Building Homes and Building Community

Faith, fellowship and two-by-fours are all combining in York to provide new, affordable housing for 14 families, while building community, residents and different faiths.

A joint project between Habitat for Humanity and several area churches, including St. Joseph Parish, the Faith Build is bringing together congregations in order to work on Habitat projects. The 2019 build will not only provide housing for families in need, but it will also be one step in revitalizing the local community and building community between residents, Habitat and the various faith communities.

“Habitat believes that there are many partners, mostly the neighbors, that are required in order to have true community transformation. We’re not here just to make things look better or operate better; we’re here to create a sense of community between businesses, the individuals in this neighborhood and Habitat,” said Tammie Morris, executive director with York Habitat for Humanity. A Christian organization, Habitat is building more than homes through this project, Morris explained.

“In addition to building 14 new, affordable homes, we’re also going to help neighborhoods within a 15 block area, all around this build, with critical home repairs and aging-in-place services. So Habitat’s mission is not just to create new, safe, affordable housing, but to help preserve home ownership in the communities that we serve,” said Morris.

For Dwight Utz, a parishioner of St. Joseph Parish in York and a committee member for the Faith Build, being involved in this project is just as much about building homes as it is building bridges.

“The important part for our parish and for me was this whole environment of ecumenical, interreligious collaboration. And to bring the community together so that we are focused on York and what we can do for the York community,”
DIOCESAN NEWS

Diocese Sees 54% Increase in Financial Transparency Rating

By Rachel Bryson, M.S.  
*The Catholic Witness*

“As the recipient of your generosity, the Diocese takes the responsibility of carefully managing your gifts very seriously. We are committed to the highest standards of good stewardship, accountability, and transparency.”

These words from Bishop Ronald Gainer were reaffirmed at the end of 2019 when the Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) Annual Diocesan Online Financial Transparency Study was released. This study, annually conducted by the independent VOTF organization, reports on the financial transparency of dioceses and archdioceses throughout the United States. In 2019, the Diocese of Harrisburg received a total score of 86% out of 100%, which is a 54% increase over the Diocese’s score in 2018. The report analyzed the 2018 financial report posted to the Diocesan website.

According to the VOTF report, “The Diocese of Harrisburg also achieved an extraordinary increase in score. Like Erie, they too are under close scrutiny as a result of past failures in responding to clergy sex abuse. The increases clearly demonstrate a move by these dioceses toward more openness about finances.”

“We are pleased with the improvements cited in the VOTF report. The Diocese of Harrisburg remains committed to transparency and the timely presentation of useful information regarding operations and finances,” said Don Kaercher, chief financial officer for the Diocese. “While the Diocese has historically prepared and published most of the items measured by the VOTF report, they may not have always been as readily accessible as possible. We have made great strides in making such information easier to locate, and will continue to make improvements in that area going forward.”

This was the third financial transparency study completed by VOTF. The report reviews a range of criteria through a 10-question worksheet, with each criterion adding a certain value to the final score. Some of these criteria include how accessible the financial information is; if the posted reports have been audited; if information is available on the annual appeal and the programs it supports; if members of the finance council and accounting staff are listed; if financial policies are posted; and if collection counting policies are posted. According to the report, the average score achieved by the 177 dioceses in the United States was 65.25%.

Other results of the report included:
- 65% of dioceses exhibited a commitment to financial transparency by sharing their audited financial statements;
- Dioceses sharing their audited statements have increased during the past three years;
- 27% of dioceses provided no financial information online; and
- The average transparency score dropped slightly in 2019 due to tighter scoring criteria.

While the vast majority of dioceses have shown a commitment to financial transparency, “a sizable minority share little or no verifiable financial information with their members,” said the report.

The five dioceses that received a perfect score of 100% were the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska; the Diocese of Charlotte, North Carolina; the Diocese of Erie; the Archdiocese of Philadelphia; and the Diocese of Rochester, New York.


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PCC Looks at Troubling Numbers in Latest Abortion Report

From the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference announced Jan. 6 it was alarmed by many of the numbers contained in the latest comprehensive abortion report released by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Pennsylvania’s Abortion Control Act requires the state Department of Health to prepare and distribute a report on abortion each year. The report for 2018 was released in late December. The report showed there were 30,364 abortions in 2018, an increase of 353 from the prior year. The encouraging news for pro-life advocates is that the latest total is less than half of the all-time high of 65,777 abortions in 1980.

Of particular concern is that 41% of all the current abortions were chemical abortions (listed as Medical-non-surgical). That is up from 38% the previous year. This is especially alarming since many abortionists have stated plans to increase this type of procedure.

“These numbers show that abortion remains a serious problem in Pennsylvania, as well as across the entire United States,” said Eric Failing, the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference. “We’re grateful that the number of abortions has decreased significantly in recent decades, but there are still way too many. Even one is too many.”

The report also indicates that women ages 25-29 had the most abortions in 2018. There were 810 abortions committed on minors, those under the age of 18. Two abortions were performed on girls 12 and under.

Philadelphia was the county with the highest number of abortions at 11,494. That number represents 40% of the state’s total. Statistics show that 39 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties showed a decrease in abortions from the previous year. Every county in the state had at least one resident who had an abortion in 2018.

March for Life – in D.C. and PA

The PCC’s press release on abortion statistics in the state comes less than three weeks ahead of the National March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 24. With a theme this year of “Life Empowers: Pro-Life is Pro-Woman,” the March for Life Rally begins at noon at 12th Street on the National Mall. Following the rally, at approximately 1 p.m., marchers progress up Constitution Avenue to the U.S. Supreme Court. For detailed information on the event, visit www.marchforlife.org.

Mark your calendar and plan to participate in Pennsylvania’s inaugural March for Life on May 18 in Harrisburg. Hosted by the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference and the Pennsylvania Family Institute, the march will begin with a rally at the State Capitol at 11 a.m., followed by the march at noon. Stay tuned to Diocesan media and the PCC at www.pacatholic.org for more details about the march as they develop.

(The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference is based in Harrisburg and is the public affairs arm of Pennsylvania’s Catholic bishops.)

Bishop Gainer’s Public Calendar

- January 19 – Diocesan Respect Life Mass, Church of the Good Shepherd, Camp Hill, 9:30 a.m.
- January 23-26 – Legatus Summit, Naples, Florida

WITNESS TV

The Diocese of Harrisburg and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC) are joining forces to produce Witness TV. This television show airs weekly at 5:30 a.m. on Sundays on ABC 27. Witness TV features stories from throughout the Diocese, highlighting the work of our parishes, Catholic schools and ministries, as well as state legislative updates. Programs will be available to view on the Diocesan website after they air. Story ideas for Witness TV can be submitted to communications@hbgdiocese.org.
Continued From 1
said Utz. “It’s really im-
portant, I think, to get all
faiths to see what vision
we have for our commu-
nity and Habitat is what re-
ally brought this together.”

