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Good Shepherd
Announces Suspension
of School Operations

By Rachel Bryson, M.S.
The Catholic Witness

In September of 1953, the doors to Good Shepherd Catholic School in Camp Hill opened for the first time. Through the more than 65 years since then, the school has seen thousands of students pass through its doors. As was announced this week, the doors to Good Shepherd Catholic School will close permanently for grades first through eighth this month. After a time of transition, an early learning academy for pre-K and kindergarten students will open in 2021.

Father Neil S. Sullivan, pastor of Good Shepherd Parish, said this decision was made after considerable effort, discussion and prayer. Decreasing enrollment and the financial stress it brings, along with the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic, left the parish with little choice.

“This is not something we planned to do or wanted to do,” said Father Sullivan. “However, it is something we need to do given our current situation and challenges beyond our control. This decision affects us all in many ways. I share the disappointment it brings. Our immediate priority is to assist our students in transitioning to other schools and support our faculty and staff in finding new positions.”

Father Sullivan explained that the school has been faced with declining enrollment and increasing operating deficits for several years. The school has experienced a 43% decline in enrollment since 2016. In March of this year, 152 students were enrolled for the 2020/21 school year. As of May 28, this number had declined to just 82.

“In fairness to families, students, teachers, staff, and parishioners, our responsibility to make sure the entire parish is strong and secure for the future, and after final consultation with the Diocese and our parish advisory groups, we have had to come to a decision at this juncture so that plans can be made for the future,” added Father Sullivan.

Parish and school leadership have worked with a taskforce during the past several months to develop a plan to prevent the suspension. Unfortunately, the decline in enrollment left the parish with no other options, explained Father Sullivan. Making the difficult decision to suspend the school’s operation will better position the parish to provide for the spiritual, physical and educational needs of its families moving forward.

Looking to the Future

“Good Shepherd Catholic School has changed the lives of countless people in the Harrisburg Region since its founding in 1953. We can’t forget the
St Joseph’s Church, Hanover, Adds Striking Crucifix to Sanctuary

By Chris Heisey
The Catholic Witness

A few days before Pentecost Sunday, an 11-foot crucifix was raised and mounted on the right side of the sanctuary at St. Joseph Church in Hanover. The old adage, “Easier said than done,” was never truer in this major engineering feat, which was expertly completed by Conewago Enterprises on May 28.

Originally planned to be installed prior to Easter, the Covid-19 pandemic delayed the project, according to Mgsr. James Lyons, pastor. The current church was built in the 1970s, and its sanctuary is flanked by a massive brick wall in which a large statue of the Good Shepherd is center mounted over the altar. To remove this depiction would have involved substantially altering the foundation of the church building, so the decision was made to add a large crucifix to the right to augment the sanctuary above the tabernacle.

The beautiful crucifix is estimated to be more than 100 years old, and at one time it hung in a Pittsburgh area parish. The corpus was in dire need of restoration, and the century-old rugged wooden cross was also restored.

What made raising and hanging the crucifix onto a flat brick surface so challenging was the size and the weight of the art. Three members of Conewago – after project manager Zach Wentz designed the mounting brackets – had to carefully hoist the several-hundred-pound crucifix by hand and rope support via elevator lift truck to secure it into the slide-in brackets. With nearly 75 years of combined Conewago experience between them, Rob Little and foreman Randy Amspacher improvised several times with the aid of Jesus Sanchez to hoist the crucifix in the exact manner required to secure the strikingly-detailed corpus. Father Matthew Morelli, parochial vicar, also helped prepare the corpus for the tense lifting operation.

The lighting fixtures were adjusted so that the new addition

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rich history of this school, and the thousands of children who have passed through its doors,” said Michael Pietropola, school principal.

Pietropola has been working with Father Sullivan and other members of the parish and school to transition Good Shepherd Catholic School into an early learning facility.

“We have our eye on January 2021 and the launching of the Early Learning Academy at Good Shepherd School. It will offer programs for three and four year olds as well as Kindergarten in a Catholic environment with exceptional opportunities and resources,” said Father Sullivan.

“Mr. Mike Pietropola is already exploring how we can serve our parishioners as well as those from other parishes and the local community with an engaging, empowering and creative environment for young learners.”

