Excitement Permeates First Day at New Holy Trinity School

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

The celebration of the inaugural first day at the new Holy Trinity School in York illustrated the excitement, energy and faith-filled love already in existence there.

A combination of the former St. Joseph School in Dallastown and the former St. Patrick School in York, Holy Trinity – located in the former St. Patrick’s building – opened its doors with a celebration that featured a school-wide Mass, a red-carpet walk and a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

“The kids will have happy stories to tell when they get home, right from the first day. Moving forward, it will be a wonderful opportunity for all of them to be here at Holy Trinity,” said Margaret Snyder, Vice Principal.

Students were treated to a red-carpet welcome, as teachers formed a line to high-five them as they arrived on Aug. 21. To begin the day, members of the school community joined faculty, staff and the student body for Mass celebrated by Bishop Ronald Gainer.

“Don’t you look great!” Bishop Gainer exclaimed, looking at rows of PreK through sixth-graders dressed in matching Holy Trinity School t-shirts.

“It’s wonderful to begin together this brand new school year and a brand new school. What a great day!” he told the students.

“This Catholic school is going to – as the tradition of our Catholic education must – keep us centered on our faith and on the person of Jesus Christ,” Bishop Gainer said. “I know wonderful things will happen this year – all the activities and lessons and everything that’s a part of Holy Trinity School, and that the love of Jesus will always dominate what happens here.”

Members of the Holy Trinity School community – including students, parents, faculty, administrators and pastors – celebrate the official opening of their new school, located on the grounds of St. Patrick Parish in York. The first day of school on Aug. 21 featured a red-carpet welcome, Mass celebrated by Bishop Ronald Gainer, and a ribbon cutting led by Vice Principal Margaret Snyder and Principal Kathleen Smith, far right.
Program Examines Plight of Refugees

By Al Gnoza
Special to The Witness

The subject of immigration has been all over the news and all over the country in recent months. On Aug. 15, it was front and center at the Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick in Harrisburg.

The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference joined Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg and other community service organizations to encourage everyone to support the plight of refugees around the world and to treat all people with love and respect.

The program was organized by the Cathedral Parish’s Mercy Matters Committee.

“You hear all the talk about the ‘immigration crisis,’” said one of the prime speakers, Eric Failing, the Executive Director of the PCC. “This is not a crisis. It’s an opportunity to live our faith.”

Failing praised the courage of refugees who have come to America seeking a better life. One such young man was at the program and spoke to the audience at St. Patrick’s. Amin Habeeb came to the United States several years ago in seeking asylum from Egypt.

“The situation in Egypt turned upside down in a very short period of time. Christians were fleeing their villages,” Habeeb told the crowd. “Refugees are coming here because they know this is a safe place.”

Habeeb now works with Catholic Charities Immigration and Refugee Services in Harrisburg and helps others with the knowledge and experience he has gained. He was sworn in earlier this month in Philadelphia as an official U.S. citizen.

The PCC thanks Father Joshua Brommer, the pastor of the Cathedral Parish, for hosting the event. Father Brommer addressed the gathering, saying “we have a lot of work to do but we can do it with your help.”

Just last month, the PCC sent a letter on behalf of Pennsylvania’s Catholic bishops to the Trump Administration asking it to maintain and even possibly expand the U.S. refugee resettlement program. The letter was in response to reports that the president was considering curtailing or even eliminating the program.

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Running the red carpet, Kellen Tremel receives a high-five from Father Mark Weiss, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Dallastown.

Holy Trinity School

Continued from 1

Following the Mass, the school community congregated at the school’s entrance for the official ribbon-cutting ceremony, which resulted in boisterous cheers before students made their way to classrooms.

“As a teacher, I spend time in the summer thinking of new, fun things to bring into the classroom. To do this now in a new place with new students is exciting. I’m looking forward to adding new spins into my class here at Holy Trinity,” said third-grade teacher Jennifer Dodson.

“In a Catholic school, I feel like I can really reach my students by working along the lines of getting to their beliefs, their morals and our Catholic values. That’s very important to help our kids grow today,” she said.

First-grade teacher Lynda Starceski said she is eager to see the synergy and ideas that result from bringing the two former schools together at Holy Trinity.

“I’m very excited. I’m in a new room and we have a new school as we join together. It’s like a spark that you need every now and then to liven things up,” she said. “I firmly believe that Holy Trinity School will keep the presence of Catholic education in the city of York.”

Principal Kathleen Smith said students at Holy Trinity will be the beneficiaries of the best offerings from St. Joseph’s and St. Patrick’s, including a Spanish class, music and band programs, clubs and service opportunities.

“We have a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in our community – not only in our Catholic community, but in our city as well,” Smith said. “I’m excited and filled with joy about what’s going to come.”

(Learn more about Holy Trinity School at https://htcsyork.org or call 717-854-8263.)
Diocesan Superintendent Reflects on Schools’ Commitment and Ability to Teach the Whole Student

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Dan Breen, a native of Massachusetts and a former Catholic school principal in Tennessee, was appointed the Diocese of Harrisburg’s Secretary for Education and Superintendent of Schools on July 1. In this role, he will oversee the operation of the Catholic schools in the Diocese. He will also work to support the Catholic identity of our schools, and support pastors and principals with their school related responsibilities. As a new academic year began, Breen participated in a question-and-answer interview to tout what Catholic schools have to offer, and to celebrate those dedicated to their mission.

Talk about your own appreciation for Catholic schools.