Utz explained that this
project is a good example
of what can happen when
various people, and faith
communities, work to-
gether.

“We have a very diversi-
fied committee as part of
the Faith Build and to see,
hear and listen to others
in the faith community
about how they see what
we’re doing and what they
see as our ability to come
together as one, it really is
amazing,” said Utz. “Where
a faith community wasn’t
as collaborative with the
Catholic faith in the past,
now, we’re beginning those
dialogues which hadn’t
happened for a long time.”

One Board at a Time
The Chestnut Street
Revitalization Project,
which is the project for
the Faith Build, was first
thought of more than two
years ago. The vacant lot
was destroyed by fire more
than 10 years ago, but by
the end of 2021 or early
2022, it will be home to 14
families.

St. Joseph’s Parish
has had 40 volunteers
work at the site over four
weekends, in addition to
financially supporting the
project.

“We took a
special col-
lection one
Sunday and
the parish
community
was very,
very support-
ive,” said Utz.
“St. Joe’s has
been part of
Habitat for
Humanity for
a very long
time, but
Father (Step-
hen Fernandes, OFM
Cap) thought
we needed
to get more
involved. I
just hope
this contin-
uues because
it is really a
great project.
I think you
can see from
what our
team mem-
ers and
other faith
communities
are doing, it’s
really spe-
cial.”

In addition to St. Joseph’s,
other faith communities
involved with the project
include LCBC, Stillmeadow
Church of the Nazarene,
Church of the Open Door,
Friendship Community
Church, First Presbyterian
Church, Zion Lutheran,
St. Paul’s Lutheran Church,
Living Word, JABEZ
Ministries and Airville Com-
nunity Churches.

To learn more about the
Faith Build, please visit
www.yorkhabitat.org/2019-
faith-build.html.
January 10, 2020 • The Catholic WITNESS

‘Where Feet May Fail and Fear Surrounds Me’

By Chris Heisey

The Catholic Witness

Seven days before Christmas, the Trinity High School Choir, under the direction of Caroline Jarrett, performed several powerfully poignant Christmas melodies for inmates at the Cumberland County Prison. This year marked the third year that the choir performed its program, “The Choral Works of Mercy” – an idea Jarrett envisioned after being inspired by the mercy teachings of Pope Francis.

“It is the most wonderful concert of the year for us,” Jarrett said. “It matters so much to us because we are doing the Lord’s work and sharing our music for the right reasons.”

The choir, consisting of more than 30 young men and women, performed two programs, the first for some two dozen female inmates and a second for more than 70 male inmates. The music encouraged the participation of the inmates and many visibly had tears streaming down their faces when the songs of Christmas childhoods past were sung.

A rendition of “Silent Night” had a majority of the inmates joining voices with the students.

“It is just an amazing experience because you get to see the emotions of everybody and how much it means to them, and that really touches you also,” senior Andrew Root said after performing. “One inmate nodded to me, folded his hands to say thank you, and that just really touches you deeply.”

A signature piece that the Trinity choir performs is Hillsong United’s “Oceans,” selected by the choir for its moving lyrics. It was the final piece in each performance. “And there I find You in the mystery; in oceans deep my faith will stand.... Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me,” the song begins. It also noticeably touched the inmates, given how movingly the words were sung by the Trinity choir.

“When the inmates cry and get emotional, you realize that they are just like us, they really are,” said senior Jamie Carson, who also performed a tender solo piece celebrating the fiat of the Blessed Mother.

Caroline Jarrett, Choir Director at Trinity High School, accompanies Choir members as they sing Christmas selections for female inmates.

Julianne Miekley, Emily Johnson, Lydia Kramer and Amelia Ritrievi raise their voices in song.

CHRIS HEISEY, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

The Trinity High School Choir brought their program, “The Choral Works of Mercy,” to inmates at the Cumberland County Prison a week before Christmas.
Diocese of Erie Opens Cause for Canonization of Woman
Who Championed Education of Persons with Disabilities

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Barber National Institute in Erie in 2003, three years after Dr. Gertrude Barber’s death. Pictured from left with students are Dr. Barber’s sister, Kathryn Barber Durkin; John Barber, president of the Barber National Institute; Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, former lieutenant governor of Maryland and daughter of Robert and Ethel Kennedy; and Maureen Barber-Carey, executive vice president of the Barber National Institute.

From the Diocese of Erie
Bishop Lawrence T. Persico of Erie issued a degree Dec. 12 to open the cause for canonization of Erie native Dr. Gertrude A. Barber as a saint in the Church. Dr. Barber, founder of the Barber National Institute, was a renowned educator and woman of faith who dedicated her life to serving children and adults with intellectual disabilities/autism and their families.

The opening of the cause for canonization is one of the first steps in a process that likely will take decades or longer.

“It is an honor to open the cause for sainthood for Dr. Gertrude Barber,” Bishop Persico said. “Her family members, and the thousands of families who have been touched by the work she initiated in her lifetime, are surely thrilled to be part of this historic moment. But I am particularly pleased that the good work of Dr. Barber, motivated by her Catholic faith and undertaken on behalf of those in need, will now be known more fully by those throughout our region and beyond.”

With the historic announcement, a formal inquiry will begin a review of her life, work and holiness. Bishop Persico approved the appointment of Msgr. Thomas McSweeney, a retired priest and former director of the Office of Evangelization for Communications of the Diocese of Erie, to serve as diocesan postulator of the cause. In this role, Msgr. McSweeney will be the main point of contact for the gathering of documentation and formal interviews with anyone wishing to discuss the interactions they had with Dr. Barber. The testimony will become part of the official documentation considered during the canonization process.

“Gertrude is now declared a Servant of God. As postulator, I will interview people who are standing in line to share their story as part of a solid document that can be presented to the Vatican,” Msgr. McSweeney told The Catholic Witness. “We would be so interested in anybody who can give comment on her heroic virtue, her holiness. We need witnesses who can support those particular elements of her cause.”

A Lifetime of Commitment
Dr. Barber (1911-2000) left a legacy of deep compassion and groundbreaking advancements in educating and empowering those with intellectual disabilities in her nearly 70 years of service.

She took up the mission when, as an assistant in the Erie School District, she had to tell parents of children with special needs that services were not available for their children in their community. She was deeply affected as she saw parents face the options of either keeping their children at home without access to an education and training, or sending them to a distant institution.

Dr. Barber became determined to find another way. She believed that all individuals, regardless of their disability, have unique gifts to offer, and have the right to live to their fullest potential. She was deeply affected as she saw parents face the options of either keeping their children at home without access to an education and training, or sending them to a distant institution.