Father Sullivan added that based on enrollment numbers for next school year, 26 of the 82 registrations are in the pre-K and kindergarten grades.

“We will take the next six months to plan and prepare for what we see as the next step in the mission of Catholic education at Good Shepherd based on our history and the current needs of the parish and local community,” said Father Sullivan.

“I was sad to see the news of the 1-8 grades ceasing to operate,” said Marty Kearney, a parishioner of Good Shepherd. “A phrase from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 9:17, comes to mind when I think of the school. Jesus said, “Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.” This speaks to the unique opportunity our parish and school faces – that the school facility can be transformed into not only the early learning academy, but to also be a center for religious education of the parish at large. It can be a great place for youth activities, for adult education, and for families. I know that Good Shepherd is up to this challenge.”

As preparations are made to suspend the school’s operation, parish and school leadership will work closely with the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools to support staff members and to assist families who wish to continue their Catholic education at neighboring Catholic schools.

“I am grateful to everyone who is part of our school. Our parishioners provide an incredible building for God’s children to learn and share yearly support for its mission and operation. Our faculty and staff give their all. Our parents sacrifice and partner with us. Our students not only learn, but they teach us. This next chapter will continue Good Shepherd’s amazing legacy of Catholic education and faith formation by focusing on God’s littlest ones,” said Father Sullivan.

(Witness file photos by Chris Heisey.)

Good Shepherd students are seen during Mass in this file photo from The Catholic Witness.
Virtual Workshop
Address Spiritual, Physical Wellbeing during Pandemic

By Rachel Bryson, M.S.

The Catholic Witness

Faith, healthcare and how to connect the two was the theme of the June 2 Spiritual Health, Physical Wellness virtual workshop. Almost 70 attendees, most of whom work in some form of healthcare or healthcare ministry, heard from health care professionals and clergy on various topics, including tools for taking care of yourself while caring for others, mental health first aid and end-of-life issues.

Dr. Oralia Garcia Dominic with Penn State College of Medicine spoke to attendees about some tools they and their families could use to maintain spiritual health and physical wellness. She told participants that it is important to remember that they are not alone and to use technology to remain connected.

Dr. Dominic also added that as front line responders, “you are helping someone. If you become burned out, that outreach is disrupted.”

Some of the tools Dr. Dominic discussed included using evidence-based strategies to lower your risk, working to achieve your own best health and wellness, following all recommended guidelines, maintaining a healthy weight, staying connected with your friends and families, keeping faith, and asking for help when you need it.

“Whatever you are feeling, it doesn’t matter; there is no bad feeling,” said Dr. Dominic. “You have a network behind you.”

Changing gears, the workshop then focused on self-care and mental health. Dr. Bonita Adlestein Kozemchak spoke about her Sanctuary in Place program. She began this virtual program in March as a place for those who are fearful or those needing a safe place to express their thoughts on both the current pandemic and other fears.

“Whatever you are feeling, it doesn’t matter; there is no bad feeling,” said Dr. Kozemchak. “As Christians and Catholics, how are we called to respond to this? What is our faith and moral compass? Where are we representing God? How are we being Jesus to others that we know and don’t know? At the end of this, what is your desire to be on the other side of this?”

Judy Newberger, the parish nurse for St. John the Baptist Parish in New Freedom, said that because of the pandemic and the closure of churches, she has been able to get to know the members of the parish much better.

“We talked to people (on the phone) to find out how they are doing,” said Newberger. “Sometimes we would match people up to get groceries. It was extremely fulfilling. Personally, it has been very rewarding and has helped me feel more comfortable navigating the pandemic.”

Deacon Steve Huete, from St. Ignatius Loyola Parish in Orrtanna, shared that the pandemic has forced him to slow down and has allowed much more time for prayer.

“I’ve really enjoyed working at the church as a deacon,” he added. “When Father (Dominic DiBiccaro) says Mass and I assist, I’m very much aware that we are praying on behalf of the parish.”

John Noullet from Wellspan Philhaven, who led the mental health first aid session, told participants that mental health challenges are very common, possibly even more so than physical health emergencies that are addressed in a traditional first aid training. The challenge with mental health is overcoming the stigma around it.

