



## And the winner is... Patti Jo Uplinger of Linesville

Seventy-seven people participated in *FaithLife's* recent trivia contest about the origins of the Nativity set. And, thanks to the Internet, everyone who responded answered all three questions correctly. Names were placed in a random drawing, with the winner picked Nov. 29.



Although the questions were easy (if you have a computer), *FaithLife* wanted readers to take time this Advent season to learn about St. Francis' reenactment of the first Nativity scene. Here are the questions and correct answers:

1. In what year was a Nativity scene first staged publicly? **1223 A.D.**
  2. Which pope gave his permission to present this Nativity? **Pope Honorius III**
  3. This Nativity scene was set up in a cave. In what village? **Creccio, Italy.**
- Congratulations, Patti Jo! A member of St. Philip Parish in Linesville, she wins a \$75 gift certificate to Hofmann's Church & Religious Goods, Erie.

# One-day total: \$2.9 million

## Anonymous donor triples gifts to Prep/Villa

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

Cathedral Preparatory School and Villa Maria Academy in Erie collected a record \$2.9 million in a one-day fundraising effort that school officials say "exceeded our wildest expectations."

The Prep/Villa college preparatory school of the Diocese of Erie has been the recipient of many generous gifts over the years, but the one-day fundraising total was what Chris Hagerty, director of strategic initiatives, called "off the charts successful."

"I do consulting work in advancement all over the country and I've never seen anything like this," Hagerty told *FaithLife*. "We got blown away."

According to Hagerty, school officials sent out the annual fundraiser appeal this fall, but they added a twist: Any single gift made during a

24-hour period on Nov. 12 would be tripled by an anonymous donor. By the end of the day, 1,259 single gifts had come in—mostly online—totaling about \$741,000. That sum, plus the tripled amount, added up to \$2.9 million, Hagerty said.

Prep/Villa has never raised that much money in one day. Previous one-day fundraisers netted up to \$25,000. But throughout the 24-hour period Nov. 12, Hagerty watched as three to four online gifts were given per minute. About 90 percent of the gifts were made online, and many came from alumni, parents, grandparents and friends of Villa and Prep.

"The generosity of our people is amazing," Hagerty said. "It is these people who have taken ownership of our school."

Even Prep and Villa students contributed to the fundraiser. More than 60 percent of the combined student population donated money to the effort, giving about \$9,800.

Bishop Lawrence Persico called the fundraising campaign "a testament to the loyalty and confidence" that donors have in both schools.

"The support that was given is also an indication of the quality of education that is found at Cathedral Prep and Villa," Bishop Persico said.

The money, all unrestricted dollars, will likely be used to help fund the five-year strategic plan of Prep/Villa. Currently in year three of that plan, school board members will determine how best to use the \$2.9 million.

Among some of the possible uses of the funds, Hagerty said, are facility improvements at both Villa and Prep,

including air conditioning. The funds also may be used to enhance educational programs and to maintain solid wages for faculty.

"Every dime will go to help in the strategic plan," Hagerty added. "Money can go very quickly, but our job is to use it wisely."

For Hagerty, there's an underlying message in Prep/Villa's success this fall. Other Catholic schools, he said, can do the same thing. The \$2.9 million fundraiser was the result of what he called "a full marketing effort" that included regular mailings, emails, and messages sent on Twitter and Facebook.

"If there's one message I'd like to get out to other schools, it's please don't think this is just Prep and Villa," Hagerty said. "Every school can do this. Think big."

## Immaculate Conception remains holy day of obligation this year

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Monday, Dec. 8, remains a holy day of obligation this year even though it falls on a Monday. Any Eucharistic liturgy celebrated on the evening of Sunday, Dec. 7, is a celebration of the second Sunday of Advent, not an anticipated Mass for the Immaculate Conception.

According to the Office of Worship of the Diocese of Erie, an Advent Sunday takes precedence over the celebration of the Immaculate Conception. Masses for the Immaculate Conception, therefore, should be offered on Monday, either in the morning or in the evening.