Dr. Barber became determined to find another way. She believed that all individuals, regardless of their disability, have unique gifts to offer, and have the right to live to their fullest potential. She was deeply affected as she saw parents face the options of either keeping their children at home without access to an education and training, or sending them to a distant institution. She was deeply affected as she saw parents face the options of either keeping their children at home without access to an education and training, or sending them to a distant institution.

Dr. Barber began meeting with parents and, in 1952, opened the first class for children with intellectual disabilities in a room borrowed from the YMCA. She soon initiated classes for children with vision and hearing impairments, and opened training programs for adults with intellectual disabilities at locations around Erie.

In 1959, with the discovery of the polio vaccine, the city of Erie closed its former communicable disease hospital and leased the facility that would become the Barber Center. According to Dr. Barber, her students at last had “the first place we could really call home.”

Dr. Barber’s commitment to her service was founded in her faith. She was born in Erie in 1911, and grew up in the shadow of St. Ann Church, where she was a member throughout her life. She attended Villa Maria Academy and Edinboro Normal School (now Edinboro University) before earning a bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree from the Pennsylvania State University.

She became a teacher in the Erie School District in 1931, and resigned in 1971 to become the full-time administrator at the Barber Center.

She oversaw the expansion of services from early intervention services for infants and toddlers to the opening of a center for senior adults. She also responded to requests from locations throughout Pennsylvania, opening residential group homes and adult day services in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh regions.

She wrote the Barber National Institute philosophy: “All persons are children of God...with feelings, emotions, needs and capabilities unique to these persons and their heritage. In a world where all persons differ, everyone should have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.”

Dr. Barber died on April 29, 2000, as the Barber Center was in the midst of a capital campaign to build a new school and state-of-the-art training center. Her legacy continues to be carried out today, as 3,900 employees statewide provide a range of services for more than 7,200 children and adults with autism, intellectual and physical disabilities and behavioral health challenges and their families.

“She didn’t see these kids as disabled, she saw them as special. She lived that out, and you can see how her faith informed it, never giving up hope, and how people’s lives were changed for that alone,” Msgr. McSweeney said.

He spoke firsthand of the transformation he saw in the lives touched by Dr. Barber.

In 1971, as a newly-ordained priest assigned to St. Jude Parish in Erie while teaching at Gannon University, he encountered several parents who were distraught in seeking assistance for their children born with disabilities.

“They were beginning to feel rebuffed. There was not a place for them in the school system, there was no medical treatment. The whole concept seemed to be, ‘Well,
Good Shepherd Student Project Sends Care Packages to Military Personnel

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

A student service project that began in the fall at Good Shepherd School in Camp Hill culminated in boxes of personal care items and snacks for military personnel in time for Christmas.

In September, sixth-graders decided on the project of sending care packages to members of Good Shepherd families who are deployed. The school distributed flyers to ask for donations, and each grade was encouraged to collect specific items for the packages.

Students responded, bringing in toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, tissues, toilet paper, hair ties and brushes, stationery, drinks, gum, candy, granola bars and dried fruit.

The items were sorted and packed into three boxes, along with personal letters and cards for the military personnel.

“We are excited how our project evolved and are proud of our effort. We can’t thank the Good Shepherd community enough for their donations,” said Good Shepherd’s principal, Michael Pietropaolo.

“We give thanks at this time of year and ask God to bless the USA,” he said.

Col. Thomas Spahr, a 1989 graduate of Good Shepherd and a graduate of Trinity High School in 1993, wrote a letter to Pietropaolo and the students to share his appreciation for two of the care packages.

Col. Spahr, stationed in Kabul, Afghanistan, is the father of two students at St. Patrick School in Carlisle and at Trinity.

“Being a Soldier is hard and demands great sacrifice, but it is rewarding and the people I work with are great,” he said.

He wrote about his fellow soldiers at Camp Resolve Support, who also benefitted from the care packages.

“One of the things I like best about our Camp is the coalition partners,” the colonel wrote. “Most are from NATO countries, with the exception of Australia. Each country paints and decorates their headquarters with their national colors and murals from their country. On Sundays, we do physical fitness as a large group and many Sundays we celebrate different holidays from the different countries and they tell us all about their history.”

“The war in Afghanistan has been long and very sad,” Col. Spahr said. He asked the students to “Please pray very hard for peace and the people of Afghanistan.”

“Thank you from my entire team for all of the gifts you sent in your packages. Your thoughtful gifts make our lives a little bit easier,” he said.
Sacred Heart and St. George in Union County Welcome Bishop on Feast of Epiphany

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Surrounded by the radiance of Nativity scenes, strings of lights and vibrant poinsettias, Catholics gathered at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Lewisburg and St. George Church in Mifflinburg to celebrate the Epiphany with Bishop Ronald Gainer.

The feast celebrates the manifestation of Jesus as the Messiah, as the Magi arrive from the east to adore the Christ child.

“The reason you traveled to Holy Mass today was the same reason the Magi did – to pay homage,” Bishop Gainer told the faithful gathered for Mass at Sacred Heart on the evening of Jan. 4, and at St. George the next morning. Ten miles separate the churches, both under Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish.

“The Magi brought gifts; you bring your love and loyalty to Christ, and you receive a gift in return – Christ present in the Holy Eucharist,” he said.

The bishop said that while we emphasize the gifts of wealth that the Magi bring, it is the Magi who receive the gift, that of God made man. “And my dear friends in Christ, there is no greater gift than that,” Bishop Gainer said.

A Caring Community
Located in Union County, in the northern tier of the Diocese, Sacred Heart Church was dedicated in 1935, and St. George Mission Church in 1999.

“What continues to impress me about the people here is their charity,” said Father Mark Wilke, pastor.

The Caring Community, an outreach of approximately 100 volunteers from Sacred Heart and St.
EPHYPANY
Continued From 8

George, carries out various works of charity on a weekly basis.

“They write letters to the bereaved, deliver meals to people recovering from surgery, give rides to parishioners for appointments, and visit with folks who are unable to go out. Those who are unable to physically participate help in the work through prayer,” Father Wilke said.

The Caring Community began during the pastorate of Msgr. William Richardson and continues to flourish under the leadership of parishioner Eileen Pannell.

“Her dedication to the Caring Community and coordination of the people involved has helped everyone in the parish give and receive works of charity,” Father Wilke said.

“The Caring Community reminds us that it is a gift to be able to receive charity from others. We have a temptation to close off our hearts to help when we need it; we use this outreach as an opportunity to say, ‘These are your friends and neighbors who are willing to help you,’” he said.

Sacred Heart and St. George are home to “a strong community of Catholics throughout the area,” Father Wilke said. The parish also has a vibrant Catholic Campus Ministry including Catholic Campus Ministry at Bucknell University and prison ministry at USP Lewisburg.