“A lot of people that have a mental health diagnosis tend to suffer in silence,” said Noullet. “Mental health...
first aid is about helping someone who is developing a mental health challenge or experiencing a mental health crisis.”

Rounding out the day, Father Stephen Logue, STL, bioethicist for the Diocese, provided information on end-of-life issues.

“The human person is a union of body and soul, the physical and spiritual” said Father Logue, adding that while we are in the world, the world will hate us at times for our belief, including those regarding end of life. And that is okay.”

Through his presentation, Father Logue discussed Catholic teaching on euthanasia, proportionate versus non-proportionate means and ordinary versus extraordinary means, spiritual care at the end of life and care after death.

“Be the soul of the world,” said Father Logue. “Even when the world reacts with anger and hatred, we don’t respond in kind.”

The Spiritual Health, Physical Wellness workshop was sponsored by the Diocesan Health and Pastoral Care Ministry. For more information, please visit www.hbgdiocese.org/healthcare-ministry.

(Author’s Note: Updated to reflect the change in the title “Spiritual Health, Physical Wellness” to “Spiritual Health, Physical Wellness”.)

(Author’s Note: Added a photograph of the participant watching Father Stephen Logue’s presentation on end of life issues. The photograph is credited to Chris Heisey and Jen Reed, The Catholic Witness.)

(Author’s Note: Updated the caption of the photograph of the crucifix to read: “The crucifix is raised by Randy Amspacher, Father Matthew Morelli and Jesus Sanchez.” The photograph is credited to Chris Heisey, The Catholic Witness.)
Pope Francis prays for the soul of George Floyd and for peace and justice in US

By Courtney Mares
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis said June 3 that he is praying for the soul of George Floyd and all victims of racism, adding that nothing is gained by violence.

“Dear brothers and sisters in the United States, I have witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest in your nation in these past days, following the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd,” Pope Francis said in a video broadcast June 3.

“We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life. At the same time, we have to recognize that the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost,” the pope said.

Pope Francis prayed for the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron of the Americas, to intercede for peace, justice, and reconciliation in the U.S. at the end of his Wednesday audience, livestreamed from the Vatican’s Apostolic Palace.

“Today I join the Church of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and of all the United States, in praying for the rest of the soul of George Floyd and all the others who have lost their lives because of the sin of racism,” the pope said.

“Let us pray for the comfort of families and friends who are heartbroken, and pray for national reconciliation and the peace we yearn for.”

Cities across the U.S. have seen widespread protests in the wake of the death of George Floyd. Some protests have turned to nights of rioting, and conflicts with police. At least five people have died amid the protests as of June 3.

In the video of the May 25 arrest, an officer with the Minneapolis Police Department can be seen kneeling on Floyd’s neck for several minutes after he was taken into custody. Floyd could be heard saying “I can’t breathe” several times. He died soon after.

Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was arrested May 29, and was initially charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter. Those charges were upgraded to second-degree June 3. He and the three other officers present at Floyd’s arrest, also charged, were fired from the Minneapolis Police Department.

Catholics across the Twin Cities have called for justice and unity in the wake of Floyd’s death.

Clergy in Minnesota, including the Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St. Paul-Minneapolis, participated in a silent walking protest June 2 to pray at the location where George Floyd died in police custody.

Archbishop Hebda had offered a Mass for the soul of George Floyd and for his family May 27.

“Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, intercede for all those who work for peace and justice in your land and in the world. God bless you all and your families,” Pope Francis said.

(Photo by Scott Olson/Getty Images.)
Bishop Gainer Calls for Peace, End to Racism

Bishop Ronald W. Gainer released the following statement in response to the brutal killing of Mr. George Floyd, a Minnesota man killed while being arrested by a Minneapolis police officer.

“As a Catholic, I was shocked and saddened by the senseless, brutal treatment and death of Mr. George Floyd. No person should ever be so mistreated, humiliated and murdered because of the color of his or her skin.

“The frustration and anger we are seeing unfold in cities in our Diocese, and across our country, through various protests is understandable. Racism has been and remains a plague in our society as insidious as any virus that sickens us. It affects us individually and as a nation. This is an opportunity that should not be lost. We should all take this moment to listen. Listen to the frustrations. Listen to the fears. Listen to the heartaches. Most of all we need to examine our own conscience regarding the dignity and sanctity of every human life.

