for Jesus

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

The Diocese’s annual Catechetical Conference drew more than 300 men and women involved in parish religious education programs to the Diocesan Center Nov. 10 for a day of prayer, camaraderie and workshops.

The theme of the day was “All in for Jesus” and examined the role of catechesis in the greater work of evangelization.

Keynote speaker Dr. Bob Rice, professor of Catechetics and Evangelization at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, was the keynote speaker.

“Our ability to love is based in part on our ability to know. ... When we are attracted to someone or something, we’re eager to learn more. That’s what we’re going for in this ministry of catechesis,” Dr. Rice said.

“We’re doing education for the sake of love. It’s something that always goes to the heart, because we want people to fall more deeply in love. That’s the difference between catechesis and instruction,” he remarked. “To something that’s informational, our response might be, ‘Wow, I had no idea.’ Something that’s catechetical should elicit the response, ‘Wow, I had no idea He loved me that much.’”

“Everything we’re doing is driven by love and explained by love,” Dr. Rice told the catechists. “This is the role we play. We all have various kinds of textbooks and curriculum and things that we’re trying to impart, but catechesis isn’t done through books. It’s done through people.”

The gathering opened with Mass celebrated by Father David Danneker, Diocesan Vicar General. He joined James Gontis, Diocesan Director of Evangelization and Catechesis, in presenting awards to ten catechists for outstanding service.

Award recipients were Rose Barnas of St. James in Lititz; Anne Marie Boltz of Assumption BVM in Lebanon and Our Lady of Fatima in Jonestown; Becky Broderic of Sacred Heart in Cornwall; George Byerly of St. Catherine Labouré in Harrisburg; Sister Anna Cosgrave, OSF, of Holy Trinity Parish and Our Lady of the Angels School in Columbia; James Fair of Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg; Andrea Morrison of Holy Name of Jesus in Harrisburg; Nora Torquato of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Lewistown; Stacey White of St. Joseph in Hanover; and Linda Walborn of St. Monica in Sunbury.

“Evangelization and catechesis, while they are distinct, are inseparable,” Gontis said. “For catechesis to be effective, we have to set our hearts and minds aflame with Jesus. Our catechists help their students know Jesus in order to love him.”
Unique School System Strengthens Leadership, Unity among Trinity Students

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

A unique schoolwide system at Trinity High School in Camp Hill is strengthening mission and ministry by fostering faith, leadership and unity among students.

Known as the House System, the initiative is producing results in students’ academic, social and spiritual growth.

It’s achieved by grouping students into smaller communities to increase opportunities for leadership and mentoring across grade levels.

At Trinity, students in grades 9-12 are grouped into four Houses: De La Salle, Immaculata, Loyola and Seton. They remain in their specific House through graduation.

Common in European schools and implemented in a number of Catholic schools across the United States, the House System “allows us to build on what is already a strong spirit at Trinity,” said John Cominsky, principal.

The system challenges administrators, faculty, students, parents and staff to look at the school through a new lens. Homeroom periods have been replaced by small mentor group sessions within the Houses. Seating at Masses and assemblies is arranged by House instead of grade. Even office staff are assigned to Houses as a means of furthering camaraderie and healthy competition.

Faculty members were educated in the system before its introduction to students, noted Sister Susan Kuk, IHM. She is the Director of the House System at Trinity.

The system is set up with one faculty dean and eight faculty mentors per House.

Student leadership is prominent. Instead of Student Council roles, they serve as school captains; house captains; service, activity and ministry coordinators; and group, activity and service leaders.

“We’re expecting a lot from the students with this program,” said Bill Boia, theology teacher and dean of De La Salle House. “They have embraced it. They’re coming with ideas for activities and running them.”

Mentor Group Bonds

In daily mentor group sessions, students gather with their assigned faculty member to talk, or plan House-led activities.

“With the Houses and the smaller mentor groups, people feel like they have a place where they belong,” said junior Maureen Pham, a Ministry Coordinator in De La Salle House.

Freshman Grace Hubbard, a member of Seton House, said the mentor groups have fostered unity and spirit.

“Every teacher here goes out of their way to have an impact on our lives,” she said. “Now with the mentor leadership, there are even more opportunities to form that bond. That helps us develop as students.”

Unity and Competition

The House System also allows students to “take ownership of their school experience, and fosters healthy competition,” Sister Susan observed.

In the House System, students remain with the same mentor teacher throughout high school. This approach allows connections to develop, Sister Susan said.

“It allows faculty to see where a student needs to be challenged or developed, or where they might need help,” she said.

Senior Maura Consedine, House Captain for Immaculata, said the relationships between students and teachers have been a hallmark of Trinity.

“The unity has been instrumental,” Maura concurred. “Student leaders are learning people skills, and how to work with groups. Even those who don’t have a leadership position in the system are participating, being positive and being a part of it all. That’s just as important for success.”

For students Maureen and Maura, school spirit and unity are crucial to the high school experience.

“We’re coming out of our shells and taking ownership,” she said. “We’re planning events and liturgies, and being ourselves.”

House activities have included prayer services, landscaping in the school’s courtyard, cards for St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital, pen pal letters for children in Africa and packages for soldiers.

The House System was fully implemented at Trinity at the start of this academic year, and already the fruits are being realized.

“It has helped strengthen the Catholic identity of our community, and socialize our young people within our Catholic tradition,” Cominsky said.

For information on Trinity High School and its House System, visit www.thrick.us or call 717-761-1116.)
St. Patrick’s Potato Project Assists Food Pantry

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

A week before Thanksgiving, students at St. Patrick School in York took part in a hands-on service project to help feed those in the local community.

Partnering with the nearby Catholic Harvest Food Pantry, students as young as preschoolers teamed up to count and sort 2,000 pounds of potatoes, which the pantry distributed to individuals and families for their Thanksgiving meals.

Working in groups on the gym floor, the students dug into 50-pound bags of potatoes and sorted them into smaller bags of eight to be boxed and returned to the pantry. Teachers facilitated the effort, as older students partnered with younger ones in 30-minute increments. All total, students sorted 2,000 pounds of the starchy crop in two days.