“We certainly have distinct communities at Sacred Heart and St. George, but strive to be one parish with two churches,” Father Wilke said. “I can’t say enough about the kindness and generosity of the people here.”
Sisters of Mercy Mark 150 Years in Diocese of Harrisburg

By Sister Regina Werntz, RSM

Special to The Witness

In September, the Religious Sisters of Mercy marked their 150th year in the Diocese of Harrisburg. With just six community members currently serving within the Diocese, one might say, “No need for fanfare.” Yet, in response to their fourth vow of service to those who are poor, sick, and in need of education, for 150 years the Sisters of Mercy have touched the lives of students, families, orphans, immigrants, refugees—generations of people within the Diocese. There is a story to be told.

Beginning

The Mercy story in the Harrisburg Diocese began with Jeremiah Shanahan, its first bishop. To address the needs in the new diocese, Bishop Shanahan wrote to his two aunts, both Sisters of Mercy in the Chicago community, imploring them to ask their Mother Superior for help. Later, he traveled to the Windy City to state his case in person.

On September 1, 1869, six Sisters of Mercy arrived in the Diocese by train. Since the promised convent in Harrisburg was not ready, Mother Clare Grace, two professed Sisters, two novices, and a postulant first resided at St. Mary’s Convent in Lebanon. After a short time, when the Sisters returned to Harrisburg, two members of the founding group went back to Chicago and the postulant left the community.

Taking Root

The Sisters’ first convent in the capital city was a rented house on State Street; then, in 1871, Sylvan Heights Home became the Motherhouse. The Sisters had no sooner settled in when it was taken over for use as a Theological Seminary. (Later, when Sylvan Heights became an orphanage, the Sisters returned to operate it).

“Next, Mother Clare finally bought a $10,000 property at Maclay Street with only $10 in the bank,” Sister Mildred Ludes, who entered in 1908, recounted. “There they prayed for coal and food, especially bread. The tombstones bearing the ages of young Sisters who died of tuberculosis...is proof of the poverty they suffered.”

Times were hard. Sister Mary Gertrude Wierick, a native of Littlestown and the first new member, entered in 1870 but vocations to the community came slowly, for Catholics were in the minority. Facing people’s bigotry and fear, the Sisters were ridiculed on the streets. Nevertheless, they went from house to house, visiting the sick and breaking down walls of prejudice that intimidated Catholics from sending their children to Catholic school. With no payment for services rendered, fees for music lessons and tuition from a few “select” schools sustained the Sisters.

By 1929, there were 10,000 Sisters of Mercy across the country in 60 independent motherhouses, with “branch houses” stemming in 60 independent motherhouses, with “branch houses” stemming from each. In response to Rome’s request to amalgamate, the Harrisburg Sisters were among 39 motherhouses whose members voted to form the Sisters of Mercy of the Union. Numbering 112 professed Sisters and six novices, they became part of the Union’s Province of Scranton, with headquarters in Dallas, Pa.

To meet the varied needs of the growing Catholic population, more and more Sisters came to the Diocese from all parts of the Scranton Province (which included the Dioceses of Scranton, Harrisburg, Altoona-Johnstown, Pittsburg, Brooklyn, Rockville Centre, and Georgetown, Guyana). At their Centennial celebration in 1969, almost 150 Sisters, including 40 retired members, served throughout the Diocese.

Ministries

Opened in 1955 for the retired Sisters and those teaching at Bishop McDevitt High School, Mercycrest Convent had space for retreats, meetings and relaxation. It also housed Mercycrest Kindergarten, which prepared hundreds of children for school.

With a Catholic population of seven percent in the late 1950s, Harrisburg was still considered a mission diocese. However, increased and resultant need for workers, especially in Lancaster County, attracted many Latin American families to the area. Thus, by the 1960s, much of the school population at St. Mary’s in Lancaster was Spanish-speaking. Several Sisters learned the people’s language and various cultures, preparing them to teach the children and minister to families in their homes. It was a proud...
Each year, the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus announces winners of various awards, including the Star Council Award. The Star Council Award recognizes outstanding achievement in membership, insurance and service program activities. In order to earn the Star Council Award, a council must qualify for the Father McGivney, Founder’s, and Columbian Awards – respectively, for excellence in membership growth, excellence in promotion of insurance products, and excellence in programming and charitable outreach.

Two Councils in the Diocese have notified The Catholic Witness of earning the Star Council Award: Knights of Columbus Council #6353 from St. Joseph Parish in York, and Council #14081 of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Harrisburg.

Pictured in the photo at right, are members of Council #6353. From left are Council Treasurer William Fullerton, Grand Knight Jonathan Gnae, State Deputy Mark Jago, current Deputy Grand Knight Kelly Brown, Father Tage Danielson, Financial Secretary David Simms, K of C Insurance Agent Jon Deacon, Trustee William Schreiber, Lecturer Charles Krause, Advocate James Werth, Program Director Wayne Kurek and Brother Knight Obi Uzoma. Not pictured are 2018-2019 Deputy Grand Knight Frank Kibler and District Deputy Patrick Workinger.

In the photo at left are Council #14081 members with their Star Council Award. From left are K of C Field Agent Paul Broten, Programs Director Chet Hickey, Grand Knight Christopher Wilson, State Deputy Mark Jago and State Chaplain, Father Gregory D’Emma.

For information on the charitable works of the Knights of Columbus and how to join a local council, visit www.kofc.org.

Knights Council Earn Star Council Award

SISTERS

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day in the late 1970s when the Sisters sent St. Mary’s first Latino students to enroll at Lancaster Catholic High School. In 1975, the Sisters of Mercy also worked at Indiantown Gap, assisting newly-arrived refugees from Vietnam.

Most of the women from the Harrisburg Diocese who entered the Sisters of Mercy over the past 150 years were educators at all levels, but some served in social work, health care, Province Administration, parish ministry, and so forth. Sister Mary Concilia Moran, a Bishop McDevitt graduate, was elected to serve as Scranton Province Administrator, then Mother General of the Sisters of Mercy of the Union.

In Summary
One might say that the Sisters of Mercy gave much to the Diocese of Harrisburg, but families within the Diocese did likewise: they gave the Sisters of Mercy and the People of God their daughters. Fifteen Mercy Sisters from the Diocese are still living: Sisters Miriam Butz/Lancaster, entered 1939; Mary Canisia Hockensmith/McSherrystown, 1943; Paula Mary Aumen/Gettysburg, 1947; Marise Fabie/York, 1949; Marie Genevieve Mannix/Harrisburg, 1950; Maria Goretti Kubala/Marticville, 1951; Kathleen Marie Carroll/Harrisburg, 1955; Alice Marie Sanders/Gettysburg, 1955; Katherine Brennan/Williamstown, 1958; Jeanne d’Arc Salinger/Harrisburg, 1958; Dorothy Marie Reaver/McSherrystown, 1961; Carol Rittner/Camp Hill, 1962; Regina Werntz/Shamokin, 1962; Mary Ellen Fuhrman/Steelton, 1965; and Kristina Knott/Gettysburg, 1966.