“While the frustration is justified, the violence, especially against law enforcement officers, the random destruction of property and the looting is never justified and only leads to much greater losses than gains. This past weekend, we celebrated the Solemnity of Pentecost. When imparting the Holy Spirit, Jesus said to his apostles, “Peace be with you.” It is this peace we all need to bring into our hearts and strive to spread in our communities at this time. I ask the people of our Diocese and all people of good will to work to uproot every form of racism and to bring peace to our hearts and communities.”

Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School Teacher Earns National Crystal Apple for Classroom Innovation

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

Sara Wrightstone’s fifth-grade classroom at Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School is a student-centered combination of faith, hands-on activities and the challenge to meet their potential.

In the course of a normal school year, there are ancient history lessons that involve the mummification of hotdogs, language arts activities on iPads, and science experiments with rain gauges in the school yard.

“Any way I can get them to be active in their learning is a lot more beneficial for them, and I can see them learning more that way,” said Wrightstone. “I love doing hands-on activities. I think that’s the best way to learn.”

When schools across the state were called to utilize creative ways to continue educating students after buildings closed to the pandemic on that fateful Friday, March 13, Wrightstone and her colleagues got right to work. Prepared from the get-go to offer remote instruction on the heels of a Diocesan flexible instruction days action plan, Wrightstone found innovative methods to continue teaching – and check on the emotional wellbeing – of the 25 students in her class.

These efforts offer insight as to why she was one of three recipients nationwide of this year’s Crystal Apple Award.

The award is presented annually by School Specialty, an organization that leverages professional perspectives and resources for teachers in their efforts to engage and inspire students. The Crystal Apple recognizes the transformational efforts educators make in the lives of their students.

As an award winner, Wrightstone was presented with a crystal apple, a

More Crystal Apple, page 8
$500 gift card for her classroom, and individual medals for her students.

“It’s a phenomenal accolade for Sara to receive this national award,” said David Rushinski, Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School’s principal. “She executes the plans well. She gives so much time and energy to what she is doing in the classroom. When she tries something new and it works, she continues to perfect it. She is all about the kids,” he said.

“Sara is a phenomenal human being. She’s kind. She will do anything for anybody that needs assistance. She’s willing to go above and beyond in anything she does, if it’s going to help the school improve,” he said.

In addition to teaching fifth grade, Wrightstone leads the annual school musical and coaches Girls on the Run and Quiz Bowl. She serves on the Math Curriculum Committee for the Diocese of Harrisburg, and on the Development Committee and School Board at Harrisburg Catholic Elementary.

“I really love what I do. I’m certainly honored to have the award, but I guarantee everybody in the teaching world deserves to have an award like this,” Wrightstone said. “I really have to thank my coworkers. They’re awesome in what they do. We all have to work together to make education possible here at Harrisburg Catholic Elementary. We work numerous hours working with kids, but it’s worth it at the end.”

The last 11 weeks of the school year required necessary change for students learning from home. Wrightstone used technology to her advantage. Teaching subjects and weaving the faith into daily lesson plans remained constant as she connected to her kids via programs and apps, even adapting lessons for students using cell phones.

And there was another crucial element for her and the staff: ensuring the emotional and physical needs of the students were also met.

A city school with campuses at the Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick and Holy Family Parish, Harrisburg Catholic serves students of various ethnicities, many of whom come from underprivileged families. Through its Meal Program, Harrisburg Catholic Elementary offers free breakfast and lunch to all students every school day.

To help address a lack of food security among its families, Harrisburg Catholic distributed food on a regular basis during the final 11 weeks of the school year. They turned monetary donations from staff and parishioners into grocery store gift cards, and distributed food donated by individuals and businesses.

“Sara assisted at every one of them,” Rushinski said of the food distribution days. “Our school community was able to help our families with that basic need. It’s part of who we are, and we have a responsibility to take care of that need as well.”

“Our faculty works 100 percent for every child here. We work so hard to meet every one of their needs,” Rushinski added. “Our population has such diverse needs. It expresses to me and to the whole community the effort that every one of our faculty put into what they do to make sure every child’s needs are met.”

The school community is unsure of what instruction might look like come fall, but Wrightstone is convinced that whatever plans are put into place, the staff and faculty at Harrisburg Catholic Elementary will be ready to meet them.