I myself went to Catholic school as I grew up in Boston. I think that Catholic education in conjunction with my faith formation at home opened the door to God for me. There was a narrative, a wholeness that made sense to me as I got older. I was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph — I remember getting my birthday off because I was born on St. Joseph’s Day — and they had a profound impact on me. My own children have attended Catholic school, and I have seen their teachers as a perfect complement to the faith formation that my wife and I have tried to provide them at home. I only wish more people had to the faith formation that my children have received.

What experience and qualities do you bring as Secretary for Education and Superintendent of Schools?

I believe that we have to look at what works throughout this country and continue to teach as a principal. Good teacher for more than 20 years and was, in fact, a middle and high school principal. I have experience in my current work.

What do you consider our schools’ biggest strengths and gifts?

What impresses me in the Diocese of Harrisburg is that we have been very faith in promoting and providing a strong authentic Catholic identity to our families. We have really been trying to live the Biblical call to excellence, and you can see that footprint in our schools. We have really tried to hire the best Catholic role models. We present them to our students as examples of professionals who are willing to continuously improve in their personal and professional lives — in their walk with the Lord and in their professional calling.

What challenges are the schools facing, and how can we meet them?

Our Catholic schools face challenges as all Catholic schools in this country do. We are facing a culture that is less Christian than it was, and it is always a challenge to find successful financial models and to offer continually added value to the student experience. What more can we do today than we did yesterday? It takes a special dedication to ask such questions continuously, and that is a challenge, but it is also an opportunity and a blessing.

Bishop McDevitt High School Announces New Principal

Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg is pleased to announce Vincent D. Harper, M.Ed., ’92, as the high school’s principal. The announcement was made Aug. 28. Harper will assume the principal position in the near future, joining the leadership team for the 2019-2020 academic year.

“We are thrilled to have Vince as principal of Bishop McDevitt High School,” said Michael J. Modica, ’70, Board of Director’s President. “Vince’s experience in his various administrative roles in our local public schools makes him a seasoned professional. Additionally, we love welcoming alumni back as staff.”

In his role as principal, Harper will work in collaboration with President David Gardiner in providing overall direction for Bishop McDevitt High School. Harper is primarily responsible for academic and curriculum management, faculty development, and student services. The principal reports to the Board of Directors and the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Harrisburg.

Harper comes to Bishop McDevitt High School after serving as principal at Susquehanna Township High School. Prior to his leadership role at Susquehanna, Harper served as Assistant Director of Special Education at Harrisburg City School District, where he was a Special Education Facilitator and faculty member. Additionally, Harper served as Director of Special Education and High School Principal at Commonwealth Cyber Charter School.

Harper earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from Franklin and Marshall College, Master of Science in Special Education from McDaniel College, and a Master of Education in Educational Administration from Cabrini College. Harper also completed the Leadership Residency Program at Shippensburg University, where he obtained his Superintendent’s Letter of Eligibility.

Harper and his wife, Danielle (Mehalick) Harper, ’95, are parishioners of Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Middletown and their son is entering fourth grade at St. Catherine Labouré School in Harrisburg.

What is your message for faculty and administrators as a new academic year begins?

My first message for our teachers and administrators would be a big thank you — thank you for embracing the Lord’s call to teach. Thank you for having the courage to put yourselves before our families day in day out, and to do the hard work required of us. “Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire,” St. Catherine of Siena said. I would like to remind them that our hope is in Christ, and he is alive and he loves us deeply and walks with us through our ministry. When you really think of that as a reality and you reflect on all the good things we are doing in our schools, you have to see this time, this day, as a time for renewed faith, optimism and opportunity in the Diocese of Harrisburg. Let’s push our schools.

What message do you have for students and parents?

To our current students and parents, I want to say thank you as well for trusting us, and I’d like them to know that we are working daily to earn that trust and to make our Lord proud of our efforts. To prospective parents and students, I would say that we have a unique approach to education to offer you. Many people talk about educating the “whole child,” but we have a unique commitment and ability to really do so. The Catholic Church has an amazing intellectual tradition and a tradition in the arts that we tap into as a way to educate our students. In a time when resources are often cut in schools, we allow students time to play and move and offer top-shelf athletics programs.

At a time when meditation and mindfulness are valued, we have a powerful tool in the Rosary! We strive daily to be Christian than it was, and it is always a challenge to find successful financial models and to offer continually added value to the student experience. What more can we do today than we did yesterday? It takes a special dedication to ask such questions continuously, and that is a challenge, but it is also an opportunity and a blessing.
New Principals Eager to Energize School Communities

This year, the Diocese of Harrisburg welcomes four new principals, ready to inspire and energize students, faculty and school communities. The principals shared their thoughts with The Catholic Witness prior to the start of a new year. Learn more about Catholic schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg at www.gocatholicschools.org.

Choosing A School For Your Child?
Consider Catholic Schools

Excellent Academics
95% of our Elementary students score above the national average in Language skills.
90% of our Elementary students score above the national average in Reading.
85% of our Elementary students score above the national average in Math.

Affordable Tuition
We are committed to making Catholic education an affordable option for families. Financial Aid and Scholarship programs are available to help with the cost of attending our schools.

High Graduation Rates
Over 98% of our students graduate from High School.

College Scholarships
Annually over $40 Million in scholarship funds are offered to graduates of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg.

Tuition Assistance and Scholarships are available. Learn more at a school near you.
Find a school at www.GoCatholicSchools.org
Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg • 4800 Union Deposit Road • Harrisburg, PA 17111 • (717) 657-4804

Jeffrey Hughes
Resurrection Catholic School,
Lancaster
717-392-3083
www.rcspa.org

“I am blessed to have been selected as the new principal at St. Catherine Laboure Catholic School. I am eager to meet the new and returning faculty, staff, families and students. I look forward to working with the school and church community to help bring to it a sense of energy, excitement, and positivity this school year.”