In 1991, 160 years since their founding in Ireland by Venerable Catherine McAuley, the Sisters of Mercy of the Union and almost all U.S. independent Mercy communities formed The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. They, and Mercy Sisters worldwide, serve in more than 40 countries. Today, as in 1869, the number of Mercy Sisters in the Diocese Harrisburg is back to six: is God calling any woman within the Diocese to be a Sister of Mercy?
Tell me a little bit about your childhood.

I have three other brothers, Dan, Chris and Tim. My dad and mom still reside in Columbia, Pa. We went to Holy Trinity School, which is now Our Lady of the Angels. Then all of us went to Lancaster Catholic High School. After that, I went to Bloomsburg University for four years and majored in secondary education, and specialized in political science and economics. I never got a chance to really teach political science and economics, but I taught different pieces of history.

When did you first consider the priesthood?

I think that it was always there. Some priests say it was always there, and I guess it was that way with me too. The most common years are the sacramental years of first Holy Communion and Confirmation. We had first Holy Communion in second grade, and Confirmation in sixth grade. For Confirmation, it was Bishop Dattilo’s first year as bishop of our Diocese. My brother Tim and I were confirmed in sixth grade.

Those years were very formative for me, thinking that maybe God was calling me to the priesthood, but I couldn’t put it in words at the time. But then it kind of faded away, until college. At Bloomsburg, Father McNeil was there as our campus minister. I went to the campus ministry house there, and that was a good formative time for me as well, and I discerned priesthood there a little more.

What would you encourage someone who is 20-22 years old to do, if they feel called but haven’t given it a lot of thought?

I would encourage them to pray, encourage them to take opportunities to get involved in Catholic campus ministry. Talk to your priest, get to know the other students in Catholic campus ministry. Oftentimes, we don’t get a chance to pray because we’re so busy with other things, especially at college. But prayer is so important, because it’s in the silence that we hear the Lord speaking. The Lord is speaking to us, but we need to be able to listen and to hear him.

Ask your campus minister, “How am I able to pray in the midst of all that is happening in college, in the midst of all my responsibilities, in the midst of the stress?”

What did you do after college graduation, and when did you decide to enter seminary?

I graduated from Bloomsburg University in 2001. From that fall until the spring of 2008, I taught at York Catholic High School. For two years, I taught American history and world history for seventh and eighth graders. Then for five years, I taught American history for eleventh and twelfth graders.

The day after I got the job at York Catholic, which was June 29 or 30, my older brother Chris was being ordained in Scranton. We were in the cathedral, and I remember I became very emotional. That’s when I really began discerning that God was calling me. That was the lightning-bolt moment. I remember him walking down the aisle, and me thinking, “Maybe God is still calling me to be a priest.” Both my brother Tim and I were very emotional for the entire Mass. I felt the Lord was calling me at the moment.

How did your time at York Catholic impact who are you today as a pastor?

I had seven formative years teaching at York Catholic. The students taught me to be real. They taught me to teach how I am, instead of trying to teach like somebody else. The students pick out everything before you pick it out. That was a good lesson for me. I’m very, very grateful for my time at York Catholic.

What was your seminary experience like?

I was accepted by Bishop Rhodes in 2008, and spent two years at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe. I had a very good time there, learning about the faith from the Benedictines and having great friendships with my other classmates from the Diocese. Getting back into being a student at 28 was an adjustment, and St. Vincent gave me an opportunity to get back into that role.

I was at the North American College in Rome for four years – the Gregorian University for three years, and then the Angelicum for one year. I was there with a few other seminarians from our Diocese: Father Dill, Father Kuchinski and Father Morelli. We grew in the love of our faith, and we grew to know each other, which is a blessing for a priest.

I was there when Pope Benedict stepped down and Pope Francis was elected. I’ll never forget it. I just had just come back from class and was checking e-mails, and another seminarian who lives on my floor came in and said, “Pope Benedict resigned.” Well, how is that possible? I immediately went online to find the news. I went to Pope Benedict’s last audience in St. Peter’s Square, and we went to the rooftop of the North American to wave goodbye to him as he flew over the City of Rome when he left.

I also remember the night of Pope Francis’ election. We had Evening Prayer early that day so we could go down into the square and watch for the smoke. Being in the square with others from the college and from everywhere was the most beautiful thing. It showed me the universality of the Church, that we’re all part of the Body of Christ. The realization that we’re not alone, that we’re all in it together.

Do you have a favorite aspect of your ministry?

I like being with people whenever they’re sick, and up to the point of their death. I like hospital ministry, giving the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, being with the family and being with the person who is suffering. I like that aspect of the priesthood. There are so many people who are isolated and lonely, and just need someone to listen. We not only listen, but Christ has given us the ability to give the sacraments, to give them God’s strength in their time of need. We can give them the spiritual strength that they need. It’s good to bring the comfort of Jesus Christ, whether it be Holy Communion or the Sacrament of Anointing to those who are in need, home-bound, in the hospital or in a nursing home.

I enjoy going to the parochial school. Father Dubois, our parochial vicar, goes there as well. He goes any time in the morning or afternoon to get parents and students as they’re going in or out. We sometimes teach classes and visit with students at lunchtime. It’s a very good ministry of the parish.

Father Dubois and I are also part of a larger group of priests who visit Camp Hill Prison. I wasn’t sure how I would react to being a prison chaplain to celebrate Mass and hear Confessions, but I love it. The prisoners there are so much desiring the mercy of God. They give me so much, and teach me so much about Christ in their lives. That’s another beautiful ministry of our parish.

What do enjoy in your free time?

I like to cook. I was in Italy, so I love Italian food, pastas. I like to go out to restaurants with friends.

I also like to read biographies or autobiographies on political figures or religious figures. I love “A Man for All Seasons,” about St. Thomas More. I love the history of the Second Vatican Council, what went on in the councils, biographies of the popes.

You have two brothers who are also priests. That’s unique in a family.

The vocation began in the home. Whenever my dad belonged to an organization at the parish, it didn’t matter whether my brothers and I were old enough to be part of it; we’d be able to go to the meeting. He’d say, “Just sit here and listen.” We went with him to Holy Name Society meetings, and just sat there and listened. He always involved us. It was interesting to think about dad’s role in bringing us into the life of the Church, allowing us to be absorbed into the ministry and into the parish.

Mom was always so patient and always witnessing to the love of Christ. She would sit down with us and quiz us for tests in school. Tim and I are twins, and we’d always sit down and goof, laugh and carry on, and she always got through, so that we learned. She showed the love of Christ as a mother.

My oldest brother Dan, has a family. He makes sure that we’re in reality. I love him for that. He helps us realize that we have to get out of ourselves. My brother Dan and his family are very good models for Tim, Chris and I, in realizing that the priesthood is for others.