This is the second year in a row St. Patrick School has partnered with the Catholic Harvest Food Pantry for the project. The school also assists the pantry through service projects during Catholic Schools Week.

“The potato packing project and our other efforts with the food pantry give the students a good understanding of the work that the pantry does and how it serves people in our community,” said Kathleen Smith, principal. “It’s good for students to get involved in helping their brothers and sisters in need, especially during this time of year.”

Above: Joshua Tineo eagerly examines the potatoes, while Ameliyah Clayton counts them to place eight in the bag.
Left: Adelynn Gray shows Ismael Hernandez-Noyola a big spud she picked from a 50-pound bag of potatoes.
Right: St. Patrick School students team up to pack potatoes for clients of the Catholic Harvest Food Pantry in York. Clockwise from top center are Dylan Adams, Peyton Newcomer, Jocelyn Amereikh, Isabella Farber, Cameron Hillmeyer and Daniel Rodriquez.
Mass Celebrating Persons with Disabilities Illustrates ‘All Are Welcome’

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Elena Crupi was beaming at the Diocese’s annual Mass Celebrating the Gifts of People with Disabilities. Serving as a greeter Nov. 18 at St. Catherine Laboure Church in Harrisburg, she welcomed Massgoers as they arrived.

“It’s my first time doing this,” said Elena, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Mechanicsburg. “It’s so fun to greet people, to help them with things for today. It’s just awesome,” she told The Catholic Witness as she distributed programs.

Elena was one of numerous people with disabilities who shared their talents at the Mass, sponsored by the Diocesan Office of Ministry with People with Disabilities. It shined light on encouragement and inclusion, as they served as greeters, altar servers and gift bearers.

As the Entrance Procession took shape in the narthex, altar server Joe Gerzewski of St. Rose of Lima Parish in York carried the crucifix. He bowed his head and prayed as a prayer for victims of clergy sex abuse was read aloud.

“It is important that we pray for them, and do what we can to help them,” said Joe. He is an altar server and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at his parish, and a member of St. Michael’s Guard, an ecclesial movement of men throughout the Diocese devoted to serving as altar servers at Mass.

The parish congregation welcomed their guests for the Mass, which included members of the Deaf Catholic Community, people on the Autism spectrum, persons with Down Syndrome, and those with various other intellectual or physical challenges.

Appropriately, Mass began with the hymn, “All Are Welcome.”

St. Catherine’s is home to a monthly Mass for people with Autism, which incorporates low lighting, minimal music and a smaller congregation to help reduce sensory stimulation. The church, which underwent renovations last year to include increased accessibility, has wheelchair ramps, assisted listening devices, spacious aisles and an accessible altar.

In his homily, Father Neil S. Sullivan, pastor, noted that 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Bishop’s 1978 statement on persons with disabilities.

In that document, he noted, the bishops said, “We must actively work to make persons with disabilities part of the fabric of modern society, recognizing that individuals with disabilities have a claim to our respect because they are persons, because they share in the one redemption of Christ, and because they contribute to our society by their activity within it.”

“Persons with disabilities bring their own important, special and sacred perspective, their own image of Christ, and because they contribute to our society by their activity within it.”

“It is important that we pray for them, and do what we can to help them,” said Elena.

The Diocesan Mass Celebrating the Gifts of People with Disabilities. Kate Neri serves as Administrative Assistant. For information, contact kNERI@hbdiocese.org or 717-657-4804, ext. 322.

The Diocesan Office of Ministry with People with Disabilities. The office was established in 2007 and exists to serve and support parishes in creating environments where parishioners with disabilities and their families are welcomed and fully included. The office serves as a source for reference material, guidelines and training assistance. It hosts annual events such as the Diocesan Camp at Kirchenwald for adults with developmental disabilities, and the Diocesan Mass Celebrating the Gifts of People with Disabilities.

A cornerstone of the office’s ministry is its Parish Advocacy Program, an initiative designed to enable each parish to better respond to the gifts and needs of parishioners living with disabilities. Parish advocates are parishioners, chosen by the pastor, who assist in working for and with parishioners with disabilities. In consultation with the pastor, advocates identify persons with disabilities and their families, assess the needs and gifts of those parishioners and work toward elimination of barriers to pursue full participation in the life of the parish.

On the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Bishops’ 1978 groundbreaking pastoral statement on persons with disabilities, it is a time to both celebrate and to renew the resolve toward welcoming and including parishioners of all abilities, in all facets of Church life. As stated in the 1978 Statement, “There can be no separate Church for persons with disabilities. We are one flock that follows a single shepherd.”

Larry Kiley is the Director of the Office of Ministry with People with Disabilities, with his daughters Julia and Anna.

Joe Gerzewski of St. Rose of Lima Parish in York bows his head during a prayer for victims of clergy sex abuse.
Bishops See Much They Can Do Despite No Vote on Steps to Address Abuse

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

The U.S. bishops arriving in Baltimore expected to make a statement with a series of steps meant to address a new clerical sexual abuse scandal in the Church, among them a collection of standards of episcopal accountability, the creation of a lay-dominated commission to investigate allegations of bishop misconduct and a third-party reporting system to field such complaints.

They left Baltimore with no action on those steps. Even a hastily written, seemingly innocuous statement asking the Vatican to release “soon” its documentation on an investigation into retired Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick went down to a lopsided defeat Nov. 14.

So what is left for the bishops to do? Perhaps not much as a group right now, but individually they still can do much within their own dioceses, according to bishops at a Nov. 14 news conference following the public portion of the bishops’ annual fall meeting.

“All of those touched-upon things we were looking at as a conference, individual bishops can do that. We can do that already,” said Bishop W. Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, Missouri.

“The bishops, individually, already have a certain amount of power and authority,” Bishop McKnight added. “I have recently told the religious communities serving in my diocese that they have to release the names of those credibly accused to remain serving in my diocese.”

“There was consensus in the anger that was expressed by the bishops. I think we’ve all heard the anger of our lay people back home,” said Coadjutor Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Jose, California. “We listened for many hours over the past couple of days to those concerns ... and to specific recommendations, though we could not act on them.”

The Vatican asked the bishops to delay voting on the abuse-related agenda items until after a February meeting for the heads of all bishops’ conferences worldwide and so the proposed measures could be checked for their conformity to canon law.