Jodi Reagan
St. Catherine Labouré School,
Harrisburg
717-564-1760
www.sclhbg.org/school

“Resurrection Catholic School is a special place as evidenced by the people I’ve met so far – students, parents, staff and community members who demonstrate our Family of Faith drives who we are. My hope is that we continue that from a faith and educational perspective, and that we continue to grow.”

Peter Morisco
Holy Family School,
Berwick
570-752-2021
www.hfberwick.org

“When I saw the [principal] position opening, the name of this school really stood out to me. I am a family man and was drawn to this small, tight-knit community. Holy Family to me means coming together, as a family, to work as one to help our children succeed. My main goals are to grow this school and to show the community how amazing this school and the students really are. I have been thoroughly reading up on the past and recent accomplishments of the students and staff.”

Michael Pietropola
Good Shepherd School,
Camp Hill
717-737-7261
www.gscha.org

“As the new principal at Good Shepherd Catholic School, I am very excited to meet all the students and families that have been involved in Good Shepherd Catholic School and learn more about who they are. Our vision will come alive this year by creating a culture of Faith, Knowledge and Service across all of our grade levels through meaningful relationships. I am honored to be here at Good Shepherd and passionate about the success of our school, students, teachers, staff and community alike.”
As Catholic schools in the Diocese of Harrisburg opened their doors for the start of a new academic year, they did so with prayer services, Masses and special receptions to celebrate their students and the promise of a new year. Schools shared their photos with The Catholic Witness. Look for a slideshow of these and additional photos on the Diocese’s Facebook page, www.Facebook.com/DioceseofHarrisburg.

Our Mother of Perpetual Help School, Ephrata

Sacred Heart of Jesus School, Lancaster

Resurrection Catholic School, Lancaster

St. Theresa School, New Cumberland

Corpus Christi School, Chambersburg

St. Anne School, Lancaster, teachers arrive with pencil-themed sneakers

St. Teresa of Calcutta School, McSherrystown campus
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St. Francis Xavier School, Gettysburg, students watch a butterfly emerge

St. John the Baptist School, New Freedom

St. Joseph School, Mechanicsburg

Holy Name of Jesus School, Harrisburg

Lancaster Catholic High School

Delone Catholic High School, McSherrystown

Trinity High School, Camp Hill

St. Joseph School, Danville

St. Catherine Labouré School, Harrisburg

St. Patrick School, Carlisle
Disabilities Camp ‘Family’ Reunites at Kirchenwald

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

In mid-August, Caitlin Nealon made the nearly 3,000-mile journey from her home in San Jose, Calif., to Lebanon County for the Diocese’s annual camp for people with disabilities.

A highlight of the summer for more than 30 years, the week draws both new and returning campers and counselors to Camp Kirchenwald for hiking, fishing, arts and crafts, swimming, a talent show and – most importantly – camaraderie.

“I’d do anything for them. I love these guys,” Nealon said as she watched campers play games and relax in hammocks outside their circle of cabins.

Nealon, who grew up at St. Patrick Parish in York, was a teenager when she started volunteering at the camp for people with disabilities 15 years ago.

“The people keep me coming back – that’s 100 percent why,” she said. “With the campers and the other staff, I joke that everybody is camp family. There are a handful of volunteers who have been here as long as I have, if not longer. You get to know them. Many of the campers become family as well, because you see them year after year.”

Now a resident of San Jose, Nealon designates vacation time to return as a counselor.

“I get a lot of love. I get a lot of joy,” she said of serving as a counselor.

“When I first started, we had a camper who had Autism and was nonverbal. The last year that she was here, she was almost using full sentences. She went from a point where she would point at things and grunt, to using sentences: ‘I want juice.’ It’s amazing, and it brings me so much joy! I soak up as much of it as I can, just from the campers.”

A ministry of the Diocesan Office of Ministry with People with Disabilities, the camp is a summer staple for its annual attendees.

Activities at this year’s camp, Aug. 11-16, included the usual arts and crafts, games, swimming and nature walks, as well as a visit from “The Bug Man,” interaction with goats, rabbits and chickens on the camp’s property, and Mass celebrated by Bishop Ronald Gainer on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Office of Ministry with People with Disabilities welcomes volunteers to assist each year; without their help, the camp couldn’t be offered to those who enjoy its respite each year.

“They are the most amazing people you’ll ever meet,” Nealon said of the campers. “Some of our campers are artists, and they’re coming to camp to get a chance to do a lot of art and spend time in the craft lodge. Some of them are athletes, so they come to camp to hike or fish or swim.”

“Our campers all bring their talents, hang out with us for a week and maybe try something new and get some freedom to make choices in what they’re doing,” she said. “The same way when you’re a kid and you go to summer camp and get that taste of freedom, our campers get the same thing here.”

Volunteers can serve during the day or for the entire week, with overnight accommodations in the cabins. While knowledge of fishing or arts and crafts can be helpful, previous camping experience isn’t necessary to volunteer.

Take Lauren Kofalt, for instance. The 17-year-old member of Queen of Peace Parish in Millersburg had never camped before this year’s week in Kirchenwald’s woods.

Her mom saw an ad for volunteers, and thought it would be a good idea for Lauren to serve.

More KIRCHENWALD, page 9
Kirchenwald

Continued from 8

“We don’t have a lot of people who have special needs in Halifax, because we’re such a small town, so I was unsure of what to expect,” Lauren said. She said she was a bit nervous about interacting with campers at first, but the feeling quickly dissipated. In fact, as the week went on, Lauren felt drawn to working the campers who needed a bit more attention and assistance.