## Special to be aired on WJET-TV in lieu of midnight Mass

The Diocese of Erie is presenting a 30-minute Christmas Eve special on WJET-TV on Dec. 24 from 11:30 p.m. to midnight. The program will include seasonal choir music, readings from Catholic school students, and a message from Bishop Lawrence Persico.

This television special replaces the regular airing of Christmas Eve Mass from St. Peter Cathedral in Erie.

## Diocese launches campaign for families



In the Diocese of Erie, families matter, especially as the Catholic Church prepares to welcome Pope Francis to the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia next year.

On Dec. 1, the Family Life Office kicked off a year-long campaign—Families Always Matter—to strengthen, educate and affirm individuals and families of all ages and stages. The effort includes a website ([www.ErieRCD.org/fam.htm](http://www.ErieRCD.org/fam.htm)) that will serve as a hub for new and important information related to the World Meeting of Families, scheduled Sept. 22-25, 2015.

"The Families Always Matter website is the vehicle that will be used to direct this year-long campaign designed to affirm families in their relationship to God, the church, society and each other," said Ann Badach, director of the Family Life Office.

The website will provide resources found in the newly published catechesis written in preparation for the World Meeting of Families. The resources will include:

- **Monthly catechesis.** Based on 10 themes from the Family Catechesis developed for the World Meeting of Families.
  - **Resource guide.** Families will find prayers, parent tips, links to websites and other information.
  - **Guest writers.** Writers will provide 250-word narratives on the theme of the month.
  - **Community resources.** A page will be devoted to family friendly activities around the diocese.
  - **Incentives.** Includes monthly giveaways (must register on the website to win).
  - **Grand prize contest.** Top three prizes will include a trip to the World Meeting of Families, a weekend family getaway to Splash Laugh, Erie, and a family portrait (sitting fee included).
- Also on the website, there will be links to details about the World Meeting of Families.

## Students pray for Ebola victims



OIL CITY—Kindergartners to second-graders at St. Stephen School in Oil City helped write a prayer for the people of West Africa who are suffering from diseases like Ebola. Mercy Sister Tina Geiger of Catholic Rural Ministry in Oil City visited the school to talk about her recent Mercy Medical Mission trip to Nigeria. Pictured, left to right, are first-grader Keegan Kirkwood, and kindergartners Allie Harton and Blake Marchinke. Keegan holds the prayer. Allie wears a homemade surgeon's cap, and Blake holds a figure of Jesus with no arms, reminding us to be the arms of Jesus reaching out to the sick and suffering.

## Reaction to immigration reform

# Catholic groups support Obama plan

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE  
and CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Advocates for immigration reform in the Diocese of Erie and throughout the country support President Barack Obama's executive action affecting millions of people who don't have legal immigration status.

Although Obama's action is expected to allow up to 4 million immigrants to remain in the country and receive work authorization, many of those pushing for an overhaul of immigration law in the United States still want more, including passage of a comprehensive bill by Congress.

"I wish it were more. It's a start," said Benedictine Sister Marlene Bertke, who has organized monthly vigils in downtown Erie to push for a new immigration law.

"We are going to continue the vigils until Congress passes a sensible immigration law. The executive order [taken by Obama] was good, but it can be rescinded by a new president," said Sister Marlene, coordinator of Benedictines for Peace.

Catholic organizations and labor unions nationwide continue to ask Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform that would include much of Obama's plan.

action was Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

"What President Obama did will provide relief for a significant number of people," the archbishop told Catholic News Service. "But it's just that."

It's sort of like putting a Band-Aid on a wound. We still need Congress to act to provide comprehensive immigration reform.

That's the real solution." In the Diocese of Erie, members of a Catholic ministry to refugees, known as *People Organized to Welcome Erie Refugees (POWER)*, will continue to discuss the impact of the president's action.

Father John Santor, a member of the group and a longtime supporter of refugees living in the diocese, said it's time immigration law in the U.S. became more consistent and less a patchwork.