“This conference has to be a leader globally,” Bishop Cantu added. “In many ways in what we’ve done with the Dallas charter, the good things that have been accomplished for the past 16 years (since the charter was adopted) have to be replicated across the world,” such as sharing them with other bishops’ conferences “and for Pope Francis himself to hear.”

“Here in this meeting, there were many, many things that we could do that we don’t have to wait,” said Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana. “The tragedy of this is the victims and their own pain and their own hurt,” he said, noting they listened to abuse victims during the meeting who want the bishops “to prevent this from happening again.”

Bishop McKnight, who used to work at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops as a priest, said he spotted a growing consensus among bishops for greater lay involvement in dealing with abuse-related matters. As an ex-staffer, he added, “I noticed certain members of the (bishops’) conference that can generally be found on the right, and they were strongly advocating for the involvement of the laity.”

“This crisis might be drawing us together,” at least in regard to “the utilization of the lay charisms in the Church,” Bishop McKnight said. “I think there was recognition from the left and the right ... to incorporate the lay genius.”

At the USCCB, then-Father McKnight was executive director of the Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations from 2010 to 2015.

There are “positive things they can do without having consensus or a document,” Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Burlington, Vermont, said of his fellow bishops. “I am committed to transparency and accountability. My personnel files in Boston and Indianapolis are open to anyone who wants to see them where I was a priest. I absolutely support the lay board I put into place.”

Positive Changes Seen Since 1978 Pastoral on Persons with Disabilities

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

The 40th anniversary of the U.S. bishops’ “Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons With Disabilities” is a cause for celebration, said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, episcopal moderator of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD).

The pastoral looked at persons with disabilities and “their ability to be more fully engaged in the life of the Church,” Archbishop Kurtz said Nov. 14 during the fall general meeting of the U.S. bishops in Baltimore.

Now you can look at your own local churches” he added, and see that their participation has “enriched not only their own lives but the lives of so many other people.”

The NCPD board issued a statement, “A Call to Encounter and to Wholeness,” on the 40th anniversary of the U.S. bishops’ pastoral.

In it, the board affirmed the bishops’ 1978 statement. “The pastoral statement issued a call for a re-examination of attitudes, for a renewed commitment to ensure the well-being of persons with disabilities, and for concrete steps to safeguard the full integration and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the church,” the NCPD statement said.

“The pastoral statement cautioned that when that inflated sense of self-importance is given free reign, it can drive the wedge of prejudice and injustice into the heart of the Christian community. Even if there is no outright hostility from non-disabled Christians toward Christians who have a disability, the presumption that they are not one of us undermines the integrity and communion of the parish community.”

Another moment was the creation in 1982 of the National Catholic Office for Persons With Disabilities, which changed its name 20 years later to the National Catholic Partnership on Disability. The NCPD board in its statement issued a fivefold affirmation of Catholic teaching, including:

• “The inalienable dignity of every human being, formed in the image and likeness of God;”
• “The respect, honor, and protection that are due to every person from conception to natural death;”
• “That Christ’s saving grace and call to personal friendship extends to every member of the human family;”
• “That no psychological or physical condition on its own can separate someone from encountering the love of God in Christ;”
• “And that each person baptized and incorporated into the body of Christ is called to holiness and given the grace to respond to this call.”

“Persons with disabilities have the proper right to be active participants in the life of the Church. We recognize that the bare assertion and protection of rights can be a sterile exercise whenever it lacks the Christian presumption of our common call to friendship with one another in Christ,” the NCPD board said.

“For these reasons, we seek to foster the full and meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities in the life of their parish communities by offering NCPD resources and training to assist diocesan efforts to educate clergy, pastoral staff, and lay leaders to further their outreach to and support of parishioners with disabilities in every aspect of parish life.”

It added, “No parish community is healthy and flourishing if it does not welcome persons with disabilities. Vulnerability, limitation and dependency are an ordinary part of every particular human life.”

Archbishop Kurtz lauded the NCPD, which he said was “formed following that pastoral letter. From all the many efforts that have promoted, the welcoming and the engagement of persons with disabilities within our church and within our society, their work has been mighty.”

He added the NCPD statement is “both an affirmation of what has happened, and a commitment of what we’re making as a board, and something you as bishops might take back to your diocese in the hopes that you might do the same.”

ally sparked the beginning of my faith journey. When I first attended, I wit-
nessed others going crazy worshipping at Adoration, but now this year I’m the
crazy one during worship,” Schlosser said, smiling.

The holy hour of Eucharistic Adoration included contemporary Christian
worship music led by the Sean Patrick Malloy Band, its ninth year doing so.
“I’m always amazed at how open and hungry the teens are for the Eucharist,”
Malloy said.

To close out the rally, Father Brian Wayne, Director of the Diocesan Office
of Vocations, led an “altar call” where he asked married people and those who
have taken vows in religious life to stand. He then called teens who were
discerning a religious vocation to come forward for a special blessing. More
than a dozen religious sisters and 10 priests joined in the prayer.

One of the religious sisters first admit-
ted she was discerning a call to religious
life at the rally’s altar call many years ago, Father Wayne said.

First-time attendee Kenzie Braegel-
mann, a sophomore from Mary, Mother
of the Church Parish in Mount Joy, said
she enjoyed the community atmosphere
of the rally. “Everyone’s here for the
same reason,” she said.

Confession was available throughout
the day, offered by more than five dioc-
esan priests who also concelebrated the
closing Mass.

“Confession is hard, but it’s easier
when the priests know they’re talking
with teens. I had a long conversation
with the priest,” Braegelman said.

Tori Sobrevilla, a freshman from St.
Katherine Drexel Parish in Mechanics-
burg, agreed. “The priests are kind and
open. They joke with you, make you
feel comfortable. I now want to go more
on my own,” she said.

Sam Ellis’ favorite part was Eucharis-
tic Adoration. A member of Assumption
BVM Parish in Lancaster, he said “It’s a
place where teens can all be on the same
page, like a sports event. We’re all in it
together.”