“Whatever we have to do, we’ll do it,” she said. “We always come together and work as a team here.”

“I’m really glad to be here as a Catholic educator,” Wrightstone said. “I can teach the faith, and that’s most important in my book. It’s actually brought me closer to my faith, being a teacher. I want to be the best I can be and the do the best I can do to ensure the education of these kids and work with parents. I want to support them in any way I can and make their lives better.”

(Learn more about Harrisburg Catholic Elementary School at https://hbgcathelem.org/.)
The Called
A series of profiles on clergy and religious

Father Bernard Wamayose, AJ
Hometown: Eastern Uganda, Africa
Education: Seminary for the Apostles of Jesus in Moroto, Uganda
Current Assignment: Pastor of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Harrisburg

Where did you grow up, and what was your childhood like?
I grew up in eastern Uganda. Eastern Uganda borders Kenya. We are divided by a mountain called Mount Elgon. Half of the mountain is in Uganda, and the other half of it is in Kenya.

The Lord blessed my father with 90 years now. My mother passed on in 2011, she had a double stroke. For my family, we have been strong Catholics. My mom was a strong Anglican, but then she converted to Catholicism in 1993, when Pope John Paul II visited Uganda. She was seated in the front, and she happened to be one of those who greeted the pope. She did a good job raising us as Catholics. When she became a Catholic, she loved the Eucharist and she prayed the Rosary and all of the prayers.

In my family, there are eight. Three boys, including myself, and five girls. God called one home. She passed on. She was working in Mombasa, Kenya. She died in her sleep very peacefully. I am the second-to-last born.

When we grew up, my dad used to work in another city in Uganda near the River Nile, the longest river in Africa. He was working for a railway, called the East Africa Railway Company, which was built by Indians in the 18th century during the slave trade. When I was about six, he took me to stay with him while my mom and the others stayed back at home, taking care of the land, the animals and other things of the family. With my dad, I learned a lot of languages. In Uganda, there are 42 tribes, and each tribe speaks almost their own language. It’s like going to Lancaster and having a different language; York, another language; Harrisburg, another language.

Then my brother joined me. We had President Idi Amin Dada. He was a dictator who killed a lot of Ugandans. He was a Muslim. That’s when he started to say, “Friday is a public holiday. People go to the mosque. On Sundays, you may go to work, you may go to church.” The fighting came and he was killing a lot of people. My dad was among the people protesting in the company about their salaries, pensions. By then, Dada wanted to get rid of them. That was because we had the Kenyans, we had Tanzanians and we had Ugandans. Later, we had more. Burundi came. Sudan and Congo soon joined.

One of the generals was a friend of my dad. He said, “You better find a way to escape out of the country, because there is a move to erase most of you.” My dad asked to take refuge in Kenya with his friend. The president never wanted any opposition. He never wanted anyone to oppose him or push against him.

When my dad went to Kenya from the railway, my brother and I had to go back home. We went back home and stayed with mom a little bit, and then dad called mom to join him in Kenya. For us, we stayed for many years with our grandfather and grandmother. My grandfather was a chief, and chiefs in those days were very powerful people.

They had authority, they had power, they had everything. My dad came back about five years later, when the president was overthrown.

When my dad came back, which is about 1983, I was used to the city life and schools. In Uganda, they have Primary 1 through Primary 7. After Primary 7, you go to high school. For us, we were still under the British system of education, because we were colonized by the British.

I used to go to Mass at my parish, which was about two-and-a-half miles away. Of course, you go on foot, you walk. Our pastor was Polish, and we were evangelized by the Mill Hill Missionaries. Our eastern region of the country was evangelized by the Mill Hills. There is another part of Uganda evangelized by the Comboni Missionaries from Italy. The missionaries learned our language. They learned the common language that was understood by everyone.

When did you start thinking about becoming a priest?
It was in grade five, when I started to be an altar server. The reason I became an altar server was because when I would go to Mass, I saw the altar servers dressed in white with two coats. When they came in for
Mass and rang the bells during the Consecration, I thought, “This would be good. I should do that.” The altar servers could also move, when the priests went to other stations for Masses. The parishes were too big, so they had to go to what were called stations. The catechists would take care of the stations. They would put the altar servers in one car with their linens to help serve at the stations.