"But I'm happy Obama is making the push for reform," Father Santor said. "I think his goal is noble and worthy."

Sister Rosemary O'Brien, SSI, who mentors legal refugees in the Erie area, said Obama is "rattling the cage" to get Congress to act. Change can't come soon enough, she adds, especially for families.

"There are so many parents who are sending their children unaccompanied to avoid human trafficking and drug violence. How can we close our doors to that?" Sister Rosemary asks.

Obama's action on Nov. 20 will help keep parents with their children, protect workers, and alleviate many families' fears of deportation. But it falls short of what both immigrants and industry leaders were seeking. The most vexing issues they face, like speeding up the process for obtaining permanent residency and getting more visas for high-skilled technology work, would require an act of Congress.

Both Sister Rosemary and Sister Marlene believe that allowing refugees to work here legally would boost America's financial footing.

"It's not simple," Sister Rosemary said. "But if we want our country to thrive, it will help our economy to recognize the people who are working here illegally now."

From a pastoral perspective, Father Jorge Villegas, pastor of St. Stephen of Hungary Parish, Erie, said he's still a little skeptical about what Obama's action will mean. About 65 percent of his parishioners are from Puerto Rico, but there are several from Columbia, Mexico and Haiti. He assumes some are illegal.

"But I never go into that question," Father Villegas said.

Providing the protection of the church is at the core of outreach to immigrants and refugees. Among the agencies working with immigrant communities is Catholic Charities USA.

Father Larry Snyder, president, said the organization is hopeful Obama's plan will lead to much-needed legislation to provide workers with a path to permanent citizenship. He welcomed aspects of the president's plan that would prevent families from being split up and protect children fleeing violence in their homeland.

"In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus says that when we welcome a stranger in his name, we welcome his presence into our hearts," Father Snyder said in a statement.



**■ Pope meets with Mideast refugees**

ISTANBUL (CNS)—Pope Francis met with young refugees from civil wars in Syria and Iraq, a few hours after joining Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople to denounce the plight of Christians there.

"The degrading conditions in which so many refugees are forced to live are intolerable," the pope told about 100 young refugees in Istanbul Nov. 30. "We must do everything possible to eradicate the causes of this situation."

Addressing the refugees, who included Christians and Muslims, Pope Francis publicly reiterated his appreciation for Turkey's acceptance of refugees from neighboring lands—an estimated 1.6 million from Syria alone.



Pope Francis meets with young refugees from Syria and Iraq.

**■ Leaders encouraged to condemn violence done in the name of Islam**

ABOARD THE PAPAL FLIGHT FROM ISTANBUL (CNS)—Pope Francis called on political and religious leaders across the Muslim world to condemn violence done in the name of Islam.

The pope said he told Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan Nov. 28 that "it would be beautiful if all Islamic leaders—whether they be political leaders, religious leaders, academic leaders—would say clearly that they condemn [terrorism], because that will help the majority of Islamic people to say, 'that's true,'" and show non-Muslims that Islam is a religion of peace.

"I sincerely believe that you cannot say that all Muslims are terrorists just as you cannot say that all Christians are

fundamentalists; every religion has these little groups," the pope said.

The pope made his remarks Nov. 30 during a 45-minute news conference on his flight to Rome after a three-day visit to Turkey.

In response to other questions, Pope Francis said: ■ During a televised moment of silent prayer in Istanbul's Blue Mosque Nov. 29, alongside the city's grand mufti, "I prayed for Turkey, I prayed for the mufti, I prayed for myself because I need it, and I prayed above all for the peace and an end to war."

■ Both the Catholic and Orthodox churches include conservative members resistant to ecumenism, who must nonetheless be treated with respect: "A conservative has a right to speak, you don't expel him."

■ The pope would like to visit one of the camps housing refugees from the civil wars in Syria and Iraq but cannot do so now because of security concerns.