“The week opened my eyes to how people with special needs don’t have special needs all the time. They have needs and emotions like everyone else. You help them learn to be more independent. I’ve learned that just because they have special needs, it doesn’t mean they need everything done for them. They can do what anyone else can,” Lauren said.

“I was excited to help out and be where I needed to be for them,” she said. Nealon echoed the sentiment. Being “where she needs to be” for the campers means traversing the country for them.

“I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else,” she said. “It’s the highlight of the summer.”

“Camp is definitely for anyone open to a surprise,” she reflected. “I didn’t have any skills when I started as a volunteer. I was a teenager. I knew nothing. Most of what I know about how to work with people with a specific set of needs, I’ve learned through camp. It’s good for anybody, as long as you’re ready to rise to a challenge and open yourself to being surprised – by yourself and by those around you.”

(A video about the camp will be posted at www.youtube.com/hbgdiocese. To inquire about volunteering, contact Larry Kiley at 717-657-4804, ext. 322, or lkiley@hbgdiocese.org.)

“People keep me coming back. I get a lot of love. I get a lot of joy as a counselor.”

~ Volunteer Caitlin Nealon

Counselors and campers make their way up Camp Kirchenwald’s main driveway for activities.

Left: Matt Ross and Rachel Frometa share a music sheet for Mass on Aug. 15.

Above: Bob Klinestever examines Indian Ink Berries along a nature trail.

Right: Jenny Laudeman expresses her excitement about the activities at camp.
Dr. Scott Hahn Offers Hope for Hard Times during Stop in New Oxford

By Pete Socks

The state of the Church and the results of a recent Pew Study weighed heavily on the heart and mind of Dr. Scott Hahn as he returned to New Oxford on Aug. 24 to present three talks to nearly 500 attendees from throughout the Diocese of Harrisburg, Maryland and as far away as Scranton.

The Pew Study Dr. Hahn referenced in the first of three talks indicates that 70 percent of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. For those under the age of 25, the number is worse; nearly 80 percent do not believe, and some even attested they had never heard of the Real Presence.

“This is what he wants to do now with us: bring to us a message of hope,” Dr. Hahn told the crowd about what Christ wants for us in these troubled times. “Hope for hard times because, let’s face it, we are facing hard times that are harder than we expected. We’re facing darkness that has gotten darker than even the gloom-and-doomers were predicting. But as dark as the culture has become, as morally toxic as it is for our young people, I want to say that the Good News is immeasurably better than the bad news is bad.

Dr. Hahn is the Father Michael Scanlan Professor of Biblical Theology and the New Evangelization at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, where he has taught since 1990. Through his efforts thousands of people have experienced the grace of conversion and have come home to the Catholic Church. The Aug. 24 event was held at New Oxford High School on Aug. 24.

Throughout the day, Dr. Hahn presented talks on The Holy Eucharist, The Marital Covenant as Sacrament, and St. Joseph. The theme of hope was prevalent and offered attendees a boost in their own faith life to take back home to their parishes and families.

Speaking on the importance of the Holy Eucharist, Dr. Hahn remarked, “St. Jerome said ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ. We might think we can afford to ignore [Scripture] but we can’t, because if we don’t know that Word that is inspired, we’re not really going to fall in love with the Word that was incarnated, and it comes to us in Holy Communion.”

He also spoke on the mission of The St. Paul Center, an apostolate dedicated to teaching Catholics to read Scripture from the heart of the Church, and of which Dr. Hahn is Founder and President.

“Frankly, I’ve met thousands of Catholics who took religious classes in school and have said to me, ‘Why have WE never learned to read the Bible this way?’ I want to make it so that their hearts are burning, their eyes are opened and they believe in the Real Presence of Christ,” he said.

Attendee Mary Eileen Warfield summarized her impression of the messages Dr. Hahn delivered. “I felt as though God reached out to me to take me deeper into his Word. As though he drew me closer to himself to give me consolation. I read Scripture daily but there is so much that I missed. I – we – needed this day!”

Dr. Hahn concluded the day with this message: “When we get home, when we get to heaven and we see the face of the Father, when we see the face of the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God, when we look upon Jesus and realize he is a first born like no one could ever be, this

Conference attendees peruse faith-based materials during breaks between sessions.

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

Displays from the St. Paul Center line the lobby. The apostolate, founded by Dr. Scott Hahn, is dedicated to teaching Catholics to read Scripture from the heart of the Church.

Catholic Charities’ Annual ‘Come and See’ Dinner

October 23 at the Diocesan Center in Harrisburg

Featuring Guest Speaker Teresa Tomeo

Catholic talk show host and bestselling author

5:00 p.m. – Reception and Silent Auction

6:00 p.m. – Dinner by 2 Gals Catering

7:00 – Remarks by Teresa Tomeo

The annual fundraising event benefits Catholic Charities’ residential programs: Lourdeshouse Maternity Home for pregnant women, Evergreen House for women on the road to recovery, and the Interfaith Shelter for Homeless Families.

Teresa Tomeo hosts the Catholic Connection radio program and The Catholic View for Women television show on EWTN. She is an author of several bestselling books, and a columnist and special correspondent for OSV Newsweekly. As an international speaker, Tomeo addresses media awareness and activism, and shares the story of her reversion to the Catholic Church.

Individual dinner reservations are $100 per person. Various table sponsorship levels are available. RSVP at www.cchbg.org

Contact Chris Meehan for information at:
717-657-4804, ext. 284 or cmeehan@cchbg.org
Stewardship Conference Invites Attendees to Put on the Armour of God

By Jen Reed  
*The Catholic Witness*

The second annual Fall Conference of Stewardship: A Mission of Faith plans to arm attendees against the snares of Satan, said the organization’s co-founder, Rob Longo.