Father Nicholas, my pastor, was so kind. I said, “Father, I want to join the seminary.” He said, “Ok, I will talk to your parents.” I said, “I talked to my grandfather and he told me he’d love for one of us to be in the seminary.” Then he asked me what type of seminary I wanted to join. He said, “Do you want to join the Diocesan seminary to serve our Diocese, or do you want to become a missionary?” I asked, “What is a missionary?” He told me about the Apostles of Jesus, who wear white robes with the yellow sash and yellow ribbon. I said, “This is beautiful!” He said, “The Apostles of Jesus were founded by the Comboni Missionaries in Uganda. I am a Mill Hill Missionary.”

I decided I wanted to be an Apostle of Jesus, and they sent me an application. I applied, and was admitted to go to the Apostles of Jesus in Moroto, Uganda. Moroto is a very dry place. They keep a lot of cows, camels, sheep, and that’s their main food.

When did you begin seminary, and what were your studies like?

I started in seminary in 1987. I was 14 years old. My high school years were at the seminary. We studied classes just like we would have in high school. My high school education was the same as the rest of the country, but there was discipline, prayers and work in the seminary.

Most of the teachers were Comboni Missionaries from Italy. We had some Jesuits and Passionists who were also teaching philosophy. We had a novitiate on the other side. The minor seminary was in the center of campus, with philosophy on one side, the novitiate on the other side, and the Fathers’ quarters – we called it the Vatican – for the Italian priests, where they lived.

I studied there for seminary for four years. After exams, I had to go back for another two years, because in Uganda, you have to go to high school two years. The priests there were so good. They were very kind, encouraging us. The one who encouraged me most was my pastor. He loved children, and when he celebrated Mass, he really could sing. I was so much impressed by his way of life and how he encouraged us when we went back home. He would have people come and give us a small party before we went back to school.

After my senior year in high school, I had to apply for philosophy. It was in Nairobi, Kenya. I thought, “How am I going to go to Nairobi? I don’t know anyone.” I was there for three years, and I met people from Tanzania, Kenya, another part of Uganda, Sudan, Congo. After philosophy, you have to apply for the novitiate for two years. There was a novitiate in Moroto, where I had been for six years. Then there was a novitiate in Tanzania and one in Kenya, which were both good areas.

Father Alex was in charge. When I was in seminary, he was in the novitiate, and he knew me ever since I was a small boy, so he became my formator. He put all three seminaries on a piece of paper and said, “Whichever one I pick, that’s where you’ll go.” Fortunately, he picked Moroto.

When and where were you ordained, and where did you serve?

I was ordained in Nairobi. All of us were ordained together by Bishop Irile, the Auxiliary Bishop of Nairobi. My first assignment was in Tanzania. It was my first time there, and I was to go to teach in the minor seminary. I taught history and geography. In Tanzania, they speak Swahili, but you have to emphasize to them that they can’t speak in Swahili, they must speak English. If you got caught speaking Swahili, you’d be punished. I was there for a year and a half.

At the same time, I was sent to teach at St. Maria Goretti, a high school for girls. Then, they wanted someone to go back to the novitiate to help the novice director. So I went there to join Father Andreas, and I became his assistant. They had cows, pigs and goats, and I had to also make sure there was food and water within the house. Father Andreas was in his 70s, so he wanted someone young to run around and support him in a lot of things.

I helped at the novitiate for the nuns, which was one-and-a-half miles away. I was their director, and gave support there for four years. I was supposed to go to Italy to do my master’s in Rome. I knew a little Italian, and I was supposed to study Italian in Nairobi. Everything was in place, and then my Superior General called: “Father Bernard, you are not going to Italy for studies. Instead, you are going to the USA.” That was the highest point of obedience I could ever have, because I wanted to go to Italy.

When did you come to the United States, and where have you served?