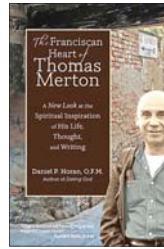
**■ Book explores Thomas Merton's Franciscan spirituality**

NOTRE DAME, Ind. (CNS)—*The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton: A New Look at the Spiritual Inspiration of His Life, Thought and Writing*, a volume by Daniel P. Horan, OFM, has been released recently by Ave Maria Press.

Merton wasn't a Franciscan; he was a Trappist. Franciscan Father Daniel Horan knows that, but in this book he does his best to make certain readers are aware not only of the Franciscan connection to the famed monk, but of the depth and breadth of that connection.

After providing brief biographies of St. Francis of Assisi and Father Thomas Merton, Father Horan delves deeply into the latter's life, beginning with how the famed priest almost became a Franciscan, and what might have prevented that from occurring.

While the book often reads like an extended term paper or thesis, students of St. Francis and Father Merton will appreciate the work that went into Father Horan's examination of Father Merton's heart through a Franciscan lens.



**Editor's Notes**  
Mary SOLBERG

The word "perseverance" comes to mind as our interior peace gets battered around daily by news of terrorism, school shootings, human trafficking and disease.

Some might think these depressing topics have no place during the celebration of the most festive Advent and Christmas seasons that are now upon us. Yet the concept of perseverance is really at the core of the Christian life, even in our joy.

The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph accepted Jesus as their son, despite their fear, their uncertainties about the future, the threats to their safety, and even their very lack of a place to call home. It takes perseverance to pray and still trust that God is by our side through everything—good or bad.

Tomorrow is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, when the Catholic Church celebrates the state of grace in which Mary herself was conceived. As we listen to the story of Jesus' birth, we will come to see Mary's trust and perseverance in the most difficult and dark surroundings.

Pope Francis has remarked on the three virtues that are apparent in the accounts of Mary found in the Gospels: her joy, her service and her perseverance. She was happy to conceive the Christ child. She was eager to serve, as seen in how quickly she visited her elderly cousin Elizabeth. And she persevered in her dedication to her son throughout her life, even watching him suffer and die on a cross.

This Christmas, watch as Mary shows us the way. In our joys, our sufferings, even as we watch what we think is a world falling apart, we must persevere, believing that every day is holy.

♦ ♦ ♦  
Even Bishop Emeritus Donald Trautman has been talking about—and living out—the message of perseverance. In November, he led a retreat on that theme for priests of the Diocese of Buffalo.

The retreat was to have ended on Wednesday, Nov. 19, but because of the monster storm that dumped several feet of snow on Buffalo, the priests were forced to hunker down and wait it out at the St. Columban Center in Derby, N.Y.

Situated about a mile off a main road, the retreat center was virtually isolated during the lake-effect storm. Some priests were unable to get medical prescriptions filled as snow kept piling up outside. Even poles were ineffective as 8 to 9 feet of snow drifted on top of cars. Finally, seminarians from Christ the King Seminary in Buffalo arrived to help shovel paths to the retreat house.

"The priests made the best of it after a couple of harrowing days," Bishop Trautman said.

Bishop Trautman stayed an extra two days at the retreat house, giving an unplanned lecture on St. John's Gospel. Because Interstate 90 was closed to all but trucks for several days, Bishop Trautman was forced to return to Erie via Route 5.

♦ ♦ ♦  
The dual-sided "Choose Life" billboard along Route 66 in Crown, Elk County, has gotten some great reviews. Knights of Columbus Council #10341 from St. Mary/St. Ann Parish recently erected the billboard, thanks to hard work by Dave Thimons, Don Stinebiser, Randy Andring, John McCloskey, and, of course, the property owners, Theodore and Susanna Kurtzhals.

♦ ♦ ♦  
About a year after a federal judge struck down a mandate that church-related agencies must facilitate employee access to contraceptives, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs, lawyers for the dioceses of Erie and Pittsburgh were in court again in November, defending the ruling and contending that the mandate in the Affordable Care Act violates their First Amendment right to religious freedom.

This is simply yet another legal line in the battle over the contraceptive issue.