It wasn’t just the teens who were spir-
itually uplifted during Adoration. Youth
leaders and adult volunteers were stand-
ing, raising their arms, moved to tears
and singing at the top of their lungs in
praise of the Lord – right alongside the
teenagers.

“I wish regular Catholic people in the
pews – people struggling with faith –
could experience the on-fire, openness,
faith and joy of young people,” Anthony
said. “Despite everything going on in
our Church today, they’re still worship-
ing and love Jesus and their faith.”

(Mariah Chupriski is a member of
St. Catherine Labouré Parish in Harris-
burg. She is part of the leadership team
of Harrisburg’s Theology on Tap group,
and is coordinating feature stories for
The Catholic Witness on young adult
ministry in the diocese. Mariah can be
reached at mchupriski@gmail.com.)
It may have been a cold, dark Sunday night, but that didn't keep people away from The 177 Project. Hosted at St. Joseph’s Parish in Mechanicsburg on Nov. 18, this event mixed Eucharistic Adoration with contemporary music, to bring the community together for praise and worship.

“We wanted to bring people together to pray and praise,” said Father Thomas Rozman, pastor of St. Joseph’s.

“And we wanted a little bit of a different atmosphere,” added Father Timothy Sahd, St. Joseph’s parochial vicar. “We’re expecting an emotion experience and another form of visceral communion with the Lord.”

St. Joseph’s hosted the program for the Diocese of Harrisburg and opened its doors to anyone who wanted to attend the free event. The parish was the only location in the Diocese where The 177 Project was being hosted.

“We’re pretty excited to be part of this,” Father Rozman said. “We gave away more than 300 tickets just to our own parish.”

The evening began with the Rosary, followed by Eucharistic Adoration and an opportunity for confessions, and closed with a performance from Ben Wagner, one of the performers with The 177 Project.

“This is a great blessing for our parish and for the Diocese,” Father Rozman said. “Anytime we can do something out of the ordinary, but still connected to the faith, that’s an opportunity we don’t want to miss,” said Father Sahd.

Praise and Worship

“We’re very happy to have you all here,” said Father Sahd at the opening of the event. “God bless you for attending and for the next few hours we spend with Him.”

After the Rosary, those attending the event spent an hour with the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration or going to confession, while listening and singing along to more traditional music.

“I’m looking forward to the concert,” said Joe Geisler, a Boy Scout and teen volunteering at the event.

Ben Wagner is a singer/songwriter from Wisconsin and entertained the crowd with his smooth voice and original works.

“I almost never get to Pennsylvania,” Wagner said. “It’s really cool to see so many people here.”

Wagner added The 177 Project has a goal to have Eucharistic Adoration in all 177 Dioceses throughout the United States.

“We need prayer more than ever,” Wagner said, adding praying together and building up the Church is desperately needed during these times.

“I was born and raised Catholic and I love it,” Wagner said. “Some people are surprised when I play songs because they are not what you typically hear at Mass. My mission is to work stories into my songs.”

Through his music, Wagner led the crowd to a deeper level of prayer and reflection.

“It was great,” said Amanda Healy after the event. “The worship part was really good.”

“I’m in awe. It was amazing,” said Brenda Perry, a parishioner at St. Joseph’s. “I could really connect with the stories and with the emotions. It connected us all on the same level so we can see God working in our lives.”

About the 177 Project

The 177 Project is working to bring renewal to parishes by encouraging Eucharistic Adoration and an evening of worship, which will foster community. The events are centered around a Holy Hour, which is followed by a concert from one of the visiting artists.

According to the organization’s website, through music, one can find a deeper connection between the created and the Creator. The 177 Project is hoping to visit all 177 dioceses in the United States in just three months.

To learn more about this organization, visit www.the177project.com.
Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School was recently awarded $4,600 through the Highmark Foundation School Grants and Awards Program to support its Wellness Initiative. Through the grant, the school will provide CPR and First Aid training to teachers and middle school students, and purchase two AEDs.

“Although we certainly don’t anticipate a cardiac event happening with our children, it can occur,” said David Rushinski, principal of Harrisburg Catholic. “We like to provide our teachers and staff First Aid and CPR classes in-house to build team unity. With the Highmark Foundation grant, we will also be able to offer the classes to seventh and eighth graders, which will further extend it out into our communities.”

While a number of the teachers at both of the school’s campuses are trained in First Aid and CPR, training all teachers will make the scheduling of playground and cafeteria duties easier. Two AEDs will be purchased – one for the campus on South 25th St., and one for the campus at Church and Liberty streets. The AEDs will also benefit those who attend after-school and weekend events.

“We are honored to help Harrisburg Catholic strengthen their response to incidents of cardiac arrest,” said Highmark Foundation President Yvonne Cook. “Providing training to students as well as teachers is a great step toward providing our communities the training everyone needs to respond to a medical emergency.”

For information on Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School, call 717-234-3797.

Lourdes Regional Students Create Living Rosary as Part of SportsLeader Program

Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School in Coal Township conducted a Rosary Rally on Oct. 29 in the auditorium. The entire K-12 student body, faculty and parents participated.

Father Andrew Stahmer, school chaplain, supplied the gym-size Rosary. Senior Jared Stewart held the cross. Senior Frances Czeponis began the Rosary by leading students in the Our Father, three Hail Marys, The Glory Be and first of the five Joyful Mysteries, the Annunciation. Senior Jacob Rees recounted the Visitation; senior Lilly Bickel, the Nativity; senior Chris Stewart, the Presentation in the Temple; and senior Sierra Coleman, the Finding in the Temple.

Following each Mystery, students from grades 2-12 began each decade of Hail Marys with the remainder of the students joining in the prayer. At the conclusion of the Rosary Rally, James Gontis, Diocesan Director of Evangelization and Catechesis, and of Sports Ministry, offered closing remarks.

A Diocesan initiative of evangelization through sports, the Rosary Rallies are being held in each of the Diocese’s seven high schools. The rallies are also connected to the SportsLeader apostolate, which incorporates 4 basic pillars: virtue formation, Catholic identity, mentoring and ceremonies. The Rosary Rallies are part of the Catholic identity pillar.

In observance of All Saints Day, students at Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Lancaster and Our Mother of Perpetual Help School in Ephrata modeled the lives of the saints during special presentations.