“People are feeling like they’re in a battle, and God wants us to put on the armour of our relationship with him to fight the trappings of the Evil One,” he said.

The conference, “Put on the Armour of God,” takes its theme from spiritual tools at our disposal to grow in the faith: Adoration, Reconciliation, Mass, Obedience, Unity and the Rosary. The two-day event will be Sept. 18 and 19 at The Star Barn in Elizabethtown, and will feature prominent Catholic speakers, Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and outdoor Stations of the Cross.

Stewardship: A Mission of Faith was co-founded nearly a decade ago by Longo and David Abel, and started with no-cost stewardship and evangelization materials for parishes.

“It grew out of the understanding that stewardship is a way of life,” Longo said. “It’s living God-centered rather than self-centered. It calls for an understanding that everything we have is a gift from God that we’re coming together in unity to live the goodness, truth and beauty of who God is and the message that he has for us.”

“The Evil One wants us to think that we’re in this alone, to create despair, and to isolate us,” he said. “When we get together in a setting like this conference will offer, we’re coming together in unity to live our faith, to pray and to grow in love.”

One-day and two-day registration options are available, and seating is limited. For more information, visit www.stewardshipmission.org.

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**Diocese of Harrisburg Women’s Conference**

October 12 from 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Bishop McDevitt High School, Harrisburg

Keynote Speaker: Helen Alvaré

*Internationally known Catholic speaker*

“Shedding Light Not Heat: Families and Other Religious Communities Respond to a Hypersexualized Culture”

Workshop Sessions ~

- Confession
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Praise and Worship
- Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
- Lunch ~ Vendors

Register online and find more information at www.hbgdiocese.org/women

For general information, contact Jim Gontis at jgontis@hbgdiocese.org or 717-657-4804, ext. 227.
**The Called**

*Features on the faithful*

**Father Mark Weiss**

**Hometown:** Steetlon

**Education:** Public school, Penn State University, St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pa.

**Assignment:** Pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Dallastown

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*When did you think about becoming a priest?*

Throughout my younger years, I thought about the priesthood, I think maybe more so when I got into college. I went to Penn State University and switched my majors like many college students do over the years. I was involved at the main campus with the Catholic student Newman Association, which is the Catholic group that many colleges have on campus. I got to know different friends there, and to share similar experiences of our faith backgrounds.

It was between my freshman and sophomore years at Penn State that our Newman group had a chance to visit Pope John Paul II at World Youth Day in Denver, Colorado. We did a road trip, and it was a fantastic experience to draw our group together in a trip across the country, but to get to Denver and see so many thousands of young people who also cared about their faith, cared about Jesus, cared about their life in God—that really solidified our group and helped us to grow stronger.

And that helped me personally, spiritually, getting more involved with the Newman group, and toward the end of my years at Penn State to think about becoming a priest. I was debating on whether or not being a priest was going to be something here at home as a Diocesan priest. I was thinking at times to maybe be a missionary priest, as you often hear stories of different saints traveling to different countries. In my senior year, I was studying Human Development and Family Studies, which I thought I could use to continue to further my education to be a counselor. I was thinking about helping families in terms of cognitive behavioral therapy.

But during my senior year, there was a priest that came from Maryknoll Missions. He provided an opportunity for me and a friend of mine, where they would sponsor a program for people to see if they would want to explore missionary life. So we had the chance to go overseas in the summer of 1996. We went to Kenya for six or seven weeks to get a sense of what missionary life was like. As wonderful as it was, it made me realize that a lot of people care about their faith, and that, in some sense, America has become a new mission territory. We have lost our Judeo-Christian background, and we see more of that in the deterioration of our culture and the need for God’s message to be shared here at home. That’s why I went to the Diocese of Harrisburg to become a seminarian.

I had to wait a year because the fall semester had already started, and I took a job in a hospital for almost a year. I thought it would be helpful to see sick people, to interact with them as I was gathering their information in the administrative office. Then in 1997, I joined the Diocese of Harrisburg as a seminarian and did my schooling at St. Vincent Seminary.

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**What was your seminary experience like?**

It was wonderful. I had two years of Pre-Theology when the Diocese wanted me to study abroad in Rome. Initially, I was very excited to study outside of the United States, but I started to have some health issues with anxiety that I didn’t realize I had been dealing with before. It took me a couple years until we figured it out with my doctor. The Rome studies didn’t work out but, as we try to trust in God and his plan, it led me back to continue with my studies as well as getting a handle on my health issues.

I was ordained in 2004. Bishop Dattilo had passed away, and so we actually had the Auxiliary Bishop from Pittsburgh – Bishop Winters – come to ordain me and two other classmates. Bishop Dattilo did ordain me as a transitional deacon, and I like to claim to fame that I was the last person that he ordained.

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**What would you say to a young person who is discerning a call to the priesthood?**

It’s hard for me to imagine today people in college who might be discerning a call, especially when you’re talking about the real cost of financial education. I was very fortunate, with my mom working as a nurse for Hershey Medical Center, to get 75 percent off tuition. I would encourage people to finish their degree, continue to get a little bit of that life experience before they enter seminary.

I think it’s important in the midst of this world that we live in, to continue to practice the faith, even on a college campus. Continue to go to Mass, continue in the acts of charity like Newman groups on campus would do. I think it’s important to talk to some of the priests you know, to get a feel from them what priestly life is like. Discern and pray about it. Find someone who could be a spiritual director to help you make those kinds of decisions, because it’s not an easy decision.