Mary Solberg is the editor of FaithLife. Email: [msolberg@ErieRCD.org](mailto:msolberg@ErieRCD.org) Call 814-824-1171 Twitter: @ERIERCDsolberg

# Why it's important to sign child refugee document



**Guest Commentary**  
Thomas J. Gamble, Ph.D.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Mercyhurst University President Thomas J. Gamble was among more than 30 Catholic college and university presidents who signed a document this fall calling attention to the plight of undocumented minors crossing the U.S. border from Central America. "The Statement on Child Refugees"—endorsed by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities—says Catholic institutions of higher learning have the "opportunity and obligation to respond."

I have been asked to write about why I signed the immigration declaration that calls on the United States to offer an ethos of hospitality and kindness to child refugees, primarily from Central America, who are arriving on the Mexico-Texas border. For me, the question really is how could I not sign the declaration? Let me explain by starting with a personal reflection that places their plight in a different context.

When I was a child, my mother worked outside the home and my maternal grandmother, Savaria, largely raised me. Savaria left the poverty of southern Italy when she was very young. She couldn't speak English and she couldn't read or write English or Italian. I've never loved anyone more. I know

the analogy is far from perfect, but now, when I see these dark-haired, dark-eyed children flee poverty and violence in Central America with hope for a safer, better life, I can't help but think of the young Savaria on that boat from Italy arriving in a strange new land. How could I not want our nation to recognize the frailty of contemporary children in similar circumstances? How could I not be moved by their aspirations and their fears?

Beyond the personal, though, I am the leader of a Catholic institution of higher education founded by an order of Irish nuns. The very word "Catholic" means universal; it is a universal, not a national faith. Its teaching reaches each and every continent on the planet. The Catholic Church, of course, teaches hospitality, especially to those in need: "Whatever you do for the least of these you do for me."

Our university founders, the Sisters of Mercy, whose gift is hospitality as well as mercy, came to the United States primarily to minister to poor immigrant populations in our cities. The plight of immigrants is a critical concern of the Sisters of Mercy. Again, how could I not sign a declaration asking for mercy and hospitality for these young immigrants of today?

Mercyhurst has had the opportunity to directly respond to the needs of similarly impacted young people. We are proud to have been able to provide higher education to migrant children at no cost. When asked about life before coming to college, one student explained: "It was tough. Since each harvest was temporary, we had to move to another place to make a living. This meant packing up and driving for two days. Housing was also difficult to



Unaccompanied migrant children file out of a room at a U.S. government facility in south Texas.

find, being a big family. Usually the first few days we slept in the car before being given a place to stay at the temporary workplace."

The refugees at the border face even more difficult circumstances because many of them arrive without any family. If we Americans have the opportunity to transform such lives, how could we not do so?

For these reasons and many others, I am proud to have Mercyhurst among the 50 Catholic colleges and universities signing the declaration. I am proud of what Mercyhurst does and will continue to do to respond to "the least among us."

Thomas J. Gamble, Ph.D., is the president of Mercyhurst University.

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## News Briefs

### Professor honored with Spirit of Mercy

ERIE—Dr. Mary Hembrow Snyder, a professor of religious studies and director of the Center for Mercy and Catholic Studies at Mercyhurst University, received the school's Spirit of Mercy Award in November.

Snyder, who previously received Mercyhurst's coveted Teaching Excellence Award, has been at the Erie campus for 26 years. She has held various positions of leadership while continuing to teach and do scholarly work. She has authored four books, most recently as co-editor with Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB, of *Essential Writings: Joan D. Chittister*. She also was a guiding force in establishing the new Helen Boyle Memorial Archive in honor of Joan D. Chittister, OSB, at Mercyhurst.

### Christmas concert to be held in DuBois

DuBOIS—The public is welcome to attend the annual Shalom Christmas Concert Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. at the Paul G. Reitz Theater, located on Scribner Avenue in DuBois.

Catholic parishioners in Clearfield County are organizing the evening. Admission is free. For more information, contact Judy Smart at 814-637-5930 or Rich Kenawell at 814-771-7932.