Sacred Heart’s first graders shared their knowledge of saints by dressing in costume and memorizing a brief synopsis of their particular saint. Sister Danielle Truex, principal, told the students at the end of the assembly, “Just remember that you do not have to be someone who is well-known to be a saint or do any great thing. The important thing is that you love God, yourself and others.”

At Our Mother of Perpetual Help, fourth graders selected and researched the life of a saint. Dressed in costume, they told the story of that saint’s life to their schoolmates. The presentations provided historical and inspiring facts about the saints, and offered insight into the lives of these remarkable people who dedicated their lives to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Saints included Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky, C.Ss.R. St. Josephine Bakhita, St. Leopold Mandic and St. Dorothy of Caesarea. 

COURTESY OF OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP SCHOOL  COURTESY OF SACRED HEART SCHOOL
Honor as a verb is defined as having regard with great respect. These days it seems respect is not so freely given; it must rather be rightly earned to last long. The two football programs of York Catholic and Delone Catholic clearly have a high regard for each other. It was evident during the District 3, Class 2A championship, played Nov. 9 at South Western High School’s Mustang Corral in Hanover, in a driving drizzle that never put a damper on a great football game that surely will be long remembered.

In Week 9, York Catholic beat Delone, 35-7, in convincing fashion in league play. The undefeated Fighting Irish are a physical football team up front, which gives their many skill players room to throw and run. Yet, the better football team doesn’t always win big games when the decided underdog comes ready to play with emotion, enthusiasm and hungry for an upset.

York Catholic scored three minutes into the game behind their speedy running back, Cole Witman, but Delone immediately answered with a determined drive that showed the Squires could take a punch. Starting the second half, Delone marched down the field in four minutes to knot the score at 14.

What gave this game the classic feel of a heavyweight fight, was each team’s ability to answer a challenge. When Delone muffed a punt early in the fourth quarter, giving the Fighting Irish a short field, the momentum shifted as the Irish punched in a score to go up by a touchdown. But the determined Squires made a key defensive stop to get the ball back with less than four minutes left.

After two Fighting Irish 15-yard penalties, Squires’ quarterback Evan Brady hit Tyler Monto for a spectacular 23-yard touchdown Hail Mary pass that stunned the Irish faithful into silence and the Delone fans into a full frenzy.

Faced with the most difficult of all football decisions, Delone choose not to go for two, but instead chipped the extra point through to tie the game at 21 with less than a minute to play. In the first overtime play set, the Fighting Irish ran their deadly wildcat formation to score quickly, and the Squires could not answer that score as York Catholic’s defense made the game’s last and most important stop. Defense, in the end, wins championships.

It’s cliché to say it’s a shame someone had to lose this game, but it doesn’t mean it shouldn’t be said. Delone’s grit, desire and determination is what should be long remembered. “This was a classic game, a great game. Hats off to Delone Catholic,” York Catholic head coach Eric Depew said as his team celebrated their second championship in three years.

In the mist, with the dejection and ebullience over, many Squires and Irish walked off the drenched field with arms on each other’s shoulders, freely defining honor that will last.
Tell me about your childhood.

I was born and raised in York. I am the middle child of three. My sister is 12 years older than I, and I was a surprise child, only to be followed by another surprise child, my brother, 11 months later. My parents were both York Catholic graduates. They saw that we went to Catholic school.

Were you always interested in the priesthood?

Mostly, I kind of had this inkling thinking of the priesthood in second grade, as I was preparing to receive first Holy Communion. Although by sixth grade I knew for sure. If you were to ask my former sixth-grade teacher, she would tell you that I wanted to be a priest back then.

Some point along my high school years I was considering going along a different path. I spent a year at Penn State-York and didn’t do too well academically because I was working full time and going to school full time. I thought about taking Political Science, and you almost start to think, “Maybe I want to be a priest or a politician.” I ultimately made the right choice.

My parents fought to keep me in Catholic school. I benefited from the generosity of others through several scholarships. I have a true appreciation for Catholic education – not just Catholic schools but also our religious education programs.

Ultimately I felt God calling me in this direction. Over time, you waiver. “God, are you sure this is where you want me to be?” My birthday is June 6, 1981. I was ordained June 6, 2009. God has his way of showing me this is the path he wants me to follow. The following year, I was celebrating my 29th birthday on the Feast of Corpus Christi, which was the name of the parish in Chambersburg where I happened to be assigned.

The academic challenges were more difficult for me. I had to fight tooth and nail to get to where I am today. I always tell people, “You know what they call a seminarian who gets a 2.0? Father.” I made it by the grace of God, and it helped me become who I am today to persevere through some of the challenges. It helps me have an understanding too of those who struggle academically.

For me, the degrees on the wall, while they are a piece of paper, I look at them and smile because I worked hard to earn them.

Is there something that really drew you to the priesthood?

For me, it was the Eucharist, my family’s faith and the priests and parochial vicars who served the parish over the years. Father Thomas Hoke was my pastor growing up at St. Rose. Just the example of priests and religious, and my own family. And the sacrament of Divine Mercy itself, the Most Holy Eucharist. I have a great love for our Lord. I have a great love for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Those things were the drawing of God pulling me in.

Reconciliation is a wonderful sacrament. I experience this myself: when we admit that we’re wrong, there might be some trepidation, but don’t be afraid. Our God is a merciful and loving God. As soon as you are open to God and you’ve opened your heart and poured it all out before him, and you receive the words of absolution, your sins are forgiven. Those sins are gone. It’s a true freedom and a true experience of joy. If it’s been years since you’ve been to Confession, don’t be afraid. Just come, open your heart and experience God’s tender mercy.

What are your responsibilities as a pastor?

I’m pastor of an inner-city parish with a school grade. My number one responsibility is the pastoral care of the souls in my parish. I visit nursing homes monthly. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. I visit the school kids almost every day, either at lunch or as they’re ready to go home. On the weekend, I do the same thing with the religious education students. I’m still teaching RCIA on a regular basis.

Being inner-city, we have some challenges. We’re in the middle of our capital improvement campaign and we’re doing a lot of construction. Sometimes I’m the janitor, or the maintenance guy. I prefer to be the spiritual father, but the administration can be quite challenging. But I’m learning. I’m still a young pastor and will grow with it in time, but it’s still a challenge.