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**Tell me a little bit about your childhood.**

In my early childhood years, I grew up in Steetlon. My dad’s side of the family was stationed there for three years. Obviously, I don’t remember much of that upbringing, but I grew up mostly in the Hummelstown-Hershey area with my mom and dad and my two older sisters. We belonged to St. Joan of Arc Parish in Hershey. The pastor that I remember growing up was Msgr. Leo Bierster. He was kind of the rock, the anchor of that parish in the time that I grew up.

It was always a thought about becoming a priest on and off throughout my life. I remember as a young child with my sister and friends in the neighborhood pretending to play Mass at home with bed sheets as albs or vestments. We had a makeshift altar out of the coffee table. We had those candies, the Ncco wafers, that we used.

I have fond memories too growing up personally in my own bedroom, where my mom and dad taught me and my sisters how to pray at the end of the day. I took that and as I got older, we weren’t kneeling by the bedside as younger children anymore; at the end of the day it was a moment of prayer and reflection on my day. Reading the Bible; we started out with the Children’s Bible of course, with the pictures. Then I got the more adult Bible, and thought I could read the whole Bible. Leviticus and Numbers were books that were difficult to get through, but I wanted to make sure I could say I was a person who read Sacred Scripture.

I remember in high school at times just reflecting on daily life, and lying on my bed and just talking with our Lord, listening to our Lord. My mom and dad would make sure we had in our bedrooms a crucifix above the door. That was a subtle influence of the Catholic faith growing up within my family. My mom and dad made sure my two older sisters and I would always go to Mass on Sundays. We would say Grace before dinnertime.

I wouldn’t say we were overtly a religious family in terms of praying the Rosary together, but they made sure we did those kind of things: going to Mass, going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation every three months. I still often use that as a good analogy for adults. We talk about our cars and our oil changes that we have; it’s a good “oil change” for the soul to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation once every three months.

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**What do you enjoy most about your ministry?**

I think any priest will share that one of their favorite parts of ministry is certainly the celebration of the sacraments with the people. I get great joy and edification in celebrating the Mass and sharing that with the people of God. Also in terms of encountering people’s brokenness in the Sacred Rite of Reconciliation, and just being by with God is always powerful because it conveys his mercy. I often think that if people could hear in the confessional what I and other priests hear, I think this world would be a lot less judgmental, a lot more forgiving, and a lot more loving of one another. This world would be filled with more compassion and mercy.

The people of God – I’m always amazed by them: the daily Mass people, in terms of their faithfulness which outshines my own, the people who are coming in to the RCIA program because they want to be Catholic; seeing their hunger and thirst for the faith in some ways helps to renew my faith.

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**Tell me something fun about you, or a little-known fact.**

I have a fascination with astronomy. When we had the total solar eclipse in the United States in 2017 – the next one is in 2024 – I traveled to Tennessee to see that with my telescope. I’ve always been interested in the exploration and the science of space. I feel in some ways it reminds me of my younger years as a child, when I would walk the family dog to the park and look up at the sky. It helped me to fathom the unfathomable in terms of the greatness of God and the universe that he’s given us.

A couple years ago, I also had the opportunity to do the Camino trip in Spain with a priest-friend of mine from Oklahoma. That was a wonderful pilgrimage to walk across Spain. There are different types of Camino walks that you can choose. We did the Camino Frances, which is basically a walk of 175 miles over the course of ten days to get to the city of Santiago, to Compostela, in which there is a beautiful cathedral with relics of St. James the Greater.
Giving Your Life Away

By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC
Special to The Witness

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, there lived a young maiden with her grandparents. Their home was of modest size and she, being the only child, had the freedom to go into any room except one. This room was constantly locked. The only key, to her knowledge, was in the possession of her grandmother. The young maiden tried over and over again to find out what was in this forbidden room. Her grandmother would say, “Hush child, you are not old enough to understand.”

One night, her curiosity got the best of her. As she pretended to be asleep, she watched her grandmother take the lamp and unlock the door to the secret room. As her grandmother closed the door behind her and locked it again, the young maiden snuck up to the key hole, hoping to see what was going on in the room. She could hear her grandmother humming, perhaps she might not be old enough to understand. Several years passed. On the morning of her tenth birthday, at her place at the kitchen table was a simple box tied with a bright blue hemp bow. As she sat down, her grandmother pointed to the box and said, “Happy Birthday, dear!” With great enthusiasm, she ripped open the box to find the key to the room!

“Happy Birthday, dear!” With great enthusiasm, she ripped open the box to find the key to the room! By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC

Annual Diocesan Charismatic Day of Renewal

“The Beginning and the End: The Healing of Past Soul Wounds”

September 21 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Diocesan Center, Harrisburg
Father Paul CB Schenck, Presenter

Father Schenck is parochial vicar at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Mechanicsburg and Director of Deacon Formation for the Diocese of Harrisburg.

To register, or for additional information, visit www.aliveinthesspirit.net or www.hbgdiocese.org/renewal, or call Joyce at 717-308-7245.

By mail, send a check payable to “Diocese of Harrisburg” for $20 per person ($10 for students age 16 through college) to Jackie Curran, Office of Catholic Life and Evangelization, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA., 17111. Lunch sandwich choices are ham, turkey, tuna and low gluten salad. Deadline for RSVP for lunch is Sept. 9.

Registrants may bring a non-perishable food item for the Silence of Mary Home.

A Marian Day Invitation to All the Ladies of the Harrisburg Diocese

When: October 5th, 2019 (First Saturday)
Where: Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Cornwall, PA
Wear your hats or fascinators
We are going to celebrate Mary’s Month of October with Mass, Devotions and a Tea-Party Brunch.