### Candlelight service planned in Erie

ERIE—The public is invited to attend the Son of God Prayer Group's Christmas Candlelight Service Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. at Holy Rosary Church chapel, E. 28th and East Avenue, Erie.

The evening will include Christmas hymns and a special presentation by Frank Juhasz of a true Hungarian story during World War II. Fellowship will follow the service.

### Priests to lead pilgrimage to Italy

ERIE—Father James Campbell and Father Joseph Campbell are leading a pilgrimage to Italy for the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 1-12, 2015.

The 12-day pilgrimage will include visits to Rome, Assisi, Orvieto, Bolsena, Siena, San Gimignano, Florence, Pisa and Lucca. The price includes hotel accommodations, daily breakfast and dinners with wine, guided sightseeing and medical travel insurance. For more information, call Catholic Heritage Tours at 800-290-3876 or visit [www.catholicheritagetours.com/TCI](http://www.catholicheritagetours.com/TCI).

# Haven receives \$50,000, properties

## 2014 Roar on the Shore chose men's shelter as its charity

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

St. Patrick's Haven, a homeless shelter for men in downtown Erie, has received three empty properties and \$50,000 raised in last summer's annual Roar on the Shore motorcycle rally.

The windfall of cash and property bolstered associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, who have kept the shelter running since the mid-1980s.

"We started with nothing. I



The current St. Patrick's Haven in downtown Erie.

always said that if it's God's will that there will be a Haven, then it will be here...and it has. The money will always come to pay the bills," said Sister Mary Fromknecht, SSI, director of St. Patrick's Haven.

According to Sister Mary, last summer's rally selected St. Patrick's Haven as its main charity. The Manufacturer & Business Association, which sponsors the event, presented the shelter with a \$50,000 check. And Erie businessman Rick Griffith, a board member of the Manufacturer & Business Association, donated three vacant properties to the shelter.

The lots are located in the 200 block of E. 12th Street, only a block from the existing site. Members of the St. Patrick's Haven board already have met to discuss possible ways to use the land. Under consideration, Sister Mary said, is construction of a new building.

"We haven't arrived at any major conclusions," Sister Mary said. "But one of our hopes is to upgrade."

Having a new building would ensure the future of the shelter, especially since the donated prop-

erties are located in downtown Erie, close to those most in need, and with easy access to the nearby Emmaus Soup Kitchen.

"The site is perfect," Sister Mary said.

Last August, thousands of motorcyclists converged on Erie for the Roar on the Shore rally. Many members of the Sisters of St. Joseph, their associates, as well as board members of St. Patrick's

Haven, rode or were passengers in the rally.

About 125 riders participated in the Faith and Freedom Ride that kicked off the event in front of St. Patrick's Haven.

"We had a wonderful time doing it," Sister Mary added. "The whole thing has been a wonderful example of what Erie has been able to do for these street men."

## OBITUARY

### Sister Emilie Rose LeBoeuf, SSJ, devoted to teaching

Sister Emilie Rose LeBoeuf, 78, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, died Nov. 17 in the 62nd year of her religious life.

Sister Emilie Rose was born in Bradford, Sept. 14, 1936, the daughter of the late Archie and Betty Gates LeBoeuf. In 1953, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from her home parish, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Bradford, and professed her final vows on Aug. 15, 1959.

Sister Emilie Rose felt the call to her vocation when she made her first Communion, having been nourished by the dedication and spirituality of teachers at St. Bernard, particularly Sisters Consuela, Rose Agnes, Mary Pascal, Marcella and Virginia Ann. She always said that the way they lived the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph drew her to her vocation. She also credited the sacrifices and loving support of her parents.

Sister Emilie Rose graduated from St. Bernard Elementary and High School in Bradford. In 1964, she earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Villa Maria College, Erie, and in 1979 earned a master's in theatre arts from Villanova University, Villanova, Pa.