I came in 2007. I first went to St. John the Baptist in New Freedom. When I was first working on my papers, I was working with now-Bishop Waltersheid. He was communicating with me from the Diocese about...
coming here and how to get the visa. When I packed my bags, I didn’t know what would be here, or what the weather would be like. I was told, “As a missionary, you have to pack light. Carry the essentials.” I arrived at Kennedy Airport in New York, went to Allentown to do paperwork, and then I went to St. John the Baptist. Father Capitani and Father Nugent were there. It was a very nice welcome and the parishioners welcomed me. I stayed for two weeks with one of the families. The people were nice and they were very happy. I tried to get used to American culture. The parishioners were so kind. They gave me a lot of warm clothing, invited me to dinner, took me to places I wanted to go. One of the ex-police officers taught me how to drive, because in Uganda, we drive on the left. I was at St. John the Baptist for five and a half years. Then I went to Bucknell University in Lewisburg, and I assisted as parochial vicar to Father William Richardson at Sacred Heart. I was independent as the university chaplain, and I had my own house. Father was very nice. He had two churches and four Masses, and he’d give me one. I would do Sacred Heart one week, and the next week go to St. George. The parishioners would come to the Newman House to cook. Deacon Owen showed me around, and he became a good friend. I was there for four and a half years, then I was told to come here to Our Lady’s.

**How do you take your experiences from Uganda and apply it to being a pastor at Our Lady’s?**

As a pastor, there are good things and there are challenges. Being a pastor here is something, for me, that is very good. At home, it is not so much organized; the pastor is doing this and that. Here, there is a system. When I came, the biggest challenge was the Parish Council was not working. The parishioners said they didn’t have a Parish Council for two or three years. The Finance Council was still moving forward. So when I came, I said we needed a Parish Council, because we are two communities; we have Vietnamese, and we want them to be involved. When I invited them to join, the people came. We actually had too many people, so we had to limit the numbers.

**What do you enjoy most about being a priest?**

My favorite part of the priesthood is the Eucharist, because without the Eucharist, I cannot be a priest. I also like to listen to Confessions and visit the sick. Of course, all the sacraments, I love them. Most of the time when someone calls because they are sick, or someone wants Confession, I don’t say, “It can wait.” Because you never know. I will rush to be with that person.

**What do you do in your free time?**

On my day off, which is usually Wednesday, we have ladies who clean the house. On Wednesday after a good rest, I do laundry, then I will sit and read. I read the Bible or watch short movies. I also do some exercise, or go out and listen to the birds. Sometimes I’ll go to the church to have quiet time there in Adoration. I also do some cooking. I cook twice a week. I like Italian food and Irish food.

**What is it like for you as priest these days during the pandemic?**

It is very challenging for us, because we are used to having people around us. Now, we don’t see them. But that doesn’t mean that we don’t celebrate the Mass. I celebrate Mass every day. For Masses on Sunday, because we have wifi, we can put it on the website and Facebook. I always write my homilies to be put in the bulletin so people can read the message. Some people, I write to. Some, I give a call. Some call me. I encourage them and tell them that even though we are separated physically, we are united in the spirit and in faith. We are together. I am always in connection with them. I encourage them and pray with them, and I find that the people are generous. They send in their envelopes or donate online. Financially, we are not shaky.

It is a hard time. You don’t see your parishioners, they don’t see you. We are a family, and we are separated.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about your priesthood?**

My studies have enabled me to read a lot of things, reflect on a lot of things. It gives me a sense of how we need God in our lives so much. Without God, we are useless. One young lady came to me, who graduated from Bucknell. She said, “Father, I have been sustained by Communion. When they told us we could not go to church, I almost died.” She said, “I told my pastor that I reflected on my faith, and our faith is shaken.” She said, “During hard times, people sometimes forget about their faith. They’re caught up in their fears, trials, anxieties and worries, and they forget that God can take care of that. We should remain strong. God is here, and God cares.”

*(Interview conducted by Chris Heisey, *The Catholic Witness*)
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.

Buchanan Valley
St. Ignatius Loyola:
Brenda Althoff

Coal Township
Our Lady of Hope:
Mary M. Schickley
Clara Jones
Mark Radziewicz

Hershey
St. Joan of Arc:
Natalie Shovlin

Lancaster
Assumption BVM:
Joseph Dennis
St. John Neumann:
David Gaydos
Joan Brown

Mount Joy
Mary, Mother of the Church:
Carole Sullivan

Palmyra
Holy Spirit:
Helen T. Landis

Selinsgrove
St. Pius X:
Anna Price
Margaret Lewis

Shippensburg
Our Lady of the Visitation:
Angelo Costanzo

York
St. Joseph:
John Olshefski
Margaret Sciortino

DIOCESAN NOTEBOOK

Fundraisers & Events

The St. Pauline Center in Kulpmont is lighting candles that can be purchased in memory of loved ones. While the doors of the center remain closed, volunteers are lighting candles offered for prayers for loved ones. A large candle can be lit for $5, and a small one for $1. Mail your selection and payment to the St. Pauline Foundation, P.O. Box 115, Kulpmont, PA, 17834.