The Ladies of the Sacred Heart C.C.W will be our Hostesses.

Schedule of Activities
8:00 am Registration, Continental Breakfast
8:30 am Confessions offered
9:00 am Mass
10:15 am the Fatima Rosary
11:00 am Tea and Brunch
Win a prize for the best hat or fascinator
Please contact Anne Hasting at 717-274-8582 for more information.
May 16-26, 2020, to attend the world-famous Passion Play in 2020 in Oberammergau, Germany. The villagers of Oberammergau first performed the play in 1634 in fulfillment of their promise to God for sparing them from the Black Plague, and it is presented there every 10 years. Cost is $4,199 (includes taxes and airline surcharge). The trip will leave from Philadelphia airport. Brochures are available. Only four seats remain. Contact Mary Lore at Marycloretto@gmail.com or 717-286-7239.

St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Mechanicsburg, a one-day pilgrimage to the St. Anthony Chapel in Pittsburgh, Oct. 23. The chapel is home to nearly 5,000 relics from all around the world. Pilgrimage includes Mass and a private tour. Return trip includes a visit to the self-guided tour of the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville. Without a boxed lunch, the cost of the trip is $49; with a boxed lunch, the cost is $61. For information or to register, contact Lou Schultz at LouisSchultz@msn.com or 717-503-5322.

**Education & Enrichment**

Financial Education Workshop at St. Joseph Church in York, Sept. 8 from noon-3:30 p.m., addressing the uncertainty of financial planning, income distribution, financial aid, insurance, retirement, and elder care, Wills, Power of Attorney and Directives, and other topics. Hosted by Knights of Columbus Council #6353. A luncheon will be served. RSVP to 717-845-5390; for questions, call Jon Deakin at 717-818-2858.

“Recognizing Evil: Temptation, Inversion, Obsession and Possession.” Father John Szada will speak on evil in the world, Sept. 9 from 6:30-8 p.m. at Holy Infant Church in Manchester. This was a popular session at the Diocesan Men’s Conference.

“What Strange God is This?” presented at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Millersville, Sept. 16 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. by Tom O’Neill, Director of the Diocesan Office of Family and Respect Life Ministries. Evening includes song, presentation and the Rosary.

“Yes, YOU Can Evangelize!” presented by Pete Socks of Breadbox Media, a national Catholic podcasting network, Sept. 26 at 7 p.m. at St. Leo the Great Parish in Rohrerstown. Socks’ blogs, workshops and books include book reviews and Catholic commentaries at the national level. Snacks and conversation will follow the presentation. No RSVP required.

Bishop Robert Barron’s study program, “The Mass,” offered at St. Leo the Great Parish in Rohrerstown beginning Oct. 2 after the 7 p.m. Mass. View the DVD as a group. Study guide and discussion are optional. Learn to fully understand and appreciate the source and summit of the Catholic faith. To register, or for more details, contact henrychrist50@gmail.com.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Mechanicsburg, Forty Hours Eucharistic Devotions, Sept. 8-10 at 7 p.m. Composer and musician E. Louis Caner, OEF, director of pastoral care at St. Joseph Parish in Lakeland, Fla., will lead devotions with special music and a focus on the teaching of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi regarding the Eucharist. Sunday evening includes music, Scripture, and reflection. On Monday, Caner will bring a Taizé-type service, and the parish choir will join him for Tuesday’s concluding service.

The Borough of Steelton and Prince of Peace Parish, Ecumenical Prayer Service honoring all Emergency Responders, Sept. 5 at 2 p.m. at Prince of Peace Parish-Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Steelton. Reception in the parish center follows the service. RSVP to the parish at 717-985-1330 or pop.parish@comcast.net. All members of the community are welcome to attend.

Caerolom on Sept. 5 at 7 p.m. at St. John of Arc Church in Hershey. Spend time with our Lord in Adoration, song, meditation and prayer, and feel his presence among us. Men and women will be held in the cafeteria. All are welcome, bring a friend.

**Pilgrimages & Retreats**

St. Peter Parish in Columbia, pilgrimage to Oberammergau. Eleven-day Alpine Europe tour

Theology on Tap in Lancaster, Sept. 12 at 7 p.m. at Anne Bailey’s Irish Pub, Lancaster. Guest speaker, Father Deogratias Wugasira, raised in Tanzania and now chaplain at Lancaster General Hospital, will speak on “Our Faith Journey.” All young adults (20s and 30s) are welcome to attend. For information, contact Faith Hermitess at sisterhermitess@gmail.com or call 717-730-7123.

**Diocesan Notebook continues on page 15**
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.

Bloomsburg
St. Columba: Edward C. Wade

Camp Hill
Good Shepherd: Shirley Bonefant, Russell Klingensmith, Marilyn Meeks

Danville
St. Joseph: Joseph Tinsley

Elizabethtown
St. Peter: Andrea Derr, Gordon Smeal

Gettysburg
St. Francis Xavier: Eric W. “Ricky” Beiley

Greencastle
St. Mark: Janet Lynne Fiorelli-Conway
St. Vincent de Paul: Patricia Pitt, Ethel Resh, Edmond Trostle

Harrisburg
Holy Name of Jesus: Anne F. Doherty, Mary E. Goodling
St. Catherine Laboure: Jacqueline Shaulis

Mechanicsburg
St. Joseph: Vincent “Jim” Silvester, Francine Hernjak Yetter
St. Katharine Drexel: Monica Rose Davis, Dolores (Nunny) Kosenske, Aldon (Al) Michelotti, Mary Keene

Morning Star Pregnancy Services’ Walk & Run for Life, Sept. 14 on Harrisburg’s City Island. There will be a kids’ zone, including free carousel rides, train rides, face painting, bounce houses, games, treats and more. Free pancake breakfast after the race. Register at www.supportmorningstar.com.