What has changed for you since the release of the Grand Jury report?

Since the Grand Jury report, the majority of our faithful have been extremely supportive of their priests. That’s a beautiful thing to see. A couple of weeks ago, I was out walking, and somebody yelled out from their car. It was hurtful, but it’s a part of being a witness. But overall in the parish, the people of God have been really supportive of their priests.

What message do you want to share in light of the report?

Where we go forward now, with the Church having acknowledged the mistakes of the past, we continue to beg for forgiveness. We pledge to do all we can to prevent this from ever happening again. The Diocese has done a tremendous job in implementing safe environment programs for youth in our parishes and in our schools.

We acknowledge those mistakes, we beg for forgiveness and work together to strengthen our Church. That’s the most important thing today, that we’re united in faith in Jesus Christ, that our Lord is who we look to in faith. In everything that we do, we should remain true to the Eucharist, to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and trust the Lord with all your heart, soul and strength.

What is a fun fact about Father Carroll?

I follow the Baltimore Orioles, and go for the Ravens, which is fun in Pennsylvania with Eagles Country and Steelers Country. I like to sometimes stir the pot in a fun way. You have to enjoy life. I was a Scout, so I enjoy the outdoors, campfires and being out on the water.

What are your favorite books or movies?

With the school kids, at least once a year I mention “Rocky” along the line. I enjoy the underdog aspect. I enjoy superhero movies. I have a unique movie repertoire. The most interesting movie I watched was “St. Vincent” with Bill Murray. There are certainly moral issues there, but the end of the movie was very powerful for me, seeing the good in people even through their very hard exteriors.
The Spirituality of Looking at Your Feet

By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC

The first thing we are to understand about our “feet” is that they belong to Jesus. His feet are the people of the Mystical Body of Christ.

When I was a novice, I studied the mystery of the Mystical Body of Christ. After our instructions, the other novices and I went for a walk. Trying to process what we were taught, one novice asked, “What part of the Mystical Body of Christ do you see yourself?” One novice after another said, “The heart of Christ.” “His eyes.” “His ears.” “His hands.” “His mouth.” I responded, “His feet!” “What? Why that?” Smiling, I answered, “The feet are the part of the body that is attached not only to the body but also to the earth. I want to carry Christ to the created world.”

I could not help think about this story as I reflect on the last part of the Diocese of Harrisburg’s Jubilee Prayer. It says: “And, for those who will in - respond, “His feet!” “What? Why that?” Smil - ing, I answered, “The feet are the part of the body that is attached not only to the body but also to the earth. Wherever we are is where we are called to be holy. Wherever we are, we are to bring Christ. We are to be His eyes, His ears and His hands.”

By focusing on the location of your feet, you are present to the here and now. In doing this, you can see the person in front of you in a deeper way. By living in this awareness, one can more easily treat others with love.

In time, when this becomes habitual, you will find yourself acting differently. Your “feet” can lead down a path that allows you to let someone “in.” It might cause you to do something impractical, something unexpected but nonetheless absolutely necessary. In short, continually looking at your feet” causes you to live for another. Isn’t that what Christ teaches us?

In a sense, our feet are the “beasts of burden” for our body. They serve the body and carry it down a certain path. Remember what Christ did on that first Holy Thursday? He washed the apostles’ feet. In response, Peter begged him to wash his hands and head as well. Our feet remind us that we are called to serve others.

Really look at your feet and love them because they can be a vehicle of bringing Christ to the world.

If you are interested in reading more from Sister Geralyn, you can find her columns in the November 9th issue of the Catholic Witness on pages 11 and 12.

Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC

“Thoughts from a Catholic Evangelist”
Diocesan Notebook
Compiled by Jen Reed

Spiritual Offerings

Holy Hour of Reparation hosted by St. Peter Parish, Columbia, at St. Mary’s Chapel, Wrightsville, the first Friday of the month at 7 p.m. Spend an hour in prayer in the presence of the Lord. For information, contact David at StPetersBible@gmx.com.

Public square Rosary rallies on the square in New Oxford the second Saturday of the month, in Littlestown the third Saturday of the month, and in Hanover the fourth Saturday of the month. For information, call Grace at 717-624-2180.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the St. Pauline Center at 1150 Chestnut Street in Kulpstown on Fridays from noon-10 p.m., and Saturdays from 5 a.m.-7 p.m. The Chapel of Divine Mercy is prayed in the chapel on Fridays at 3 p.m.

Friday evening prayers for healing in the Church. St. Joseph Church, Mechanicsburg. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 7 p.m. with Evening Prayer, followed by prayers for victims of abuse and prayers for healing for the Church. Concludes with Night Prayer and Benediction at 9:30 p.m.


Advent Mission at St. Benedict the Abbot Church in Lebanon, Dec. 2 and 3 with the Sisters of Reparation to pray at the St. Pauline Center in Lebanon. Nov. 30. Missionary Prayer and Mission Message at 6:30 p.m. Holy Hour, Rosary, mission message and confessions, Nov. 27-29. Closing Mass, mission message and opportunity to commit your life to Christ, Nov. 30. Mission conducted by Father Johannes Mary Smith, FI, Chaplain to the Discalced Carmelites in Elyssbury.

Pilgrimages & Retreats

Holy Land Pilgrimage, Feb. 14-24, 2019. Four nights along the Sea of Galilee, five nights in Jerusalem. Personal tour guide and coach bus. Father John Gordon of the Diocese of Newark will join pilgrims. Cost is $1,749, land-only package. Pilgrims must arrange own flights. For more information, contact Julie and Andy Raspl at raspl1833@comcast.net or 717-394-7715.

Join Msgr. William J. King on a pilgrimage to Ireland, departing Nov. 4 and returning Nov. 13, 2019. For information or a flyer, contact Jeanie Ishman at jeanieish@stcas.net.

Join Father Job Foote on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, May 6-15, 2019. Cost of $3,390 includes roundtrip airfare, double occupancy hotel rooms, breakfast and dinner daily, nine days sightseeing in private bus, Christian guide and more. Contact the St. Paul the Apostle Parish at 717-867-1525 or Father Foote at 717-875-3569 for information or reservations. Informational meeting is Nov. 29 at 6 p.m. in the parish hall.