It is good to have two brothers who are priests who you can call to ask about certain areas or issues. We’re all together in it. It’s very beautiful to pray together and be together.
Carrying Christmas into Ordinary Time

By Sister Geralyn Schmidt, SCC
Special to The Witness

Christmas 2019 has become a memory. The beautifully wrapped presents have all been opened. Bows and wrappings have been torn and thrown out, or collected to be used again next year. The Christmas ham and turkey, along with the rest of the food, have been consumed. School has begun and it’s back to work for the rest of us. The glow of the Christmas tree, though still beautiful, has become a bit commonplace. The merchandise in the stores is now geared for Valentine’s Day. The extraordinary Christmas season has now turned to something ordinary.

Even liturgically, the priest now wears green. The priest’s black vestments are now green. The Christmas tree, though still beautiful, has been consumed. School has begun and it’s back to work for the rest of us. The glow of the Christmas tree, though still beautiful, has become a bit commonplace. The merchandise in the stores is now geared for Valentine’s Day. The extraordinary Christmas season has now turned to something ordinary. Most stores are now gearing up for Valentine’s Day. While the Christmas tree is still beautiful, it has been consumed. School has begun and it’s back to work for the rest of us.

Yet, we shouldn’t have to imagine it, because “from His fullness we have all received!” (Jn. 1:16) By our baptism we have become children of God. As His children, we wonder over the tiny sparks of grace that incarnate His word into our world. Sparks of grace? Hmm ... Perhaps estranged siblings or a parent and child finally, after many years, talking on the phone ... A plant that never bloomed suddenly sending forth beautiful blossoms even though you changed nothing in its care ... A whispered prayer becoming reality .... Knowing and believing that the death of a loved one is not the end, and that all life has meaning. The list could go on and on.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI writes, “The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.” Isn’t this the awesome reality of what Christmas is all about? By the life and death of that boy born in a manger, our life perspective changes. He becomes our model in what being human is all about. We give Him our flesh and He gives us His humanity. We give Him our eyes and He gives us His vision. We give Him our minds and He gives us our thoughts. We give Him our feet and He sets them on His path. We give Him our hands and He folds them in His prayer. We give Him our hearts and He gives us His will to love.

There is NOTHING ordinary about that! http://humanityfaithhopecharity.com/2018/02/11/caryll-houselander-prayers-presented-poems/

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

Masses for Healing from Addiction

The Diocesan health care chaplaincy program is working with parishes to host Masses for Healing from Addiction. The Masses will provide spiritual support to those who suffer from addiction and to their loved ones. Dates will be added to the list as Masses are scheduled. The list can also be found at www.hbgdiocese.org/healthcare-ministry/.

January
St. Peter Son Korean Community, Enola, Jan. 12 at 10 a.m.
St. Monica, Sunbury, Jan. 22 at 6:30 p.m.
Holy Angels, Kulpmont, Jan. 23 at 7 p.m.

February
St. Catherine Labouré, Harrisburg, Feb. 1 at 9 a.m.
St. Joseph, Milton, Feb. 7 at 9 a.m.
Prince of Peace, Steetfon, Feb. 9 at 10:30 a.m.

March
St. Joseph, Milton, March 4 at 6 p.m.
St. Ignatius Loyola, Buchanan Valley, March 18 at 6 p.m.
Assumption BVM, Lancaster, March 25 at 7 p.m.

April
St. Joseph, Milton, April 21 at 9 a.m.

May
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Marysville, May 1 at 8:30 a.m.
St. Joseph, Milton, May 4 at 9 a.m.
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Mechanicsburg, May 16 at 5 p.m.

June
St. Catherine Labouré, Harrisburg, June 20 at 9 a.m.
St. Joseph, Milton, June 24 at 7 p.m.

Weekdays
St. Ignatius Loyola, Buchanan Valley, April 21 at 9 a.m.
St. Peter Son Korean Community, Enola, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m.
St. Joseph, Milton, March 4 at 9 a.m.
St. John, Harrisburg, April 21 at 9 a.m.
St. James, Hummelstown, May 1 at 8:30 a.m.
St. Joseph, Milton, May 16 at 5 p.m.
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Mechanicsburg, May 16 at 5 p.m.
St. Catherine Labouré, Harrisburg, June 20 at 9 a.m.
St. Joseph, Milton, June 24 at 7 p.m.

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SPRITUAL OFFERINGS

15-decade Rosary for Life, every third Saturday of the month following the 9 a.m. Traditional Latin Mass at St. Law-
rence Chapel in Harrisburg. All are invited to attend for any end to abortion. For information, contact Chris at 717-
432-5415.

EDUCATION & ENRICHMENT

The Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic attract prayerful men and women with a deep love of the Catholic Church, an inter-
est in living according to Gospel values, ongoing study of the faith, and salvation of souls. If you are interested in learning
about the Dominican Lay, attend a monthly fraternity meet-
ing. The next one is Jan. 12 at 1 p.m. at the Dominican Mon-
astery in Lancaster. For more information, contact opiatyslan-
caster@gmail.com.

Theology on Tap in Lancaster presents Daemon Owens, Jan.
14 at the Holiday Inn’s Imperial Restaurant, Lancaster. Owens,
international speaker and founder of “joytub,” will speak on “To Be Is To Be For.” Questions followed by the speaker and Q&A at 7:30 p.m. Theology on Tap is a young adult ministry of the Diocese, open to all young adults in their 20s and 30s.

Theology on Tap in York presents Angelus Virata, director
of evangelization at the Basilica of the Assumption in Bal-
timore, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. at The First Post in York (second floor). Virata will speak on “Come, Holy Spirit,” describing her
journey to a life of spreading the Gospel. Theology on Tap is a young adult ministry of the Diocese, open to all young adults in their 20s and 30s. For more information on this and other young adult activities, visit www.Facebook.com/York Theology on Tap.

“The Unplanned Morning of Hope, Healing and Repara-
tions” featuring Abby Johnson’s true story in the movie “UN-
PLANNED,” Jan. 18 at St. Joseph Church in York. Day begins
with Mass at 8 a.m. in the Divine Mercy Chapel, followed by
light breakfast and the movie at 9 a.m. Morning will include a
Holy Hour, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Confes-
sion at 11 a.m. in the chapel. RSVP to Peggy at peggydhoff-
aol.com. Snow date is Jan. 25.

The Lay Baptist in New Freehold, 12-week Surviving Divorce
program begins Feb. 5 at 6:45 p.m. Program brings hope and
healing to those who need comfort, counsel, and clarity after
divorce. Visit http://www.catholicdaughters.org/ and click on “Education

Contest Forms” under the frequent downloads section for
rules and details. Entries must be postmarked by or deliver-
ed to Margaret T. Giordano, Education Contest Chair,
Department of Religion, Lancaster, PA 17601, by Feb. 1. Call
717-390-9035 with questions.