She taught for nearly 50 years, having spent 43 of those at the Diocese of Erie: St. Andrew, Holy Rosary, St. Patrick, St. Ann, Our Lady's Christian and Villa Maria Elementary, all in Erie; St. Agatha, Meadville; St. Mary, Reynoldsville; Kennedy Catholic High School, Hermitage; St. Leo Elementary, Ridgway; Elk County Catholic High School, St. Marys; Bradford Christian High School, Bradford; and Venango Catholic High School, Oil City. She also served as principal at St. Ann.



Sister Emilie Rose LeBoeuf, SSJ

Sister Emilie Rose participated in the SSJ/Marycrest Prayer Card ministry, praying for patients at Saint Vincent Hospital. She was a receptionist/volunteer with the Oil City Housing Authority and ministered at the Adult Education/Resource Center with Career Link of Oil City.

Sister Emilie Rose participated in a Congressional Leadership Conference and attended numerous seminars on a variety of topics. She was nominated four times to *Who's Who Among American Teachers*.

Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by her sister, Dorothy, and her brother-in-law, Daniel.

In addition to many friends and her religious community, survivors include her nephew, Mark Taylor.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Nov. 20 at the St. Joseph Community Living Center, Erie. Interment was at Trinity Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Community Support Fund of the Sisters of St. Joseph, 5031 West Ridge Road, Erie, Pa. 16506-1249.

# Mercyhurst University cuts 14 positions, reduces others to part-time employment

Fourteen administrators and staff have lost their jobs and six full-time positions have been reduced to part-time at Mercyhurst University, a private Catholic institution founded by the Sisters of Mercy in Erie.

Mercyhurst President Thomas J. Gamble notified employees of the layoffs in a letter Nov. 20, saying the cutbacks were "necessary for us to continue our goal of creating high-quality, exciting and relevant academic programs."

"Still, those affected by this news are our co-workers and our friends," Gamble added. "All have made valuable contributions to the university. Eliminating their positions to better secure our strategic future was a difficult decision, one that I own."

Gamble pointed to changing student demographics and shifting interests of students as reasons for the layoffs. Enrollment at the university dropped by about 5 percent across all Mercyhurst

campuses from 2013-14 to 2014-15.

In addition to the reductions in staff, employer contributions to the pension plan will be suspended through May 2015 and the more highly paid members of the president's staff have accepted pay cuts for the remainder of the academic year.

According to Gary Brown, senior vice president for strategic finance, no faculty positions were eliminated and no academic programs were cut or reduced. Athletic programs were affected, but no jobs directly dealing with student athletes were eliminated.

Mercyhurst University has 559

full-time employees throughout its system, which includes satellite campuses in North East and Corry and at Erie's Booker T. Washington Center. Due to low enrollment, Mercyhurst closed its Girard campus at the end of the 2013-14 academic year.

Despite the layoffs, Mercyhurst plans to shift its focus more heavily in high-demand disciplines, including computer science, biomedical science, public health, big-data analytics, convergent media, digital humanities and physician assistant studies. It also expects to expand its programs at the Booker T. Washington Center.

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## \$10,000 given to youth programs



ERIE—The Knights of Columbus Central West Region recently gave the Diocese of Erie \$10,000 to use for its youth programs. For the past 20 years, Central West councils have sold special lottery calendars to raise money for diocesan youth ministries. Presenting the check to Bishop Lawrence Persico, left to right, are: Raymond Barber, state council chairman; Charles Mahood, former regional chairman; and George L. Beckes, chairman.

## Pajama, diaper drive held in Shenango



SHARON—Sacred Heart Church in Sharon held a Christmas Pajama and Diaper Drive to benefit the children of the Shenango Valley. Parishioners, standing left to right, are: Pat Barnhart, Michael McNulty, Mary Alice Snyderwine and Dolores Quartini. Seated, left to right, are: Palma Glaser and Aline Gadola.