Pilgrimage to Oberammergau Passion Play, Sept. 8-18, 2020. Join Father Job Foote and St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Annville on an Austria and Germany Pilgrimage that includes Vienna, Salzburg, Munich, and the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany. Cost of $2,439 includes roundtrip airfare, daily Mass in historic churches, first class and select hotels based on double occupancy, first class tickets to the Passion Play, breakfast daily and most dinners, English-speaking tour director, sightseeing and transfers by private motor coach. For information or reservations, call Mary Langan at 717-867-1525 or 717-379-6243.

Father Peter Di Tomasso, M.S.S.C.C., and UNITOUrs will lead a pilgrimage to see Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, Sept. 8-15, 2019. Cost of $2,439 includes roundtrip-airfare, hotel accommodations, air-conditioned motorcoach, a full-time tour guide, meals per itinerary, and departure tax and current fuel charge. Call Father Peter at 717-642-8815 for a brochure with more details.

Join Father Neil Sullivan for St. Catherine Laboure Parish’s 70th anniversary pilgrimage to France, March 26-April 4, 2019. Daily Mass, professional tour manager and local guides, accommodations in Lisieux, Orleans, Lyon, Lourdes (2 nights) and Paris (3 nights), breakfast and dinner daily, land transportation by de luxe motorcoach, round trip motorcoach, roundtrip airfare from Washington Dulles to Paris CDG and more, for $3,599 per person/double occupancy. Contact Karen Hurley at k.m.hurley1@gmail.com or George’s International Tours (800) 566-7499, sales@georgesintl.com or visit www.georgesintl.com.

“Advent Waiting…Ours and God’s,” retreat by the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s Pastoral Associates, Dec. 3 from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and Dec. 4 from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicket City, Md. Facilitated by Karen Bruzkiewicz, Director of Faith Formation at St. Mary’s Parish in Annapolis. Contact Susan Yost at susan.yost@archbalt.org or 717-379-6041.

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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.

Catawissa
  Our Lady of Mercy:
    Clare MacMahon
  St. John Neumann:
    Shirley A. Scott

Dauphin
  St. Matthew the Apostle:
    Michael Kolackovsky

Gettysburg
  St. Francis Xavier:
    Shirley A. Miller

Greencastle
  St. Mark the Evangelist:
    Una Karen Gailey
    Shirley A. Scott

Hanover
  Sacred Heart of Jesus:
    Shirley A. Lucasbaugh
  St. Joseph:
    Donald F. Baker, Jr.
    Chester Barrick
    Shirley Cassagne
    Stormie Hildeman
    Betty Skunda
    Audrey Sloat
    Mark L. Staub
    John Tomaszewski

Harrisburg
  Holy Name of Jesus:
    Mary V. Abate
    Kathleen M. Anderson
    Violet L. Peterson
  St. Catherine Labouré:
    Mildred Litzelman
  St. Margaret Mary:
    Thomas Chapman
    Luigi Scotto D’Antuono
    Dennis W. Loftus
    Paul Townsend

Hershey
  St. Joan of Arc:
    Helen Bartlye
    Bill Bratina

Lancaster
  St. John Neumann:
    Eleanor Nimick
    Earl Sharp
  Lebanon
    Assumption BVM:
      Mary Lou Batdorff
    Giovanna Marino
    Janna McConnell
    St. John Neumann:
      Christine T. Nimick

Lebanon County
  Annunciation BVM:
    Anthony John Zito
    Mollie Y. Sletten
    St. John Neumann:
      Mary Lou Batdorff
    Giovanna Marino
    Janna McConnell

Manheim
  St. Richard:
    Sharon Overton

McSherrystown
  Nativity BVM:
    John H. and Minnie M. Hodge

Mechanicsburg
  St. Elizabeth Ann Seton:
    Annamarie Breen

Mount Carmel
  Our Lady of Mount Carmel:
    Larry Leshinski

New Cumberland
  St. Theresa:
    Ed Grauery
    Margaret Meckel

Palmrya
  Holy Spirit:
    Emily Selbert

Steleton
  Prince of Peace:
    Natalie Chiort
    Joseph Musa, Jr.
    Virginia (Yetter) Zuvich

York
  Immaculate Conception
    BYM:
      Charles Laczkoskie
  St. Joseph:
    John D. McEachern

Deceased Clergy

Please pray for the following clergy who died in December during the past 25 years:

- Father Stephen Roko, 1993
- Father John Aurentz, 1996
- Father Vitalie Leonard Casey, 1997
- Father Joseph Blaschovics, 1999
- Father Robert Kobilkar, 1999
- Deacon Michael Lydon Sr., 1999

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St. Margaret Mary Spartan Singers, performing at the Sylvania Chorale’s “A Harrisburg Christmas—2018” show at the Grace Millennium Pollok Performing Arts Center in Camp Hill. Shows are Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 9 at 3 p.m. Tickets are $8 for adults, $5 for students and seniors. Visit www.mgmpac for information, tickets and reservations.

St. Pauline Foundation’s Christmas raffle, Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. at the Pauline House, Kulpmont. Homemade wedding soup, haluski, pigeons, baked goods and beverages. Eat-in or take-out. Raffle tickets are $20 for 26 or $10 for 11. Additional sheets are half price. Need not be present to win. Proceeds benefit children’s charities. Call JoAnn at 570-259-9299.

Noreen Neitz Memorial 10K and 5K Run and Sufficient Radical 1-Mile Walk, Dec. 15 at St. Francis Xavier School, Gettysburg. Race starts at 10 a.m., 1-mile walk at 10:15 a.m. Medals for 10K finishers. Prizes to top winners in each age category. Proceeds benefit the St. Francis Xavier School Development Fund and the Noreen Neitz Scholarship Fund. Register at https://www.sfxcas-pa.org or email nmscholarship@sfxcas-pa.org.