Knights of Columbus #3625, all-you-can-eat breakfast at Prince of Peace Parish in Steelton, Sept. 22 from 9 a.m.-noon. Eggs, pancakes, bacon, sausage, muffins, orange juice and coffee. Cost is $8.

Chicken barbecue dinner at Mother Cabrini Parish in Shamokin, Oct. 6 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the “Cabrini Shed,” corner of Race and Cherry Sts. Tickets available at the parish office from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Event includes half a chicken, baked potato, beans, roll and a “sweet.” Limited supply of extra dinners and chicken halves for walk-in customers. Donation $8. Take-out only. Call 570-648-4512, ext. 1, for information.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Hanover, chicken barbecue, Sept. 14 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. in the gym. Tickets are $9 and include half a chicken, baked potato, applesauce, roll and butter. Event includes a bake sale. Contact the parish office at 717-637-4625 or Pat Hubbard at 717-637-0121.

St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Bonneauville, 17th annual golf tournament, Sept. 14 at Meadowbrook Golf Course. Four-person scramble, 8 a.m.-11 a.m. shotgun start. Cost is $55 per golfer, $220 per team. Contact Jeff Small at 717-334-8542 to register or for info.

St. Catherine Laboure School in Harrisburg, 5th Annual Topper Trot 5K and 1 Mile Fun Run, Sept. 14 at Bishop McDevitt High School. The 5K begins at 10 a.m., followed by the Fun Run at 11 a.m. Event honors the memory of Msgr. Vincent Topper while benefiting the school’s tuition assistance program. Walkers, runners, children, and adults are welcome. For information and to register, visit www.sclhbg.org/school.

Chicken barbecue at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Abbottstown, Sept. 7 from 11 a.m. until sold out. Includes half a chicken, potato, roll, butter and applesauce, and supports Knights of Columbus charities. For more information, contact Ken at 717-814-0265 or e-mail slchaine@hotmail.com.

Morning Star Clinics is seeking a P/T educator to teach nationally recognized curriculums in Dauphin/Cumberland Counties. Program empowers teens to make healthy decisions regarding relationships and risk behaviors. Also promotes sexual risk avoidance to achieve best outcomes. Proven ability to relate to youth and an engaging speaking style required. One-year commitment following formal training, PA clearances. E-mail Leslie at lmoyer@morningstarclinics.com.
‘40 Days for Life’ Campaigns Planned in Local Communities

Give witness to the sanctity of human life and promote an end to abortion through the 40 Days for Life campaigns, which will take place in several locations throughout the Diocese this fall.

40 Days for Life is a community-based campaign that takes a determined, peaceful approach to showing local communities the consequences of abortion in their own neighborhoods, for their own friends and families. The movement calls for participants to witness to the sanctity of human life through a three-point program of activities: prayer and fasting, constant vigil at abortion clinics, and community outreach.

The worldwide campaign takes its name from the 40-day periods God used to transform individuals, communities and the entire world, from Noah in the flood and Moses on the mountain, to the disciples after Christ’s Resurrection.

Its mission is to bring together the body of Christ in a spirit of unity through prayer, fasting, and peaceful activism, with the purpose of repentance, to seek God’s favor to turn hearts and minds from a culture of death to a culture of life, thus bringing an end to abortion.

40 Days for Life campaigns will take place Sept. 25-Nov. 3 in the locations listed below. For more information about the campaign, and to connect to local efforts, visit www.40daysforlife.com.

**Chambersburg/Hagerstown**

Free screening of the movie “Unplanned”

Corpus Christi Parish Center, Chambersburg
Sept. 6 at 7 p.m.

RSVP for the movie to griffithjean3@gmail.com

Campaign on the public right-of-way at Women’s Reproductive Health

160 W. Washington Street, Hagerstown

Corpus Christi Parish participates in 40 Days for Life in Hagerstown
Sept. 28 and Oct. 16 from 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Campaign contact is Jeff Myers

717-870-5181
jeffreymy@yahoo.com

**Harrisburg**

On the public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood

1514 North 2nd Street

**Lancaster**

On the public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood

31 South Lime Street

Vigils Mondays and Thursdays

Contact Tom Ramsbottom

717-468-3822
Tramsbottom354@comcast.net

**York**

Opening Mass celebrated by Bishop Ronald Gainer
Sept. 22 at 5:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Church

Testimonies, music and dinner follow in Brenner Hall

Campaign on the public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood

728 South Beaver Street

Contact Tom Evans

717-999-4025
tomevans54@comcast.net

The annual Marrian Pilgrimage at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church in Centralia drew hundreds of Eastern and Latin Rite Catholics to the near-ghost town in Columbia County on Aug. 25.

The church, with its spotless white bell tower, overlooks the once-flourishing coal town, rendered desolate since the underground mine fires that ignited in 1962. Each August, the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia hosts a Marian pilgrimage on the church grounds, drawing worshipers from along the east coast.

This year’s celebration was led by five bishops of the Eastern and Latin Catholic Churches, including Metropolitan Borys Gudziak, Archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, and Bishop Ronald Gainer of Harrisburg.

Father Ryan Fischer, pastor of Divine Redeemer Parish in Mount Carmel, leads a living Rosary on the grounds of the church.

EWTN plans to broadcast the Divine Liturgy on Aug. 30 at 3:30 p.m.

Bishops, including Bishop Ronald Gainer, center, process into Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church in Centralia on Aug. 25 for the annual Marrian pilgrimage.