Showing of the pro-life movie “UNPLANNED” at Mary,
Gate of Heaven Church in Myerstown, Jan. 12 at 3 p.m.
Teenagers under 17 must be accompanied by an adult.
Light refreshments and a discussion follow the movie. The
Respect Life Committee meets the third Tuesday of each
month.

Showing of the film “UNPLANNED,” in the social
hall at St. Joseph Parish in Hanover. Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. The
story of Abby Johnson, director of a Planned Parenthood
clinic, believed in a woman’s right to choose - until the
day she saw something that changed everything. Parental
discretion encouraged for children younger than 17.

St. Catherine Labouré Parish in Harrisburg, bus to the
March for Life in Washington, D.C., Jan. 24. Departs at
7:30 a.m. from the parish and returns at 6:30 p.m. Rid-
ers asked to contribute $30 to help cover the cost of the
bus. Contact Deb in the parish office at 717-564-1321,
ext. 132, to reserve your seat.

“A Night of Accordion” at Lancaster Catholic High
School, Jan. 28 at 7:30 p.m., featuring Cody McSherry ‘21.
Repertoire will include classical, jazz, international folk and
accordion novelty pieces. McSherry previously performed at
the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Admission is free.
Donations accepted for Lancaster Catholic’s Fine & Perform-
ing Arts Department.

St. Cecilia Parish in Lebanon, spring travel trip to Fox-
wood, Mystic & the Newport Mansions. May 3-7 includes
motorcoach transportation, four nights lodging at Two Trees
Inn Foxwoods, eight meals. Visit Newport Mansions, visit
Mystic seaport and old Mystic village, and much more, for
$540 per person, double occupancy. For information and res-
ervations, contact Fred Maurer at 717-273-7930.

Lancaster Catholic High School’s activities fair, Jan.
25 from 1-3 p.m. in Berger Gym. Prospective families can
speak to and interact with various clubs, sports teams, campus ministry and the Fine and Performing Arts en-
sembles. Students who complete a bingo card indicating they spoke with a variety of extracurricular activities will be
entered into a raffle for free tuition for the 2020-21 school
year. To register, visit www.lcchs.org/activities/ Attendees
who pre-register will be entered into a raffle to win Amazon
gift cards.

“Told of Biblical Proportions” trip with St. Joseph
Leisure Club in Mechanicsburg, June 23-26, Trip to Ken-
tucky destinations, including the Creation Museum, a
75,000-square-foot facility featuring biblical history and
exhibits, botanical gardens, a planetarium, and a zoo and more.
The Ark Encounter, a full-size Noah’s Ark, built according to
the dimensions given in the Bible; the 19th century Ger-
man neighborhood, Mainstrasse Village, home to the Car-
roll Chimes Bell Tower, the Goose Girl Fountain and unique
shops and galleries; a private dinner cruise on the Queen
City Riverboat; and a live performance of at Washington Platform Restaurant, Cincinnati.
Contact trip coordinators at 717-737-8600.

York Catholic High School, two open houses for stu-
dents and parents. Jan. 12 from noon-2 p.m., featuring a
school fair and fair for prospective students for grades 7-12
students who attended the open house will win a tuition for
a year. Snow date is Jan. 26 from noon-2 p.m. Second open house, Jan. 29 from 6-7:30 p.m., for students to meet the teachers and sample classes to see how they blend with technology. Pre-register at www.yorkcatholic.edu. For more information, contact Margaret T. Giordano, Director of Admissions and Enrollment, at mggiordano.sultzbach@comcast.net.

York Catholic High School’s Science and Engineering
Fair, Jan. 29 from 6-7:30 p.m., during its open house.
Twenty students will present projects. First place winners
will proceed to the York County Science and Engineering
Fair at Penn State York campus in March. Topics range from
the effect of exercise on emotional intelligence to the deter-
mination of the best camouflage in wooded environments.

York Catholic schools family Mass and Battle of the
Buildings, Jan. 25 at York Catholic High School. Mass at 4
p.m., celebrated by Father Daniel Richards. The Battle of
the Buildings “minute-to-win-it” games of competition
between partner schools follows Mass. Each school is col-
lecting non-perishable items for three local food banks dur-
ing the event.

Palmyra Knights of Columbus’ Youth Free Throw Cham-
pionship for boys and girls ages 9-14, Jan. 26 at 1 p.m. at
Palmyra Middle School. Free event sponsored by the
Knights. Winners progress through local, district, and state
competitions. Participants must provide proof of age and
written parental consent. Information and entry form avail-
able through Jim Albus at jalbus350@comcast.net.

Knights of Columbus Council 6810, annual Free Throw
Championship, Jan. 19-1:30 p.m. at St. Leo the Great
School in Rohrerstown. Open to boys and girls ages 9-14.
Winners progress through local, district and state competi-
tion. Participants must provide proof of age and
written parental consent. Register at the door for the free
event. For information, contact George Elko, 717-205-
6210 or GMElko@comcast.net.

Holy Name Society of St. Cecilia Parish in Lebanon,
spaghetti dinner with bread and salad bar, Jan. 25 from 11
a.m. -6 p.m. at the parish center on State Drive. Cost is $10
for adults, $5 for children under 12, and free for children
under 3. Take-out available.

Bingo at St. James Parish Hall in Lititz, Jan. 19. Doors
open at 12:30 p.m., Bingo begins at 2 p.m. Twenty regular
games, paper cards, $1,000 jackpot, 50/50 specials, food.
Cost is $15 for nine regular cards and three strips jackpot.
Must be 18 to play. Sponsored by the Men’s Club of St.
James.

Day trip to Pittsburgh including The Flight 53 National
Memorial, the Church Brew Works, and St. Anthony’s Chap-
el on home to the largest collection of publicly venerable
Christian relics in the world outside of the Vatican, spon-
sored by St. Catherine Laboure Parish in Harrisburg. May
17. Deluxe motor coach trip, $35/traveler, departs at 8:45
a.m. and returns at 9:30 p.m. For information and res-
ervations, contact Deb at dialidilkbcb@gmail.org or 717-584-
1321.

Catholic Daughters of the Americas’ baby shower for
A Woman’s Concern, Jan. 19 at 1:45 p.m. at the Parish
Activity Center at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Millers-
ville. Hosted by Lancaster County Peace #1023. All
Catholic women invited to attend and to bring new items for
infants or toddlers to age 4. Light refreshments and games.
Contact Margaret T. Giordano at mggiordano.sultzbach@
comcast.net or 717-390-9035.

JOB OPENINGS

Lancaster Catholic High School seeks an advancement of-
icer to advance the mission of the school through fund-
raising plans and constituent relations. Responsibilities
include developing communication strategies, cultivating
donor relationships, procuring major gifts and running an
annual fund. Background and youth protection clearances
required. Forward an application, pastor recommendation
cover letter and résumé to Deb Waters, principal, at hiring@
lancastercatholic.org. Links to application and pastor
recommendation available with full job description at www.
hcg.org/jobs.