## Tax credit scholarship money goes to schools in diocese



PUNXSUTAWNEY—Ss. Cosmas & Damian School in Punxsutawney recently hosted the Bridge Educational Foundation for the presentation of Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) scholarship awards to schools in north central Pennsylvania. Ss. Cosmas & Damian students benefited from a portion of the \$78,000 awarded to the region. Attending the ceremony were representatives from DuBois Area Catholic Schools, Elk County Catholic, and St. Boniface and St. Leo schools.

Pictured, left to right, are: WalMart representative Jason Klipa; State Rep. Matt Gabler; Msgr. Joseph Riccardio, pastor of Ss. Cosmas & Damian; Waste Management representative Judy Archibald; RBC Capital Markets representative and Bridge Foundation board member Jim Tricoll; Ss. Cosmas & Damian Principal Jessica Dinger; and Speaker of the House, Sam Smith.

## Eagle Scout completes paver project around St. Anne statue



ERIE—Nathan Kujan of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Erie, earned his Eagle Scout Award for constructing a paver pathway and circle for a St. Anne statue located on the parish grounds. Nathan also constructed benches and added flower pots and trays to beautify the area.

A member of Troop 59 from Our Lady of Peace Parish, Erie, Nathan was recognized for his achievements during a ceremony at Blessed Sacrament this summer.

## Kuzma family celebrates with bishop



ERIE—Bishop Lawrence Persico recently celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving for newly ordained deacon, Brother John Paul Kuzma, OFM., Cap., at Holy Family Church in Erie. The bishop presented Brother John Paul with a diocesan stole because the Kuzma roots began in the Diocese of Erie. There were more than 200 family and friends present for the Mass and reception that followed. Brother John Paul is the son of Michael and Linda Kuzma.

## K of C helps homeless shelter



MEADVILLE—Representatives of St. James Haven, a temporary homeless shelter for men, received \$100 recently from members of Meadville Knights of Columbus Council #388. The shelter, shown in background, was founded in 1997 by the associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Pictured, left to right, are: Jerry Whitman, facility manager; Todd Kidd and Marie Peers, co-directors; accepting check from K of C Grand Knight Scott Hamilton; Gaynell Mailliard, treasurer; and K of C chaplain, Father Matthew Kujawski, pastor of Meadville's St. Agatha and St. Mary of Grace parishes.

## Singers participate in festival



GREENVILLE—Several singers from the St. Michael School choir in Greenville recently participated in the Mercer County Chorus Festival at Mercer High School. They joined 110 of the best junior high school singers in Mercer County, presenting a concert later that same day. Pictured, left to right, are: Sophia Geving, Caroline Hoover, Lee Groce, Nicole Lacey and Madison Murphy, along with their teacher Dan Hogan.

## St. Luke student wins VA essay contest



ERIE—Seventh- and eighth-graders at St. Luke School in Erie recently participated in the 7th Annual Veterans Day Essay Contest run by the Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Students were asked to explain what the phrase "The home of the free, because of the brave" means to them. Allison Dugan, an eighth-grader, won the contest and attended a Veteran's Day parade. She read her essay at the Veteran's Day ceremony at the Naval Reserve Center in Erie. Pictured, left to right, are: Jackie Shaffer, seventh- and eighth-grade English teacher; Allison Dugan; and Lt. Commander David Q. Baughier, commanding officer, Navy Operational Support Center.

## MARCH FOR LIFE

Washington, DC ★ January 22, 2015

—AN INVITATION—

Help remind our government leaders and the entire nation that one of the most important things in life is LIFE itself. Please join us this January and join hundreds of thousands of your fellow Americans in a march up Constitution Avenue as we encourage our leaders to *choose life!*

**"Among the vulnerable for whom the church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us."**

— Pope Francis

- ★ Wednesday, January 21: Leave Erie at 11 p.m.
- ★ January 22: See DC in the a.m. Gather for the March at noon.
- ★ Friday, January 23: Return about 2 a.m.
- ★ \$54 per seat; **\$45 per seat special price until December 22**
- ★ Pay online or mail payment to People for Life.
- ★ Financial help may be available: Sponsorship inquiries are welcome.
- ★ Limited seating: Make reservations early.
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