Resurrection Catholic School in Lancaster will hold its annual Golf Outing on Sept. 15 at Meadia Heights Golf Course in Lancaster. For information on registering as a foursome, or if you would like to become a sponsor, contact Amanda Lyda at 717-475-6330.

Education & Enrichment


Pilgrimages & Retreats

The Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women is unable to hold the HDCCW 10th Annual Weekend Retreat scheduled for June 12-14, 2020, due to restrictions in place for the pandemic. Father Chris Alar, MIC, has agreed to be our retreat master for 2021. “Save the date” of June 11-13, 2021 for the 2021 HDCCW Weekend Retreat.

Rachel’s Vineyard retreats in June have been canceled. The retreats are for women and men struggling with grief and loss from an
abortion. The next retreat is scheduled for September in Columbia, Pa. Rachel’s Vineyard retreats are part of the Project Rachel ministry in the Diocese of Harrisburg. For information on the confidential retreats, contact Becky Biter at undefeatedcourage@gmail.com.

**Job Openings**

**Resurrection Catholic School in Lancaster is seeking a full-time middle school math and science teacher.** All applicants must complete the Harrisburg Diocese Professional Employment Application, submit three current letters of reference, and obtain the proper clearances. To be considered for an interview, applicants must also provide a Pastor’s letter of reference from the church that they currently attend. If interested, please submit a cover letter, résumé, letters of reference, Pastor’s letter of recommendation, and transcripts to Mr. Jeffrey Hughes, Principal, Resurrection Catholic School, at jhughes@rcspa.org or mail information to Resurrection Catholic School, 521 E. Orange Street, Lancaster, PA 17602. The application packet found on the Diocesan website must be completed and submitted.

**Lancaster Catholic High School seeks a practicing Catholic to serve as its Director of Enrollment Management** to develop and implement a comprehensive and effective program that recruits, selects and enrolls mission-appropriate students. Reporting directly to and collaborating with the Director of Strategic Marketing and Communication, the Director will oversee the admissions operation and serve as a primary external representative of LCHS in recruiting events in key markets and in making presentations to alumni and other school constituents. He/she will assist the Director of Strategic Marketing and Communication in developing a data-driven, effective strategy that succeeds in achieving the school’s annual enrollment goals. The Director will develop and conduct admissions events, respond to admissions inquiries, interview and provide ongoing counsel to prospective families and students regarding the admissions process and review applications. He/she will manage the admissions office and programs, including developing/updating content for electronic and print communications.

The ideal candidate will have a bachelor’s degree and at least three years of successful professional experience in sales or school admissions; the ability to work independently and as part of a team; superior interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills; and proficiency in basic customer relations management systems and computer applications. To apply, please complete the online application at advancement@lchsyes.org.

**St. Anne School in Lancaster is seeking a part-time Music Teacher** for the 2020-2021 school year. This part-time position (15 hours per week) is responsible for teaching grades K-8 the music curriculum established by the Diocese of Harrisburg, organizing the school Christmas Concert, providing the music for school liturgies and conducting the school choir. Candidates should be practicing Catholics with a bachelor’s degree and teaching certification. Qualified candidates should forward a résumé and cover letter to Suzanne Wood, 108 E. Liberty St., Lancaster, PA 17602. Materials may also be emailed to: woodsu@stannelancasterpa.org.

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**To report suspected abuse of a minor, please follow these two steps:**

1. Call the toll-free PA Child Abuse Hotline at **1-800-932-0313**
2. Report suspected abuse of a minor by a church official, employee or volunteer by calling the diocesan toll-free hotline at **1-800-626-1608**

It is important that you report suspected abuse with both law enforcement and the diocese.

Email: ReportAbuse@hbgdiocese.org