Mark Your Calendars!

Next Deadline: January 15

The deadline for submissions for the January 24 edition of 
The Witness is Wednesday, January 15 at 4:30 p.m.
Submit written announcements via e-mail to
witness@hbgdiocese.org. Limit 70 words.
No ads, posters or PDFs, please.
A link to the submission deadlines for all editions in 2020 is posted on The Witness
page at www.hbgdiocese.org/job.
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.

**Berwick**
Immaculate Conception BVM: Rodney Edwards
St. Joseph: Anthony D. Felix, Sr. Robert Felix, Sr. Sara James Michael Kenney Paul Kocela Ralph Norce III Emily Speziali

**Camp Hill**
Good Shepherd: Robert Weber

**Chambersburg**
Corpus Christi: William Ciccarelli Jere Perry Remedies Rosel Joseph Rotz Virginia Tarquino

**Hanover**
St. Vincent de Paul: William Hockensmith Richard Garvick Betty Sterner

**Harrisburg**
Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick: Vanda Khan
St. Catherine labour: Richard Bielenzo
St. Francis of Assisi: Consorcia Arce
St. Margaret Mary: Robert Caruso, Sr. Edward Raffensburger
Hershey
St. Joan of Arc: Valeria Hamilla
Kulpmont
Holy Angels: Nicholas J. Gula Mary Dolores Marshall
Lancaster
Assumption BVM: Helen Dennis Joseph Secora Josephine Tarallo
St. John Neumann: Elizabeth “Betty” Ferderbar George Ominski
Mary Polanskey Frank Pouda Rebecca “Becky” Reidenbach Carl Schweiger
St. Joseph: John A. Biskin Delana Carol Ann Johnson Veronica M. Lucks Madison Elizabeth Shonk
Lebanon
St. Cecilia: Joseph C. Sattler
Manheim
St. Richard: Leroy “Roy” Erwin Rose Marie Hershey Matilda “Lee” Joan Marrash Mary Pollard Jeanette D. Thompson
McSherrystown
Annunciation BVM: Susan Kuhn
Mechanicsburg
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton: Joan Logue Elizabeth Spade
St. Joseph: Joseph Entwisle Michael Kennedy Elizabeth Spade
Millersville
St. Philip the Apostle: Alexander DiGuiseppe Sharon Ford Phyllis Galletta
Mount Carmel
Divine Redeemer: Anna M. Flynn
Mount Joy
Mary, Mother of the Church: James Price
New Cumberland
St. Theresa: Mary Krause
New Freedom
St. John the Baptist: Dorothy Fritz Jane F. Shirey Peggy H. Zeigler
New Oxford
Immaculate Conception BVM: Jackie DePauls
Rohrerstown
St. Leo the Great: John A. Wodarcyk
Selinsgrove
St. Peter the Apostle: Rachel M. Tomaszewski
Steelton
Prince of Peace: Frances Romano
York
Immaculate Conception BVM: Robert Bommer Seraphine Daugherty James Pichler
St. Joseph: Jean Marie Anderson Fred Greaves
St. Rose of Lima: Edward Hoffman

**Deceased Clergy**
Please pray for the following clergy who died in January during the past 25 years:
Father Michael Homola, 2003
Deacon Ralph Runkle, 2005
Father Wallace E. Sawdy, 2006
Msgr. Francis Kumontis, 2009
Father Thomas F. Langan, 2012
Father C. Robert Nugent, 2014
Father Raymond Orloski, 2016
Msgr. Mercurio A. Fregapane, 2017

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Registration with the e-mail service will not automatically cancel your mailed subscription. If you prefer to receive the online version instead of a copy in the mail, e-mail your name and mailing address to witness@hbgdiocese.org.

**Puzzle is found on 13**

**Now Open**
Mausoleum offering crypts and niches
A Pre-planning Option for Catholic Burials at Holy Saviour Cemetery

More Information:
Joe Briansky, Manager | 3420 N. Susquehanna Trail | York, PA (717) 764-9685 | jbriansky@hbgdiocese.org
Posada Tradition Celebrated in Harrisburg

By Rachel Bryson, M.S.
The Catholic Witness

Good food, music, prayers and a focus on the Christmas story were all experienced in the days leading up to Christmas through Las Posadas. A tradition in Mexico and several other central and south American countries, this event commemorates the journey of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph in searching for a place to stay in Bethlehem.

“It is a tradition that comes from Mexico and starts on the 16th of December. There are nine Posadas that end on the night before the baby Jesus was born (Christmas Eve). Every one represents the nine months that Mary was pregnant,” said Angie Casanova, one of the Posada travelers who participated in the tradition in Harrisburg.

During the nine nights of the event, travelers visit a different homes or parish each night. St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Harrisburg was one of the stops during the Posada.

At the beginning of the evening, the travelers are divided into two groups, with one inside and the other outside. The group outside represents Mary and Joseph, while those inside represent the innkeepers. After reciting the Posada litany, various call-and-response type songs of Joseph asking for a place to stay, those outside are admitted to the “inn.”

“It’s a joy and a tradition of the culture. The families like to keep this culture alive. In this society, sometimes we don’t think about Christ and what the meaning (of His birth) is. It is also teaching the children about Mary and Joseph and how baby Jesus was born. He was born in stable in a very humble place. It’s very beautiful for the kids to learn that,” said Casanova.

Each night also focuses on a different element or piece of the Nativity. Casanova explained that this focus is yet another way the Posada serves to prepare hearts to receive Jesus on Christmas.

Ramona Morales, a native of Puerto Rico, said she has celebrated something similar and thinks this event is good for families.

“We are meeting together to pray, to sing. We sing and we share food. I think this is a great thing to bring to the Church. As a family, we need to teach our traditions and our customs,” Morales said.

“There are prayers and scriptures that go with every Posada, every single day is a different one. It’s a beautiful event. It’s community and it also brings a lot of joy,” added Casanova.

Delone Catholic Defending in Banner Manner

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

Fog enveloped the Carroll Valley on Jan. 3 in dense fashion, making visibility near zero, but what was quite visible was that the defending Class 3 A state champion Squirettes of Delone Catholic are clearly seen as the team to beat in 2020.

Jumping out to a 27-0 first quarter lead against an outmatched FairField team, the Squirettes – who start four sophomores and only one senior – demolished the Knights with their patented full court trapping defense that swarmed the court causing turnovers by the dozens. Surely, FairField is not a formidable foe, but undefeated Delone has beaten York Catholic by 30 and Trinity by 20 in the season’s first half, and those are clearly rather bellwether victories.

While the Squirettes won the state title last year as a heavy underdog against Dunmore, it’s difficult to see this team ever not being the favorite to defend its PIAA title come springtime.