York Catholic High School’s Christmas concerts. Senior high concert is Dec. 9 at 6 p.m., and junior high concert is Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

York Catholic High School’s “Welcome Wednesday,” Dec. 5 from 10-2 p.m. for families who want to tour while classes are in session. YC Student Ambassadors will escort families to observe a typical school day. Visitors can meet the Administrators Director. Contact Heather Hoffman, Director of Admissions and Enrollment, at 717-846-8871, ext. 221, or hhoffman@yorkcatholic.org.

Bingo at St. James Parish hall, Lititz, Nov. 25. Doors at 12:30 p.m., bingo at 2 p.m. Twenty regular games, paper cards. $1,000 jackpot, 50/50 specials and food. Cost of $15 includes 9 regular cards and three strips jackpot. Must be 18 to play.

Alumni Mass for St. Theresa School in New Cumberland, Nov. 24. Celebrate 75 years of Christ-centered education with Mass at 8:30 a.m. at St. Theresa Church.

Following Mass, enjoy 1940s music and song as alumni and friends tour the school. Light refreshments, food and entertainment until 11:30 a.m.

Job Openings

Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Harrisburg seeks full-time Parish Business Manager. Position assists pastor in the overall administration of the parish with respect to personnel, finance, buildings and grounds, parish committees and organizations, and scheduling. A Bachelor’s degree in accounting or business administration or its equivalent is required as well as a minimum of three years of experience in business administration and personnel supervision. Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. Submit letter and resume requirement to holynameofjesusparish@hghdiocese.org or Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 6150 Allentown Boulevard, Harrisburg, PA 17112.

Secretary for Communications for the Diocese of Scranton. Seeking qualified candidates for the senior management position of Diocesan Secretary for Communications. For a more comprehensive description of the position and required qualifications, individuals are encouraged to visit the diocesan website at www.diocecesofscranton.org. Interested applicants must forward their submissions by Nov. 30, 2018 to: James Burke, Diocesan Secretary for Human Resources, 300 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton PA 18503, or email Jim-Burke@diocecesofscranton.org. EOE.

Submission Deadlines

The deadline for submissions for the December 7 edition of The Witness is Wednesday, November 28 at 4:30 p.m. Submit written announcements via email to witnessed@hghdiocese.org. Limit 60 words. No ads, posters or PDFs, please.
CHURCH NEWS

Bustling Port City has Packed Agenda for Week before World Youth Day

By Manuel Rueda
Catholic News Service

At the entrance to the Panama Canal, the city of Colon is bursting with commerce. Its duty-free zone is the largest in Central America, and its port facilities handle 2.9 million containers of goods each year.

But in January, Colon also will be teeming with spiritual activity. The city of 250,000 is one of the most active participants in Days in the Dioceses, the week set aside for World Youth Day pilgrims to interact with local parishes.

Colon, an hour’s drive from Panama’s capital, hopes to host 15,000 pilgrims Jan. 14-20. The diocese has a full week of activities set up for pilgrims who choose to make it their base.

“This is something historic” said Lourdes Velasquez, a resident of Colon who has volunteered to host pilgrims during the event. Velasquez has signed up to host eight pilgrims in her three-room home.

“We don’t want people to stay in schools or gyms, we want them to feel like they’re part of our family,” she said.

The activities in Colon will include city tours, discussions of its social problems, and a night of musical and cultural presentations.

Pilgrims with a thirst for adventure also can sign up to spend a couple nights in remote jungle villages that are part of the diocese, but are only accessible by river.

The diocese is setting aside a day for pilgrims to reach out to the city’s most vulnerable inhabitants. Young people will be encouraged to visit a home for the elderly and a local orphanage, where they will be invited to volunteer with tasks that are needed or simply interact with the people there.

“We want people to feel the Church’s missionary spirit,” said Joan Berrio, 29, general coordinator for World Youth Day activities in the Diocese of Colon.

Local volunteers told Catholic News Service that Colon recently has gone through rough times, with thousands of people losing their jobs at the port as business dries up from neighboring countries.

That has led to drug problems in some neighborhoods and to increasing levels of poverty, with illegal tenants taking over buildings abandoned by owners who have given up on some of the city’s neighborhoods.

But young Church leaders are hoping that these issues will not dampen Days in the Dioceses. Instead, they see the event as something that could encourage local leaders to keep on working toward a better future.

“Despite all the difficulties, people here do not lose hope,” Berrio said. “And I think that World Youth Day will renew people’s faith, highlight the positive aspects of our city and show us that not all is lost.”

To sustain its activities during Days in the Dioceses, Colon’s Church leaders are trying to recruit 100 volunteers at each of the diocese’s 23 parishes.

Yarlene Allen, a volunteer with the logistics committee, said she decided to get involved because she went to World Youth Day 2013 in Rio de Janeiro and wants others to experience the event. She said she keeps in touch with the family she stayed with during Rio’s Days in the Dioceses.

“It’s a marvelous experience,” Allen said. “You meet other young people from other cultures, who also want to follow Jesus and see the pope.”

Organizers in Colon said pilgrims from Canada, Poland, the Czech Republic and Gabon have signed up to spend Days in the Dioceses in their area.

But Colon is far from the only option. All of Panama’s seven dioceses will host pilgrims during the week that precedes World Youth Day, and dioceses in nearby Nicaragua and Costa Rica also are participating.

World Youth Day’s official internet site, https://panama2019.pa, allows pilgrims to request the place they would prefer to go to when they register for Days in the Dioceses.

Whatever the location, the experience is “unique” said Miguel Pinilla, a Colon volunteer who attended the last World Youth Day, in Krakow, Poland.

“It’s really great to see so many young people sharing their faith and searching for the purpose that God has for them in life,” Pinilla said.

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Diocesan Catholic Cemeteries

WREATH PROGRAM

As a loving festive tribute, the Diocesan Office of Catholic Cemeteries is hosting a memorial program that will place a wreath or flowers at your loved one’s final resting place for the Christmas season. To arrange for your remembrance, please visit your local Diocesan cemetery office or online at www.hbgdiocese.org/cemeteries.

All memorial tributes will be reverently placed on or about the second week in December. Please ensure that your order is received by December 3, 2018. All memorial tributes that remain in good condition will be displayed until February 28, 2019.

On behalf of the Diocesan Office of Catholic Cemeteries, we wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.